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EXPLORING THE INFLUENCES OF LEADERSHIP STYLES ON EMPLOYEES' JOB SATISFACTION

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	2
LITERATURE REVIEW	3
1. Overview of leadership styles.....	3
2. Overview of employees' job satisfaction	4
3. The influences of leadership styles on employees' job satisfactions.....	5
3.1. <i>Transformational leadership style and its impact on employees' job satisfaction</i>	<i>5</i>
3.2. <i>Transactional leadership style and its impact on employees' job satisfaction</i>	<i>6</i>
3.3. <i>Passive/avoidant leadership styles and its impact on employees' job satisfaction.....</i>	<i>7</i>
3.4. <i>Summary of transformational, transactional and passive/avoidant leadership styles</i>	<i>8</i>
A DISCUSSION OF A RESEARCH STUDY.....	10
1. Overview of a specific research study.....	10
2. Research philosophy	10
3. Research approach	11
4. Research methodological choice	12
5. Research strategy.....	12
6. Time frame	13
7. Ethical considerations	13
8. Research validity	13
9. Research reliability	14
CONCLUSION.....	15
REFERENCES	15

INTRODUCTION

According to Ogbonna and Harris (2000), it is critical to manage the appropriate leadership style because leadership seems to influence not only the employees in the field of human resource management but also the effectiveness of strategies and organizational performance relating to the aspect of strategic management. In addition, human resources within an organisation play an important role as a competitive advantage which affects the success or failure of a business (Bucic et al., 2010). However, an organization often faces different human resources practices which need to be considered in order to create job satisfactions such as wages level, reward policy or working conditions, etc. Therefore, leaders and managers should pay attention to their employees and choose suitable leadership style in the workplace. Omar (2013) pointed out that employees' job satisfaction plays a crucial role and has a huge impact

In association with the increase in the interests in the contribution of leadership styles to employee satisfactions in the academic field for example Voon et al. (2011) and Emery and Barker (2007), this paper is designed to undertake the literature review of the topic "Exploring the influences of leadership styles on employee satisfactions". In particular, the relationship between different types of leadership styles, such as transformational, transactional and passive/avoidant and employee satisfactions will be presented to provide the evidences about the influences of each of leadership style. Then, an analysis of a specific research study in relation to leadership styles and staffs' job satisfaction is discussed, focusing on research philosophy, ethics, reliability and validity.

LITERATURE REVIEW

1. Overview of leadership styles

The concept of leadership style has been defined by many studies since 19th century (Bass, 1985). According to him, leader is the person who directs his subordinates and provides motivation and inspiration in workplace. Later on, Bennis and Nanus (1985) described the same concept which considered the relationship between leaders and their subordinates as an effective way for better work performance in order to achieve organisation purposes. Besides, the concept of leadership is different from management. It can be said that leaders have broader perspective comparing with managers who often deal with short-term problem.

Early concept of leadership mostly concentrated on the characteristics of successful leaders like power, behaviour and their influence (Bass, 1985) whereas current studies focused on the importance of subordinates and the relation of them to leadership. Leadership is defined as the process in which the interactions between the leaders and the followers are emphasized to indicate the followers to achieve the common goals (Northouse, 2010). This concept is considered as the important subject of the organizational behaviours, which consist of both individual and organizational interaction (Obiwuru et al., 2011). According to Belonio (2012), leadership styles is described as how a leader acts to direct and to inspire his/her employees to reach the achievement of organisational purposes. Boateng (2012) expressed the same viewpoint which defined leadership style as the way an individual leads his/her followers, makes right decisions and interacts with others within workplace. Another definition was developed by Arzi and Farahbod in 2014 that emphasized leadership style is a process in which a leader would not only guide employees but also implement strategic plans of business and encourage his/her subordinates for better work.

Besides, there are some theories underlying the leadership to demonstrate the characteristics of the leaders and their behaviours, for instance, Trait theory, Contingency and so on (Sharma and Jain, 2013). Firstly, Trait theory refers to the assumption that a leader is born, not made (Turner and Muller, 2005). It means that there are some characteristics which actually classify between leaders and non – leaders, for instance, agreeableness, conscientiousness and intellects (Horner, 1997). In contrary to Trait theory, Contingency theory emphasizes “self- leadership”, meaning that the effective leadership style is built based on situations, such as development, urgency and task (Houghton and Yoho, 2005).

