

## Person-Oriented Leadership Enhancing Employee Outcomes

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### Abstract

This study evaluates the relationship between person-oriented leadership and employee outcomes. Person-oriented leadership requires leaders to build and maintain their relation with the employees. In order to accomplish organizational goals, the leader need to understand that having a strong bond with the employee is important. Therefore this research focuses on the effect of person-oriented leadership on employee outcome. The data collection was conducted by distributing questionnaires to 200 employees in different divisions and departments at a public research university in Malaysia. The result of the SmartPLS path analysis model displayed four findings: first, participative leadership style was significantly associated with job satisfaction. Second, consultative leadership style was significantly associated with job satisfaction. Third, participative leadership style was significantly associated with organizational commitment. Fourth, consultative leadership style was significantly associated with organizational commitment. These findings demonstrate that it is important for leaders to implement participative and consultative leadership style during their day-to-day job operations, in order to ensure job satisfaction and organizational commitment of employees in organization.

**Keywords:** participative style, consultative style, job satisfaction, organizational commitment

### Introduction

Person-oriented leadership is an important leadership behavior style as it encourages leaders to form mutual respect, trust and confidence with followers, as well as to motivate and inspire them to accomplish the strategic business vision and missions of their organization (Sinani (2016); Robbins & Judge, (2013).) According to many scholars such as Amabile et al. (2004), Yukl (2005), and Jong and Hartog (2007), person-oriented leadership consists of two salient features: participative style and consultative style. Participative style broadly defined as the willingness of leaders to closely work with their followers and involve them in decision making to achieve daily work objectives. Leaders who practice this style opt to lead the organization through joint decision making process and consultation in performing daily job. Consultative

style on the other hand is often defined as the readiness of leaders to request for ideas or opinions from their followers in achieving work objectives. Leaders who practice consultative style opt to appreciate the followers' ideas and opinions in setting their goals while completing their daily tasks (Berson & Avolio, 2004; Jong & Hartog, 2007). Current literatures on leadership revealed that leaders who are capable of planning and administering daily job operations by properly implementing participative style and consultative style, had significant impact on various aspects such as organizational commitment (Mahmoud et al., 2018; Tabbodi, 2009; Yousef, 2000) and job satisfaction (Sinani 2016; Brown, 2003; Rad & Yarmohammadian, 2006). In the perspective of organizational behavior research, job satisfaction is defined as the perception of the employees on their job condition either internally or externally. The level of satisfaction may be higher when the employees are able to experience high pleasurable emotions (Sinani 2016; Feinstein, 2002; Invancevich, 2008; McShane & Von Glinow, 2005). Then, organizational commitment is defined as the value that is shared consistently between the employees and the organizations. This involves high feeling of obligations and commitment towards the organization (Mahdi et al. 2014; Mahmoud et al., 2018; Allen & Meyer, 1990; Feinstein, 2002; Meyer et al., 1990).

Meanwhile, according to the findings of the studies conducted by Hassan et al. (2018) and Khuong & Hoang (2015), employees or followers will have strong motivation in doing their job, reach their full potentials and can work well under the observation of the leader when the leader is able to attract their attention. Thus, charismatic leader is viewed as a leader with good attitudes or behaviors. Charisma can be achieved by having a great self-confidence and good communication skills especially in one-to-one discussion with the employees (Richter 2018; Khuong & Hoang, 2015). Many scholars agreed that participative style, consultative style, job satisfaction and organizational commitment are interrelated. For example, leaders who have the capabilities to properly implement participative style and consultative style in handling various daily job functions may lead to an enhanced job satisfaction (Yiing & Ahmad, 2009; Ismail, Zainuddin & Ibrahim, 2010; Ismail et al., 2010; Gharibvand et al., 2013) and organizational commitment (Hulpia et al., 2009; Tabbodi, 2009; Yousef, 2000; Ismail et al., 2010). However, the role of person-oriented leadership as an important predictor in the organizational relationship between leader and employees were less emphasized in organizational leadership literature (Brown, 2003; Tabbodi, 2009; Hulpia et al., 2009; Yousef, 2000; Nguni et al., 2006). Yet, there was a study conducted by Wei, Li, Zhang and Liu (2016) which identified the effect of authentic leadership in influencing employee's performance (Wei, Li, Zhang, & Liu, 2016). However, there were several other aspects discussed by previous researchers related to the same concept which included discussions on the conceptual definitions and different types of leadership behaviors and traits in various organizational settings (Berkley, 2008; Colquitt et al., 2015). There were also studies that elaborated on the characteristics of person-oriented leadership by including discussions on the practices and importance of the leadership style in private and public organizations. There was also a study conducted by human resource managers and consultants by using applied research methods and procedures to develop leadership behavior styles and linked the effect of such implementation with general organizational issues such as reward levels, promotion

