TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP STYLE AND ITS RELATION TO EMPLOYEES INTEGRITY: FINDINGS FROM THE STUDY OF GOVERNMENT AGENCY IN MALAYSIA

Najihah Binti Ahmad

Faculty of Administrative Science and Policy Studies, Universiti Teknologi MARA, Cawangan Negeri Sembilan, Malaysia

Nur Baiti Ashiqin Binti Mohamad Nor

Faculty of Administrative Science and Policy Studies, Universiti Teknologi MARA, Cawangan Negeri Sembilan, Malaysia

Marni Binti Haji Ghazali

Faculty of Administrative Science and Policy Studies, Universiti Teknologi MARA, Cawangan Negeri Sembilan, Malaysia

Shahidah Binti Abd Razak

Faculty of Administrative Science and Policy Studies, Universiti Teknologi MARA, Cawangan Negeri Sembilan, Malaysia

Noorie Haryaniee Binti Moultone

Faculty of Administrative Science and Policy Studies, Universiti Teknologi MARA, Cawangan Negeri Sembilan, Malaysia

ABSTRACT

This aims to identify the level of employees integrity at the workplace; second to examine the relationship between transformational leadership dimensions with particular emphasized on (i) intellectual stimulation, (ii) individualized consideration, (iii) inspirational motivation and (iv) idealized influence with employees integrity; and lastly to determine the most influential dimension of the transformational leadership on employees integrity. Data was collected through a structured questionnaire from 136 respondents. The main analysis involved descriptive and inferential statistics in order to achieve the research objectives of the study respectively. The study findings revealed that the level of employees' integrity is high at one of the government agency in Negeri Sembilan. Result also confirmed that transformational leadership dimensions were significantly related to employees' integrity, it produces positive and moderate relationship with employees' integrity. The study findings also indicated that the individualized consideration is the most significant predictor of employees' integrity at the workplace.

Keywords: *Transformational leadership style, employee's integrity, Government agency*

INTRODUCTION

In the era of globalization, an effective leadership style is very important for organizations striving to remain competitive especially in the global competitive environment. Besides, there are several challenges faced by the public sector such as convergence in information, communication and technology (ICT), increasing in demand and expectation for better service quality and service delivery, demand for good governance and Malaysia is no exception. Furthermore, with the rising of new challenges brought about by economic, political, social and technological factors, it required the organization to shift from transactional leadership style to transformational leadership style. In the viewpoint of Nanjundeswaraswamy and Swamy (2014), effective leaders are the one who are able to influence and motivate their followers to perform as they asked to achieve the desired goals of organization. In fact, the difference styles of leadership also may affect the performance and the effectiveness of organization (Nanjundeswaraswamy, & Swamy, 2014).

However, the current study focused on the relationship between the transformational leadership style and employees integrity at the workplace. The term transformational leadership was first introduced by Burns (1978) and further developed by Bass and others (Bass & Avolio, 1990; Avolio et al., 1999). Also, Transformational leadership style can be described based on these dimensions namely intellectual stimulation, individualized consideration, inspirational motivation and idealized influence (Bass, 1988; Avolio, 1999). Based on the previous studies with regard to leadership approaches, especially the ones that have been discussed since 1980s described that transformational leadership emerged to be of particular importance to explain the relationship between transformational leadership and integrity (Bryman, 1992 & Northouse 2010). In fact, the term integrity is often debated and discussed in the context of leadership as a normative principle and focusing on how leaders ought to behave (Bass & Steidlmeier, 1999, May et al., 2003, Ciulla 2005 & Rawls 2005). Most importantly, in recent years integrity has come to be seen as a critical component of leadership, nevertheless, a full understanding of how integrity and leadership are interrelated is still emerging in the leadership literature (Palanski & Yammarino, 2007). Not only that, the researcher believes that transformational leadership style may lack of integrity if the leaders are still underlying with self-interest and self-satisfaction (Parry & Thomson, 2002). Study conducted by Yahya et al., (2016) mentioned that leadership style able to affect followers' integrity which it can lead the followers to perform their positive attitudes and behaviors.

