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**LEADERSHIP STYLES AND WORK-RELATED ATTITUDES  
AMONG SOCIAL SERVICES EMPLOYEES IN PENANG**

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***Abstract***

This study intends to unearth the relationships and the impacts between leadership styles and work-related attitudes among the social services employees in Penang. The leadership styles have been identified as a major factor in determining the success or failure of organizations. This also has been associated with the behavior of the leaders in manning the employees toward the organizations' vision, mission, and goals. Moreover, the leadership styles had been associated with the employees' performance. In this context, the employees' work-related attitudes, namely job satisfaction, career satisfaction, and organizational commitment. The employees of social services department had been identified for this study. They were given a self-administered questionnaire in getting their insight on their work-related attitude concerning the leadership styles of their superiors. Thus, the study employed the study tools of Leadership Development Behavior Questionnaire (Form XII), job satisfaction, career satisfaction, and organizational commitment. This study discovered the implications between leaders' leadership styles on employees' work-related attitudes.

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## 1. Introduction

Organizations are a combination of resources, such as employees, physical, information, and money. In this context, leadership is needed to control these resources in organizations that lead to their vision and mission. Leaders are required to have knowledge, abilities, and skills in various aspects of their interpersonal relationships, namely communication, motivation, and group dynamics (Nasurdin, Osman, & Ahmad, 2006). Moreover, leaders are required to have the characteristics of leadership to lead and guide their employees toward achieving the organization's vision, mission, and goals. Thus, the leaders need to establish a direction of the organization that coordinates their employees through communication and inspire their workers.

Job satisfaction refers to an individual's good feeling and positive affection toward their job (Noordin & Jusoff, 2009). Job satisfaction affects an employee's feel positively or negatively about his or her job. Oswald, Hossholder, and Harris (1994) stated that job satisfaction includes enhanced self-esteem, feelings of control, responsibility, task identity and task meaningfulness among employees. Moreover, Alas and Edwards (2011) stated job satisfaction as affective and a pleasurable emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's work. Interestingly, another view on job satisfaction, it can be achieved through mentally challenging work, equitable rewards, a supportive working environment and helpful colleagues (Armentor & Forsyth, 1995). Thus, job satisfaction concludes on one's good and great feeling toward their job.

Career satisfaction as the overall affective reaction of individuals to their career (Greenhaus, Parasuraman, & Wormley, 1990). This notion is supported by Butler (1996) and Kerr (1996) where a satisfied person is more likely to provide high levels of service to their customers and more likely to remain with the organization, thus reducing staff turnover. Moreover, organizations must understand the relationships between leaders' internal desires, the environment fostered by the organization, and career satisfaction (Jiang & Klein, 1999). Kubicek (2004) looks at the relationship between mentoring and career success. He finds that leaders who have been mentors achieve more promotions, more salary increases and more career satisfaction.

Organizational commitment is defined as a relative strength of an individual in measuring the level of his involvement in the organization (Mowday, Porter, & Steers, 1982). Moreover, organizational commitment is commonly conceptualized as an affective attachment to an organization characterized by shared values, a desire to remain in the organization, an action characterized by shared values, a desire to remain in the organization, and a willingness to exert effort on its behalf (Mowday, Steers, & Porter, 1979; Allen & Meyer, 1990). Furthermore, organizational commitment is seen to the degree of attachment and loyalty felt by individual employees to their organization (Mowday et al., 1979; Alas & Edwards, 2005).

Transactional leadership style is a demanding commitment of workers and promises a reward or recompense exchange and would take stern action if the employee's performance is unsatisfactory in achieving the goal. Bass (1990) also divides this transactional leadership style of management by exception and reward contingent. The leadership style of management style for an exemption according to explain the kind of punishment that would be received if the organization fails to meet the standards that have been agreed upon. Contingent reward leadership is to set and clarify what should be achieved, how to implement it and what kind of reward that would be acceptable if the objective is achieved. This indicates these leaders

meet the needs of subordinates through extrinsic rewards. This type of leadership style practice of giving rewards and punishments based on job performance.

