

Leadership Styles and Educators' Commitment in Private Universities in Malaysia

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Abstract

The objective of the study was to examine the correlation between selected leadership styles and educators' commitment through a quantitative method of research. The limitation of the previous studies which became the cornerstone for this study was two-fold, firstly the leadership style focused on in previous studies were transformational and transactional leadership and secondly there is a dearth of research on leadership styles and organizational commitment from a private universities perspective. In this study, three independent variables namely democratic leadership, autocratic leadership and laissez-faire leadership were tested against three dependent variables namely; affective commitment, continuance commitment and normative commitment. This created nine hypotheses in total which was tested and analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). A total of one hundred and twenty-seven (127) valid and complete questionnaires were collected from six different universities providing a number of interesting findings, namely a positive correlation between democratic leadership with affective and normative commitment; a positive correlation between autocratic leadership and continuance commitment and a positive correlation between laissez-faire leadership with affective and normative commitment. The findings of this study is intended to contribute to the knowledge of leadership styles and educators' commitments. This study is concluded with a few recommendations and limitations.

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INTRODUCTION

'No one leadership style perfectly fits any situation' (Goleman, 2000). This statement in itself depicts the understanding that circumstances, organizational culture and organizational players are influential towards the type of leadership style adopted to accomplish certain objectives. Leaders in the higher

education industry are constantly challenged to create a collegial learning atmosphere while maintaining a healthy balance between administrative control and faculty autonomy. While there is a growing need for individuals to have abilities to lead besides knowledge and skills, there is an equal growing emphasis on employee commitment (Tahir, et al., 2014).

“Employees’ who are strongly committed are those who are least likely to leave the organization” (Clinebell, et al., 2013). According to Linh (2018), educational institutes must attract and retain competent educators. To retain these educators and maintain or increase their commitment to the organization it is important to identify the right type of leadership style that is most suited (Leng, et al., 2014).

In this context, higher education institutions namely private universities have been required to consider the best leadership style to develop leaders that are able to adapt to these new circumstances (Black, 2015). It is essential to ensure that the higher education system is well managed due to the constant increase in the demand for specialized higher education in Malaysia (Abdul, et al., 2016).

Leaders in the education industry would have to develop a good understanding of educations in the context of educational and linguistic rights and religious rights (Bajunid, 2014). For the wellbeing of the society, leadership is noted to play an essential role in improving personal skills that benefit the society and not just organizational success. Leadership is the action of leaders leading a group of people or followers to achieve organizational objectives through change as it would essentially influence the performance of the organization (Aziz, et al., 2013). Many leadership styles have been developed in the past years focusing on the leader’s personality that can be applied in any organization depending on different situations (Mahmood, 2015). The established leadership styles that have been identified are autocratic, participative, situational, democratic, laissez-faire, transactional, and transformational (Leng, et al., 2014). The leadership styles that are observed in this study would be autocratic, democratic and laissez-faire.

There are 47 private universities and 20 public universities in Malaysia. Private universities and colleges have played a huge role in the development of higher education in Malaysia (Williamson, 2018). However, a majority of the higher education institutions are now facing financial difficulties (Williamson, 2018). As reported in the New Straits Times, 53% of them are making losses. This is affecting around 121,000 students and 5,800 academic staff in institutions of higher learning (Williamson, 2018). For effective performance of Universities, the academic staff therefore play a vital role (Iqbal and Hashmi, 2015). In addition, the commitment of academic staff in Universities play a critical role in their success (Houston, Meyer and Paewai, 2006;

Atan, 2007). Lack of motivation and commitment of academic staff can lead to poor performance of organizations on the whole (Chelliah et al., 2015). Although commitment has been found to play a critical role, there is a dearth of empirical studies on the dimensions of organizational commitment of academicians in Malaysia. Past research has focused on the some of the factors that influence commitment of academicians. Past research has also examined whether factors like job satisfaction (Donald, Lucia and Victor, 2016), organizational trust (Vanhala et al., 2016), perceived organizational support (Chelliah, et al., 2015) and organizational justice (Hassan, 2002) are predictors of organizational commitment. However, there is a paucity of research on the relationship between leadership styles on the three dimensions of organizational commitment in Malaysia.