For example, transformational leadership can influence the behavior rather than the mind-set of the leader. This statement was corroborated with a study conducted by Parry & Thomson (2002) found that there was positive significant correlation between transformational leadership and perceived integrity (Parry & Thomson, 2002). Besides, the study findings from previous study found that the relationship between transformational leadership and integrity shows that leadership can give the impact to the organization which it could influence the behavior of employees (Go & Je, 2015). In relation to this study findings, Mohamad et al., (2014) in their study revealed that transformational leadership have significantly influence good governance practices that would led to fairness, transparency, accountability and openness in organization (Daud & et al., 2014).

Nevertheless, study conducted by Etter & Palmer (1995); Schneider (2009); Porter, Webb, Prenzler & Gills (2015) found that how leadership style could influence the employees integrity in

an organization is less focused and less emphasized in direct relationship between the leader and followers (Mohamad et al., 2016). Not only that, Parry & Thomson (2002) revealed that lack of empirical evidence in research with regards to the relationship between transformational leadership and integrity (Parry & Thomson, 2002). In fact, most of the researchers focused on the issues of integrity and they tend to explore the effort taken by government to improve the level of integrity among public servant. Additionally, they are focused on how government policy could increase the level of integrity among the employees in the public service (Mohamed et al., 2017). Hence, based on the abovementioned statement, this study attempts to identify the level of employees' integrity at the workplace, to examine the relationship between transformational leadership dimensions namely (i) intellectual stimulation, (ii) individualized consideration, (iii) inspirational motivation and (iv) idealized influence with employees integrity; and lastly to determine the most influential dimension of the transformational leadership on employees integrity at one of the government agency in Negeri Sembilan.

The following subsection discusses about integrity and transformational leadership dimensions with particular emphasized on (i) intellectual stimulation, (ii) individualized consideration, (iii) inspirational motivation and (iv) idealized influence. Besides, secondary data was compiled and articles were reviewed to provide in-depth understanding on the subject matter of the study.

Definition of Integrity

Study conducted by Palanski and Yammarino (2007) argued that the concept of integrity can influence the analysis on the difference level of people such as individual, group and organizational because the term integrity was related with words and action. Besides that, the integrity can give the impact on trust, satisfaction, followers and leader performance which eventually integrity has the connection with the leadership style. In relation to this, researchers also analyze the relationship between integrity and leader effectiveness at the individual level analysis (Hooijberg, Lane, & Diverse, 2010). Furthermore, study carried out by Palanski & Yammarino (2009) also stated that integrity at the individual level refers to the individual integrity acting as entity. With particular emphasized, the integrity of individual refers to his or her words and actions (i.e., supervisor, peer, employees or external customer).

Not only that, prior studies have discovered the model and suggestion to deal with the conceptualization of integrity at multiple levels (i.e., top, middle and lower level) by focusing on how leader can influence the integrity at different level of individual (Palanski & Yammarino, 2009). Nevertheless, lack of agreement about the definition and also conceptualization of integrity in leadership literature and other definitions of integrity also overlap with other concepts for instance honesty, ethics, morality, justice and authenticity. Nevertheless, in literature, concepts like "ethics" and "morality" usually refer to actions that are in line with socially acceptable behavior (Verissimo, J.M.C & Lacerda, T.M.C. 2015; Palanski & Yammarino, 2007).

Transformational Leadership Style

According to Sidra et al., (2006), in today's dynamic business environment, for developing best followership and change management dealing, transformational leadership model is best. Burns (1978) stated that transformational leadership refers to a leader with one or more persons engage to raise the highest level of motivation and morality. This definition was supported by

Adair (2003) stated that, the transformational leadership will go beyond the desired performance by encourage the followers to develop, stimulating the intellectual and inspire the followers to go beyond their individual interest and achieve collectivism purpose in order to achieve the organizational goals. Meanwhile, Christensen & Rayor (2003); & Schrieshiem et al., (2006) as cited in (Swid, 2013) highlighted that communication and stimulating the vision is one of the important characteristic of transformational leaders that refers to the action that inspire the followers to perform their task beyond the expectations.

