

THE MEDIATING ROLE OF JOB SATISFACTION IN THE LINKAGE BETWEEN LEADERSHIP STYLE, STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION, AND EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE: A SYSTEMATIC LITERATURE REVIEW ON MALAYSIA GOVERNMENT-LINKED COMPANIES

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Abstract

The actual function played by job satisfaction in mediating the dynamics between leadership styles and practices, strategic communication methods within an organisation, and job performance and productivity was examined in the current study. Particularly, this study performed a systematic literature review (SLR) through robust guidelines to delineate the interrelationships among the key variables under the context of Malaysian government-linked companies (GLCs). The results revealed statistical significance in the influences of two leadership styles, namely transactional and transformational, on the level of job satisfaction among Malaysian GLC employees. Simultaneously, GLC employees' job performance and productivity were considerably shaped by how contented the employees were with the current job roles and responsibilities. Organisational leaders who practised the transformational style were also discovered to exert favourable and statistically profound impacts on Malaysian GLC workers' job contentment. The findings suggested that leaders, who possessed and communicated transformational visions, offered highly individualised attention towards each employee while continuously inspiring workers to excel in their current job duties. Conversely, GLC workers' job engagement degrees fluctuated when organisational leaders exhibited transactional practices. Meanwhile, the approaches utilised by a GLC in communicating organisational vision, missions, and objectives were pivotal. Adequate and strategic communication could assist in attaining an alignment with workers' values, requirements, and goals. A high alignment level between personal and organisational values significantly and positively influenced the level of how employees were satisfied with their current jobs. The study outcomes collectively contributed valuable and actionable insights to Malaysian policymakers and GLC leaders. Relevant insights could effectively aid in boosting job performance, contentment, engagement, commitment, and productivity, while concurrently contributing to accomplishments in the stipulated organisational missions and objectives.

Keywords: Leadership Style, Strategic Communication, Job Satisfaction, Employee Performance, Government-Linked Company

Peranan Mediasi Kepuasan Kerja dalam Hubungan antara Gaya Kepimpinan, Komunikasi Strategik dan Prestasi Pekerja: Ulasan Literatur Sistemik terhadap Syarikat Berkaitan Kerajaan (GLC) di Malaysia

Abstrak

Kajian ini meneliti peranan kepuasan kerja sebagai pemboleh ubah mediasi dalam hubungan antara gaya kepimpinan, kaedah komunikasi strategik organisasi, serta prestasi dan produktiviti pekerja. Kajian ini menggunakan pendekatan systematic literature review (SLR) berlandaskan garis panduan yang mantap bagi memperincikan interaksi antara pemboleh ubah utama dalam konteks syarikat berkaitan kerajaan (GLC) di Malaysia. Dapatan kajian menunjukkan bahawa gaya kepimpinan transaksional dan transformasional mempunyai pengaruh signifikan terhadap tahap kepuasan kerja pekerja GLC. Prestasi dan produktiviti pekerja turut dipengaruhi secara ketara oleh tahap kepuasan mereka terhadap peranan dan tanggungjawab semasa. Pemimpin yang mengamalkan gaya kepimpinan transformasional didapati memberi kesan positif yang mendalam terhadap kepuasan kerja, dengan menekankan visi transformasional, perhatian individu yang tinggi, serta dorongan berterusan untuk pekerja mencapai kecemerlangan dalam tugas semasa. Sebaliknya, tahap penglibatan kerja pekerja menunjukkan variasi apabila pemimpin mengamalkan pendekatan transaksional. Selain itu, pendekatan komunikasi strategik oleh GLC dalam menyampaikan visi, misi, dan objektif organisasi memainkan peranan penting dalam membentuk keselarasan antara nilai organisasi dan nilai peribadi pekerja. Tahap keselarasan yang tinggi antara kedua-dua dimensi ini memberi kesan positif yang signifikan terhadap kepuasan kerja. Secara keseluruhannya, hasil kajian ini menyumbang pandangan yang bernilai kepada pembuat dasar dan pemimpin GLC di Malaysia. Dapatan kajian berpotensi meningkatkan prestasi kerja, kepuasan, penglibatan, komitmen, dan produktiviti pekerja, di samping menyokong pencapaian misi serta objektif organisasi..