opportunities, employee morale, productivity, and profit (Cohen, 2016; Hamel, 2017). The approach used in this study adopted simple descriptive, correlation, and secondary data techniques in order to understand the consequences of different types of leadership and to overcome related practical problems (Leadership Blog, 2013; MSG Management Study Guide. 2017). However, the effect of size and nature of relationship between person-oriented leadership (i.e. participative style and consultative style) and employee outcomes has not been discussed in depth in previous literatures (Lythreatis, Sayed Mostafa & Wang 2017; Ismail et al., 2010; Jong & Hartog, 2007; Yukl, 2005). As a result, those studies produced unconvincing outcome and not offer sufficient justifications to be used by practitioners in understanding the complexity of relationship between person-oriented leadership and employee outcome such as organizational commitment and job satisfaction in order to formulate proactive career development and succession plans in supporting the strategies and goals of the organizations in becoming dynamic and strong. In light of this, the limitations of previous literature posits a significant gap for the current researchers to fills. The current research aim to fill the gap by quantifying the effect of person-oriented leadership in encouraging the employee outcomes. This study primarily intended to answer two important objectives: to measure the relationship between person-oriented leadership and job satisfaction, and to measure the relationship between person-oriented leadership and organizational commitment.

## Literature Review

In organizational leadership, the notion of people-oriented leadership consists two influential style which are participative and consultative styles (Amabile et al., 2004; Yukl, 2005; Jong and Hartog, 2007). Person-oriented leadership focus on strengthening and building the quality of relationship between leaders and followers and it able inspire and motivate employee to meet the organizations' needs and goals. This relationship is consistent with the notion leadership theory. For example, path-goal theory explain that the ability of leaders to guide their followers through the right path are important determinants to achieve their goals. (House, 1971, 1996; House & Mitchell, 1974).

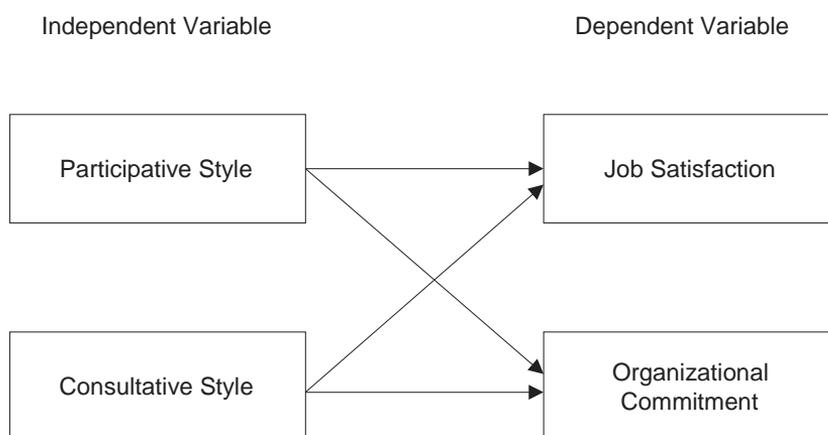
Besides, leader-member exchange theory (Dienesch & Liden, 1986; Gomez & Rosen, 2001) suggests that leaders and followers should have a good quality relationship to induce positive follower behavior. In order to good relationship, leaders needs to display their confidence, respect, openness and independence to the employee in the organizations. Application of these theories in person-oriented leadership demonstrated that quality relationship between leaders and employee is normally translated into participative style and consultative style. The essence of these theories is consistent with the believes that there is a relationship between person-oriented leadership and employee outcomes because leader are those who stimulate, motivate and recognize their employees to complete the tasks given and to achieve the desired results and induce positive outcome such as job satisfaction and organizational commitment (Al-Ansi et al., 2015; Azman et al., 2016; Mahdi et al., 2014; Mahmoud et al., 2018; Andersen, 2016) as well as to implement various styles in leadership to manage the employees effectively (Richter 2018; Asrar-ul-Haq & Kuchinke, 2016).