Furthermore, previous studies found that transformational leadership also has the different type of influence that directly comes from one person which the leader act as the collaborator to influence a person not only by upholding the agreement but also through the interpersonal relationship. Besides, leadership style also can be seen when one leader cooperate with other people together to raise their morality levels. Hence, it could be assume that it can be main reason why transformational leader having more integrity (Trapero & Lozada, 2010). In relation to transformational leadership styles, studies conducted by Bass (1985) & Leithwood (1994) mentioned that the idea of conceptualized transformational leadership consists of four elements namely intellectual stimulation, idealized influence, individual consideration and inspirational motivation (Veeriah, Piaw, & Li, 2017). Avolio et al., (1991) established four (4) primary dimensions or behaviours that constitute transformational leadership as follows:-

Intellectual Stimulation

Intellectual stimulation can be defined as creativity, initiative, reviewing the existing assumption and solve the problem with the new way of thinking. Intellectual stimulation also refers to the leaders that able to transform the organization by presenting the proposed solutions and ideas of the staff, do not criticized the employees' ideas and also encourages the staff to be more creative by giving the challenging task to the staff (Scaunasu, 2012). Meanwhile, Avolio & Bass (2002) mentioned that in this dimension, the transformational leaders stimulate their followers' efforts to be innovative and creative by querying assumptions, reframing problems and approaching old situations in new ways.

Not only that, in this dimension leaders encourage the followers to challenge their old traditional way on completing the tasks by trying the new way of doing things and also include the staff in the process of finding and sharing the solutions to certain issues. Intellectual stimulation give the opportunities to evaluate the environment either internal or external environment of organization to stimulate the new ideas (Edwards, Knight, Broome, & Flynn, 2010). Besides, employees who perceived their supervisor to be a person with integrity are not likely to feel empowered when their supervisor not encourage them to create new ideas and work on their interest but they have high trust towards their leader and depend on their perspective. The researcher also stated that the intellectual stimulation towards integrity and the result shows integrity perceptions do not give the effect on effectiveness of empowerment for employees with the low intellectual stimulation (Smothers, Doleh, & et al., 2017).

Thus, on that note the following hypotheses were developed as follow:

Hypothesis a1: There is significant relationship between intellectual stimulation and employee's integrity at the workplace.

Individualized Consideration

Individualized consideration refers to the developmental leadership by providing the professional development opportunity to associate on improving the skills and expression of self-efficacy. In addition, individualized consideration also refers to the supportive leadership which respect the followers and individuals, a part from that it will promote the less negative reactions towards changes of the organizational (Edwards, Knight, Broome, & Flynn, 2010). Besides that, individualized consideration also refers to the role of leader as a mentor by given the priority and being a good listener to the individual follower's for achievement and growth by encouraging them to take more responsibilities especially during the delegation of tasks in order to develop their full potential and become actualized. A leader with individualized considers to perform mentoring programs as a mechanism to help followers to grow through personal challenges (Daud & et al., 2014). The previous researcher stated that individual consideration on integrity concern the relative amount of inconsistency between individual acting regarding to the difference of integrity perceptions due to the time and situation (Palanski & Yammarino, 2009).

Thus, on that note the following hypotheses were developed as follow:

Hypothesis a2: There is significant relationship between individualized consideration and employee's integrity at the workplace.

Inspirational Motivation

Inspirational motivation can be define as ability that qualified leader to figure the inspiration and motivation among their followers with the appropriate behavior that can influence the followers motivation and inspirational. Inspirational motivation leader may behave in the way to motivate and inspire the followers by encourage followers to work in team, respect the followers interest, encourage follower to be positive by appreciate their work (Scaunasu, 2012).