Organizations that have transformational leaders will be very effective as the leaders are constantly open toward motivating and encouraging their employees to be more enthusiastic and promote them to accomplish each task assigned creatively. Furthermore, Burns (1978) introduced the concept of transformational leadership style as a process in which leaders and workers are interdependent to improve the morale and motivation to a higher level. He also said that transformational leaders are individuals who are ideal and have high moral values, especially in the aspect of justice and equality. Den Hartog, Van Muijen, and Koopman (1997) argued that transformational leadership is a form of inspiring leadership among his followers to carry out something beyond his ability and the ability of the ordinary. Transformational leadership style was also able to expand and increase the desire to learn or care, generate awareness and acceptance among employees of the vision and goals of the organization (Yammarino, Spangler, & Bass, 1993). Transformational leaders inspire followers to overcome their self-interest for the good of the organization.

## **2. Problem Statement**

Problems would arise due to leaders' lack of communication in conveying the organizations' mission and vision to their employees. Leaders are required to be efficient and effective in their communications with employees. Thus, lack of proper communication would lead to misunderstanding and misconception among employees in organizations. Therefore, this would further lead to the employees' performance, namely their work-related attitudes that comprised of job satisfaction, career satisfaction, and organizational commitment. Conversely, leaders would be seen as having an effective and efficient or ineffective and inefficient leadership styles among their employees. In this era, leaders should have good and acceptable leadership styles in the perception of their employees as this would affect their employees' performance. In an isolated situation, leaders could not accept the opinions and views of their employees. Moreover, the employees are required to carry out their duties according to the leaders' instructions. There were cases where leaders acted on their emotions towards their employees. These situations had affected the employees' work-related attitudes such as job satisfaction, career satisfaction, and organizational commitment.

## **3. Research Questions**

The research question of this study are as below:

1. What is the relationship between leadership styles and work-related attitudes, namely job satisfaction, career satisfaction, and organizational commitment among social services employees in Penang?

2. What is the impact of leadership styles and work-related attitude, namely job satisfaction, career satisfaction, and organizational commitment among social services employees in Penang

#### 4. Purpose of the Study

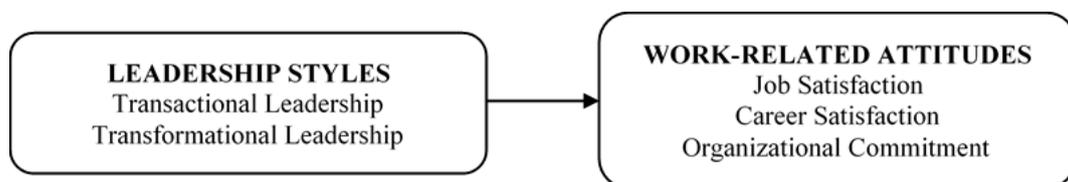
This study intends to review the perspectives on leadership styles and work-related attitudes among the social services employees in Penang. Specifically, the objectives of the paper are to determine the relationship between leadership styles and work-related attitudes; and understand the impact of leadership styles on work-related attitudes among social services employees.

#### 5. Research Methods

The population consisted of civil servants in the state social services department amounted to a total of 80 people. Thirty-four employees had participated and returned the completed self-administered questionnaire from two units of the department. The state social services department had been established to oversee the wellbeing, provide protection, and recovery to the target group of the department, developing communities through behavioural changes, increased capacity for self-reliance, and improve the welfare of the community through welfare services and social development. Moreover, the state social services office monitors five district offices in various locations throughout the state. The self-administered questionnaires were distributed among employees at the state social services department. The questionnaires were collected in the subsequent day after the distribution.

