

# The Impact of Leadership Styles, Perception towards Gender and Working Experience on Employees' Job Satisfaction in the Higher Education Institute

Darshini Veerasundar, Mazuwin Binti Haja Maideen

**Abstract :** *The main objective of this study is to examine the relationship between leadership styles; perception towards gender; working experience and employees job satisfaction in the Higher Education Institute in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Questionnaires were used as the data collecting method. The sample size comprised of 120 employees at 4 different universities (Monash, Taylor, Inti, and Sunway University). In order to analyse the responses gathered through the questionnaire, the statistical tool named SPSS was used. For purposes of data analysis and hypotheses testing, several statistical methods such as descriptive analysis, descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and multiple regression analysis were utilized to understand the dimensionality of the variables. The determined findings showed that employees' job satisfaction is positively and significantly impacted by leadership styles, perception towards gender, and working experience. A positive significant relationship between these variables and employees' job satisfaction was confirmed with leadership styles as the highest influencing factor by employees. The findings of the study would hopefully contribute to the building of new knowledge. Furthermore, it can be useful for human resource development in the education industries. This study provided an additional opportunity for the decision makers to develop and design more effective policies in this area to ensure that the performance of companies still on top.*

**Keywords:** Leadership, Malaysia, Employee Satisfaction, Gender

## I. INTRODUCTION

In today's competitive business world, the success of organisations depends on their leaders to maintain competitive advantage. Over time, leaders have been altered along with the changes in employee requirement. As a result, there is a demand of change between the leaders and their followers (Akram et al., 2016). Leaders influenced followers in various ways through training, coordination, motivation, communication and rewards. A good leadership can fulfill job satisfaction, thus increasing employees performance and lifting the organisational work performance up in the final result (Chang, 2017). Mangkunegara and Huddin, (2016) said that employees with high performance are able to support the achievement of goals and objectives of the organisation.

In order to have high performance of an employee to do the job, the employees should have job satisfaction over that has been obtained in the process of interaction with the work environment. Leadership role becomes important and necessary for an organisation to align the needs and create a good working situation (Olasupo, 2011).

Job satisfaction can be broadly defined as the extent to which employees are content with their jobs (Saleh, 2017). Study done by Sunarsih(2015) revealed that good working conditions enhanced job satisfaction levels among employees. Employees' moods and emotions are core building blocks that form the affective element of job satisfaction. Job satisfied employees have been shown to have higher levels of commitment to their jobs and organisations. In any organisations, human resource plays a major role for employee performance and job satisfaction. Organisations need highly performed employees with appropriate skills and knowledge to achieve their objectives and goals (Mathis and Jackson 2014).

The education industry, especially universities plays an important part of the education sectors as it plays a major role in development and also it is the foundation for the economic growth (Patrinos, 2016). With the rising of globalization and management's demand for global skillsets, the education industry is changing rapidly along with the new technology. Among the challenges faced in today's education industry are lack of effective communication, lack of creativity and innovation. The success of these institutions depends highly on employee's performance and the leadership skills (Iqbal et al., 2015). In recent years, education industry is focusing to facilitate greater coordination and performance that is more organized between the leaders and the members of their groups (Berson and Linton, 2015). So, increasingly, institutions are employing leaders who are highly educated, well informed and with great communication skills that facilitate the bond between members of their group. Therefore, the different types of leadership style along with the influences towards an organisational, employees' job satisfaction level and their commitment are the essential factors in ensuring the effectiveness and the achievement of the organisations in order to face the market competitiveness (Justin and Heyliger, 2014). Among all the leadership styles, the most common are transformational, transactional and democratic leadership.

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**Darshini Veerasundar** Is working in School of Business and Management, Asia Pacific University Malaysia

**Mazuwin Binti Haja Maideen** Is working in School of Business and Management, Asia Pacific University Malaysia.

Despite the different style of leadership that can affect the job satisfaction, perception towards gender and working experience also may influence the level of job satisfaction (Chek et al, 2016). It has been a great interest to researchers in the field of management level, especially in recent years, where women gender have begun to have more leadership position in the job field. In this research, three main leadership styles will be mainly discussed, followed by the impact of perception towards gender and working experience on employees' job satisfaction. This research study seeks to establish a relationship between leadership styles, perception towards gender and working experiences (independent variables) and job satisfaction (dependent variable), in order to critically challenge the views expressed above.