The relationship between leadership style and commitment are considered crucial because it does impact the turnover rate and other organizational outcomes (Demirtas, and Akdogan, 2015; Camps and Roriguez, 2011). The study by Demirtas and Akdogun (2015) revealed the positive impact of ethical leadership on affective commitment and turnover intention). Camps and Roriguez (2011) found that transformational leadership positively influenced organizational commitment and thereafter performance of employees. Another study by Asiri et al. (2016) found a positive relationship between commitment and transactional leadership. Most of the past studies focused on transactional and transformational leadership styles. However, there is again a dearth of research on the relationship between autocratic, democratic and laissez faire leadership styles towards organizational commitment of academic staff from a private universities perspective. This study will therefore empirically test the relationship between democratic leadership, autocratic leadership and laissez-faire leadership against three dimensions of organizational commitment namely; affective commitment, continuance commitment and normative commitment.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The concept of organizational commitment is defined as the willingness and desire of employees to adapt to the organization’s environment by accepting the values and remaining committed (Mahmood, 2015). Commitment is an indispensable and invisible element and the three dimensions observed are affective, continuance and normative (Clinebell, et al., 2013). These three dimensions are as defined; employees that are emotionally attached to the organization that are willing to contribute effective show that the employees

have affective commitment towards their organization (Chirchir, et al., 2014). These employees have interest in the work they do and a strong belief on accepting goals or the organization as said by Al-Daibat (2017). Secondly, continuance commitment shows employees doing their job in the organization not because of their interest but due to lack of alternatives available (Chirchir, et al., 2014). Employees having this commitment type would rather continue working in the same organization instead of switching to a new one as they do not want to incur losses in terms of retirement plans or other benefits from their organization (Al-Daibat, 2017). Thirdly, normative commitment is present if employees work in the organization due to the time and money invested on them such as trainings for their professional developments (Chirchir, et al., 2014). Due to this, employees would prefer to stay and contribute to the organization's benefits and goals (Al-Daibat, 2017). To summarize the key terms of these three commitments; affective commitment is the affection for job, continuance commitment is the fear of loss and normative commitment is the obligation to stay.

Leadership Styles

Democratic leadership style is also known as participative leadership as individuals are given a chance to involve themselves in the organization's decision-making process besides developing their own leadership skills (Leng, et al., 2014). Besides being involved in the decision making process, leaders are renowned for encouraging feedback and input from the team members (Arikkök, 2017). It has been identified that democratic leadership is more effective than autocratic leadership (Khumalo, 2015). There are interrelations between the context, characteristics, motivations and outcomes of democratic leadership. Participative leadership encompass the utilization of several decision making procedures that include and involve employees (Yukl, 2010). The participation of other people or employees provides more ideas and can have an influence over the leader's decisions. There are different types or categories of participation namely consultation, joint decision making, power sharing, decentralization, empowerment, and democratic management (Yukl, 2010). A study by Yukl (2010) revealed that participative leadership style can be effective in specific situations and is considered an effective leadership style that leaders should adopt (Yukl, 2010). A study Almarakshi et al. (2019) found that participative leadership is a effective leadership style that leaders should adopt.

Autocratic leadership style is defined as an authoritarian leadership, in which the leaders demand

complete followership from their employees. This is displayed through unilateralism which depicts control, domination, underestimating subordinates' abilities and instructing subordinates for any actions needed to be taken. Often times decisions are seen made without the involvement of subordinates (Leng, et al., 2014). This naturally would result in passive resistance from the team members. Naturally, this would lead to insignificant productivity. Subordinates' cooperation, development and achievement would show very little results as they would not be committed to doing their job (Okoji, 2014). Despite knowing this outcome, this leadership style is still adopted to date in certain situations. (Ping, 2015).

Laissez-faire leadership style is described as a passive leadership style, as it identifies a reduced role and activity of the leader in the operations of the organization. Leaders practising this leadership style would be characterised as individuals that avoid themselves in taking full responsibility of a situation or activity (Asrar-ul-Haq & Kuchinke, 2016). Employees freedom in making decisions is seen as paramount and the leaders would usually allow their employees' to carry out critical thinking and make decisions that would affect the organization. The minimum leadership control however is described as the least effective leadership style Chirchir, et al. (2014).

Organizational Commitments

Employee commitment is an individual's relative ability and involvement in a certain organization (Nayak & Sahoo, 2015). There are three categories of commitment considered in this study namely affective commitment, continuance commitment and normative commitment.

Leng, et al. (2014), associated employees' engagement and emotional attachment towards their organization as the presence of affective commitment. Friendly environment, peer motivation and good internal relations were considered some of the reasons why employees would associate with the organization by way of heart (Knippenberg & Sleebos, 2006). This form of commitment would dictate loyalty and employees not wishing to leave their jobs. Powell & Meyer, 2004 associated this way of commitment to an individual's optimistic personal desire and achieving the organizational goals. The employees were in no way forced to work in the organization for economic reasons (Mahmood, 2015).