In addition, the leader's efforts in inspirational motivation seem to be fail unless they demonstrate with the integrity. This characteristic also will result in an ethical when the leader demonstrates with the integrity (Aswegen & Engelbrecht, 2009). A study conducted by Bass & Avolio (1994) stated that inspirational leader more aware on what the most important of the problem and intent to use of 'gut feeling' and intuition to solve the problems. The leaders also allow their followers to decide their own ethical principle freely. Inspirational motivation leader also will remain optimistic by empowerment to boost their confident to achieve the goals. At the same time, Banerji & Krishnan (2000); Bass & Avolio (1994); Odom & Green (2003) highlighted that inspirational motivation leader also focused on the followers' commitment to ensure there are motivated to find the solution for the problem (Aswegen & Engelbrecht, 2009).

Thus, on that note the following hypotheses were developed as follow:

Hypothesis a3: There is significant relationship between inspirational motivation and employee's integrity at the workplace.

Idealized Influence

According to Dionne et al., (2004) idealized influence known as the formulation and communicated the vision and challenging goals by motivating followers to work beyond targeted to achieve the goals. The idealized influence refers to the leader as the role models for example to the follower which leader who will admire, respected and trusted by their followers (Ling, Sing, & Lo, 2011). The previous study suggested that having idealized influence can induce less stress and burnout within the workplace. Idealized influence also includes self-determination expression, honesty and openness as well as risk taking. The researcher also stated the inclusion whether the leader emphasizes the importance of employees belief and acts consistently with them. Idealized influence will help the leader to gain trust among followers, beyond their respect and priority (Edwards, Knight, Broome, & Flynn, 2010).

Study conducted by Bumgarner (2016) stated that leaders will motivate and encourage employees to reach the new level of development and productivity by using charismatic strategies. In order to integrate idealized influence, the level of autonomy will be expand and improve the independent thinking as well as improving the outcomes. Besides, the employees' empowerment also will increase their commitment towards the organization (Bumgarner, 2016). According to Parry & Proctor Thomson (2002), as cited in Aswegen & Engelbrecht, (2009) stated that idealized influence will result on follower that follows the leader ethical standards and practise it into his or her vision and their life. Idealized influence shows the integrity in the leader's behaviour can lead to build the trust and respect of the followers. Transformational leader will go beyond self-interest and consider the ethical and moral impact on their actions (Aswegen & Engelbrecht, 2009).

Thus, on that note the following hypotheses were developed as follow:

Hypothesis a4: There is significant relationship between idealized influence and employee's integrity at the workplace.

METHODOLOGY

A cross-sectional study was carried out using individual as the unit of analysis at one of the government agency located in Negeri Sembilan. Data were collected using self-administered questionnaires using 5 points Likert scales ranging from (1) strongly disagree to (5) strongly agree as a primary data collection. In this study, simple random sampling was employed. Accordingly, 150 questionnaires were distributed to the respondents; all returned but only 136 were usable for data analysis with response rate 90.6%. All responses to the questionnaires were analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS). In this study, the independent variable (IV) is transformational leadership style with particular emphasize on ((i) Intellectual stimulation, (ii) Individualized Consideration, (iii) Inspirational motivation and (iv) Idealized influence and dependent variable (DV) is employees integrity. The interpretation of the data was carried out using descriptive analysis (mean and standard deviation), Pearson product-moment correlation and multiple regression analysis used to identify the level of employee integrity, to examine the relationship between variables and to determine the most influential of transformational leadership style (i.e: intellectual stimulation, individualized consideration, inspirational motivation and

idealized influence) on employees' integrity at the workplace. Also, to test the hypotheses developed based on research framework.

RESULTS AND FINDINGS

Based on 136 usable responses, data were analyzed using SPSS version 21. For reliability analysis, the values of Cronbach's alpha show all variables yielded satisfactorily results ranging from .788 to .840. Meanwhile, the normality test was also conducted for both (independent and dependent variables) to determine data collected was normally distributed for the study. From the analysis, the assumption of normality within the range +2 and -2 values. Thus, it indicated that all independent and dependent variables were normally distributed.

This section presents the study finding obtained in this study. Data was analyzed using SPSS. Table 1 describes the demographic profile of the respondents.