Kata Kunci: Gaya Kepimpinan, Komunikasi Strategik, Kepuasan Kerja, Prestasi Pekerja, Syarikat Berkaitan Kerajaan (GLC)

Introduction

The specific pathways through which various leadership practices and styles interact with strategic communication within an organization and affect employee performance and productivity have been increasingly examined and analyzed by scholars in the field of organizational research. A similar trend has also been discerned in the context of Malaysian government-linked companies (GLCs). Particularly, two

leadership styles, namely transformational and transactional, have been demonstrated to exert profound influences on Malaysian GLC workers' job contentment, demeanours, and attitudes. The former style, which incorporates providing highly individualised attention towards each employee and constantly inspiring workers to excel in their current job roles and obligations, has been revealed to effectively increase employees' contentment with their current jobs and productivity (Alshammari et al., 2023; Zainal et al., 2022). Comparatively, transactional practices encapsulate structured assignments and compensation, which may engender discrepancies in job engagement and satisfaction levels (Yusoff et al., 2023). Effective communication channels within an organisation are also pivotal to organisational clarity, collaboration, and trust. Past academicians uncovered that sufficient organisational communication channels could aid in boosting job contentment. The positive impact was derived from aligning employees' requirements, values, beliefs, and objectives with organisational goals and an open organisational culture (Rani et al., 2021).

Job satisfaction or contentment has been increasingly acknowledged by existing researchers such as Ahmad and Raja (2021) and Dao et al. (2025) as a substantial mediating variable in boosting organisational productivity. Nonetheless, a significant discrepancy exists in the present knowledge corpus due to limited academic investigations compared to the focus on how different leadership styles and strategic communication practices influence job performance or productivity, respectively. Specifically, Malaysian cultural and organisational dynamics potentially produce substantial impacts on how workers perceive and react to organisational leadership styles and communication practices (Yusoff et al., 2023). Current empirical research also continuously concentrates on qualitative and quantitative techniques, which may restrain the holistic comprehension of the present study topic. Quantitative methods can offer significant statistical insights. Nonetheless, the methods may neglect nuances and workers' perceptions of job satisfaction (Ahmad et al., 2021), especially after the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. The pandemic has emphasised the importance of accounting for worker welfare and job satisfaction in effective leadership practices and organisational communication approaches to guarantee organisational effectiveness (Noor et al., 2022). Therefore, a systematic literature review (SLR) on observational research examining how work satisfaction mediates the interaction among organisational leadership, strategic communication, and job performance across Malaysian GLCs is crucial. The current study would resolve the current discrepancy in the knowledge corpus by offering a deeper comprehension through the synthesis of various findings. As a result, actionable insights could be

provided to organisational leaders and policymakers to effectively improve job performance and satisfaction among Malaysian GLCs.

This research contributes to the current body of knowledge in several significant ways. To begin with, instead of considering the leadership style or strategic communication separately, it combines both constructs into a single mediation model that places job satisfaction as the focal explanatory process that connects managerial practices and employee performance. Second, the review is context-dependent to Malaysian GLCs organisations, whose organisational governance frameworks are defined by hybridity, bureaucratic hierarchies and public accountability pressures, potentially influencing leadership and communication relationships in a different way compared to the context of the private sector. Third, the systematic literature review based on PRISMA protocols and quality evaluation based on CASP criteria allows the study to go beyond the discontinuous empirical evidence and offer a systematic, evidence-based synthesis of mediation patterns. Lastly, the review has included post-pandemic organisational contexts, which have been published up to 2024, which makes it up to date and provides theoretical and practical insights that can be applied to the current leadership and communication challenges in semi-public institutions. Taken in totality, this integrative, mechanism-oriented and contextual approach can be considered as a unique input to organisational research in emerging economies.

Literature Review

Various researchers have demonstrated diverse pathways of organisational leadership styles in contributing to job performance and satisfaction, especially in organisational psychology (Mujtaba et al., 2025; Reyaz, 2024). Three leadership styles, namely spiritual, transformational, and transactional, have been demonstrated by existing empirical evidence to play an influential role in determining employees' job contentment and productivity (Memon et al., 2023; Asif & Shaheen, 2022). Concurrently, the dynamics among leadership styles and organisational outcomes are mediated by employees' satisfaction with existing job duties and roles. For instance, Priarso et al. (2018) uncovered that the interplay among transformational leadership practices, the workplace, job motivation, and employee performance was notably moderated by how employees, who worked at Indonesian corporations, were contented with their jobs. The contentment level of workers with their current job roles and duties was also demonstrated by Roz (2019) to significantly mediate the interaction between