## **II. LITERATURE REVIEW**

In the past decades numerous studies have pointed out that transformational leadership has positive relationship with employee's job satisfaction (Braun et al., 2013; Kim and Kim, 2014; Munir et al., 2012; Trivellas and Santouridis, 2014). Moreover, it is also been empirically proved that employees' job satisfaction is enhanced when higher authorities stress on democratic or transformational leadership style (Reichard, cited in Hussain et al, 2014) which encourages and help the employees to set their goals and fulfilled the task assigned with the facilitation of the leader (Herminingsih, 2015). Bacha and Ejigu (2017) highlight that managers with transformational leadership management style not only result in better employees performance but also provide more job opportunities for the employees. As mentioned earlier, employees that are promoted are more likely to be satisfied.

Northouse (2013) on the other hand argued that transactional leadership style has a positive correlation on job satisfaction. The conditional reward aspect of transactional leadership occurred daily in an individual's life. However, some researchers concluded that transactional leaders do not positively influence employee job satisfaction, however, other scholars disagreed with the concept (Epitropaki & Martin, 2013; Long & Thean, 2015; Pieterse et al., 2015). The findings of Wang et al (2016) on the other hand demonstrated a positive relationship between democratic leadership style and job satisfaction. Democratic leadership is an open and transparent way of leading where the decisions are shared among members of the organisations and inputs are contributed by all members (Smith et al, 2016). The study also emphasised effective supervisor communications as a factor influencing employee job satisfaction. Leaders who use democratic leadership style has also been shown to improve the cognitive state of followers and thus increase their job satisfaction (Kiptiony, 2017). As a result, high job satisfaction would positively affect employees' performance and overall the organisations performance.

Study done by Bhatti et al. (2013) indicated that perception towards gender of the individual will influence the job satisfaction. Individual attributes and background of the employees or their leaders have been identified as the key factors to bring variations in the employees' job

satisfaction (Capecchi and Piccolo, 2015). Research done by Sattar et al. (Cited in Hoppe et al, 2013) also mentioned that perception towards gender have impacts on the job satisfaction level of employees in the workplace. People tend to perceive individual leadership by gender or race. These are tested as the predictor of job satisfaction or dissatisfaction and its consequences such as involvement, commitment, absenteeism and turnover (Collins et al. 2014). They found that different these factors play different roles in diverse settings.

Employee with long experience with the same organisation tends to more liable and found more difficulty to shift job from one to another due to emotional attachment with the organisation. This show an affective commitment and satisfaction of an employee towards organisation (Tita, 2011; Mohammed and Ahmed, 2017). This is also supported by Arian et al (2018). This is in line with the study done by Mathur and Mehta, (2015) in which they found a close relation between working experience and job satisfaction. In contrast to that, study done by Ahmad et al., (2013) revealed that the years of experience of respondents have insignificant positive effect on satisfaction. Similarly, Kour et al. (2016) study examined relationship between demographic factors of employees and job in India and they found that there is no significant association between working experience and job satisfaction. One potential reason for this is that, increasing the working history causes personnel to elevate their expectations and to become more aware of their rights, so their consent is less

## **III. METHOD & MATERIALS**

In this study, the philosophy of positivism is used based on the research aim where there are few leadership styles that influences the organisational performance. By adapting this theory, hypotheses are developed based on existing theory which will be tested and confirmed upon completion of this research. According to Saunders et al (2009), there are seven strategies that can be used, namely experiment, survey, case study, action research, grounded theory, ethnography and archival research. Based on the research objective and research question, survey research strategy will be used in this study. This is the most common strategy used in research and is usually linked to the deductive approach. Data are often obtained using questionnaire and it is easy to make comparison as the data are all standardised. Not only that, by using this strategy, researchers will be able to have more control over the research process (Saunders et al, 2009). For this study, the research choice would be mono-method (quantitative) since the aim of the study is to examine the relationships among its variables which includes three independent variables (democratic, transformational and transactional leadership) and one dependent variable (employee satisfaction).