Demographic

With respect to demographic profile, the majority of the respondents were female (58.8%) and male (41.2%). While, in terms of age, most of the respondents between 31 to 40 years old (52.9%) followed by 20 to 30 years old (27.9%) and the least respondent aged between 41 to 50 years old with (19.1%). For education level, most of the respondents' from Diploma level (37.5%) then the least respondent was Master level (0.7%). Most of the respondents served more than 5 years (65.4%).

Table 1.0: Demographic Profile of Respondent

Demographic	Details	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	56	41.2
	Female	80	58.8
Age	20-30 years old	38	27.9
	31-40 years old	72	52.9
	41-50 years old	26	19.1
	SPM	43	31.6
Highest Education	STPM	8	5.9
Level	DIPLOMA	51	37.5
	DEGREE	33	34.3
	MASTER	1	0.7
Years of Working in the	Less than 1 year	1	0.7
Organization	1 to 2 years	6	4.4
	3 to 5 years	40	29.4
	More than 5 years	89	65.4

n=136

Level of Employees' Integrity

In this study, descriptive analysis was conducted to identify the mean score and standard deviation of the variable. Table 2.0 indicates the results of descriptive analysis in this study.

Table 2.0: Level of Employees Integrity

Items	Mean	Std. Deviation	Level
Integrity	4.10	.51	High
Practice Integrity	4.10	.60	High
Work Sincerely	4.00	.66	High
Work Fairly	4.10	.64	High
Responsible	4.20	.54	High
Accountable	4.20	.53	High
Perform Task Diligently	4.30	.57	High
Behave at Workplace	4.20	.61	High

Table 2.0, indicates the level of employees' integrity at the workplace. This study finding indicates that the overall level of employees' integrity at one of the government agency located in Negeri Sembilan is high which is within the range 4.0 – 4.3 (See table 2.0).). As suggested by Nunally (1978) & Stufflebeam (1972), these values indicated that, the mean values within the range of 1.01 – 2.00 is low, 2.01 – 3.00 is moderately low, 3.01-4.00 is moderately high and 4.01 – 5.00 is high. With respect to relationship between independent and dependent variable, the Pearson's r Correlation test was carried out to examine the relationship between intellectual stimulation and employees' integrity. According to Salkind (2000) the correlation coefficient indicators as follows: correlation between 0.8 to 1.0 (very strong), 0.6 to 0.8 (strong), 0.4 to 0.6 (moderate), 0.2 to 0.4 (weak) and lastly 0.0 to 0.2 (very weak) (Salkind, 2000).

Table 3.0: Pearson Correlation between Intellectual Stimulation and Employees' Integrity

		Employees' Integrity	Intellectual Stimulation
Employees' Integrity	Pearson Correlation	1	.572**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	136	136
Intellectual Stimulation	Pearson Correlation	.572**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	136	136

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Pearson's Correlation Coefficient r was used to examine the relationship between Intellectual stimulation and employees' integrity at the workplace. As shown in table 3.0, there is a moderate relationship between Intellectual stimulation and employees' integrity at the workplace (Salkind, 2000). The result also shows that there is significant correlation between Intellectual

stimulation and employees' integrity at the workplace (r = .572, p<0.01). The correlation is positive indicating that increase in intellectual stimulation will result increase in employees' integrity at the workplace. Thus, the study findings indicated that there is significant relationship between intellectual stimulation and employee's integrity at the workplace. Hence, Hypothesis a1 was accepted.

Table 4.0: Pearson Correlation between Individualized consideration and employees' integrity

		Employees' Integrity	Individualized Consideration
Employees' Integrity	Pearson Correlation	1	.597**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	136	136
Individualized Consideration	Pearson Correlation	.597**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	136	136

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Table 4.0 above indicated that there is a moderate relationship between individualized consideration and employees' integrity at the workplace. The result also shows that there is significant correlation between individualized consideration and employees' integrity at the workplace (r = .597, p<0.01). The correlation is positive indicating that increase in individualized consideration will also result increase in employees' integrity at the workplace. Thus, the study findings indicated that there is significant relationship between individualized consideration and employee's integrity at the workplace. Hence, Hypothesis a2 was accepted.