transformational leadership and workers' job performance in the food industry. While a linear correlation existed between transformational leadership and job contentment among Indonesian enterprises, an inverse association was uncovered for transactional leadership (Siswanto et al., 2020). An insignificant relationship was also revealed between job contentment and performance by Siswanto et al. (2020). Meanwhile, job contentment and productivity were found by Pudyaningasih (2020) to be substantially influenced by the leadership type practised in an organisation. The level of employees being satisfied with their present job roles and duties also profoundly mediated the associations between transactional leadership and employee performance and between transformational leadership and employee performance across different educational institutions (Tomizh et al., 2022). Specifically, employees' intrinsic motivation and job engagement were boosted by the practices of transformational leadership. Employees who were more intrinsically motivated and engaged in their current jobs also reported greater contentment with their current jobs and demonstrated enhanced performance. In addition, Rafia and Sudiro (2020) pinpointed the significant mediating role played by job contentment among Indonesian governmental employees in the dynamics among transformational leadership and job performance. Similar findings were also reported in the context of nursing in North Sulawesi, where healthcare institutions practised spiritual leadership (Pio, 2022).

The aforementioned interaction, especially in the Malaysian context, has been discovered by existing researchers. A partial mediating impact produced by job contentment on the interplay between organisational commitment and nurses' performance at Hospital Universiti Sains Malaysia was discovered by Otoum et al. (2021). Principals at governmental secondary schools in Subang Jaya, Malaysia, also played a considerable role in shaping how educators were contented with their current job duties through leadership practices (Mirsultan & Marimuthu, 2021). Moreover, transactional leadership was pivotal to higher levels of job commitment among employees in the Malaysian construction sector (Mahfouz et al., 2023). Job commitment also functioned as the underlying factor contributing to the dynamics between transactional leadership practices and job performance. Nanjundeswaraswamy (2023) also uncovered the partial mediating influence of job satisfaction on the interaction between leadership practices and job performance across small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in India. Several contextual factors were also highlighted, particularly employee maturity and professional background. Additionally, Oyewobi (2024) uncovered that leadership practices indirectly influenced organisational commitment

within Nigerian quantity surveying companies, with job satisfaction mediating the relationship. Oyewobi (2024) also created importance-performance maps, which pinpointed specific management endeavours to effectively enhance job satisfaction and commitment. Hence, existing findings underscore that organisational management should practise effective leadership styles to boost job performance based on worker values (Norhisyam, 2025). Accordingly, employees who are more satisfied with their current roles tend to exhibit positive attitudes towards their job responsibilities, which may contribute to higher-quality task performance while maintaining organisational loyalty. Halim et al. (2021) revealed that work satisfaction mediated the relationship between leadership communication and employee retention through an exploratory study in the hospitality sector. However, relevant studies have rarely focused on Malaysian GLCs. The unique governance framework of GLCs may exert different effects on leadership styles and on how job satisfaction mediates the relationship between leadership and job performance, compared to private and non-governmental organisations. Although some scholars have examined several government-related sectors, including education, healthcare, and construction, scarce investigations and limited research have specifically addressed GLCs. Given the economic significance of Malaysian GLCs, further investigation is needed to examine whether the relationship is economically significant, which necessitates more examinations concerning the interplay between leadership, job satisfaction, and worker performance across GLCs in this context. Consequently, the present study may well bridge the existing literature discrepancy and contribute practical organisational insights.

Methodology

Research Design

An SLR was conducted in the current study to appraise how job satisfaction mediated the dynamics between leadership, strategic communication, and job performance among Malaysian GLCs. Specifically, original articles of observational and empirical research published in high-quality peer-reviewed journals were included for the SLR. The Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) guidelines were adopted to increase the replicability and transparency of processes in determining, screening, and including eligible articles.

Search Strategy

Multiple online journal article databases, namely Google Scholar, Scopus, Web of Science (WoS), and PubMed, were thoroughly explored to determine articles that fulfilled the inclusion criteria. Particularly, articles published from January 2010 to September 2024 were determined and assessed to ascertain the latest academic trends pertinent to leadership, strategic communication, work satisfaction, and job performance in Malaysian GLCs. All pertinent articles were determined via a combination of keywords, Boolean operators, and truncation symbols, which encompassed general and specific words corresponding to each variable, with synonyms expanding the result scope. Boolean operators, such as AND and OR, were utilised to refine the search results. Truncation symbols (e.g., "communicat" for communication, communicating, etc.). Table 1 below depicts the summary of search strategies.