Data is primary and are collected by the mean of survey questionnaires. Questions are adapted from various sources and a total of 150 questionnaires was distributed to each respondent by hand and collected once the respondents filled up the questions.

The survey questionnaire adapted are divided into four sections. The first section of the questionnaire consists of questions regarding the demographic information such as age, gender, occupation, marital status, working experience and education. 2nd – 4th section are designed to test the relationship between the independent variables and dependent variable.

The primary data obtained are then processed through editing, coding and tabulation and transformation (Jha, 2014). The first step in processing of data is editing of the questionnaires. Editing is a process of checking to detect and or correct errors. To keep the response with in limited alternatives, researchers need to assign some alphabetical or numerical symbols or both to the answers. The alternatives must be mutually exclusive, defined in one concept or term only. This form of processing is known as coding

(Sarantakos, 2009). Next step is tabulation which summarizes the raw data and display it in a compact form. Lastly some of the data will be converted to a format that is suitable for further analysis (Jha, 2014).

#### IV. RESULTS

After gathering the responses from the respondents, reliability test was carried out through Cronbach's coefficient alpha to measure how free the items from random errors (i.e. error-free indicator) and to determine how strong or weak the reliability of items. The level of reliability was determined based on the value of Cronbach's alpha, which ranges from 0 to 1 and the closer the number to 1, the greater the reliability (Zikmund et al., 2013). Table below shows the reliability results of this study;

**Table 1: Reliability Results**

Variables of the study	No of Items	Cronbach Alpha
Employees' Job Satisfaction	12	0.833
Leadership style	10	0.742
Perception towards gender	3	0.824
Working experience	1	0.701

Table 1 shown above indicated that the values of Cronbach's alpha of all factors including dependent and independent variables were more than 0.7. A range of Cronbach's Alpha values for dependent and independent variable items are from 0.701 until 0.833. Therefore, based

on the results obtained, the reliability statistics of the dependent variables and independent variables are good as proposed by Zikmund et al., (2013). This is in line with the arguments of Sekaran, (2016) that if the Cronbach alpha is closer to 1 then the internal consistency is greater.

#### Normality Test

**Table 2: Normality test**

	Skewness		Kurtosis	
	Statistics	Std.Error	Statistics	Std.Error
Job Satisfaction	<b>.042</b>	.221	<b>-.299</b>	.438

Table 2 shows skewness and kurtosis values used to access the degree of distribution vary from the normal distribution. It has been found that the value of skewness for job satisfaction (dependent variable) 0.042. Meanwhile, the value of kurtosis is -.299. According to Hair et al. (2015) skewness and kurtosis are considered within a normal range if it falls anywhere between +1 to -1. Thus, as all values of

skewness and kurtosis were inside the range of +1 to -1, it can be concluded that the data was normally distributed.

#### Correlation Analysis

For the purpose of finding the relationship between the dependent variable and the independent variables of this study, correlation test carried out using SPSS software.

**Table 3: Pearson's Correlation analysis**

Independent variables	Pearson correlation (r)	Sig (2-tailed)
Leadership style	0.694**	0.000
Perception towards gender	0.674**	0.000
Working experience	0.674**	0.000

Table 3 provides the correlation test results which are carried out on all of the variables that are independent and dependent. The correlation results showed that leadership styles, perception towards gender and working experiences have their correlation coefficient "r" score of 0.694, 0.674, 0.674 respectively. These values indicate that leadership style can enhance the satisfactory level because it

is recorded to be highest among all followed by gender perception and lastly working experiences.

# The Impact of Leadership Styles, Perception towards Gender and Working Experience on Employees' Job Satisfaction in the Higher Education Institute

In general, this means that all independent variables have a strong relationship with dependent variable as the values of correlation coefficient “r” recorded are above that 0.60 (Salkind and Winter, 2017). Moreover, it can be observed that all independent variables are positively correlated with the dependent variable (employees’ job satisfaction). These results are supported by the value of sig for all of the variables tested, which were recorded 0.000 (0.000 < p of 0.01) indicating to the significant relationship

existed between independent variables and the dependent variable. Thus, it can be concluded that leadership styles, perception towards gender and working experiences can influence the satisfactory level of the staff.