Continuance commitment on the other hand, identified itself with taking into consideration risks and costs associated when leaving an organization. This is

mainly because this commitment type focused on employees' needs rather than their willingness to stay in the organization. Factors such as salary, medical and other economic benefits were noted as some of the reasons for employees to decide if they would stay on with an organization or leave it; (Powell & Meyer, 2004) and (Meyer, et al., 2006). Recent literature, Mahmood, 2015 had identified that if given a better opportunity, employees would leave the organization for their personal benefits. Employees seen practicing this commitment style would need motivation to work for the organization because their main reason of staying was their self-interest and the economic factor. If they received a better alternative, they would leave the organization.

Normative commitment was noted to link employee's ethical attitude towards the organization. This commitment type identified closely to an individual's degree of involvement. Employees would usually feel the sense of obligation or moral duty to stay loyal to their company (Mahmood, 2015). Perceived as reactive in nature, employees practising this type of commitment were noted to be less likely to leave or switch organizations even if they were given an opportunity (Gellatly & Irving, 2009). Organizations likely to have this type of commitment present were organizations that would invest money on training and developing employees which naturally influenced the employees' sense of loyalty to the organization.

Relationship between democratic leadership style and organizational commitment

The democratic leadership style was noted as the preferred style of leadership for a myriad of literary reasons. A study by Almarakshi et al. (2019) found that participative leadership was the most preferred leadership style. Another study by Ojokuku, et al. (2012) concluded that the democratic style had a positive effect on employees' performance thereby having a positive impact on organizational commitment. Garg and Ramjee (2013) specifically identified that democratic leadership style built trust and emphasized on employees' development. The positive impact of this leadership style on the level of commitment was echoed in a recent study by Basit, et al. (2017). Past literature such as Chau and Min, 2008, had identified a positive relationship between democratic leadership and employee commitment. A much recent study conducted by Leng, et al. (2014), on the impact of leadership styles on employee commitment in retail industry revealed that democratic leadership style had the most effect towards continuance commitment, followed by normative and lastly affective commitment. Khumalo, 2015 identified

the democratic leadership style as more effective than the autocratic leadership style. From a political, socio-economic and cultural perspective, a democratic leadership style was seen to enhance human rights, well-being and societal happiness (Leng, et al., 2014). However, a study by Miao (2013) revealed that only affective and normative commitment were positively related to participative leadership. The study by Miao (2013) found no relationship between participative leadership and continuance commitment. This study therefore intended to substantiate these findings through relevant statistical testing. The following hypothesis were developed based on the literary finding;

H₁: There is a correlation between democratic leadership styles and affective commitment of educators in private universities.

H₂: There is a correlation between democratic leadership styles and continuance commitment of educators in private universities.

H₃: There is a correlation between democratic leadership styles and normative commitment of educators in private universities.

Relationship between autocratic leadership style and organizational commitment

Literary finding had identified mixed findings on the relationship between autocratic leadership style and commitment of employees. A study by Ananthi (2011) found a significant and positive relationship between autocratic leadership and employee commitment towards the organization. Similarly, Alkhatni (2016) also found a significant relationship between autocratic leadership and employee commitment. However, the results Almarakshi et al. (2019) revealed that autocratic styles was not as preferred compared to participative leadership style. Leng, et al. (2014) further identified negative relationships on the affective and normative dimensions of employee commitments. The study identified that the productivity levels are immensely affected. Similarly, another study by Ogbah (2013) revealed that organizational commitment had a negative relationship with autocratic leadership style. The study also stated that autocratic leadership style was the most used in organizations. In addition to passive resistance; cooperation, development and achievement would show very little results as the subordinates would not be committed in doing their job (Okoji, 2014). As subordinates would be presented with limitations in opportunities to make decisions or suggestions, innovations or practise of creativity would be noted as highly restricted (Amanchukwu, et al., 2015; Iqbal, et al., 2015 and Basit, et al. 2017). This naturally as a

whole would impact the employees' commitment in the organization. This finding is also echoed by Zareen, et al., (2015). However, an autocratic leadership may be more effective under certain situations. A study by De Hoogh et al. (2015) revealed that autocratic leadership was positively related to team performance when team power struggles were low. On the contrary, autocratic leadership was not a preferred leadership style when team power struggles were high. Although majority of study depicted negativity, surprisingly, it seemed to have a positive impact on continuance commitment and therefore it was still practiced (Ping, 2015). This study therefore intended to substantiate this finding through relevant statistical testing. The following hypothesis were developed based on the literary finding;

H₄: There is a correlation between autocratic leadership styles and affective commitment of educators in private universities.