Table 1: Summary of Search Strategies

Concept	Keyword	Boolean Operator	Truncation Symbols
Leadership Style	"transformational leadership" OR "transactional leadership" OR "autocratic leadership" OR "servant leadership" OR "democratic leadership"	AND	leadership style*, leader*, management
Strategic Communication	"organisational communication" OR "internal communication" OR "strategic communication"	AND	communicat*, "internal communication"
Job Satisfaction	"job satisfaction" OR "employee satisfaction" OR "workplace satisfaction"	AND	satisf*, "job contentment"
Employee Performance	"employee performance" OR "work performance" OR "organisational performance"	AND	perform*, productivity, efficiency
Context	"Government-Linked Companies" OR "GLCs" OR "Malaysian companies" OR	AND	Malaysia*, GLC*

Concept	Keyword	Boolean Operator	Truncation Symbols
	"corporate sector"		

Eligibility Criteria

The inclusion and exclusion criteria were stipulated to ascertain eligible articles (see Table 2). The inclusion criteria encompassed observational research among Malaysian GLCs to capture real-world dynamics and trends. The mediating role of job satisfaction was also the key focus of the present study. Only peer-reviewed journal articles were included, which contributed to strengthening sufficient methodological rigour. The publication period was also stipulated to be between 2010 and 2024, which reflected the latest research trend. Meanwhile, the exclusion criteria included contexts beyond Malaysia or non-observational studies, which eliminated irrelevant or low-quality findings. Stipulating the specific language helped to support consistency in the SLR, and the omission of unavailable full-text articles ensured that all included articles could be methodologically and comprehensively reviewed (Munn et al., 2018).

Table 2: Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Criteria	Inclusion	Exclusion
Study Context	Conducted among Malaysian GLCs	Not conducted in Malaysia or GLCs
Study Design	Observational articles evaluating the dynamics between leadership, strategic communication, work satisfaction, and job performance	Non-observational design, such as experiments and case studies
Variable	Articles that appraised work satisfaction as a mediating variable in the linkage between leadership and job performance, or strategic communication	Articles that did not assess the current study variables
Publication Date	Articles published from 2010 to September 2024 in English	Articles published in non-English languages

Criteria	Inclusion	Exclusion
Full Text	Full-text articles available in peer-reviewed journals	Articles unavailable in full text

Article Selection

A methodological process was administered based on the PRISMA guidelines to guarantee the inclusion of the most relevant and high-quality articles, high transparency, and adequate methodological rigour.

Title and Abstract Screening

The initial phase was screening article titles and abstracts among two independent reviewers to affirm that the included articles examined the key variables, namely the leadership style, strategic communication, job satisfaction, and employee performance, among Malaysian GLCs. Articles not pertinent to the current study topic or that did not fulfil the inclusion criteria were omitted. Citation management software, including EndNote or Mendeley, was also utilised to avoid article duplication and ensure a smooth screening process.

Full-Text Review

The second phase was a holistic review of screened full-text articles among the two reviewers to guarantee the fulfilment of all stipulated inclusion criteria. The current phase ensured that the included articles investigated job satisfaction as a mediating variable in the interplay between leadership or strategic communication and worker performance among GLCs. A standardised data extraction form was utilised to record all pivotal details, including the research design, sample size, and outcomes, to guarantee the fulfilment of inclusion criteria. Justifications were provided for excluded articles to guarantee high transparency in the process.

Resolution of Disagreements

A third reviewer was consulted to address dissent on article inclusion or exclusion emerging from the two reviewers to guarantee a consistent and unbiased selection process. The two reviewers constantly engaged

in multiple discussions to achieve an agreement, with the eligibility criteria as the reference. The third reviewer performed an independent evaluation for all disagreements, which aided in elevating the reliability of the process while reducing potential subjective bias.

PRISMA Flow

The process was visually portrayed through a PRISMA flow diagram to offer an unambiguous overview of the number of included and excluded articles in each phase. Particularly, the diagram illustrated the methodological omission of articles from the initially included articles to guarantee sufficient accountability and transparency. The final number of included articles was determined according to the rigorous, thorough, and holistic process in Figure 1.

