

Malaysian Employees' Preference Of Their Managers Leadership Style

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The employees are actually the blood that make the company move and perform in the business world, as such ability to manage the employees are critical to ensure that they are alive and able to put 100% efforts towards achieving the organizational goals and objectives. Hence, this study is conducted to identify whether the charismatic leaders are well preferred by the Malaysian employees. Surprisingly, most Malaysian employees preferred to have charismatic managers to lead the organization. About 200 questionnaires were distributed all over Malaysia, about 107 responded to the survey giving a response rate of 53.5%. Most of them agreed that the managers should be able to make them feel special ($p=0.000$), feel established in the organization ($p=0.000$), feel empowered ($p=0.000$), the leader should be extraordinary ($p=0.000$) and tangible in the workplace ($p=0.000$).

Keywords : transformational leadership, charismatic leadership, visionary leadership, managers, employees, organization

1.0 Introduction

In the early years, the most common type of leadership in any industry is autocratic leadership, which was well accepted by most employees largely due to their poor education background and lack of exposure in understanding their rights as workers. In Malaysia, the legacy of colonialism was strong enough to instill the notion of top-down management among the country's developing industries, thus exposing the tendency for corporations to practice autocratic leadership dominantly for many years. However, since the mid-80s until today, the management world has been experiencing phenomenal transformation and

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Malaysia certainly was not to be left behind. Inevitable adoption of these more democratic management ideas, coupled with the fact that most Malaysians are increasingly getting better education and ample exposure to information, consequently led to diversity in leadership styles amongst the captains of the industries (Abdulrani, 2006). The primary objective of this study is to explore the extent of preferences among Malaysian employees on having managers who are practicing charismatic leadership styles in managing the employees, work and other related matters in the office. As such, this paper shall begin with a discussion on the different types of leadership, followed by the methodology used for this study and the discussion of the findings. The implications of the study are offered at the end of the paper.

2.0 Literature Review

2.1 Transformational Leadership

Transformational leaders able to stimulate followers to see problems in new ways and help them to develop their full potential and resulted in enhanced creativity of their followers (Jong & Hartog, 2007; Kent, Crofts, & Azziz, 2001). A person with this leadership style is a true leader who inspires his or her team constantly with a shared vision of the future. They are highly visible, and spend a lot of time communicating with their subordinates. They do not necessarily lead from the front, as they tend to delegate responsibility amongst their team. While their enthusiasm is often infectious, they generally need to be supported by people who cover the extensive details required in the tasks. Ozaralli (2003) concurred with Bass (1985) regarding the definition of transformational leadership, but added four dimensions to magnify its qualities including charisma, individual consideration, intellectual stimulation and inspiration. In addition, it is actually a leadership that gets people to do more in achieving high performance. The special qualities that often characterize transformational leaders include vision, charisma, symbolism, empowerment, intellectual stimulation and integrity (Schermerhorn, 2005; Burke & Collins, 2001; Rowden, 2000). Actually, there are two types of leadership that falls under transformational leadership, which are charismatic and visionary leadership. As such, both types of leadership were further elaborated in the preceding paragraph.

2.2 Visionary Leadership

Visionary leadership goes beyond charisma since it's the ability to create, articulate a realistic, credible and attractive vision of the future for an organization or organizational unit that grows out of and improves upon the present situation (Robbins & Coulter, 2003) and a vision should create enthusiasm, bringing energy and commitment to the organization. The leaders also appears to have three qualities which are the ability to explain the vision to others, the ability to express the vision not just verbally but through the leader's behavior and the

ability to extent the vision to different leadership context, which are related to effectiveness in the visionary roles.