There are numerous recent studies advocate that participative style and consultative style of leadership are important predictors of employee outcomes in various organizational settings. For example, few empirical studies were conducted to evaluate the influence of person-oriented leadership based on by on the perceptions of 430 employees in various organizations in UAE (Yousef (2000), a study conducted on 238 part-time MBA students and researchers' working papers in a Malaysian university (Yiing & Ahmad, 2009), a study conducted on 27 supervisors and 93 participants in the University of Mysore, India (Tabbodi, 2009), and a research conducted on 150 employees in a local authority in East Malaysia (Ismail et al., 2010).

The findings from these studies revealed that the ability of leaders to appropriately practice participative style and consultative style in executing day-to-day job operations had led to an enhanced (Ismail et al., 2010; Yiing & Ahmad, 2009) meanwhile, evidences from literature on organizational leadership highlighted that person-oriented leadership may act as potential predictor to organizational commitment (Abouraia & Othman, 2017; Mahmoud et al., 2018; Tabbodi, 2009; Yousef, 2000). Based on the literature, a theoretical framework was established as illustrated in Figure 1.

## Theoretical Framework And Hypothesis

**Figure 1: Theoretical Framework**



Based on the framework, the hypotheses constructed for this study were:

- H1: There is a positive relationship between participative style and job satisfaction.
- H2: There is a positive relationship between consultative style and job satisfaction.

H3: There is a positive relationship between participative style and organizational commitment.

H4: There is a positive relationship between consultative style and organizational commitment.

## Research Methodology

This study employed a cross-sectional research design as it integrates the leadership literature together with a survey as the main procedure for data collection. This enables the researcher to collect precise data, minimize bias and enhance the quality of the data (Cresswell, 1998; Sekaran, 2000). This study was conducted at a Malaysian public research university in Peninsular Malaysia. At the early stage of this study, the survey questionnaire was drafted based on the person-oriented leadership literature. After that, a back to back translation technique was employed to translate the questionnaire into Malay and English languages in order to enhance the validity and reliability of the findings (Hulland, 1999; Sekaran, 2000).

The survey questionnaire has four major sections. Firstly, participative style had six items adapted from the participative leadership behavior literature (Jong & Hartog, 2007; Likert, 1967; Yukl, 2005; Yousef, 2000). Secondly, consultative style had five items adapted from the consultative leadership behavior literature (Bennis, 1985; Jong & Hartog, 2007; Likert, 1967; Yousef, 2000). Thirdly, job satisfaction had fourteen items adapted from job satisfaction literature (Fletcher & William, 1996; Locke, 1976; Spector, 1997). Lastly, organizational commitment had eleven items adapted from organizational commitment literature (Allen & Meyer, 1990, 1990; Brown, 2003; Morrow, 1993). All these items were assessed using a 7-item scale ranging from “strongly disagree/dissatisfied” (1) to “strongly agree/satisfied” (7).

A purposive sampling plan was used to distribute 200 survey questionnaires who works in different divisions and departments in the organization. Purposive sampling was used as the organization is not able to provide the list of employees for confidentiality reasons, and this situation may not allow the researchers to select participants using a random technique. Of the total number, 130 (65 percent) usable survey questionnaires were returned to the researchers. Participants of this study answered the questionnaires based on their consents and a voluntary basis.

The SmartPLS was used to analyze the survey questionnaire data. This software is able to provide latent variable scores, avoid small sample size problems, assess very complex models with many latent and manifest variables and many other benefits (Henseler, Christain, Ringle, & Sinkovics 2009; Hair et al., 2017). Data from this study were analyzed using the following procedure: first, confirmatory factor analysis were used to determine validity and reliability. Second, composite reliability analysis was conducted for construct reliability. Third, the structural model was assessed by examining the path coefficients using standardized betas ( $\beta$ ) and t statistics ( $t > 1.65$  or  $p < 0.05$ ). Four, the value of R<sup>2</sup> was used as an indicator of the overall predictive strength of the model [i.e., 0.19 (weak), 0.33 (moderate), and 0.67

(substantial)] (Chin, 2001; Henseler et al., 2009). Finally, the value of Q2 was used as a criterion to assess the model's predictive relevance [i.e., 0.02 (weak), 0.15 (medium), and 0.35 (large)] (Hair et al., 2017).