H₅: There is a correlation between autocratic leadership styles and continuance commitment of educators in private universities.

H₆: There is a correlation between autocratic leadership styles and normative commitment of educators in private universities.

Relationship between laissez-faire leadership style and organizational commitment

Literature on the whole presented mixed finding which encouraged this variable to be studied further. Nguyen, et al. (2017) had identified that leadership styles played an important role in determining the levels of commitment. The results revealed that autocratic and laissez faire leadership styles were not preferred to create commitment among subordinates. Often times' employees could feel insecure as laissez-faire leaders would not be interested in their employees and would only secure their own position at work. This leadership style had been observed to create confusion among employees resulting in weak employee commitment (Beer and Eisenstat, 2000). This led to further support by other researchers such as Hans and Mubeen (2018) which stated that laissez-faire negatively correlated with affective commitment and normative commitment. This also echoed the findings in Khumalo (2015). The negativity of this leadership style impacting the affective commitment was also identified in Buciuniene and Skudiene (2008) providing a consistent finding over time. The findings in 2015 and 2018 seemed to be an update to older literature which identified that leadership styles such as autocratic and laissez-faire, did not have any positive influence on the commitment of employees in university libraries Awan & Mahmood (2010). However, there were also past research that have

revealed positive outcomes of laissez-faire leadership style. A study by Sandling (2015) argued that the laissez-faire leadership could be more effective in situations when the followers are highly motivated, knowledgeable and skilled. Ryan and Tipu (2013) pointed out that laissez-faire leadership may be more effective in an environment that facilitates innovation. Theodosiou and Katsikea (2007) further added that a laissez-faire leadership style could contribute positively towards the employees motivation and this could lead to innovation and other positive outcomes. As noted earlier, this naturally intended to substantiate the finding through relevant statistical testing. The following hypothesis were developed based on the literary finding;

H7: There is a correlation between laissez-faire leadership styles and affective commitment of educators in private universities.

H8: There is a correlation between laissez-faire leadership styles and continuance commitment of educators in private universities.

H9: There is a correlation between laissez-faire leadership styles and normative commitment of educators in private universities.

METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH DESIGN

Research Design

The research design is an explanatory one carried out to fulfil the research objectives (Cooper & Schindler, 2013). The research onion provided a general view on the type of methods needed for each level until the data collection was successful. The first layer known as philosophy focused on the assumptions made for developing knowledge for a study while the second layer was the approach for the development of theory. The third layer indicated the strategy used for the research followed by research choices such as mono, mixed and multi methods (Saunders, et al., 2015). This study is an applied research focusing on positivism and deductive approach. The quantitative method was seen as suitable for the analysis of data received through survey or questionnaire in a numerical form. This study emphasized on explaining the relationship between the three leadership styles and three organizational commitments in private universities in Malaysia. Cross-sectional method of collecting data at one given period was suitable for this study. The Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) and Organisational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ) were selected for data collection.

Sampling Technique and Sample Size

Sampling is where a small number of people are selected that represents the total population. This is done due to the time constrain to collect a huge

amount of data. An appropriate sample size is necessary to collect data for interpretations. The targeted population of this study was the educators from private universities in Malaysia. Of the sampling techniques, convenient non-probability sampling was adopted as it was considered most practical. Based on the formula, the sample size proposed by Hair et al. (2010) was 15 to 20 respondents for each construct and the minimum sample size should be 100. 2,042 questionnaires were sent out of which 127 complete and valid responses were received.

Instrumentation

Self-administered questionnaires were chosen due to its convenience and inexpensive way of data collection. The responses were kept anonymous so that where respondents would be able to answer the questions honestly. Questionnaires were distributed to respondents that represented the characteristics of the whole population. The questionnaire consisted of three sections. The first section (Section A) was based on demographic variables with four questions presented (gender, age, name of university, years of experience). The second part (Section B) consisted of questions on independent variables focusing on the three leadership styles (democratic leadership, autocratic leadership, and laissez-faire leadership). Democratic leadership style had a total of six questions followed by five questions for autocratic leadership and laissez-faire leadership style respectively. The third section (Section C) encompassed questions for the organizational commitments (affective commitment, continuance commitment, and normative commitment). Five questions each for affective commitment and continuance commitment were presented followed by four questions on normative commitment. These questions were adapted from Lilian Githuka (2017), Leng, et al., (2014) and (Mishra, et al., 2018).