In recent time, there are three popular leadership styles, known as transactional, transformational and passive/avoidant style (Boateng, 2012). Among them, the transformational leadership is viewed to be complex and highly influential in comparison with the remaining styles. Hence, under different situations, different types of leadership styles would be chosen appropriately.

2. Overview of employees' job satisfaction

Employee satisfactions are also mentioned as job satisfactions which address the positive or comfortable feelings about job experiences (Voon et al., 2011). There are various studies related to the job satisfaction from the earliest period until now. The main reason of widely studies and discussion of job satisfaction is that it influences the effectiveness of both strategies and organisation performance. Locke (1976) said that “job satisfaction is a pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from one’s job or job experiences”. Later on, other researchers such as Weiss (2002) and Armstrong (2006) expressed the similar term which stated that job satisfaction is the feelings and judgments of people toward their job or a particular aspect of the job. Besides, the definition of job satisfaction also can be attempted from an organizational perspective (Fatema, 2014). In management viewpoint, Celik (2011) provide an understanding that job satisfaction is bound to the fair behaviours of leaders.

Several scholars, from their point of view, has categorized different factors that can affect job satisfaction. It can be organizational factors, environmental factors, personal factors. While Castillo and Cano (2004) claimed there are several elements such as working conditions, supervision, policy, promotion and empowerment that affect directly on job satisfaction, some scholars argued that employees’ satisfaction are strongly influenced by personal factors. Personal factors are personal characteristics, job match and life satisfaction (Dormann and Zapf, 2001). Similarly, in 2012, Dizgah et al. also mentioned about personal factors that have great impact on employees’ satisfaction, for instance, age, gender, income and education. Overall, it can be seen that there is no single factor that can influence the overall job satisfaction of employees. Factors may work well under one specific situation but may not work in others. Moreover, in order to create job satisfaction, motivation is strongly considered. For instance, back in 1964, Vroom explained the concept of motivation to work depends on the relationship of three components. They are expectancy, instrumentality and valence. Expectancy is the belief that hard work will result in increased job performance; Instrumentality is the belief of well performance will receive valued rewards and Valence is that the individual places upon rewards.

In summary, the high level of job satisfaction can result in the high performance of an organisation. There is a high appreciation on the improvement of employee satisfaction because it helps lower turnover and increase employee productivity (Ling et al., 2011; Boateng, 2012). According to Abdullah et al. (2011), 13 variables are emphasized to measure satisfaction of the employees, concentrating on the relationships with supervisors, individual recognitions, rewards, cooperation, loyalty and trusts.

3. The influences of leadership styles on employees' job satisfactions

As mentioned above, three main leadership styles including transactional leadership style, transformational leadership styles and passive/avoidant leadership styles will be applied to discuss about the impact of different leadership styles on job satisfaction of employees within organisation.

3.1. Transformational leadership style and its impact on employees' job satisfaction

Transformational leadership style is the flexible one which connects the leaders with the followers through high levels of morality and motivations (Obiwuru et al., 2011). The style is emergent from the combination of trait and behavioural theory along with the contingency leadership theory, as specified above (Lussier and Achua, 2007). Leaders with this style expect the outcomes beyond expectations of the organisation (Boehnke et al., 2003). Hence, it concentrates on the social values and needs along with demands of the employees (Bass, 1985). It is said that transformational leadership style centered on the importance of interaction between individuals in workplace. Leaders and their followers have a common goal by sharing same desires, values and motives (Gheith, 2010). According to Bass (1985), leaders working in an organization which requires fast changing and creativity, especially in an uncertainty work environment, would prefer this style in order to increase the performance of employees, resulting in organisational effectiveness. Moreover, it is claimed that with the approach of transformational leadership style, subordinates with low motivation can become more self-monitoring as well as self-evaluate (Bass, 1999). In addition, a finding of Nemanich and Keller in 2007 showed that transformational leadership style would help leaders to continuously challenge more in workplace. Another suggestion by Goertzen (2012) is that leaders can benefit from this style to solve conflicts and concerns among followers. There are four components which illustrate transformational leadership style, including idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation as well as individualized consideration (Avolio et al., 1997; Voon et al., 2011). According to Voon et al. (2011), leaders with transformational leadership style are role models for their followers. It is argued that employees would respect and follow

their leaders by understanding and having right attitude on fulfilling work duties. In inspirational motivations, leaders attract their followers by introducing inspirational motivation. This way would make followers to follow and commit with the organization (Northouse, 2007). Transformational leaders are responsible for creating mission and vision and connecting those with employees to ensure that their employees have good conditions to conduct challenging work-related tasks. Intellectual stimulation means that leaders encourage their followers' creativity and innovation. There is a saying of Shibru and Darshan (2011) that supported for the term of intellectual stimulation, which is: "Innovation and creativity are in the heart of the intellectual simulation factor". Individualized consideration is the way leaders interact and support their followers such as understanding followers' concerns and opinion; guiding and coaching followers (Kaur, 2012).

