The Relationship Between Transformational, Transactional Leadership Style and Organizational Commitment in GLCs in Kuching, Sarawak: Mediating Role of Followership Dimensions

Joleen Vicky Anak Keron

Master of Science (Human Resource Development)
2015
The Relationship Between Transformational, Transactional Leadership Style and Organizational Commitment in GLCs in Kuching, Sarawak: Mediating Role of Followership Dimensions

JOLEEN VICKY ANAK KERON

This project is submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the Master of Science (Human Resource Development)

Faculty of Cognitive Sciences and Human Development
UNIVERSITI MALAYSIA SARAWAK (2015)
DECLARATION OF ORIGINAL WORK

This declaration is made on the .............day of............2015.

Student’s Declaration:

I ........................................................................................................................................
(Please indicate student’s name, matric no. and faculty) hereby declare that the
work entitled, .........................................................................................................................
is my original work. I have not copied from any other students’ work or from any other sources except where due
reference or acknowledgement is made explicitly in the text, nor has any part been written for me by
another person.

Date submitted __________________________ Name of the student (matric no.)

Supervisor’s Declaration:

I ........................................................................................................................................
(Supervisor’s name) hereby certifies that the
work entitled, .........................................................................................................................
(TITLE) was prepared by the above named student, and was submitted to the “FACULTY” as a *
partial/full fulfillment for the conferment of .................................................................
(Please indicate the degree), and the aforementioned work, to the best of my knowledge, is
the said student’s work

Received for examination by: __________________________ Date:____________________
(Name of the supervisor)
I declare this Project/Thesis is classified as (Please tick (√)):

☐ CONFIDENTIAL  (Contains confidential information under the Official Secret Act 1972)*
☐ RESTRICTED    (Contains restricted information as specified by the organisation where research was done)*
☐ OPEN ACCESS

Validation of Project/Thesis

I therefore duly affirmed with free consent and willingness declared that this said Project/Thesis shall be placed officially in the Centre for Academic Information Services with the abide interest and rights as follows:

- This Project/Thesis is the sole legal property of Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS).
- The Centre for Academic Information Services has the lawful right to make copies for the purpose of academic and research only and not for other purpose.
- The Centre for Academic Information Services has the lawful right to digitise the content to for the Local Content Database.
- The Centre for Academic Information Services has the lawful right to make copies of the Project/Thesis for academic exchange between Higher Learning Institute.
- No dispute or any claim shall arise from the student itself neither third party on this Project/Thesis once it becomes sole property of UNIMAS.
- This Project/Thesis or any material, data and information related to it shall not be distributed, published or disclosed to any party by the student except with UNIMAS permission.

Student's signature ______________________  Supervisor's signature: ______________________
(Date)                                           (Date)

Current Address:
________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________________

Notes: * If the Project/Thesis is CONFIDENTIAL or RESTRICTED, please attach together as annexure a letter from the organisation with the period and reasons of confidentiality and restriction.

[The instrument was duly prepared by The Centre for Academic Information Services]
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to all the individuals and organizations which has provided their assistance, guidance, and support during the process of completing this dissertation.

First and foremost, I would like to extend my deepest appreciation and gratitude to my research supervisor, Dr. Abdul Halim Busari who had rendered his assistance, guidance, invaluable advice, and support throughout this study. My sincere appreciation and gratitude also goes to the internal examiner of this research, Dr. Surena Sabil, for her time and constructive advices as well as suggestions in improvising this dissertation.

I would also like to thank all of the lecturers and staffs from Faculty of Cognitive Sciences and Human Development (FCSHD), Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS) for their help, support, and sharing of their invaluable experience.

My special appreciation also goes to the staffs of the studied organization for their precious time in responding to the questionnaires of this research.

Finally, I wish to dedicate my heartfelt thoughts and love to my family members and friends for their support and understanding throughout the completion of this dissertation.