The questionnaire was divided into 4 sections, namely Section A that seeks demographic information, Section B that seeks leadership, Section C that seeks job satisfaction, Section D that seeks career satisfaction, and Section E that seeks organizational commitment. Moreover, the leadership questions were based on the Leadership Behavior Development Questionnaire-Form XII (LBDQ-XII) by Stogdill (1963). On the other hand, the work-related attitudes, namely job satisfaction was based on Weiss, Dawis, England, and Lofquist (1967), career satisfaction was based on Greenhaus et al. (1990), and organizational commitment was based on Mowday et al. (1979).

In this paper, a model framework was constructed to study the relationship between leadership and attitude towards work. These models focus on the relationship between leadership and job satisfaction, leadership and career satisfaction and organizational commitment, and leadership relationship. Leadership characteristics used to measure the motivation and commitment of employees in the organization studied. Figure 1 depicts the paper's framework.



**Figure 01.** Study's Framework

The hypothesis of the study's framework are as follows:

H1: Leadership styles have a significant relationship with work-related attitudes.

H2: Leadership styles have a significant relationship with job satisfaction.

H3: Leadership styles have a significant relationship with career satisfaction.

H4: Leadership styles have a significant relationship with organizational commitment

## 6. Findings

Demographic analyses were done on gender, ethnicity, age, and working experience as depicted in Table 1. The social services department's employees were considered almost equal between male and female employees. There were 18 female employees (52.94%) as compared to male (n=16, 47.06%). Moreover, the majority of the employees were Malays (n=33, 97.06%) as compared to other ethnics. Age-wise, 18 employees (52.94%) were between 23 to 36 years old. This is followed by 14 employees (41.18%) were between 37 to 52 years old. Finally, two employees were less than 23 years old (n=1, 2.94%) and more than 52 years old (n=1, 2.94%), respectively. Majority of the employees had work experience between 11 to 15 years (n=15, 44.12%). Eleven employees (32.35%) had 5 to 10 years of work experience. This is followed by 4 employees (11.76%) who had more than 20 years of work experience, 3 employees (8.82%) with less than 5 years, and one employee (2.94%) had between 16 to 20 years.

**Table 01.** Demographic Analysis

Item	n	%
Gender		
-Female	18	52.94
-Male	16	47.06
Ethnicity		
-Malay	33	97.06
-Indian	1	2.94
Age (years old)		
- Less than 23	1	2.94
- 23 to 36	18	52.94
- 37 to 52	14	41.18
- More than 52	1	2.94
Working Experience (years)		
- Less than 5	3	8.82
- 5 to 10	11	32.35
- 11 to 15	15	44.12
- 16 to 20	1	2.94
- More than 20	4	11.76

Table 2 depicts the correlation analysis. The relationship between reward and motivation were analyzed on the employees of the state social services. In general, the relationship between leadership styles and work-related attitude of employees were moderate ( $r=0.57$ ). On the other hand, a high relationship was indicated between leadership styles and career satisfaction ( $r=0.75$ ). Unfortunately, job satisfaction and career satisfaction had no relationship with leadership styles. Thus, leadership styles played an important role and would influence the employees' work-related attitudes.

**Table 02.** Correlation Analysis

Item	1	2	3	4
1. Job Satisfaction	1			
2. Career Satisfaction	0.727*	1		
3. Organizational Commitment	0.670*	0.602*	1	
4. Leadership Styles	0.334	0.327	0.753*	1
5. Work-Related Attitudes	0.891*	0.864*	0.885*	0.566*

In Table 3, the simple regression analysis was conducted on leadership styles toward work-related attitudes. The social services department employees had the adjusted R<sup>2</sup> value showed 29.7% for the dependent variable of work-related attitudes, which was explained by the leadership styles. This means that 70.3% of the variance for work-related attitudes was explained by other unknown additional variables that have not been explored. The simple regression model (F=13.66, p<0.00) was proven to be a significant model due to the F ratio being significant in predicting work-related attitudes. Leadership styles ( $\beta=0.57$ , p<0.00) was a significant predictor of work-related attitudes for the social services department employees. Moreover, this explained that leadership styles were positively related to work-related attitudes among the social services department employees.