Data Collection and editing

Questionnaires were introduced carefully to the respondent to ensure a high response rate as recommended by Saunders, et al, (2019). In this study, online questionnaire was the most preferred method for data distribution and collection where respondents were reached conveniently. The questionnaire was created through Google Forms and then forwarded to the educators via email. Mail merge was used to send the emails to many at once to save more time. Manual questionnaire was also prepared to overcome any issues faced such as unavailability of internet access or mobiles device. Official letters and Information sheets were provided to respondents to understand the objective of the study.

Data Processing

Data collected would be analysed to test the research hypotheses (Sekaran, 2016). After choosing the accurate data, it would be categorized and then downloaded using the SPSS program. The data collected was prepared through a process of transferring the responses from Google Form to Microsoft Excel for better layout of data. Various tests and analysis were carried out using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). The process started with the development of questionnaire followed by the distribution of questionnaire for data collection and then transferring the information for further analysis (Saunders, et al., 2019).

Data Analysis

The researcher carried out a descriptive analysis, reliability test and correlation test. The descriptive analysis was carried out to identify the frequencies and percentage for gender, age, name of university and years or experience. This was followed by the reliability test which was conducted to study on how reliable and accurate the data collected was. The Cronbach Alpha's value was observed accordingly. According to Sekaran, 2016, the Cronbach Alpha value ought to be above 0.7. Lastly, the Pearson Correlation Coefficient test was adopted to evaluate the correlation among independent and dependent variables. It would determine the type of linear components associated between the variables. The negative values would indicate a negative correlation, while the positive value would indicate positive correlation and if there was no correlation, then the value recorded would be 0. The hypothesis would be tested using the correlation values generated through SPSS thereby assisting in determining the relationship between leadership styles and the commitment of educators in private universities. (Hair, et al., 2003).

4. Results

4.1 Demographic profiles of the respondents

For the purpose of this research, a total of 127 responses was compiled which hailed from six different universities. Of the 127 participants, there were 77 were female respondents (60.6%) and 50 were male respondents (39.4%). The percentage identified the female respondents as the majority gender participating in this study. The age distribution bracket of the respondents ranged from 20 years – 60 years and above with the majority of the respondents coming from the age group of 30 – 39 years old. 2 respondents (1.6%) hailed from the age group of 20 - 29 years followed by 50 respondents (39.4%) from 30 - 39 years; 45 respondents (35.4%) from the age group of 40 - 49 years old, 21 respondents (16.5%) from the age

group of 50 - 59 years old and 9 respondents (7.1%) from the age group 60 years and above. Based on the data collected, 22 respondents had working experience of less than 2 years; 32 respondents had working experience of 3-5 years; 24 respondents had working experience of 6-8 years; 16 respondents had working experience of 9-11 years; 12 respondents had working experience of 12-14 years and 21 respondents had 15 years and more working experience.

4.2 Descriptive Statistics

Based on the results obtained in the table below, the democratic leadership style had a mean value of 3.5761 and standard deviation of 0.7964. The autocratic leadership style had a mean value of 3.4126 and standard deviation of 0.8179 while the laissez-

faire leadership style had a mean value of 3.2787 and standard deviation of 0.9384. Amongst these three independent variables, democratic leadership scored the highest mean. As for the commitment types, affective commitment had a mean value of 3.6898 and standard deviation of 0.9986, continuance commitment had a mean value of 2.9307 and standard deviation of 0.8595 while normative commitment had a mean value of 3.2106 and standard deviation of 1.0110. Affective commitment was recorded to have the highest mean value whilst normative commitment was recorded to have the highest standard deviation. The averaged mean value of 3 commitment types identified that most of the respondents had the tendency to agree to the questions in questionnaire.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Democratic Leadership	127	1.00	5.00	3.5761	.79647
Autocratic Leadership	127	1.00	5.00	3.4126	.81795
Laissez-Faire Leadership	127	1.00	5.00	3.2787	.93847
Affective Commitment	127	1.00	5.00	3.6898	.99864
Continuance Commitment	127	1.00	4.80	2.9307	.85945
Normative Commitment	127	1.00	5.00	3.2106	1.01106
Valid N (listwise)	127				

4.3 Reliability

From the data collected, the reliability and consistency of data was measured through Cronbach Alpha. The ideal Cronbach Alpha scale would be above .7 (Zikmund, 2013). The table below depicted the reliability analysis of this study. All the independent and the dependent variables were recorded reliable in this study. The highest Cronbach Alpha value recorded

was for effective commitment with 0.955 followed by the laissez-faire leadership style with 0.874. The lowest Cronbach Alpha value was for continuance commitment with 0.753. A total of 30 items (questions) were tested for reliability. A value of 0.9 was recorded for Cronbach Alpha verifying the data as reliable.