## Findings

### Respondents Profile

Table 1 to Table 8 shows the details of the respondents. Majority of the respondents were females (58 percent), aged from 25 to 34 years old (55 percent), married employees (69 percent), held Malaysian Certificate of Education (37 percent), supporting staff (82 percent), working experiences from 6 to 10 years (29 percent), and their monthly salary range from RM1000 to RM2499 (53 percent).

**Table 1: Respondent Profiles**

Respondent	Sub Profile	Percentage
Gender	Male	57.7
	Female	42.3
Age (years)	Below 25	8.5
	25 - 34	54.6
	35 - 44	16.2
	45 - 54	12.3
	46 and above	8.5
Education	SPM/MCE/Senior Cambridge	36.9
	STPM/HSC	13.1
	Diploma	29.2
	Degree	16.2
	Others	4.6
Position	Grade 41 and above (Professional & Management)	17.7
	Grade 32 and below (Supporting staff)	82.3

Length of Service (years)	5 years and below	23.8
	6 – 10 years	29.2
	11 – 15 years	22.3
	16 – 21 years	7.7
	More than 22 years	16.9
Monthly Salary (Ringgit Malaysia)	RM 1,000 – RM 2,499	
	RM 2,500 – RM 3,999	
	RM 4,000 – RM 5,499	
	RM7000 and above	

Note:

MCE / SPM: Malaysia Certificate of Education / Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia

HSC / STPM: Higher School Certificate / Sijil Tinggi Pelajaran Malaysia

### Validity And Reliability Of Instrument

Table 2 shows the results of convergent validity analysis. The loadings of variables were greater than 0.70 in their own constructs in the model. Additionally, the correlation between factors and items had higher loadings than other items in the different constructs. In sum, the results show that the items which representing each construct meets the criteria of convergent validity (Henseler et al., 2009). All constructs have average variance extracted (AVE) values larger than 0.5, indicating that the constructs examined meet the acceptable standard of convergent validity (Barclay et al., 1995; Fornell & Larcker, 1981; Henseler et al., 2009).

**Table 2: The Results Of Factors Loadings And Cross Loadings For Different Constructs**

Constructs	Participative Style	Consultative Style	Job Satisfaction	Organizational Commitment	AVE
Participative Style	0.759 to 0.884				0.690
Consultative Style		0.820 to 0.917			0.748
Job Satisfaction			0.726 to 0.861		0.635
Organizational Commitment				0.717 to 0.874	0.635

Table 3 shows the results of the discriminant validity and construct reliability. Otherwise, all constructs had values of  $\sqrt{\text{AVE}}$  in diagonal that were greater than the squared correlation with other constructs in off diagonal, showing that all constructs met the acceptable standard of discriminant validity (Henseler et al., 2009; Yang, 2009). Conversely, the values of composite reliability for all constructs were greater than 0.80, indicating that the instrument used in this study had high internal consistency (Henseler & Chin., 2010; Nunally & Bernstein, 1994).

**Table 3: The Results Of Discriminant Validity And Construct Reliability For Different Constructs**

Variable	Participative Style	Consultative Style	Job Satisfaction	Organizational Commitment	Composite Reliability
Participative Style	0.831				0.930
Consultative Style	0.278	0.865			0.922
Job Satisfaction	0.695	0.373	0.797		0.954
Organizational Commitment	0.586	0.311	0.684	0.797	0.896

### Analysis Of The Constructs

Table 4 shows the results of variance inflation factor and descriptive statistic. The Mean values for the constructs are from 5.3026 to 5.7647, signifying that the majority respondents perceived that the levels of participation style, consultative style, job satisfaction and organizational commitment range from high (4) to highest level (7). Meanwhile, the values of variance inflation factors for the relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable were less than 5.0, indicating that the data are not affected by serious collinearity problem (Hair et al., 2017).