May God bless all of you.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acknowledgements</th>
<th>i</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Table of Contents</td>
<td>ii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List of Tables</td>
<td>vi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List of Figures</td>
<td>ix</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abstract</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Abstrak</em></td>
<td>xi</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION 1-47

1.0 Introduction of the Chapter 1
1.1 Introduction of the Study 2
1.2 Background of the Study 5
   1.2.1 Background of Government-Linked Companies (GLCs) 10
   1.2.2 Leadership in Government-Linked Companies (GLCs) 13
   1.2.3 Issues in Government-Linked Companies (GLCs) 14
1.3 Problem Statement 16
1.4 Research Aims and Objectives 23
1.5 Research Hypotheses 26
1.6 Conceptual Framework 28
1.7 Definition of Term 30
   1.7.1 Leadership 30
   1.7.2 Transformational Leadership 30
   1.7.3 Idealized Influence 31
   1.7.4 Individualized Consideration 32
   1.7.5 Inspirational Motivation 33
   1.7.6 Intellectual Stimulation 33
   1.7.7 Transactional Leadership 34
   1.7.8 Contingent Reward 34
   1.7.9 Management-By-Exception 35
   1.7.10 Organizational Commitment 36
   1.7.11 Affective Commitment 36
   1.7.12 Continuance Commitment 37
   1.7.13 Normative Commitment 37
   1.7.14 Followership 38
   1.7.15 Active Engagement 39
   1.7.16 Independent, Critical Thinking 40
1.8 Significance of the Study 41
1.9 Limitations of the Study 44
1.10 Summary of the Chapter 46
## CHAPTER 2  LITERATURE REVIEW

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>Introduction of the Chapter</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>Concept of Leadership</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>Emergence of Leadership Theory</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2.1</td>
<td>Trait Theory</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2.2</td>
<td>Contingency Theory</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2.3</td>
<td>Situational Leadership Theory</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2.4</td>
<td>Full Range Leadership Model</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2.5</td>
<td>Transformational Leadership Theory</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2.6</td>
<td>Transactional Leadership Theory</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>Concept of Organizational Commitment</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>Concept of Followership</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>Emergence of Followership Model</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.5.1</td>
<td>Zaleznik’s (1965) Followership Model</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.5.2</td>
<td>Chaleff Followership Model</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.5.3</td>
<td>Kellerman Followership Model</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.5.4</td>
<td>Kelley Followership Model</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.6.0</td>
<td>Relationship between Leadership Styles and Organizational Commitment</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.6.1</td>
<td>Relationship between Leadership Styles and Followership Dimensions</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.6.2</td>
<td>Relationship between Followership Dimensions and Organizational</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Commitment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.6.3</td>
<td>Mediating Role of Followership Dimensions</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>Summary of the Chapter</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## CHAPTER 3  RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>Introduction of the Chapter</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>Research Design</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>Research Location, Population, and Sample</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>Research Instrument</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3.1</td>
<td>Designation of Questionnaire</td>
<td>107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>Ethical Consideration</td>
<td>109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>Pilot Test</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.5.1</td>
<td>Reliability Analysis</td>
<td>111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.5.2</td>
<td>Reliability of the Research Instrument</td>
<td>111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>Data Collection Method and Procedures</td>
<td>112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>Data Analysis Procedure</td>
<td>117</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER 4 ANALYSIS, FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION 123- 209

4.0 Introduction of the Chapter 123
4.1 Summary of Respondents’ Profile 124
4.2 Normality Test 126
4.3 Reliability Analysis 129
4.4 Validity Analysis 140
4.5 Descriptive Analysis 156
  4.5.1 Mean and Standard Deviation of Leadership Styles 156
  4.5.2 Mean and Standard Deviation of Transformational Leadership Factors 158
  4.5.3 Mean and Standard Deviation of Transactional Leadership Factors 160
  4.5.4 Mean and Standard Deviation of Organizational Commitment 162
  4.5.5 Mean and Standard Deviation of Dimensions of Organizational Commitment 163
  4.5.6 Mean and Standard Deviation of Followership Dimensions 164
  4.5.7 Mean and Standard Deviation of Components of Followership Dimensions 165
4.6 Results and Discussion of Hypotheses Testing 167
  4.6.1 Results of Hypothesis Ha1 168
  4.6.2 Discussion of Results for Hypothesis Ha1 169
  4.6.3 Results of Hypothesis Ha2 173
  4.6.4 Discussion of Results for Hypothesis Ha2 174
  4.6.5 Results of Hypotheses Ha3 and Ha4 180
  4.6.6 Discussion of Results for Hypotheses Ha3 and Ha4 182
  4.6.7 Results of Hypotheses Ha5 and Ha6 184
  4.6.8 Discussion of Results for Hypotheses Ha5 and Ha6 185
  4.6.9 Results of Hypotheses Ha7 and Ha8 187
  4.6.10 Discussion of Results for Hypotheses Ha7 and Ha8 188
  4.6.11 Results of Hypothesis Ha9 192
  4.6.12 Results of Hypothesis Ha10 194
  4.6.13 Results of Hypothesis Ha11 197
  4.6.14 Results of Hypothesis Ha12 199
  4.6.15 Discussion of Results for Hypotheses Ha9 to Ha12 201
4.7 Summary of the Chapter 208
CHAPTER 5  SUMMARY, RECOMMENDATION AND CONCLUSION 210-232