However, this style has a few weaknesses. Transformational leaders concentrate on giving out challenges for followers to increase the performance. Staats (2015) claimed that sometimes employees do not like challenges and pressure. They may perform immoral just to reach the expectation of transformational leaders.

Overall, most studies mentioned above proved that transformational leadership style has positive influences on employees' job satisfaction as it offers clear and positive values for employees' performance, for instance, improving subordinates' satisfaction, decreasing the absenteeism and increasing satisfaction of followers with leaders.

3.2. Transactional leadership style and its impact on employees' job satisfaction

Transactional leadership style is the approach that leaders link the work performance with the benefit that employees could gain, so that employees would conduct the work task in better way (Bucic et al., 2010). In transactional leadership style, the main motivation for employees within an organisation is rewards, both intrinsic and extrinsic. In other words, employees who perform well will be rewarded whereas employees with low commitment and work performance will get punishment. Hence, it can be said that transactional leaders help their followers to recognize what works should be done to reach the outcome of work-related tasks for getting rewards and avoiding punishments.

Avolio and Bass (2004) categorized transactional behavior of a leader into two types, consisting of constructive transactions and corrective transactions. Constructive transactions focus on the team expectations and the connection between rewards and performance. Corrective transactions explained how to change behavior within workplace. It is argued that

applying both transactional behavior in the right manner would help employees understand clearly the expectations of leaders, leading to the achievement of work effectiveness.

In contrary to transformational leadership style, transactional leadership style tends to enhance the exchanges between the leaders and the followers (Sadeghi and Pihie, 2012). Rather than beyond expectations, this leadership style pursues the outcomes to meet the expectations (Boehnke et al., 2003). Also, transactional leaders do not apply motivations and morality to reach the achievements, they link performance with benefits to force the employees to perform the works better (Pedraja-Rejas et al., 2006). Hence, the most noticeable issue underlying this leadership style is taken into account as the “regulatory strategy” (McCleskey, 2014). Three dimensions are used to measure transactional leadership style, known as contingent rewards, active management by exception and passive management by exception (Sadeghi and Pihie, 2012). In contingent rewards, Bass (1985) argued that leaders and followers would exchange their ideas and skills to reach the target of the organization. Subordinates will receive contingent rewards for their high work performance. Contingent rewards can be in various types such as a verbal or written praise, a bonus payment or a job promotion. According to Voon et al. (2011), a transactional leader will act as a mentor to direct followers what things should be completed to gain rewards. Therefore, both the job satisfaction of staffs and the satisfaction with leaders are improved. Besides, management by exception is described as an approach that related to the corrective actions of leaders when problems identified (Northouse, 2007). Although leaders in both active and passive management by exception concentrate on the exceptions, there are some significant difference between those two dimensions. The active leaders will actively search for mistakes and deal with problems to prevent them. On the other hand, in the passive category, leaders only take action when problems have already occurred. Based on previous studies of different researchers discussed above, it can be said that there is a positive relationship between transaction leaders and job satisfaction of employees.

3.3.Passive/avoidant leadership styles and its impact on employees' job satisfaction

Although the term of passive/avoidant leadership style was contributed by different authors through their own words, most definitions describing the same term about this leadership style. Leaders with this style only make contribution on solving employees' enquiries as well as proving required resources for their followers when needed. They are unlikely to offer feedback for their employees (Bartol and Martin, 1994). Passive/avoidant leadership style refers to the “Abdicates responsibilities” to make decisions (Robbins, 2007). Or the leaders do not expect their behaviors to influence on the others and they show either no or little responsibilities for

managing (Belonio, 2012). It also can be seen that there is an absence of leadership within an organization (Northouse, 2007). Furthermore, Osborn et al. (2008) built upon other previous scholars' ideas that passive/avoidant leaders are people who avoid their responsibilities on controlling subordinates' work and making decision. In this category, Bass and Bass (2004) emphasized that leaders refuse participating in making decision process. Their employees are allowed to conduct the work tasks by themselves. Leaders would give out materials for employees to support work- related tasks but would not provide feedback for the performance of staffs.