**Table 4: The Results Of Variance Inflation Factor And Descriptive Statistics**

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation	Variance Inflation Factor	
Participation Style	5.3026	1.00318	1.083	1.083
Consultative Style	5.5038	.90057	1.083	1.083
Job Satisfaction	5.7647	.65760	0.797	
Organizational Commitment	5.5569	.73999	0.684	0.797

### Outcomes Of Testing Hypotheses H1a, H1b, and H1c

Table 5 shows the results of testing the direct effects model. The inclusion of participative style, and consultative style in the analysis had explained 51 percent of variance in Job satisfaction and 38 percent of variance in organizational commitment, respectively. This result indicated that the overall predictive strength of the model was substantial (Chin 2001; Henseler et al., 2009). Further, the results of the testing research hypotheses displayed three important findings: first, participative style significantly correlated with job satisfaction ( $\beta = 0.641$ ;  $t = 10.74$ ), therefore H1 was supported. Second, consultative style significantly correlated with job satisfaction ( $\beta = 0.195$ ;  $t = 2.603$ ), therefore H2 was supported. Third, participative style significantly correlated with organizational commitment ( $\beta = 0.541$ ;  $t = 7.593$ ), therefore H3 was supported. Finally, consultative style significantly correlated with organizational commitment ( $\beta = 0.161$ ;  $t = 1.661$ ), therefore H4 was supported. In sum, the result demonstrates that person-oriented leadership does act as an important predictor of job satisfaction and organizational commitment in the studied organization.

**Table 5: The Outcomes Of Testing Hypothesis H1, H2, H3 and H4**

Hypothesis	Beta	T Statistics	P Values	R Squares
H1: PART -----> JS	0.641	10.762	0.000	0.519
H2: CNSLT -----> JS	0.195	2.603	0.005	
H3: PART -----> OC	0.541	7.593	0.000	0.367
H4: CNSLT -----> OC	0.161	1.661	0.049	

Note: Critical Values for One-Tailed Test: T Statistics > 1.65 (Significance Level = 5%)

As an extension to the testing of the above hypotheses, tests for effect size ( $f^2$ ) and predictive relevance for the reflective endogenous latent variable ( $Q^2$ ) were performed using Bootstrapping and Blindfolding procedures, respectively. The result of the Bootstrapping test showed for important findings: first, the relationship between participative style and job satisfaction had an  $f^2$  value of 0.789, which was higher than 0.35, indicating that participative style has a large effect on job satisfaction (Hair et al., 2017). Second, the relationship between consultative style and job satisfaction had an  $f^2$  value of 0.073, which is bigger than 0.02 and less than 0.15, indicating that consultative style has a weak effect on job satisfaction (Hair et al., 2017). Third, the relationship between participative style and organizational commitment had an  $f^2$  value of 0.427, which was higher than 0.35, indicating that participative style has a large effect on organizational commitment (Hair et al., 2017). Fourth, the relationship between consultative style and organizational commitment had an  $f^2$  value of 0.036, which is bigger than 0.02 and less than 0.15, indicating that consultative style has a weak effect on job satisfaction (Hair et al., 2017). Further, the results of the predictive relevance test show that the value of  $Q^2$  for job satisfaction is 0.283, and organizational commitment is 0.208. These values are greater than zero. This result shows that the model has predictive relevance (Hair et al., 2014, 2017).

## Discussion And Implication

This research shows that participative style and consultative style acted as important predictors of employee outcomes. In the context of this research, the employers encouraged the leaders to implement person-oriented leadership style as an important tool to manage, attract, retain and motivate competent followers to support their organizational strategy and goals. Majority of the participants had high level of perception on participative leadership style, consultative style, job satisfaction and organizational commitment. The outcome explained that the capabilities of leaders to appropriately practices person-oriented leadership through participative style and consultative style in in dealing with daily tasks and responsibilities have strong invoked towards employee outcome such as job satisfaction and organizational commitment.