Table 2: Cronbach Alpha Values

	Variables	Cronbach Alpha	Cronbach Alpha Based on Standardized Items	No. of Items
IVs	Democratic Leadership	.870	.872	6
	Autocratic Leadership	.805	.808	5
	Laissez-Faire Leadership	.874	.872	5
DV's	Affective Commitment	.955	.957	5
	Continuance Commitment	.753	.745	5
	Normative Commitment	.866	.868	4

4.4. Correlation Analysis

Correlation analysis was used to identify the strength and the possible relationship between two variables. (Pallant, 2016). The Pearson Correlation (r) and 2-tailed significance was calculated using SPSS identifying a correlation range from -1 to +1. With a correlation in place, the changes in one variable would

also affect the other variable over a period of time. (Saunders, et al., 2019). A correlation was identified as significant if the "Sig. (2-tailed)" was less than .05. The Correlation analysis was individually interpreted with the following results to the independent questions.

Table 3: Correlation

		Democratic Leadership	Affective Commitment	Continuance Commitment	Normative Commitment
Democratic Leadership	Pearson Correlation	1	.616**	-.009	.414**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.918	.000
	N	127	127	127	127
Affective Commitment	Pearson Correlation	.616**	1	1	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000			
	N	127	127	127	127
		Autocratic Leadership	Affective Commitment	Continuance Commitment	Normative Commitment
Autocratic Leadership	Pearson Correlation	1	.098	.217*	.147
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.274	.014	.099
	N	127	127	127	127
Affective Commitment	Pearson Correlation	.098	1	1	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.274			
	N	127	127	127	127
		Laissez-Faire Leadership	Affective Commitment	Continuance Commitment	Normative Commitment
Laissez-Faire Leadership	Pearson Correlation	1	.523**	.032	.333**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.718	.000
	N	127	127	127	127
Affective Commitment	Pearson Correlation	.523**	1	1	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000			
	N	127	127	127	127

Summary of Findings

According to the data generated, democratic leadership had a positive correlation with affective commitment as the correlation is, $r = 0.606$ and sig, $p = 0.000$. There was a negative correlation between democratic leadership and continuance commitment as $r = -0.009$. Democratic leadership and normative commitment had a positive correlation as the significance $p = 0.000$ and $r = 0.414$. Autocratic leadership did not correlate with affective commitment as the $r = 0.98$ and $p = 0.274$. There was a positive correlation between autocratic leadership and continuance commitment as the correlation received was 0.217 with 0.14 significant value. There was no correlation between autocratic leadership and normative commitment as $p = 0.099$ and $r = 0.147$. The p value was noted to be more than 0.05 . The laissez-faire leadership style had a positive correlation with affective commitment with the correlation value of 0.523 and significance value of 0.000 . No correlation was identified among laissez-faire leadership and continuance commitment due to 0.718 value for significance with correlation value of 0.32 . Lastly, with a significance of 0.00 and correlation value of 0.333 , there was a positive correlation between laissez-faire leadership and normative commitment. In summary, democratic leadership was found to correlate with affective and normative type commitments, while autocratic leadership correlated with only continuance commitment and the laissez-faire leadership correlated

with affective and normative type commitment amongst educators in private universities.

Discussion

Studies had shown the influence of leadership style and organization commitment revealing either positive or negative relationship (Rehman, et al., 2012; Saeed, et al., 2013). The level of impact varied according to the type of leadership style and the component of organizational commitment (Chirchir, et al., 2014). The Lewin's Leadership Model was applied in this study as it focused on the relevant three leadership styles while the Meyer and Allen Commitment Model was applied in this study as it focused on the relevant three commitment types.

Q₁: Does the democratic leadership style correlate with affective commitment of educators in private universities?

Democratic leadership was identified to have the strongest correlation with affective commitment in private universities in Malaysia with a Pearson correlation value of $r = 0.616$, $p = 0.000 < 0.050$. This finding supported an initial finding recorded in Rafferty & Griffin (2006) which found a positive correlation between democratic leadership style and affective commitment too. It was noted to solidify findings in much recent literature such as Leng, et al. (2014) which stated that there was a correlation

between democratic leadership and affective commitment with a Pearson value of 0.340; (Fashola, et al., 2017) concluded the same with the value of 0.246. A study by Basit, et al. (2017) also stated that the democratic leadership style would have an impact on the employees' affective commitment in turn affecting their performance in the organization as well.