5.0  Introduction of the Chapter  211
5.1  Summary of the Study  212
5.2  Summary of Research Findings  215
5.3  Contributions of the Study  224
  5.3.1  Contribution to the Literature  224
  5.3.2  Contribution to the Practitioners and Leaders  226
  5.3.3  Contribution to the Research Methodology  228
5.4  Limitations and Recommendations of the Study  229
5.5  Summary of the Chapter  232

REFERENCES  233

APPENDICES  261-296
Appendix A  Consent Letter  261
Appendix B  Research Questionnaire  262
Appendix C  Reliability Analysis for Pilot Test  270
Appendix D  Normality of Data  271
Appendix E  Reliability Analysis for Actual Test  274
Appendix F  Factor Analysis  285
Appendix G  Results of Hypotheses  292
LIST OF TABLES

Table 2.0
Main Leadership Traits and Skills Identified by Stogdill in 1974 52

Table 2.1
Summary of Components within Transformational Leadership 62

Table 2.2
Summary of Components within Transactional Leadership 65

Table 2.3
Summary of Followership Style Based on Axes of Followership Dimensions and Characteristics 77

Table 2.4
Summary of Studies Conducted on Leadership Styles and Organizational Commitment 85

Table 2.5
Summary of Studies Conducted on Leadership Styles and Followership Dimensions 91

Table 2.6
Summary of Studies Conducted on Followership Dimensions and Organizational Commitment 95

Table 2.7
Summary of Studies Conducted on Mediating Variables in the Relationship between Leadership Styles and Organizational Commitment 97

Table 3.0
Summary of Research Instrument 108

Table 3.1
Summary of Reliability Results of Research Instrument 112

Table 3.2
Summary of Statistical Test for the Study 121

Table 4.0
Summary of Respondents’ Profile 124

Table 4.1
Summary of Results of Normality Test 128

Table 4.2.0
Reliability Analysis of Transformational Leadership Style 132

Table 4.2.1
Reliability Analysis of Transactional Leadership Style 135

Table 4.2.2
Reliability Analysis of Organizational Commitment 136
Table 4.2.3
Reliability Analysis of Followership Dimensions

Table 4.3.0
Goodness of Data for Transformational Leadership Style

Table 4.3.1
PCA of Transformational Leadership Style (Rotation Method: Varimax)

Table 4.3.2
Goodness of Data for Transactional Leadership Style

Table 4.3.3
PCA of Transactional Leadership Style (Rotation Method: Varimax)

Table 4.3.4
Goodness of Data for Organizational Commitment

Table 4.3.5
PCA of Organizational Commitment (Rotation Method: Varimax)

Table 4.3.6
Goodness of Data for Followership Dimensions

Table 4.3.7
PCA of Followership Dimensions (Rotation Method: Varimax)

Table 4.4.0
Mean and Standard Deviation of Leadership Style

Table 4.4.1
Mean and Standard Deviation of Transformational Leadership Factors

Table 4.4.2
Mean and Standard Deviation of Transactional Leadership Factors

Table 4.4.3
Mean and Standard Deviation of Organizational Commitment

Table 4.4.4
Mean and Standard Deviation of Dimensions of Organizational Commitment

Table 4.4.5
Mean and Standard Deviation of Followership Dimensions

Table 4.4.6
Mean and Standard Deviation of Components of Followership Dimensions

Table 4.5.0
Relationship between Transformational Leadership Style and Organizational Commitment

Table 4.5.1
Relationship between Transactional Leadership Style and Organizational Commitment
Table 4.5.2
Relationship between Transformational Leadership Style and Active Engagement 180

Table 4.5.3
Relationship between Transformational Leadership Style and Independent, Critical Thinking 181