Three major implications can be reaped from this study: theoretical contribution, robustness of research methodology, and contribution to practitioners. In terms of theoretical contribution, the findings revealed that the ability of leaders to appropriately implement participative style and consultative style in performing daily job operations may lead to greater job satisfaction and organizational commitment in the organization. This result is consistent with the notion stated by leader-member exchange theory (Dienesch & Liden, 1986; Gomez & Rosen, 2001) and path-goal theory (House, 1971, 1996; House & Mitchell, 1974) which indicated that the ability of leaders to appropriately implement participative style and consultative style in planning and executing their daily jobs may enhance job satisfaction and organizational commitment in organizations (Yousef, 2000; Yiing& Ahmad, 20009; Tabbodi, 2009; Ismail et al., 2010). The essence of the these theories also received strongly support from the leadership style studies by Anwar et al. (2012), Azman et al. (2016) and Shin et al. (2016).

Besides, in terms of the robustness of research methodology contribution, the survey questionnaire used in this research is an important instruments for collecting data and it has met the criteria of validity and reliability analyses. This condition may lead to obtain and produce accurate, valid and reliable research findings. Meanwhile, for the implication on practical contribution, the findings of this study may be used by practitioners in improving people-oriented leadership in organization. Firstly, leaderships training skills and method should be upgrade to increase leaders' capability and competency in handling employee needs and expectations. For example, leaders able to identify the deficiency of the employees in completing assigned tasks, suggesting clear corrective actions, providing moral and physical support to boost the motivation of the employees in achieving their work related goals. Secondly, people-oriented leadership should be highly encourage to enhance engagement between leaders and employee and motivate leaders to facilitate, guide and support others in accomplishing tasks and responsibilities to effectively meet their stakeholders' needs and expectations.), equality (e.g. job structure) and needs (e.g. pay differentials according to employee differences e.g., marital status etc. Finally, the issues highlighted in this study may lead to a better design and administration of succession planning in order to select the right future leaders and train them to give full commitment and support the organizational strategic vision and missions. If these suggestions are heavily considered, they may motivate leaders and followers to enhance organizational competitiveness and performance.

## Conclusion

This study tested the hypothesized model developed based on the literatures on person-oriented leadership. The instrument used in this study was proven to meet the standards of validity and reliability analyses. The findings of SmartPLS path model revealed that the ability of leaders to properly implement participative style and consultative style in executing daily job enhanced job satisfaction and organizational commitment in the organization. This finding is also supported by the findings of previous researches which were conducted mostly in the Western context. Future researches and practices of workplace leadership need to consider participation style and consultative style as critical factors of person-oriented leadership thrust. The results of this study further suggested that the capability of the leaders to implement people-based leadership may strongly induce positive behavioral outcomes (e.g., job performance, ethical climate and service quality). Thus, these positive behaviors may increase support of the organizational strategy to remain strong and competitive in this era of borderless world and knowledge based industry.

There were several limitations of this study. The first limitation identified by was the design adopted for this study. Cross-sectional research design is capable to collect accurate and high quality data, but it did not explain detailed differences between sub-groups within the sample of this research. The second limitation faced in this study was the generalizability of the findings due to the limited diversity in the demographic of the respondents. The findings of this study are applicable and reflective to the respondents in the studied organization however, they may not be generalized to other organizations or settings. The third limitation

faced was due to the fact that this study did not evaluate the relationship between specific components of the independent variable and the dependent variable. A deeper analysis into these components may be able to increase the accuracy of the findings. Additionally, the survey method adopted for this study was not able to eliminate biases or inaccuracy on the data provided by the respondents due to their personal judgments and emotions. These limitations may reduce the ability for generalizability of the findings to this study. This research thus provided few important suggestions to improve future researches in the area of this study. First, future researches need to consider to exploring more based on different important employee demographic characteristics such as gender, age, education, and position as it might provide a different perspective on how the similarities and differences will affect the person-oriented leadership practices. Second, longitudinal study should be considered for future researches because it has more capabilities to describe the patterns of change and the direction in an organizational leadership process. Third, other specific theoretical constructs of person-oriented leadership such as facilitation skills, communication skills, and negotiation skills should be considered as they have been recognized as important predictors for employee outcomes. Four, a larger sample size should be used as it may reduce response bias and represent the studied population. Finally, the role of other elements of employee outcomes such as job performance, ethical climate and service quality need to be highlighted as they are often discussed in person-oriented leadership research literatures. The importance of these aspects needs to be further explored in future research.

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