



Faculty of Cognitive Sciences and Human Development

**RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TRANSFORMATIONAL
LEADERSHIP AND ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT: THE
MEDIATING ROLE OF PSYCHOLOGICAL EMPOWERMENT**

Munirah Hanim Binti Yusuf

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PSYCHOLOGICAL EMPOWERMENT**

P.KHIDMAT MAKLUMAT AKADEMIK
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By:

MUNIRAH HANIM BINTI YUSUF

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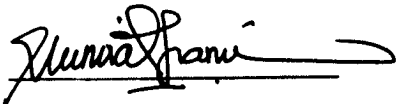
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ABSTRACT

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP AND ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT: THE MEDIATING ROLE OF PSYCHOLOGICAL EMPOWERMENT

MUNIRAH HANIM BINTI YUSUF

This research examined the relationship between transformational leadership and organizational commitment. More importantly, this research was conducted to examine the mediating role of psychological empowerment in the relationship between transformational leadership and organizational commitment. A survey research method was used to gather 118 usable questionnaires from employees are working at the Western Digital, Sarawak Branch. Findings from Pearson correlation analysis showed that transformational leadership positively and significantly correlated with organizational commitment. This result shows that transformational leadership as an important antecedent of organizational commitment. Further, the outcomes of Stepwise regression analysis showed that relationship between psychological empowerment and transformational leadership positively and significantly correlated with organizational commitment. This result confirms that psychological empowerment does act as a full mediating variable in transformational leadership model of the organization as sample. Furthermore, implications of this study to transformational leadership theory and practice, methodological and conceptual limitations, as well as directions for future research are discussed.

**Keywords: Transformational Leadership, Psychological Empowerment, and Organizational
Commitment**

ABSTRAK

HUBUNGAN DI ANTARA GAYA KEPIMPINAN TRANSFORMASI DAN KOMITMEN TERHADAP ORGANISASI: MEMPERKASA SECARA PSIKOLOGI BERPERANAN SEBAGAI MEDIATOR

MUNIRAH HANIM BINTI YUSUF

Kajian ini adalah mengkaji perhubungan di antara gaya kepimpinan transformasi dan komitmen terhadap organisasi. Fokus utama dalam kajian ini adalah untuk mengkaji peranan memperkasa secara psikologi sebagai mediator dalam perhubungan di antara gaya kepimpinan transformasi dan komitmen terhadap organisasi. Kaedah Kajian tinjauan digunakan untuk mengumpul 118 borang soal selidik yang digunakan dalam kajian ini daripada para pekerja di Western Digital, Cawangan Sarawak. Keputusan pengujian hipotesis menggunakan Analisis Korelasi Pearson menunjukkan bahawa wujud perhubungan di antara gaya kepimpinan transformasi dan komitmen terhadap organisasi di organisasi yang dikaji. Manakala, keputusan pengujian hipotesis menggunakan Analisis Regresi Stepwise menunjukkan bahawa memasukkan rasa berguna dalam analisis ini telah memberikan kesan kepada gaya kepimpinan transformasi untuk meningkatkan komitmen para pekerja terhadap organisasi. Hasil daripada kajian ini mengesahkan bahawa memperkasa secara psikologi berperanan sebagai mediator dalam model gaya kepimpinan transformasi di organisasi yang dikaji. Selain itu, implikasi kajian terhadap teori, metodologi, limitasi kajian, kerangka konseptual dan cadangan untuk kajian pada masa hadapan turut dibincangkan dalam kajian ini.

Kata Kunci : Gaya Kepimpinan Transformasi, Memperkasa Secara Psikologi, dan Komitmen Terhadap Organisasi.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

The chapter contains eight sections. The first section is the background of the study. The second section elaborates the problem statement. While the third section reveals the objectives of this research. The conceptual framework is presented in the fourth section while the hypotheses of this study are stated in the fifth section. The sixth section of this chapter is the important of the study. The seventh section explains the definition of terms. Lastly, the eighth section will explain the conclusion of this chapter.

1.1 Background of Study

The leadership term are often referred as a powerful, dynamic person who forms the path of nation. Leadership is a concept of owing certain things to the institution (DePree, 1987). Besides that, leadership usually have a general denominator the assumption that it is a group phenomenon involving the interaction between two or more persons to accomplish an objective (Janda, 1960). Leaders carry out this interaction by applying their leadership qualities, for instance beliefs, value, ethics, characters, knowledge, and skills.