While the two above leadership styles can partially reflect the impacts on motivations, this style shows very little effects (Chaudhry and Javed, 2012). There is no relationship between leaders and their followers (Northouse, 2007). Hamidifar (2010) found that leaders who apply this behavior in workplace seem to be careless of expectations and issues of others. Further, Avolio and Bass (2004) pointed out that these leaders often delay their involvement on issues until those issues become critical. On the other hand, there are also some other perspectives regarding to passive/avoidant style. One of the different viewpoint was from Goodnight in 2004. He described a passive/avoidant leader as the one who "believes in freedom of choice for the employees, leaving them alone so they can do as they want". He clarified further that employees are strongly thought of as ones who understand the job better than any other, so that there is no participation of leaders needed. Besides, Goodnight also expressed the term that some leaders may fear of losing their current job position on the next election, making them stay quiet and not use their power.

Employees need their leaders to involve in work process and to offer feedback about work performance in order to ensure the work effectiveness and to improve employees' weaknesses. However, this type of leadership style does not offer those terms above, thus leading to the dissatisfaction among employees. Overall, it is claimed that there is a negative affect of passive/avoidant leadership style on staffs' job satisfaction (Bormann and Abrahamson, 2014). On the contrary, there is an argument suggested that employees will have high responsibilities for their work since they are free to make their own decisions.

3.4. Summary of transformational, transactional and passive/avoidant leadership styles

In particular, transformational and transactional leaders have positive influence on employees' satisfaction while passive/avoidant leaders are argued to have no leadership involvement at workplace. According to their features, most researchers focused on examining the behavior of transformational and transactional leaders, but they often ignore passive/avoidant leadership

style. The main reason could be scholars believe that passive leadership is not important comparing with these two active leadership style. However, Antonakis et al. (2003) expanded the idea of active and passive leadership by expressing his opinion that passive/avoidant leadership style can be considered as an active style since leaders actively choose to not involve in the work process. Besides, in some situations, transformational leadership style is considered to have limitations as followers only follow leaders' vision (Northouse, 2007). Therefore, according to Rolfe (2011), it is necessary for organisations to ensure that its leaders have sufficient ability to lead employees.

In summary, these three leadership styles are important and they can be applied depending on the specific times. For instance, Goodnight (2004) argued that the form of passive/avoidant style could be appropriate when employees have fully experiences and skills to make their own decisions that meet requirements.

A DISCUSSION OF A RESEARCH STUDY

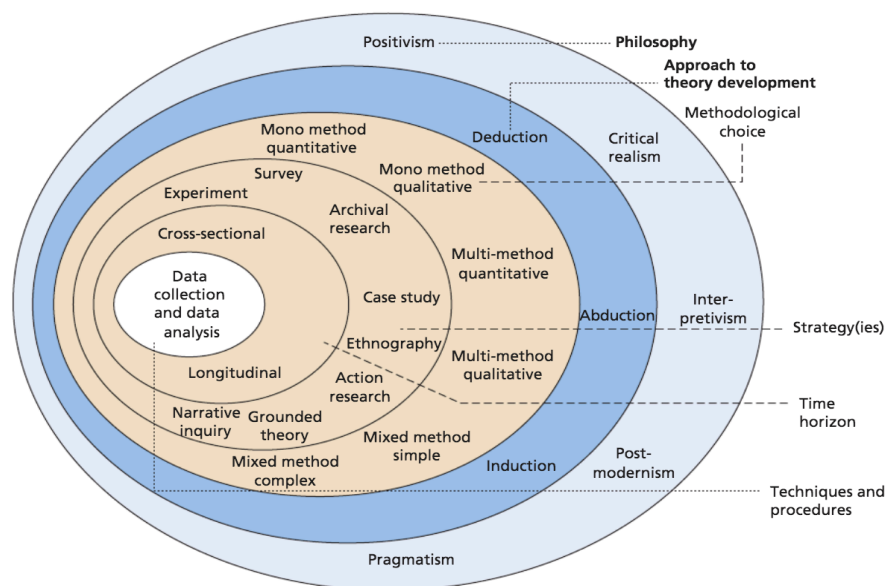
1. Overview of a specific research study

The study was developed by four scholars, namely, Voon, Lo, Ngui and Ayob. The journal was published on January 2011, examining the relationship between transactional leadership and transformational leadership style in terms of government organisations in Malaysia. Researchers built four hypothesis for testing in order to fulfill the objectives of the study.