2.3 Charismatic Leadership

A charismatic leadership style actually encompasses the visionary leadership elements, in that the leader injects huge doses of enthusiasm into his or her team, and is very energetic in driving others forward. Actually, charismatic leaders also a visionary; whereby they have a vision of extraordinary goals and the ability to motivate those around him or her to achieve that vision (Poon, 2000). However, a charismatic leader tends to believe more in him- or her self than in their team. This can create a risk that a project, or even an entire organization, might collapse if the leader were to leave: In the eyes of their followers, success is tied up with the presence of the charismatic leader. As such, charismatic leadership carries great responsibility, and needs long-term commitment from the leader. According to Robert W. Rowden (2000) defines charismatic leadership as the behavioral tendencies and personal characteristics of leaders that create an exceptionally strong relationship between them and their followers. There are three personal characteristics of the charismatic leaders, which are extremely high confidence, dominance and strong convictions in his or her beliefs (Robbins & Coulter, 2003; House, 1992). By that, followers make attributions of heroic or extraordinary leadership abilities when they observe certain behaviors. In short, charismatic leader will be those managers or leaders who are able to spark the sense of belonging towards the leader and the organization, and inspire their followers or employees towards achieving the organizational goals and objectives (Schermerhorn, 2005; Rowden, 2000).

3.0 Discussion on the Theoretical Framework

There are five important elements, which are considered to be important for the charismatic leaders to be aware of, in which will be used as a basis for evaluating the expectations of the employers towards their managers. Those elements are special treatment, feeling established, empowered, leader is extraordinary, and leader is tangible and will be discussed further in the preceding paragraphs. Hence, Figure 1 depicts the theoretical framework for this study.

3.1 Special Treatment

There are two types of charismatic leaders or managers, which are socialized and personalized (Poon, 2000; Pawar, 2003). For the purpose of this study, a socialized type of charismatic leaders will be studied in which the leaders or managers should be able to understand the wants, needs, and the development of their followers or employees. As such this hypothesis is forwarded:

H1: Employees prefer the manager makes them feel special.

3.2 Feeling Established

Charismatic leaders or managers operates through human relations, a basic prerequisites will be that the followers affirm the charisma of the leader or manager. Charismatic leaders or managers usually put emphasis on changing subordinates' needs, values, self-concepts, and goals. Other than that, those charismatic leaders or managers should be able to instill the emotional attachment and trust of the subordinates or employees towards the manager as a means for motivational arousal and enhanced self-efficacy (Huang, Cheng & Chou, 2005; Sarros & Santora, 2001). As such this hypothesis is forwarded:

H2: Employees prefer the manager makes them feel accepted by the company.

3.3 Feeling Empowered

Charismatic leaders or managers should possess personal abilities to transform their employee's values by creating a sense of importance and values to the tasks (Aaltio-Marjosola & Takala, 2000; Romm & Pliskin, 1999). As such, those managers should be able to empower their employees in the decision-making, completing their tasks and other job functions. As such this hypothesis is forwarded:

H3: Employees prefer the manager makes them feel empowered in the workplace.

3.4 Leader is Extraordinary

As a manager, a charismatic leaders or managers should be extraordinary or different in a sense that they are able to articulate a vision and mission, and creating as well as maintaining a positive image in the minds of their followers or employees (Aaltio-Marjosola & Takala, 2000; Huang, Cheng & Chou, 2005; Larsson & Ronnmark, 1999; Poon, 2000). As such, these managers should be able to challenge their followers and provide a personal example by behaving in a manner that reinforces the vision and mission of the managers. As such this hypothesis is forwarded:

H4: Employees prefer the manager to be different than any ordinary manager.