### Multiple Regression Analysis

The results obtained through regression analysis are presented in three tables called model summary, ANOVA and coefficient table as follows;

### Model Summary Table

**Table 4: Model Summary**

#### Model Summary<sup>b</sup>

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.751 <sup>a</sup>	.564	.553	.41181

- a. Predictors: (Constant), Leadership style, working experience, perception towards gender
- b. Dependent Variable: Employees Job Satisfaction

From the table above, R-value was 0.751, indicating a good level of fit for the model and a good level of prediction. Meanwhile, R Square was 0.564, showing the relationship between independent variables and dependent variable. Thus, since R Square is approximately 0.60, the relation

between dependent and independent variables is determined to be strong. This implies that approximately 60% of the total variance in the employee job satisfaction can be explained by leadership style, perception towards gender and working experience.

### ANOVA Table

**Table 5: ANOVA table**

#### ANOVA<sup>a</sup>

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	77.785	3	25.928	56.789	.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	52.962	116	.457		
	Total	130.747	119			

- a. Dependent Variable: Employees Job Satisfaction
- b. Predictors: (Constant), Leadership style, working experience, perception towards gender

From the table above, it shows the analysis of variance where indicated that F statistic produced (F=56.789), which is found to be significant (p=0.000) at the level 0.05. Thus, it can be concluded that there was a statistically significant

interaction between independent variables and dependent variable as the p-value is less than 0.05. This means that the independent variables included in this mode are statistically significant predictors of the employees' job satisfaction.

**Table 6: Coefficient table**

#### Coefficients<sup>a</sup>

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.533	.238		2.281	.024
	Leadership Style	.326	.091	.313	3.592	.000
	Perception towards gender	.162	.032	.242	2.498	.014
	Working experience	.112	.033	.220	2.138	.035

- a. Dependent Variable: Employees Job Satisfaction

As per the table above, there are three independent variables (predictors) namely leadership style, perception towards gender and working experience to predict the influence on the employees’ job satisfaction (dependent variable). For this study, the generated equation is applied to know how much the employee job satisfaction is expected to increase

when the independent variable increases by one unit as follows;

$$Y = a + b_1X_1 + b_2X_2 + \dots + b_nX_n$$

*Employees' job satisfaction*  
 = 0.543 + 0.326 (leadership style) + 0.162 (gender)



*perception) + 0.112 (working experience)*

**From the equation, it can be analysed that;**

- When leadership style increases by one unit holding all the other independent variables constant, employees' job satisfaction is expected to increase by 0.33 units and vice versa (positive impact).
- When gender perception increases by one unit holding all the other independent variables constant, employees' job satisfaction is expected to increase by 0.16 units and vice versa (positive impact).
- When working experience increases by one unit holding all the other independent variables constant, employees' motivation is expected to increase by 0.11 units and vice versa (positive impact).

## V. DISCUSSIONS

The key aim of this research was exploring the relationship between leadership styles; perception towards gender; working experiences and employees' job satisfaction in the higher education institute. Three hypotheses stand at the end of the study which constructs the relationships that were developed and tested. The three hypotheses findings indicated an empirical support in all of them. Likewise, the findings and theories related to the variables were discussed in the next section.

The first question was centered on the leadership style variable, which defined a process of motivating and influencing other employees or staffs to work willingly in order to achieve the organisation's goal (Herrmann and Felfe, 2013). The question asked whether leadership styles has a significant relationship between the job satisfaction of employees or not. To achieve it, correlation analysis and regression analysis were used as the best statistical techniques to provide a clear answer to the proposed research question in hand. Generally, the results shown in correlation analysis indicated that there is a significant and positive association between leadership styles and job satisfaction with a Pearson correlation value of ( $r=0.694$ ,  $\text{sig}=0.000 < p$  of 0.01). A similar finding was obtained by regression analysis, where a beta value was recorded ( $\beta=0.313$ ;  $\text{sig}=0.000$  at  $p < 0.05$ ), showing a significant and positive influence of leadership styles on employees' job satisfaction. Therefore, the developed hypothesis where leadership styles have a significant relationship on job satisfaction at targeted organisation is supported. This study is in line with the findings of Kim et al (2014) where the study demonstrated a positive relationship between democratic leadership style and job satisfaction. This finding also aligned with previous researcher (Kebede, ndDemeke, 2017). which found the three leadership style (transformational, transactional and democratic leadership) has positive relationship with employees' job satisfaction. Briefly, it can be concluded that the findings obtained from analyses mentioned above have provided a clear answer to the proposed research question and supported the previous literature that have been done on the same topic.