Further, they chose quantitative method by delivering survey questionnaire for a sampling size of 300 employees working in Malaysia public sector. In this study, dependant variable was job satisfaction of staffs and independent variable was consisted of transactional and transformational leadership. Voon et. al (2011) used SPSS to analyse collected data.

In the end, the result shown that transformation leadership style approach is more suitable in public sector in Malaysia.

In order to critically analyse the mentioned research study above, it is decided to apply the “research onion” which was developed by Saunders et al. (2007).



The research onion (Saunders et al., 2007)

2. Research philosophy

Research philosophy refers to the view or perspective that the researcher decides to take into account to collect and analyze data, based on either “practical philosophy” or “theoretical philosophy” (Carr, 2006). In terms of epistemology, there are two major research philosophies, including interpretivism and positivism (Mkansi and Acheampong, 2012). While

interpretivism tends to be biased on the subjectivism and in association with this perspective, the data seem to be collected through the interaction with the others without no hypothesis or no cause and effect relevant to the research (Holden and Lynch, 2004). So, the interpretation of data is also subjective so that the generalisability is evaluated to be lower (Goldkuhl, 2012). In contrast, positivism is more effective to enhance the objectivism in both data collection and data analysis (Hunt, 1991). Two philosophies are reflected in opposing dimensions, for example, when the interpretivists use no hypothesis, no cause and effect, the positivists apply hypotheses to demonstrate their purposes and implement the study (Juma'h, 2006).

Between positivism and interpretivism, it is noted that positivism is emphasized to cover the views of the author when conducting the research. To explain, it is clearly observed that the investigator utilizes four hypotheses to relate to research topic, so, when interpretivism does not support this view, it will be underestimated. Also, the topic concentrates on the causal link between leadership styles and employee satisfactions, meaning that the cause and effect are taken into account. Moreover, the final research objective addresses the proposed strategies for the public sector organisations in Malaysia, thus, high level of generalizability is required. Based on three above points, positivism is more effective than interpretivism.

3. Research approach

In research approach, there are two dimensions emphasized, namely, between inductive and deductive one and among explanatory, exploratory and descriptive one. Regarding inductive and deductive approach, in compliance with positivism, the deductive approach is certainly adopted. It means that from the general cases, the specific case of public sector organisations in Malaysia will be captured. Between deductive and inductive research, while induction emphasizes the case study as the mean to generate the common theories, deductive research explores key points from theories to apply to the narrower case (Young, 2007). As justified in the above sections, from leadership theories, the conceptual framework was drawn to support the analysis of the specific case study of Malaysia public sector organisations. Thus, the study followed deductive approach. It looked at the connection between employees' job satisfaction and leadership styles (Transformational and transactional style) then deduced the hypothesis which mentioned above.

Moreover, apart from deduction, the research was also designed to comply with the explanatory approach because it can help the researcher to seek for the causal links between cause and effect which are already known from the evidences in the previous researches (Yin, 2003). In comparison with explanatory approach, descriptive research tends to describe a phenomenon

and exploratory research does not ensure about the results of an issue, so, it explores the possible outcomes (Baxter and Jack, 2008). In application to the research topic, variables were known in advance, only causal link among them was essential to be discovered. So, explanatory research was emphasized.

4. Research methodological choice

Researchers of the study applied quantitative method for this investigation. Quantitative research consists of numerical data while qualitative research exploits insights or details of the issue (Berg, 2007). In this research, quantitative research strategy was used to help the researcher to collect the necessary data which are taken into account to demonstrate the link between leadership style and employee performance. It is noticed that in comparison with qualitative research, quantitative research tends to be effective in the social science research and logical to demonstrate the causal link as well as objective to support the positivism philosophy (Tewksbury, 2009). As a result, the selection of quantitative research strategy was also followed from the above methods selected as positivism philosophy, deductive and explanatory approach. In association with quantitative research, primary data were collected as the main data to help explain the causal link between leadership styles and employee satisfactions. Primary research refers to the research process undertaken by the researcher without collection from any journal, book or article (Driscoll, 2011). It would be more effective for the researcher to analyze the contribution of leadership style to employee satisfactions.

5. Research strategy

In this study, questionnaire was taken into account as the data collection method for the study. The most noticeable advantage of questionnaire is the ability to provide evidences under the large population and generalize the objective results (Harris and Brown, 2010). However, this method is also threatened by the hardship to access appropriate respondents, risk to estimate the sample size and capture high response rate along with the possibility to involve errors in data coding (Akbayrak, 2000). In association with questionnaire, most of questions were designed in the format of close- ended ones, with just a few open- ended questions, to deliver to the targeted audiences as the employees at different levels in public sector companies such as secretaries, employees from lower level of management to higher level of management.