3.5 Leader is Tangible

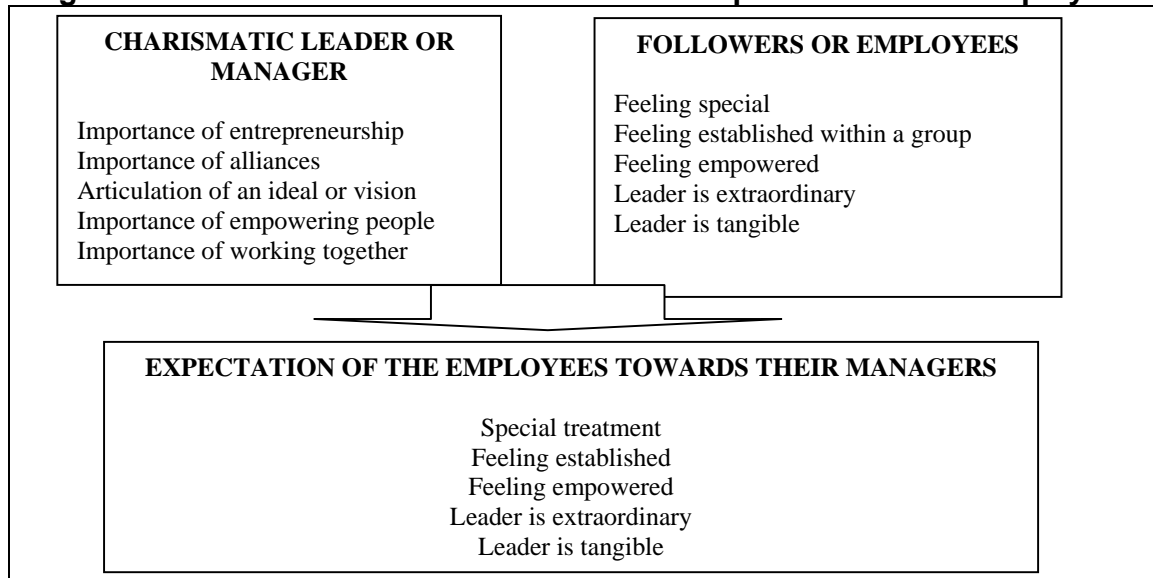
The charismatic leader or managers usually interacts with subordinates directly by providing support to subordinates or employees, building confidence to the subordinates or employees, and displaying exemplary behavior to the subordinates or employees. As such, the charismatic leader or manager can encourage the subordinates or employees to identify with them, and internalize the leader or manager values (Huang, Cheng & Chou, 2005; Palmer, Walls,

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Burgess, & Stough, 2001). As such, the assumption can be made that the employees would prefer to have a tangible manager or leader. As such this hypothesis is forwarded:

H5: Employees prefer the manager to be approachable in the workplace.

Figure 1: The Theoretical Framework on The Expectation of the Employees



4.0 Research Methodology

4.1 Measurement

Since this study is an exploratory study, a t-test being used to test the data, in order to see types of leadership styles preferred by Malaysian employees. Further, the t-test is used to identify the skewness of the data, and identify whether there is any significant difference from the result. Factor analysis and reliability analysis were used to ensure that the items developed were consistent, and the items fall within the prescribed category.

4.2 Instrumentation

About 30 Likert-scale item were developed to measure the characteristics of Malaysian managers styles that were preferred by the employees, using a 5-point Likert-scale measurement. The 5 points Likert –scale measurement is used to avoid biases from the respondents, because it will indirectly provide more options for them to give their feedback (Cooper & Schindler, 2006). The 5 points Likert-scale is labeled as such: 1 = strongly disagree and 5 = strongly agree.

5.0 Data Collection Method and Sampling

Random sampling was chosen in collecting data from Malaysia population. The target samples are of those employees starting from clerks towards directors of companies. The types of sampling used for this study is a convenient sampling. Sample size targeted is about 200 employees selected randomly from various sectors in Malaysia. The questionnaires distributed by using drop and collect method. About 107 responded to the survey giving a response rate of 53.5%. The duration for the data collection is only about three months, because this study is only an exploratory study.

5.1 Data Analysis

Out of 107 respondents, 56.1% at the age of 30 years and below, and 43.9% at the age of 31 and above. About 45.2% with annual income of RM24K and below, and 54.8% of the respondents earning more than RM24K. Male respondents about 50.5% and female respondents about 49.5%. Most of the respondents at the executive level 54.2%, clerk 39.3% and managers 6.5%. Most of the respondents have worked for about 5 – 10 years (50.5%), and most of them have gone to either universities or colleges (82.2%). Thus, it can be summarized that the respondents are well distributed and might be reflective of Malaysian employees' general opinion on their expectation towards their managers.

5.2 Psychometric Properties of Managing Styles Measurement Scales

After conducting the reliability analysis, the output showed that the items being developed had high reliability because the consistency of each items were high because the Cronbach-alpha for the five factors above 0.800, which are ranging from 0.858 to 0.901. Thus, it showed that the items internal consistency were high and the content validity of the questionnaire given that the items were written based on the literature on charismatic leadership are relevant for this study.