Table 4.5.4
Relationship between Transactional Leadership Style and Active Engagement 184

Table 4.5.5
Relationship between Transactional Leadership Style and Independent, Critical Thinking 185

Table 4.5.6
Relationship between Active Engagement and Organizational Commitment 187

Table 4.5.7
Relationship between Independent, Critical Thinking and Organizational Commitment 188

Table 4.5.8
Results of Multiple Regression Analysis with Active Engagement as a Mediator in the Relationship between Transformational Leadership Style and Organizational Commitment 192

Table 4.5.9
Results of Multiple Regression Analysis with Independent, Critical Thinking as a Mediator in the Relationship between Transformational Leadership Style and Organizational Commitment 194

Table 4.5.10
Results of Multiple Regression Analysis with Active Engagement as a Mediator in the Relationship between Transactional Leadership Style and Organizational Commitment 197

Table 4.5.11
Results of Multiple Regression Analysis with Independent, Critical Thinking as a Mediator in the Relationship between Transactional Leadership Style and Organizational Commitment 199

Table 5.0
Summary of Research Findings 222
# LIST OF FIGURES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure 1.0</th>
<th>Thesis Topic Chain</th>
<th>1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Figure 1.1</td>
<td>Conceptual Framework</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 2.0</td>
<td>Thesis Topic Chain</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 3.0</td>
<td>Thesis Topic Chain</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 3.1</td>
<td>Summary of Data Collection and Data Analysis Process</td>
<td>116</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 4.0</td>
<td>Thesis Topic Chain</td>
<td>123</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 5.0</td>
<td>Thesis Topic Chain</td>
<td>210</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ABSTRACT

The Relationship Between Transformational, Transactional Leadership Style and Organizational Commitment in GLCs in Kuching Sarawak: Mediating Role of Followership Dimensions.

The objectives of conducting this research were to identify the relationship between leadership styles, followership dimensions, and organizational commitment. Besides, this study was also conducted to identify the mediating role of followership dimensions in the relationship between leadership styles and organizational commitment. The leadership styles included in this study are transformational leadership style and transactional leadership style while followership dimensions include active engagement and independent, critical thinking. Among the research needs that solidified the importance of carrying out this research were the need to gain deeper understanding on the subject of leadership and commitment among Malaysian workforce. This is due to the lack of past researches conducted on these subjects within Malaysia context. Besides, followership dimensions were included as a mediator to enhance the understanding on the underlying mechanism and processes in the relationship between leadership style and organizational commitment especially in Malaysia workforce. The research sample of this study were employees from the 33 branches of GLCs in Kuching that participated in this study. This study focused on the followers’ perception on the leadership style exhibited by their leaders, their self-assessed followership dimension, and organizational commitment. The data for this research was obtained through 402 completed questionnaires gathered from the research participants. The analysis conducted confirms that leadership styles correlates with organizational commitment as well as with followership dimensions. The analysis also confirms that followership dimensions correlates with organizational commitment. In regards to the mediating role of followership dimensions, the analysis found that followership dimensions does act as a mediator in the relationship between leadership styles and organizational commitment. The findings of this research are with hope able to contribute to the understanding on the subject of leadership, followership, and organizational commitment in Malaysia.
ABSTRAK


Chapter 1: Introduction

1.0 Introduction of the Chapter

Chapter 1 of this research provides an introduction of the research topic and the variables that were included in this study. Furthermore, the background of this study and statement of problem which led to the need of conducting this research were also included in this particular chapter. This chapter also comprised of the conceptual framework, research objectives, research hypotheses, key definitions, and limitations of this study.

Figure 1.0. Thesis Topic Chain
1.1 Introduction of the Study

Leaders play a variety of significant roles in an organization. One of the crucial roles that can be assumed by leaders is to instil and develop employees’ commitment towards the organization. To instil and further develop employees’ commitment towards the organization, one of the essential determinants is the characteristics or styles exhibited by leaders in their interaction with their followers.

The leadership styles explored in this study are namely transformational leadership style and transactional leadership style of the full range leadership model. Full range leadership model consist of three leadership styles including transformational leadership style, transactional leadership style, and laissez-faire leadership style, however, laissez-faire leadership style were excluded from this particular study. The exclusion of laissez-faire leadership style was due to this leadership style being considered as an absence of leadership by researchers such as Bass and Avolio (1990c) and Northouse (2004).