In addition, random sampling technique was used when delivering survey questionnaires. Random sampling technique is addressed and selected from the probability sampling which is defined as the situation in which each unit has equal chance to be selected (Fink, 1995). Because the researchers wanted the high level of generalizability and there is no distinguish

point for the target audiences as mentioned above, any respondent in the study population was selected at the equal probability. There were 300 questionnaires produced for public sector companies, but the researcher could only collect the sample size of 200, making the response rate was 66.7%. Based on the sample size rule of Bartlett et al. (2001), the acceptable number of employees should be higher than 100. So, this study determined that the number of respondents was acceptable.

6. Time frame

Because both research objectives and research questions of this study emphasized the necessity of the exploration on the causal link between leadership style and employee satisfactions, cross-sectional time frame is more appropriate than the longitudinal study (Anstey et al., 2003). Also, as the data collected from primary research, the specific time is taken into account rather than different period of time, so, longitudinal study which interprets the data over time is not supportive (Rindfleisch et al., 2008). So, it is clearly justified that time frame for the research is cross-sectional one, concentrating on only one single point in time.

7. Ethical considerations

According to Clark and Creswell (2008), in order to study ethical considerations, there are various elements that researchers should consider. They are anonymity, informed consent, voluntariness, researchers' behavior, and the project's impact on participants. There were 300 questionnaire distributed but researchers could collect only 200. It can be seen that all participants in the survey participated at their free will. Further, in order to protect the confidentiality and anonymity of participants, no name, address or email were asked in the form of questionnaire. However, the study did not mention any information about producing an informed consent form. It is important for researchers to develop a formal consent to provide assurance of rights and privacy for participants (Bryman and Bell, 2011).

8. Research validity

When referring to a research, validity is one of the most important thing that should be ensure in order to understand how accurate the results are. Validity is defined as "the degree to which the evidence supports that the interpretations of the data are correct and the manner in which interpretations used are appropriate" (Moskal and Leydens, 2002). Back in 2000, Joppe claimed that validity results are truthful and believable. In his viewpoint, researchers often test the accuracy by generally producing a set of questions, then searching for answers from other scholars.

Voon et al. (2011) used random method in selecting participants for the research. It means the chosen population was diverse and the survey was undertaken in natural setting, leading to the external validity of this research. However, there might be a threat of validity in this selected paper since the number of 200 individuals could not represent for all employees working in public sector organisations in Malaysia.

Further, researchers of the study set both dependent and independent variables relating to the main objectives of study. Thus, it can be said that the study has content validity.

Also, considering the whole research, multiple regression were analysed to test whether the proposed hypothesis share the same results with previous studies. Voon et al. (2001) stated that hypothesis H1 and H2 were fully supported by the findings that contingent reward and contingent leader behavior have positive impact on followers performance and satisfaction. The results obtained were consistent with the findings made by other previous researchers such as Avolio, Waldman and Einstein (1998); Waldman, Bass and Yammarino (1990); Padsakoff, Todor and Skov (1982) and Judge and Piccolo (2004). The study also provided evidences that the outcomes of hypothesis H3 and H4 shared the same results with Hinduan, Wilson-Evered, Moss, & Scannell (2009); Clabaugh, Monrao & Sountar (2000); Pattern (1995). In summary, the selected paper presented adequate measurements and convincing evidence that make its' validity constructed.

9. Research reliability

It is claimed by Christiansen et al. (2014) that researchers should examine the reliability of variables. There are several methods to measure a variable, for instance Cronbach's alpha or pearson's correlation. Voon et al. (2011) used Pearson correlation to estimate the reliability. The selected study undertook the examination to measure three variables, mainly transformational, transactional leadership styles and job satisfaction. The result shown that the level of reliability was moderate. Thus, it can be indicated that the study is reliable.

Further, the literature review of the study based on reliable previous studies about relationships between staffs' job satisfaction and leadership behavior in different industry from various authors. However, the study was undertaken in 2011, which is quite old comparing with recent studies. Therefore, the data might not be the most useful data.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this paper has critically analysed several theories which related to the leadership style and job satisfaction of employees at workplace. In particular, the concept of leadership, the concept of job satisfaction and three different leadership styles has been examined. Also, a specific research study was taken into account to determine the research philosophy, methodological as well as ethical considerations.

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