Table 1: Reliability Analysis on the Factors

Factor	Total	Item Deleted	Total Item	Cronbach Alpha
Special Treatment	10	0	10	0.898
Feeling Established	10	0	10	0.858
Feeling Empowered	8	0	8	0.880
Leader is extraordinary	8	0	8	0.891
Leader is tangible	9	0	9	0.901

6.0 Reporting Hypotheses Findings

As can be seen from Table 2, it showed that after conducting the t-test analysis, it showed that most employees in Malaysia preferred their managers to possess charismatic leadership qualities. As such all factors are highly significant, those factors are special treatment ($p=0.000$), feeling established ($p=0.000$), feeling empowered ($p=0.000$), leader is extraordinary ($p=0.000$), and leader is tangible ($p=0.000$). Detail discussion for each factors were forwarded in the preceding paragraphs.

Table 2: Findings from Hypothesis Testing: T-test Statistics

Item Test value = 3	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	T	df	Sig. (2- tailed)	Mean Difference	95% confidence level	
									Upper	Lower
Special treatment	107	4.302	0.592	0.057	22.738	106	0.000	1.302	1.188	1.415
Established	107	3.753	0.634	0.061	12.287	106	0.000	0.753	0.632	0.875
Empowered	107	4.159	0.617	0.059	19.427	106	0.000	1.159	1.041	1.277
Leader is extraordinary	107	4.334	0.577	0.056	23.933	106	0.000	1.334	1.224	1.445
Leader is tangible	107	4.326	0.583	0.056	23.527	106	0.000	1.326	1.214	1.438

6.1 Special Treatment

H1: Employees prefer the manager makes them feel special.

Referring to Table 2, it showed that the hypothesis is accepted ($p=0.000$), in which most employees in Malaysia prefer the manager to make them feel special in the workplace. The findings are consistent with a study conducted by Healy, Ehrich, Hansford and Stewart (2001), as it showed that communication is an important element for learning, growth and change. Most of the employees in Malaysia prefer their managers to inform them on the company's vision, goals, and future plans. Other than that, the employees prefer that their managers inform them of what is expected of them, on what are the areas that the employees should improve, on what are the behaviors expected from the employees, and on what the personalities are expected from the employees. In addition, most employees prefer their managers to inform them on what are the benefits or rewards they will get from completing the given tasks, and the skills they will gain from completing the given tasks. Above all, most employees in Malaysia feel that their managers should give special attention to them as an individual.

6.2 Established

H2: Employees prefer the manager makes them feel accepted by the company.

Referring to Table 2, it showed that the hypothesis is accepted ($p=0.000$), in which most employees in Malaysia prefer the manager to make them feel accepted in the workplace. Most of the employees prefer the manager to

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acknowledge their education background, family background, cultural background, working experiences, physical limitations, personal constraints, marital status, age group, potentials, and abilities. When the manager acknowledges those elements, indirectly it makes the employees feel accepted and established in the organization that they are working at. Other than that, they feel the managers acknowledge them as part of the organization. The feeling of being established in the organization somehow shows the employees have membership in the organization, hence increases the organizational commitment among employees, that will make them stay with the organization under favorable and unfavorable circumstances affecting the organization (Abdul Rashid, Sambasivan, & Johari, 2003).

6.3 Empowerment

H3: Employees prefer the manager makes them feel empowered in the workplace.

Referring to Table 2, it showed that the hypothesis is accepted ($p=0.000$), in which most employees in Malaysia prefer the manager to make them feel empowered in the workplace. Most of the employees in Malaysia prefer their managers to empower them in the decision making process, in accomplishing company goals, in completing their tasks, in managing their work schedules, work standards, and in producing own timeframe for the given tasks. Other than that, they also prefer to be aware of the expected qualities in completing the given tasks, and understand the guidelines that they need to follow in completing the given tasks (Harvey, 2001; Wunderer, 2001). As such, employees know better of what are the expectations of the managers and their works.

6.4 Leader is Extraordinary

H4: Employees prefer the manager to be different than any ordinary manager.