Although laissez-faire leadership style is considered as an absence of leadership, transformational leadership style on the other hand is considered as a leadership style that is more suitable in current business environment where changes occur rapidly, while, transactional leadership style is regarded as a traditional approach of leadership. With transformational leadership style being regarded as more suitable for current business environment while transactional
leadership style is regarded as traditional approach of leadership, the exploration on the relationship of these leadership styles and followers’ organizational commitment in Malaysia will provide further understanding on the relationship between these variables especially in the context of Malaysian workforce.

Another variable of this study was organizational commitment which has received much attention as it is believed to be positively related to employees’ performance (Riketta, 2002). Meyer and Allen (1997) asserted that organizational commitment is not an out-dated construct or irrelevant domain of study, because, regardless of their form or structure, organizations are not disappearing. Despite the fact that organizations may become leaner and organizational models may be changing, organizations must still retain a core of committed employees for the advancement of the organization. Organizational commitment that is the interest of this study consists of three dimensions namely affective commitment, continuance commitment, and normative commitment. In this particular study, organizational commitment was examined as a whole by combining all three components of the organizational commitment rather than examine the components of commitment separately.

Besides full range leadership model and organizational commitment, followership dimensions were also included in this study as mediating variables. The followership dimensions included in this study was based on Kelley’s (1992) followership model which consists of independent, critical thinking (ICT) and active engagement (AE). According to Bjugstad, Thach, Thompson, and Morris (2006), misconception that leadership is more important than followership had led
to scarce research conducted on followership. With the limitation of literature available on followership, this hence garners the need to conduct this study to further enrich the significantly little literature on followership. Moreover, the need to explore on followership dimensions as a mediator in the relationship between leadership styles and organizational commitment emerge as researchers suggested that underlying mechanism and processes in the relationship between transformational leadership and organizational commitment are still not being completely understood (Bo, 2011).

To conclude, this study is with hope able to contribute to the existing body of knowledge as it explores the relationship between the leadership styles of transformational and transactional leadership with followers’ organizational commitment. This study also identifies the correlation between leadership styles (transformational and transactional leadership) and followership dimensions of the followers including the dimension of active engagement and independent, critical thinking. The relationship between followership dimensions (active engagement and independent, critical thinking) and organizational commitment was also examined in this study. Moreover, the role of followership dimensions (active engagement and independent, critical thinking) as a mediator in the relationship between leaders’ leadership styles (transformational leadership style and transactional leadership style) as perceived by the followers and organizational commitment of the followers were also explored in this particular study.
1.2 Background of Study

Leadership studies had drawn the attention of various parties including scholars, management, and human resource practitioners. Humphreys (2001) revealed that although leadership is one of the most studied subject, it remain as the least understood topic. Therefore, the need to conduct studies on leadership has gained heightening interest from researchers, scholars, and practitioners to acquire more in depth knowledge on the topic.

Besides leadership studies, organizational commitment has also been gaining much interest from researchers and practitioners. The interest on organizational commitment may be explained by the advantages of having committed workforce within the organization. Among the advantages of having committed employees as described by Fugate, Kinicki, and Ashforth (2004) as well as Harter, Schmidt, Kilham, and Agrawal (2009) is that committed employees can lead to decrease turnover rate, create greater productivity, and provide long term strategic advantage. This is in line with Rogers (2001) who suggested that committed employees tend to generate high performance business outcome, improved productivity, and profitability. Furthermore, the training provided to the employees as well as the experience, knowledge, and networking that employees acquired during their tenure with the organization will mould the employees to be valuable assets to the organization. Therefore, losing these valuable employees to other competitors will result in great cost. Additionally, committed employees are also sought about by organizations nowadays as they
are more willing to provide extra effort in assisting the progression of the organization.