Leadership is the prime force in any organization which chooses to stay competitive in this global era. In organization, leadership is typically in term of process of social influence whereby a leader steers members of a group towards a goal (Bryman, 1992). Burn (1978) viewed leadership as leaders inducing followers to act for certain goals that represent the values and motivations, the wants and needs, the aspiration and expectation of both leaders and followers. In organization all through the globe, there are various types of leadership style which have been implementing. The type of leadership style will result in different outcome towards the organization (Bono & Judge, 2003). Each organization will be different with one another. Therefore, several leadership styles are effective to bring positive change while some are not (Yukl, 1989).

Traditional leadership accentuate on the task to be accomplished by followers (Bass, 1990). For instance, autocratic (Reddin, 1977), initiating organization (Hemphill, 1950), crucial group activities (Fleishman, 1951), concerned with production (Blake & Mouton, 1964; Katz, Maccoby, & Morse, 1950). Conversely, contemporary leadership focuses on the quality of the relationship with followers (Bass, 1990). For instance building reciprocal trust (Misumi, 1985), participatory decision-making (Ouchi, 1981), consideration (Hemphill, 1950), interaction-oriented (Bass, 1999), democratic (Misumi, 1985), and concern for people (Blake & Mouton, 1964).

Hence, in the context of leader and follower relationship, that interaction, however takes two primarily different forms, which is transactional and transformational leadership (Bass, 1990). Recently, the focus of leadership has shifted from traditional or transactional model of leadership to a new genre of leadership theories known as transformational leadership (Bass, 1985). Transactional leadership described leaders who guide or motivate their followers in the direction of established goals by clarifying role and task requirement (Burn, 1978). Meanwhile, Bryman (1992) stated that transformational leadership entails both leaders and followers raising each other's motivation and sense of higher purpose.

Transformational leaders have four distinguishing characteristics; idealized influence/charisma, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration (Bass, 1985). The transforming leader intends to engage the follower as a whole person and not as an individual with a restricted range of basic needs. Transformational leadership influence work-related attitudes such as employee commitment in order to develop a more complete understanding of the inner working of transformational leadership (Bass, 1999).

1.1.1 Background of Transformational Leadership in Western Digital, Sarawak Branch

Western Digital Malaysia was established in 1973. Western Digital, Sarawak Branch was formerly known as Komag USA. Western Digital is a manufacturer of computer hard disks that rapidly became a speciality semiconductor maker. In 1994, Western Digital widens its business by manufacturing hard disk drive (HDD).

Transformational leadership style is implementing in the management of Western Digital in order to stay competitive with other organization in the same industry. The leaders are able to influence followers' level of commitment by generate a higher level of individual commitment on the part of the leader and

followers to a general vision, mission, and organizational objectives. The leaders improve unit performance by spent time and giving full attention to discuss any problem faced by their subordinates with reducing turnover and absenteeism among their subordinates.

Instead of using logic and reasoning, leaders also use emotion to gain trust and admiration of the subordinates that certainly promote positive follower's organizational commitment. Transformational leadership involve leaders and followers to respond with higher levels of commitment to their organization.

1.2 Problem Statement

Early studies on leadership focus on the personal characteristic (i.e. human capital) of transformational leadership (Judge & Bono, 2000; Ployhart, Lim, & Chan, 2001; Turner, Barling, Epitropaki, Butcher, & Milner, 2002) and identifying the personality traits associated with transformational leadership (Ployhart, Lim, & Chan, 2001). For instance, a number of studies found that transformational leadership is positively related with work attitudes and behaviour as both an individual and organizational level (Dumdum, Lowe, & Avolio, 2002, Lowe, Kroeck & Sivasubramaniam, 1996). Besides that, leadership literatures have mainly focused on comparing the effect of transformational and transactional leadership on their subordinates (Özaralli, 2002). For example, many studies have been completed in business and industry, government, the military, educational institutions, and non profit organizations, all of them proved that transforming leaders were more effective and satisfying as leader than transactional leader (Bass, 1998; Thite, 1999). Transformational leadership has a profound positive influence on subordinates' effort and satisfaction than transactional leadership (Bycio et al., 1995; Howell & Frost, 1989; Kirkpatrick & Locke, 1996; Parry, 2000).