Referring to Table 2, it showed that the hypothesis is accepted ($p=0.000$), in which most employees in Malaysia prefer the manager to be different than any ordinary manager in the workplace. Most employees in Malaysia prefer that their managers to be a trendsetter, ethically conscious, and environmentally conscious in the workplace. Other than that, most employees prefer to have a manager who are empathetic, a motivator, a good coach, a team player, and a strategic minded person in the workplace. As such, most employees prefer their managers to be an extraordinary manager.

6.5 Leader is Tangible

H5: Employees prefer the manager to be approachable in the workplace.

Referring to Table 2, it showed that the hypothesis is accepted ($p=0.000$), in which most employees in Malaysia prefer the manager to be approachable in the workplace. Most employees in Malaysia prefer their managers to provide

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assistance, be approachable, be seen, and be part of the working team. Other than that, most employees also prefer their manager to practice open door policy, practice strong leadership qualities, impose high quality standards, impose high ethical standards, and impose clear guidelines to the employees in the workplace. As such, the employees will be aware of the presence of the managers in the workplace, in which able to make them work more efficiently and effectively because managers are part of the team. As such, these finding is supported by a study conducted by Larrison and Ronnmark (1999), in which they mentioned that charismatic leaders or managers should maintains intensive contact with the micro-activity of the project and all the participants (employees).

7.0 Limitations And Implications

7.1 Limitations

There are few limitations for this study due to constraints that are faced while conducting this study. Since this study is only an exploratory study the outcome of this study is only a reflection on a small fraction of the whole Malaysian population. As such in the near future, a bigger sample size can be used to test the employees' expectation on their managers. In addition, a study on different ethnicity of the employees, towards the types of leaders or managers that they preferred can also be carried out, in order to add values to this study. Other than that, some modification of the questionnaire can also be done in order to enhance the value of this study.

7.2 Implication to Organization

As for organization in Malaysia, they should be aware that most employees nowadays preferred their managers to practice charismatic leadership styles. Thus, Malaysian managers should posses the charismatic qualities, in managing their subordinates or employees in order to ensure that they are able to share similar idea and vision towards achieving the organizational goals. Other than that, the organization might want to revise and employed more caliber managers that have the characteristics and qualities of charismatic leaders or managers to work in the organization; hence it will indirectly motivate the employees to be more committed towards achieving the organizational goals and objectives. Furthermore, the employees will have a clear of direction of the organization and understand what are the contributions expected from them (employees). In addition, organization should improve the situation by conducting training and education, in order to mould the charismatic qualities among the managers (Oshagbemi & Ocholi, 2006; Palmer, Walls, Burgess, & Stough, 2001).

7.3 Implication to Managers

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Surprisingly, the findings showed that the managers should be well prepared to change the way they manage their employee, and should possess more charismatic qualities in order to motivate the employees towards accomplishing the organizational goals and objectives. As supported by Takala Tuomo (2006), principles of morally good charismatic leadership can be identified and included into professional training for future leaders or managers. As such, if the managers or leaders do not have the necessary charismatic qualities, a seminar or training or workshop can be proposed to trained those managers and change their mindset and qualities, so that the managers can be more charismatic and able to function towards the betterment of the organization and not vice-versa.

8.0 Conclusion

In achieving Vision 2020, most organization in Malaysia should somehow hire a manager that has the characteristics and qualities of a charismatic leader. As such, a proper program can be developed to train the new breed of managers in Malaysia, due to well-educated work force in Malaysia. In the past, most of the workforce were not well educated, hence the authoritative type of leadership were needed to ensure that the employees able to function towards achieving the organizational goals and objective. However, nowadays most of the employees are well educated, exposed to the new era of modernization, and not to mention with the digital age, the knowledge and expectation of the employees were vast. In order, not to frustrate the employees further, a manager should have charismatic qualities in leading the subordinates or employees. By having a charismatic leaders or managers the employees will feel that they are special, accepted or established in the organization, empowered, able to respect the leader as being extraordinary, and tangible in the workplace. In short, having these qualities will indirectly motivate the employees to spend more hours working and keep up contributing to the organization improvement and achievement.

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