**Table 03.** Simple Regression between Leadership Styles toward Work-Related Attitudes

Predictors	Work-Related Attitudes	
	$\beta$	Sig.
Leadership Styles	0.566	0.001
R <sup>2</sup>	0.320	
Adj. R <sup>2</sup>	0.297	
F-Change	13.659	
Sig. F-Change	0.001	

In Table 4, the multiple regression analysis was conducted on leadership styles toward the components of work-related attitudes, namely job satisfaction, career satisfaction, and organizational commitment. The social services department employees had the adjusted R<sup>2</sup> value showed 56.7% for the organizational commitment of the work-related attitudes, which was explained by the leadership styles. This means that 43.3% of the variance for organizational commitment was explained by other unknown additional variables that have not been explored. The regression model (F=38.02, p<0.00) was proven to be a significant model due to the F ratio being significant in predicting organizational commitment. Leadership styles ( $\beta=0.75$ , p<0.00) was a significant predictor of organizational commitment for the social services department employees. Moreover, this explained that the leadership styles were positively related to organizational commitment among the social services department employees. On the other hand, the job satisfaction and career satisfaction of work-related attitudes were not significant toward leadership styles.

**Table 04.** Multiple Regression between Leadership Styles toward Job Satisfaction, Career Satisfaction, and Organizational Commitment

Predictors	Work-Related Attitudes					
	Job Satisfaction		Career Satisfaction		Organizational Commitment	
	$\beta$	Sig.	$\beta$	Sig.	$\beta$	Sig.
Leadership Styles	0.334	0.066	0.327	0.072	0.753	0.000
R <sup>2</sup>	0.112		0.107		0.567	
Adj. R <sup>2</sup>	0.081		0.076		0.552	
F-Change	3.651		3.479		38.018	
Sig. F-Change	0.066		0.072		0.000	

In summary, the hypothesis H1 is supported in explaining the social services department employees on leadership styles and work-related attitudes. Moreover, hypothesis H4 is also supported in explaining the social services department employees on their leadership styles and organizational commitment. On the other hand, hypothesis H2 and H3 are not supported. The summary of the regression is depicted in Table 5.

**Table 05.** Summary of Regression Analysis

Hypothesis		Result
H <sub>1</sub>	Leadership styles have a significant relationship with work-related attitudes	Supported
H <sub>2</sub>	Leadership styles have a significant relationship with job satisfaction	Not Supported
H <sub>3</sub>	Leadership styles have a significant relationship with career satisfaction	Not Supported
H <sub>4</sub>	Leadership styles have a significant relationship with organizational commitment	Supported

## 7. Conclusion

This paper explores the relationship between leadership styles and work-related attitudes, namely job satisfaction, career satisfaction, and organizational commitment among employees of the state social services department. Moreover, the study discovers that leadership styles have a strong relationship with work-related attitudes of the employees. This indicates that the leaders of the department need to show their strong leadership styles in the eyes and perceptions of their employees. Thus, the relationship will be translated into the employees' positiveness on their work-related attitudes, in general. Specifically, the employees' organizational commitment is influenced by the leaders' leadership styles. Furthermore, the leadership styles had an impact on the employees' work-related attitudes, namely job satisfaction, career satisfaction, and organizational commitment, in general. Moreover, specifically, leadership styles have an impact on the employees' organizational commitment.

On the other hand, the leaders' leadership styles alone are not contributing to the employees' job satisfaction and career satisfaction. This situation would be a good input to the leaders of the department to consider in ensuring their leadership styles would impact their employees' job satisfaction and career satisfaction. A good communication between the leaders and employees are needed in ensuring their employees are made known of the organization's opportunities and possible promotions. Apart, relevant programs and training would be an advantage to the department leaders in getting their employees to be a

productive employee by boosting their job satisfaction and career satisfaction. Thus, this would, in turn, give positive outputs on the organizations' services provided to the general public, specifically providing excellent services toward the state's social services.

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