Table 5.0: Pearson Correlation between Inspirational Motivation and Employees' Integrity

		Employees' Integrity	Inspirational Motivation
Employees' Integrity	Pearson Correlation	1	.557**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	136	136
Inspirational Motivation	Pearson Correlation	.557**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	136	136

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Table 5.0 above shows that there is a moderate relationship between inspirational motivation and employees' integrity at the workplace. The result also shows that there is significant correlation between inspirational motivation and employees' integrity at the workplace

(r = .557, p<0.01). The correlation is positive indicating that increase in inspirational motivation will also result increase in employees' integrity at the workplace. Thus, the study findings indicated that there is significant relationship between inspirational motivation and employee's integrity at the workplace. Hence, Hypothesis a3 was accepted.

Table 6.0: Pearson Correlation between Idealized Influence and Employees' Integrity

		Employees' Integrity	Idealized Influence
Employees' Integrity	Pearson Correlation	1	.509**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	136	136
Idealized Influence	Pearson Correlation	.509**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	136	136

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Table 6.0, shows that there is a moderate relationship between idealized influence and employees' integrity at the workplace. Finding shows that there is significant correlation between idealized influence and employees' integrity at the workplace (r = .509, p<0.01). The correlation is positive indicating that increase in idealized influence will also result increase in employees' integrity at the workplace. Thus, the study findings indicated that there is significant relationship between idealized influence and employees' integrity at the workplace. Hence, Hypothesis a4 was accepted.

The Most Influential of Transformational Leadership Style on Employees' Integrity at the Workplace.

Multiple Regression analysis was conducted to determine the most significant predictor's of employees' integrity at the workplace.

Table 7.0: Multiple Regression Analysis: -Predictor's Employees' Integrity at the workplace

	Std. Coefficient (Beta)	Sig.
Independent Variables:		
Intellectual Stimulation	.200	.068
Individualized Consideration	.292	.012
Inspirational Motivation	.208	.076
Idealized Influence	.017	.881
Dependent Variable:		
Employees' Integrity		

R	.643
R^2	.413
Adj R^2	.396
F Value	23.083

As shown in table 7.0, the study finding shows that the result for all independent variables namely intellectual stimulation, individual consideration, inspirational motivation and idealized influence. The result indicates that all the four variables accounted for only 41.3% ($R2$) of the overall employees' integrity at the workplace. Therefore, the findings indicates that there are many other variables that need to be considered in increasing the level of employees' integrity at the workplace. Apparently, the study finding revealed that the most significant predictor of employees integrity is individualized consideration with beta value $\beta = 0.292$ which is the highest values as compared to the other three independent variables namely intellectual stimulation, inspirational motivation and idealized influence. Therefore, based on the study findings it revealed that the importance of practicing high individualized consideration amongst leaders that actually describes leaders abilities to fulfill and meet the needs and expectations of the employees.

CONCLUSION

The current study aims to identify the level of employees integrity at one of the government agency located in Negeri Sembilan, to examine the linkage between transformational leadership styles with particular emphasized on intellectual stimulation, individualized consideration, inspirational motivation and idealized influence on employees' integrity at the workplace. The last objective is to determine the most significant predictor of employees' integrity at the workplace. The study finding found that employees' integrity level at one of the government agency located in Negeri Sembilan is high with mean value within the range 4.0 to 4.4. The study also examined the correlation between independent variables and dependent variable and found that all independent variables produce a moderate and positive significant relationship with employees' integrity. Result from multiple regression analysis showed that the most influential independent variable on dependent variable is individualized consideration with $\beta = 0.292$ which the highest values compared to the other three independent variables. This study only involves one government department; hence the study findings cannot be generalized to the whole population of public sector employees in Malaysia. Therefore, this study suggest that future study should consider a bigger sample size and extend the scope of the study to cover various agencies (public or private), ministries and others. Besides, this study only involves quantitative method in nature, perhaps for future research, researcher could employed both qualitative and quantitative in order to find out more in-depth study findings related to this study area.

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