Recent studies on transformational leadership reveal that transformational leadership affect a variety of outcomes especially organizational commitment (Podsakoff et al., 1990). For example 39 studies of transformational leadership literature, individuals who exhibited transformational leadership were proven to be more effective leaders with better work outcomes such as organizational commitment (Northouse, 2001). According to Mowday et al., (1982), leadership is considered as a key determinant of organizational commitment. For instance, a study by Shamir, House, and Arthur (1993) on transformational leadership suggests that transformational leaders are able to influence follower's organizational commitment by promoting higher level of inherent value related with goal accomplishment. On the other hand, transformational leaders are able to motivate their followers to get more involved in their work, resulting in higher level of organizational commitment (Walumbwa & Lawler, 2003)

A thorough study on this relationship reveals that the effect of transformational leadership towards employee's organizational commitment is indirectly affected by psychological empowerment (Avolio et al., 2004). Transformational leadership theory emphasizes the role of empowerment as a central mechanism building commitment to the organization's objectives (Avolio, 1999; Bass, 1999; Yukl, 1998). Followers of transformational leaders are expected to identify with their leaders and therefore are expected to have greater feelings that they can have an impact on their organizational commitment, through enhancement to their psychological empowerment (Laschinger, Finegan, & Shamian, 2001). Even though studies on transformational leadership has been conceptually and empirically correlated to organizational commitment but there has been little empirical research focusing on the processes such as psychological empowerment by which transformational leaders influence followers' level of organizational commitment (Bono & Judge, 2000; Kark & Shamir, 2002; Lord, Brown, & Feiberg, 1999; Yukl, 1998). Hence, this study is twofold; first this study is designed to determine the relationship of transformational leadership and organizational commitment in the studied organization. Second, this study is

aimed to determine the potential role of psychological empowerment as a mediator in the relationship of transformational and organizational commitment.

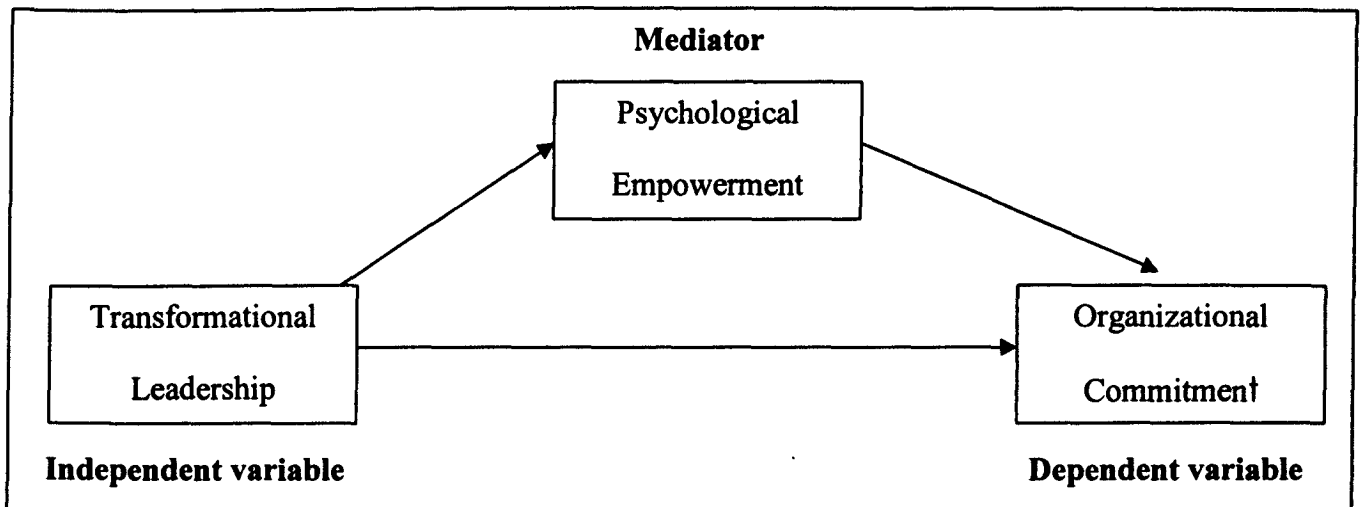
1.3 Research Objective

This research objective consist two types of major objectives:

- 1.3.1** To examine the relationship between transformational leadership and organizational commitment.
- 1.3.2** To examine the mediating effect of psychological empowerment in the relationship between transformational leadership and the organizational commitment.

1.4 Conceptual Framework

Figure 1.4: Relationship between transformational leadership, Psychological empowerment and Organizational commitment



This framework shows that the relationship between transformational leadership and organizational commitment. Most importantly this framework shows that psychological empowerment plays an important role as a mediator in the relationship between transformational leadership and organizational commitment. This framework is used as a guideline to establish research hypotheses.

1.5 Research Hypotheses

- H1: There is a positive relationship between transformational leadership and organizational commitment.
- H2: Psychological empowerment positively mediates the relationship between transformational leadership characteristics and organizational commitment.

1.6 Significant of the study

The significant of the study will contribute to three main areas: theory, research methodology and Human Resource Practitioners.