The second proposed research question asked whether gender perception has a significant relationship on employees' job satisfaction or not. From the findings above,

the relationship between gender perception appeared to be a significant and positive relationship with the level of employees' job satisfaction as proven by correlation analysis ( $r=0.674$ ,  $\text{sig}=0.000 < p$  of 0.01). To make the test more robust, multiple regression analysis was used to support this relation and impact. Based on the results of the regression, the relationship between gender perception and employees job satisfaction are positively significant, as beta value was ( $\beta=0.242$ ,  $\text{sig}=0.014 < p$  of 0.05). Thus, these findings answered the research question and supported the hypothesis developed as well, which tested that "There is a significant relationship between perception towards gender and employees' job satisfaction. This study's finding is consistent with the study carried out by Sattar et al. (Cited in Javed et al. 2014) which showed that perception towards gender have impacts on the job satisfaction level of employees in the workplace. Similarly, this finding is no different from the results obtained by Bhatti et al (2013) which shows a positive correlation between gender and employees job satisfaction. People tend to perceive individual leadership by gender or race/ethnicity. One possible explanation for this could be related to the cultural backgrounds of our country where female gender actively sharing the equal experience and opportunity to take charge in higher managerial role is rather recent. Based on the above, it can be concluded that the role of gender has an impact on the level of satisfaction among employees.

Regarding the final question proposed in this study, the researcher sought to provide a clear answer using the findings obtained from the analysis of data gathered. The findings presented in chapter four through correlation analysis indicated that working experience correlated significantly and positively with employees' job satisfaction. It can be seen this result via correlation coefficient score, which was ( $r=0.674$ ,  $0.000 < p$  of 0.01). For supporting this result, regression analysis was used also to determine the relationship between working experience and job satisfaction. Beta value ( $0.220$ ,  $\text{sig}=0.035 < p$  of 0.05) indicated to statistically positive and significant influence existed of working experience on employee job satisfaction. Significant positive relationships and impact suggest that as working experience increases, the level of employees' job satisfaction also increases. Therefore, the hypothesis "There is a significant relationship between working experience and the employees job satisfaction" developed is supported. The result of this study is in line with the previous study such as by Mathur and Mehta, (2015) in which they found a close relation between working experience and job satisfaction. Another similar study done by Tanova and Nadiri, (2013) revealed that employees that has higher working experience are more likely to feel included and perceive the organisation supportive and that is related to a higher feeling of job satisfaction. Further, this finding is consistent with study done by Staats (2015) in which that employees with higher working experience have a sense of belonging in the workplace, thus increasing the level of satisfaction.



Hence, it can be concluded that the findings obtained from analyses mentioned above have answered and supported the proposed research question.

## VI. CONCLUSION

The purpose of the current study was to examine the relationship between leadership styles; perception towards gender; working experiences and employees' job satisfaction in the higher education institute (Taylors, Inti, Sunway and Monash) located in Kuala Lumpur. To do so, the researcher has followed the academic research step by step, beginning from chapter one till chapter five. Generally, this study has achieved its research objectives which were linked to the solution of problem statement of this study. The finding showed that there is a positively relationship among the variables, leadership style being as number one factor that influences employees job satisfaction, followed by perception towards gender and lastly working experiences. Furthermore, implication, limitation and recommendations for future studies have been included in this study as a guideline for universities to practice the leadership according to the needs and the ability of the employees

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#### AUTHORS PROFILE

**Darshini Veerasundar** Is working in School of Business and Management, Asia Pacific UniversityMalaysia

**Mazuwin Binti Haja Maideen** Is working in School of Business and Management, Asia Pacific UniversityMalaysia.