Q₂: Does the democratic leadership style correlate with continuance commitment of educators in private universities?

No correlation between democratic leadership style and continuance commitment was found as the Pearson correlation value recorded was $r = -0.009$, $p = 0.918 > 0.05$. This finding supported a 2016 result by Capella in which employees with such commitment type would have no interest on their job hence the democratic leadership style practiced by their superior would not affect the employees. This contrasted from the older literature such as Leng, et al. (2014) and Chau & Min (2008) which found a positive correlation with a highest impact.

Q₃: Does the democratic leadership style correlate with normative commitment of educators in private universities?

The correlation between democratic leadership style and normative commitment was identified with the Pearson correlation value of $r = 0.414$, $p = 0.000 < 0.050$. This finding was seen supporting multiple previous literature; Leng, et al. (2014), stated that democratic leadership had a correlation with normative commitment with Pearson correlation of $r = 0.45$, $p = 0.000 < 0.050$. This positive value indicated that there was a positive normative commitment of employees with democratic leadership style being practiced by the leader. Study conducted by two researches stated that democratic leadership is an effective way to secure normative commitment and loyalty of employees in organizations (Mumford, et al., 2002; Tsui, et al., 2006). This was also supported by Capella (2016), where employees have normative commitment because they work due to financial reasons compared to their interest. This usually occurs due to environmental situations and the leadership style being practiced by their superior.

Q₄: Does the autocratic leadership style correlate with affective commitment of educators in private universities?

The results obtained from this study indicated that there was no correlation with affective commitment of employees in the organization. The Pearson correlation recorded a value of $r = 0.980$, $p = 0.274 > 0.050$. The same outcome was recorded when Yüzbaşıoğlu & Doğan (2018) conducted their research on democratic

leadership and affective commitment as the hypothesis in the study was rejected due to no correlation amongst the variables. The significant value was not below 0.050.

Q₅: Does the autocratic leadership style correlate with continuance commitment of educators in private universities?

A positive correlation was recorded between autocratic leadership and continuance commitment of educators in private universities in Malaysia. The Pearson correlation recorded a value of $r = 0.217$, $p = 0.014 < 0.050$. This showed that the leaders would motivate and encourage employees through providing rewards and benefits for accomplishing tasks. The study by Yüzbaşıoğlu & Doğan (2018) identified an acceptance of the hypothesis with the finding of a positive correlation. This finding solidified an older literature in which Alqudah (2011) found that autocratic leadership is found more positively related to continuance commitment. Another study also emphasized that employees having continuance commitment would not leave their job as they are focused on receiving benefits and promotions (Erben & Güneşer, 2008).

Q₆: Does autocratic leadership style correlate with normative commitment of educators in private universities?

No correlation was found between autocratic leadership style and normative commitment of educators in private universities in Malaysia with the Pearson correlation value of $r = 0.147$, $p = 0.099 > 0.050$. The study conducted by Amanchukwu, et al. (2015) made a statement that if an employee had normative commitment, they would not be affected by the type of leadership being adopted by their leader. They would still try their level best in giving back to the organization with improving their performance as the organization had spent a lot in terms of money and time for their development. This finding maintained the results of older literature that there was no correlation between the autocratic leadership style and normative commitment of educators; Vugt & Cremer (1999).

Q₇: Does the laissez-faire leadership style correlate with affective commitment of educators in private universities?

There was a positive correlation between the laissez-faire leadership with affective commitment in private universities in Malaysia according to the Pearson correlation results received. The value recorded was $r = 0.523$, $p = 0.000 < 0.050$. The acceptance of the hypothesis had created a variation to previous studies

varying from 2000 to 2017 which had established negative correlation between the two variables. The hypothesis was accepted although the findings were negative in nature. A study by Basit, et al. (2017) emphasized that there was no influence of the leadership style on the commitment of employees. Ismail, et al. (2011) concluded that employees having affective commitment were not affected by the laissez-faire leadership style that their leaders' practiced. This was further supported by Beer & Eisenstat (2000) stating that the laissez-faire leadership style would tend to confuse employees resulting in weak employees' commitment. Buciuniene & Skudiene (2008) agreed that there was a negative correlation between laissez-faire leadership and affective commitment. The study by Garg & Ramjee (2013) argued that their findings of $r = -0.186$, $p = 0.018$ had a 95% level of significance in which both the variables correlated negatively with each other.