With the realization on the importance of employees as valuable assets for an organization, the subject of commitment hence became a trending topic among researchers to study on factors that will develop commitment among employees. Moreover, with the current competitive business environment, it is essential to cultivate and retain commitment among employees in order to ensure the continuous development of the organization. Pertaining to the past studies conducted on commitment, the findings show that employees’ commitment had been associated with wide range of outcomes such as job satisfaction, motivation, attendance, job performance, organizational citizenship behaviour, and willingness to exert more effort for the organization (e.g., Bennett & Durkin, 2000; Jaramillo, Mulki, & Marshall, 2005; Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001). Besides, Mahdi, Mohd, and Almsafir (2013) stated that organizational commitment is indicated as one of the strong determinant of success towards employees to ensure better performance of the organization as highlighted by past literature (Chew & Chan, 2008; Das, 2002). Therefore, these past literature highlighted the positive outcomes that can be generated from committed workforce and thus reinforce the need to cultivate and retain committed employees in an organization.

On the other hand, according to Meyer and Botha (2000), full range leadership model is a strategic organization development intervention which is able to boost the influence of leadership on followers’ commitment. Leaders’ dependency on their followers to execute strategic planning and to carry out most
organizational task justified the need to ensure that employees are committed to the organization and is willing to exert effort in achieving organization’s success. Past researchers such as Avolio, Zhu, Koh, and Bhatia (2004), Mowday, Porter, and Steers (1982) as well as Ramachandran and Krishnan (2009) revealed that one of the most important determinants of employees’ commitment is the style of a leader which encourages followers to think critically and innovatively. This implies that employees’ preference towards a certain type of leadership is able to instil and further enhance their commitment toward the organization. As the two leadership styles within this study have distinctive characteristics, it is essential to investigate on followers’ preference of leadership style that would induce their commitment towards the organization.

With research on leadership styles and commitment gaining heightening attention from researchers in the past years, this had contributed to the large amount of researches conducted on the subject of leadership and commitment (e.g., Alyn, 2010; Hayward, Goss, & Tolmay, 2004; Pillai & Williams, 2004; Walumbwa & Lawler, 2003). However, as most of these researches were conducted in the Western setting, this hence raises doubt on the generalizability of these past findings in the setting of Malaysia. Although there were few studies conducted in the Asian countries such as Singapore, Thailand, and Taiwan (e.g., Chi, Tsai, & Chang, 2007; Lee, 2005; Limsila & Ogunlana, 2007; Yeh & Hong, 2012), there were still limited studies conducted in Malaysia, especially in Government-linked companies (GLCs) in Malaysia.
Additionally, while past studies on leadership styles had been focusing on transformational leadership style, it can be observed that transactional leadership style had less likely been the focus of leadership studies. There are evidently less studies conducted to explore on transactional leadership style as compared to transformational leadership style. This therefore raises the need to explore on transactional leadership style in the leadership studies.

The advent of information age and dramatic changes in workplace has made the subject of followership to become increasingly crucial to be studied (Bjugstad, Thach, Thompson, & Morris, 2006). Despite that, the subject of followership still remains understudied as compared to studies conducted on leadership. Past researches on followership had explored the relationship between followership and variables such as organizational commitment, increased job satisfaction, and decreased turnover (e.g., Blanchard, Welbourne, Gilmore, & Bullock, 2009; Salanova, Lorens, Cifre, Martinez, & Schaufeli, 2003; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004; Schaufeli, Martinez, Marqués-Pinto, Salanova, & Bakker, 2002). Although there had been studies on followership, it is still significantly little as compared to leadership studies. Moreover, most of these past studies were conducted in the Western setting thus raises the issue of generalizability of these previous findings in the context of Malaysian setting. Therefore, followership which had always been the understudied topic is included as both the dependent and mediating variable for this study.
The addition of followership dimensions as mediating variable is to address the need to understand the underlying mechanism which influences the relationship between leadership and commitment. This research needs arise as Bo (2011) stated that the underlying mechanism and processes in the relationship between transformational leadership and organizational commitment are still not being completely understood. Therefore, despite the extensive researches conducted on the subject of leadership and organizational commitment, there is a necessity to explore on the underlying mechanism and processes in regards to the relationship between leadership styles and organizational commitment.

For that purpose, this current study examined the role of followership dimensions as a mediator in the relationship between leadership styles of leaders and followers’ organizational commitment. The results of this study will be able to reveal the mediating role of followership dimensions (active engagement and independent, critical thinking) in the relationship between leadership styles (transformational leadership style and transactional leadership style) and organizational commitment. Furthermore, this can add to another important variable to the current leadership study as well as contribute to the understanding of the mechanism that underlies in the relationship of leadership styles and commitment. This will also be able to contribute to the scarce empirical evidence of followership study.