1.6.1 Significant to the Theory

This study is carried out to recognize the role of psychological empowerment act as mediator in the relationship between transformational leadership and organizational commitment. The Bass' and Burn's transformational leadership theory are the two main theories that are able to provide strong support to prove relationship between transformational leadership, psychological empowerment, and organizational commitment. The findings from this research can contribute to enrich and strengthen the theorist exist to support the indirect relationship of the variable of studies for future research.

1.6.2 Significant to the Research Methodology

The data and information gathered from transformational leadership literatures, In-depth interviews and survey questionnaires will minimize the mistake in data collection procedure. Besides that, the reliability and validity of this study is vital to enhance more accurate results and may benefit the future researcher as a guideline to those new researchers.

1.6.3 Significant to the Human Resource Practitioner

This study is significant for the practitioner to find out whether the transformational leadership increase psychological empowerment among the employees and later increases their organizational commitment. The result of this study will provide in term of conducting an effective leadership style to increase the psychological empowerment among the followers and later raise their organizational commitment. In addition, this study will present empirical evidence to managers and employees or leaders in order to improve their leadership skill to develop higher level follower commitment to their organization.

1.7 Operational Definition of the Terms

1.7.1 Transformational Leadership

Transformational leaders refer as a role model for employee. They exercising charisma, intellectual stimulation, individualized consideration and inspirational motivation to direct employees to give commitment to their organization

1.7.2 Charisma

Charisma leaders behave in ways that result in their being role model for their followers, the leaders are admired, respected, and trusted.

1.7.3 Intellectual Stimulation

Leaders with intellectual stimulation will stimulate their followers' efforts to be innovative and creative by questioning assumptions, reframing problem, and approaching old situations in new ways.

1.7.4 Individualized Consideration

The leaders give personal attention to their followers in term of their needs, trusting and respecting them, and helping them to learn by encouraging responsibility to increase their organization goals.

1.7.5 Inspirational Motivation

The leaders are able to motivate follower to commit to the vision of the organization and encourage team spirit to inspire for the growth of the organization.

1.7.6 Psychological Empowerment

Empowered employees will see themselves as more capable and will be able to influence their job and organization in a more meaningful way.

1.7.7 Organizational Commitment

Organizational commitment refers to a strong desire to remain as a member of a particular organization.

1.8 Conclusion

This chapter had discussed the overview and the significant of this study to the theory, research methodology and to the Human Resource practitioners. The next chapter will discuss on the important concept, empirical, and theoretical evidence based from literature review.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter is divided into seven sections. The first section explains the definition and role of transformational leadership. Elements of transformational leadership will be elaborated in the second section. The third section will explain about psychological empowerment. Organizational commitment will be discussed in the fourth section. The fifth section will discuss on the theoretical and the empirical evidences in supporting the relationship between transformational leadership and organizational commitment. The theoretical and empirical evidences in supporting the relationship between transformational leadership, psychological empowerment and organizational commitment will be explained in the sixth and section. Lastly, the seventh section in this chapter is the conclusion.

2.1 Transformational Leadership

2.1.1 Definition of Transformational Leadership

Burns (1978) defined transformational leadership as the process whereby an individual engages with other and creates a relationship that raises the level of motivation and morality in both the leader and the follower. Transformational leadership is the ability of a leader to influence the value, attitude, belief, and behaviour of others by working with and through them in order to accomplish the organization's mission and purpose (Rouche et al., 1989). Transformational leaders have four distinguishing characteristics; charisma, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration (Bryman, 1992). This category of leader is thoughtful to the desires and intentions of followers and tries to assist followers achieve their fullest potential. Hence, the mutual environment of this relationship requires an understanding of how both leader and follower characteristics influence this dynamics.

In the transformation process, followers and leader are inextricably bound together although the transformational leader plays a pivotal role in precipitating change (Bass, 1999). This issues is important, as individual exhibiting transformational leadership behaviour are describe as 'change agent' (Conger & Kanungo, 1988), and responsible for significant organizational transformation.

Besides that, the transformational leadership focuses on long term goals (Bass, 1990; Howell & Hall-Marenda, 1999) and these leader characteristics will lead their employees by developing a vision and motivating employees to accomplish the vision or long term goal of the organization. According to Bryman (1992) transformational leadership makes the aims and aspirations of leaders and follower congeal in to one. Bryman (1992) further explained that transformational leaders seeks to engage the follower as a whole individual and attend to the higher-order needs of followers and looks to the full range of motive that moves them. In the process, both the leader and follower may emerge with a stronger and higher set of moral values (Bass, 1999).