Q₈: Do laissez-faire leadership styles correlate with continuance commitment of educators in private universities?

There was no correlation between laissez-faire leadership style and continuance commitment amongst the educators in private universities in Malaysia. The Pearson correlation recorded a value of $r = 0.32$ but significance was $p = 0.718$ which was more than 0.050. This finding too created a variation to previous studies. The study by Garg & Ramjee (2013) stated that there was a weak negative correlation between the variables as the correlation for the findings was $r = -0.112$, $p = 0.153$. Another study by Silva & Mendis, (2017) also concluded that negative correlation value was recorded as $r = -0.402$ between laissez-faire leadership styles and continuance commitment. Maiocco (2017) empirically stated that there was more negative correlation for continuance commitment with laissez-faire leadership.

Q₉: Do laissez-faire leadership styles correlate with normative commitment of educators in private universities?

A positive correlation between laissez-faire leadership style and normative commitment was identified from the Pearson correlation value obtained; $r = 0.333$, $p = 0.000 < 0.050$. This study had a similar finding with the study conducted by Leng, et al., (2014) with a correlation coefficient value of 0.80 and a significance below 0.050. This justified the positive correlation showed that laissez-faire leadership did have effect on normative commitment. Employees with normative commitment would always contribute to their organization which in turn would expect their leaders to cooperate and involve them in decision making.

This naturally enabled employees to still be productive as they are given the opportunity to decide and make decisions independently.

Conclusion

This study has been conducted to study if there was correlation between leadership styles and educators' commitment in private universities in Malaysia. The objective of this study was to test the hypothesis on the correlation amongst the independent variables that are democratic leadership, autocratic leadership, laissez-faire leadership and the dependent variables which are affective commitment, continuance commitment, and normative commitment. As a whole, the study was successfully conducted to understand the leadership styles in detail with the type of commitment the educators' have while working in private universities in Malaysia. In Malaysia, democratic leadership has been recorded to have a positive correlation with affective commitment and normative commitment. At the same time it has recorded a negative correlation with continuance commitment. Autocratic leadership on the other hand, has been recorded to have a positive correlation with continuance commitment while recording no correlation with normative and affective type commitment. Lastly, the laissez-faire leadership recorded no correlation with continuance commitment while recording a positive correlation with affective and normative type commitment.

Implications

The implications of this study are two-fold; theoretical implications and practical implications. From a theoretical standpoint, it would contribute content knowledge to the field of leadership styles and organizational commitments. This study could also guide students or researchers to have a base of knowledge or understanding on the types of leadership styles and educators' commitments namely affective commitment, continuance commitment and normative commitment. Some of the results obtained in this study were consistent with past studies. With the assistance of Lewin's Leadership Model, employers or researchers would be able to understand the three types of leadership styles in greater depth. The second model used was the Meyer & Allen Commitment Model that assisted this study from the commitments perspective. The practical standpoint the results obtained from this study may be used in private universities or the education industry to further study the correlation of leadership styles and educators' commitment in private universities in Malaysia.

Limitation and Recommendation

Some of the limitations identified in this study were that the sample size was rather small, only six universities were identified due to time constrain and the only method of data collection used were questionnaires. Observations could also be another method of data collection. The sample size in some ways may be perceived as influencing the reliability of the findings. Gaining the interest of the respondents was a challenge as the response rate for this study were relatively low. The minimum however was attained to be able to run the relevant tests.

Recommendations for future research is two-fold; one would be from an organization's perspective and the other would be from a researcher's perspective. From an organization's perspective conducting surveys would be a good way to understand issues faced and plausible improvements necessary in the respective organization. Besides that, encouraging feedback from educators would allow leaders to provide room for improvements. In a nutshell, improving organizational structure would also increase educator's commitment by promoting educators based on their capabilities. The working environment need to be interesting and interactive so that educators can improve on their social life while teaching. Having an interactive communication with educators would remove the superior subordinate barrier. Providing training and development to educators would assist educators in handling any situations and being more productive.

From a research perspective, a bigger sample size would be needed to improve the reliability and accuracy of data. Other than that, the focus scope of universities can also be widen by conducting research in public universities and other private universities in Malaysia. The scope of this study can also be widened in terms of observing employees in the organization rather than just collecting data through questionnaires. Future research can also be conducted on educators in pre-school or primary level education; in other industries such as retail industry, manufacturing industry and many other industries existing.

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