



Relationship between Selected Leadership Style and Employee Stress Level at Workplace

Choi Mui Fong¹

Florianna Lendai ak Michael Mulok^{2*}

Helmi Sumilan³

^{1,2,3}Universiti Malaysia Sarawak, 94300 Kota Samarahan, Sarawak, Malaysia

ABSTRACT

There has been only limited research focused on the assumption of leader stress and affective well-being. Hence, this study aims to determine the relationship between leadership style and employee stress level at workplace. This study primarily took a quantitative approach for data collection and analysis. Questionnaires were distributed at three branches of banks located in Kuching, Sarawak and to their employees. The findings show that there is a relationship between autocratic leadership style and employee stress level at workplace. The strength of the relationship is weak due to $r = .461$, $p = .002$. The findings also show that democratic leadership and transformational leadership have no relationship with the employee stress level at workplace.

Keywords: leadership style; employee stress

INTRODUCTION

Previously, researchers primarily focused on the effects of stress on employees' performance, whereas the employee stress level and leadership style was often ignored. Choi (2007) highlighted that from earliest to current history, leadership has important role in developing groups, ethnicity, and countries; and Maqsood (2013) stated that leadership style is one of the factors that contributes to achieving organizational goals. Romanowska, Larsson, and Theorell (2013) have shown that leadership has an important role in the organization because it is carried with a duty to assume responsibility, while bad leadership may bring distress for every member who is affected by it. In order to ensure the organization runs smoothly and successfully, it requires the right leader and the right leadership style to face the unique challenges which lead to the organization success (Rao, 2013). Gurt, Schwennen, and Elke (2011) found that the

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E-mail address:
mmflendai@unimas.my (Florianna Lendai ak Michael Mulok)

*Corresponding author

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impact of employee health is dependent on a mixture of leadership behaviours and style. Skakon, Nielsen, Borg, and Guzman (2010) stated that there has been only limited research focused on the assumption of leader stress and affective well-being. At the workplace, stress is an unpleasant state that can lead to a long-term influence, whereby it can produce a negative impact on health, performances and productivity. Chen and Silverthorne (2005) have found that the leadership style, on-the-job performance, satisfaction, stress, and turnover intention are related. Therefore, this research looked into the three most common leadership styles, namely, autocratic, democratic and transformational that affect the employee stress level at workplace.

OBJECTIVES AND HYPOTHESES

The objectives of the study are as follows:

- i. To identify the relationship between autocratic leadership and the employee stress level at workplace.
- ii. To identify the relationship between democratic leadership and the employee stress level at workplace.
- iii. To identify the relationship between transformational leadership and the employee stress level at workplace.

The research hypotheses are as follows:

- H₀1** There is no relationship between autocratic leadership and the employee stress level at workplace.
- H₀2** There is no relationship between democratic leadership and the employee stress level at workplace.
- H₀3** There is no relationship between transformational leadership and the employee stress level at workplace.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Any leader needs to be aware that there are many ways to lead people, so they must adapt their leadership style to the current situation they are facing (Casse & Claudel, 2011). A good and successful leader does not have to be intelligent and well-educated, as long as they need to understand people on how they feel, their thought and their concerns (Darling & Heller, 2011). Naile and Selesho (2014) stated that a leader has the power to affect others and would not essentially be a manager; it can be another person who can have leadership ability and also can be a manager. Leadership may be viewed as a key resource for building and maintaining teams of employees in the organization through developing employee skills (Johansson, 2004). Moreover, according to Mendez, Munoz, and Munoz (2013), a leader can be determined by a person who has a group of people and those people on whom he or she applies his or her power are identified as subordinate in order to achieve the desired objectives. Bhatti, Maitlo, Shaikh, Hashmi, and Shaikh (2012) stated that a leader is a mentor, coach, communicator, co-ordinator, and listener. The leader's behaviour and personality have a significant effect on the way they think, feel and respond to people in their surroundings (Alkahtani, Abu-Jarad, Sulaiman, & Nikbin, 2011). When the leader consults with the employee and considers their opinions before making decisions, it can enhance the employees' ability to deal with emotional exhaustion (Mulki, Jaramillo, & Locander, 2006). Leadership can be representing as a person that influences employees and enhances employee performance (Che Ngah, Fazli Musa, Noreen Rosli, Norisaifulrudin, Mohd, Ariffin, & Krishnan, 2013). Leadership style can essentially be either stressful or positive for employees, and as