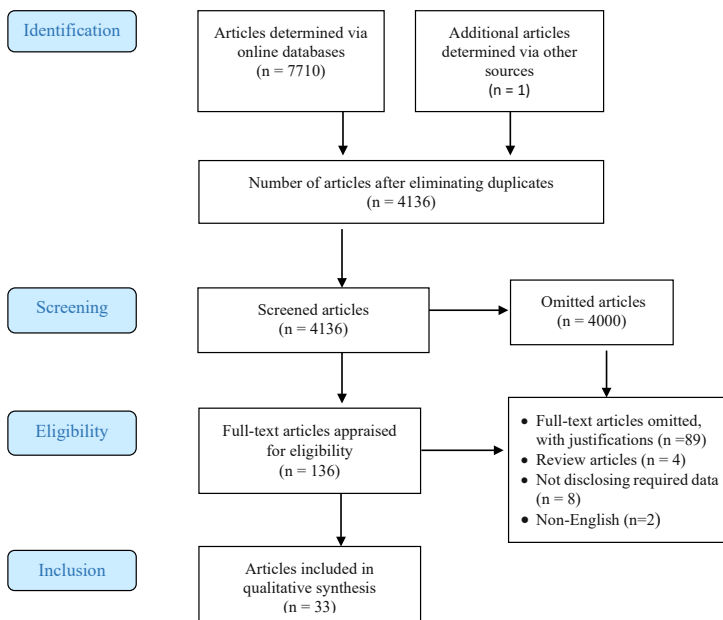


Figure 1: PRISMA Flow

Data Extraction

A holistic data extraction form was formulated to methodologically gather vital details, including the author(s), publication year, research design, sample size, key variables, and the study context, from the included articles. Mediation analysis based on the extracted data concentrated on the statistical techniques utilised to scrutinise the mediating impact of job satisfaction in the interplay between leadership, strategic communication, and job performance. The key finding section underscored the primary outcomes pertinent to the current investigation topic, which could contribute significant insights into the influences of leadership and strategic communication on work satisfaction and performance. Both independent reviewers performed data extraction based on the selected articles, which ensured adequate degrees of data reliability and accuracy. Data discrepancies were comprehensively addressed by conducting multiple sessions of discussions before attaining a consensus. Resultantly, robust data collection processes and research finding integrity were ascertained, which allowed an enriched and nuanced comprehension.

Quality Assessment

The Critical Appraisal Skills Programme (CASP) checklist, which was designed for observational research, was utilised to assess the quality of the selected articles. Hence, a more thorough evaluation of the different dimensions key to the reliability and validity of the findings was performed. The research design was examined to ensure that the methodologies in the selected articles corresponded to the research questions. Concurrently, research objectives were scrutinised to ensure high clarity. Well-defined objectives are essential to research rigour and meaningful insights. The CASP checklist was also utilised to determine the reliability and validity of the measurement scales applied to appraise the study constructs. The process was integral to ensuring that the employed measurement scales precisely scrutinised related constructs and contributed to strengthening adequate reliability and validity of the study outcomes.

In addition, the statistical approaches specific to investigating mediating variables were examined. Robust techniques are critical to deriving valid inferences. The selected articles were also categorised into low,

medium, and high quality. All low-quality articles were omitted from the final analysis. Resultantly, the CASP checklist ensured that all inferences were based on credible, robust empirical evidence to illuminate the interactions among the key variables in Malaysian GLCs.

To enhance transparency, each article was evaluated against the CASP checklist using a structured scoring framework. Each criterion was rated as “Yes” (1 point), “Partially” (0.5 points), or “No” (0 points), resulting in a cumulative quality score. Articles scoring 8–10 points were classified as high quality, 5–7.5 points as medium quality, and below 5 points as low quality. Only medium- and high-quality studies were retained for synthesis. The quality grading enabled a more systematic comparison of methodological rigour and reduced the influence of weaker study designs on the overall conclusions.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical approval is not necessary for an SLR. Nonetheless, the most optimal research practices were adhered to in the present study, including transparency in reporting and minimising bias, to ensure a precise representation of the findings from the included articles.

Results

A total of 33 articles published from 2010 to 2024 that focused on the correlation among leadership, strategic communication, and job satisfaction among Malaysian GLCs were finalised. Table 3 summarises the articles, including the first author, publication year, research design, respondents, independent variables, and key study outcomes. Table 3 summarises 33 empirical studies conducted in 2010–2024 on leadership style, strategic communication, job satisfaction and employee performance in Malaysian GLCs. When the table is examined more closely, one can see that there are several consistent theoretical and methodological trends that, together, reinforce the thesis that job satisfaction is a key explanatory variable that relates managerial practices to organisational performance.

First, the time flow of the studies indicates the transition of a simple correlational inquiry to more organized mediation-based modelling. Until 2010, and especially 2010 to 2016, the literature mainly focused on

direct relationships between leadership style and job satisfaction or job performance. For example, initial results showed medium-to-high positive relationships between transformational leadership and productivity. Nevertheless, after 2017, job satisfaction has become more frequently used as an intervening variable in studies, which is more theoretically advanced. The mediation analysis emerged the most prevalent analytical approach by 2020-2024, which indicated the shift in the examining whether leadership matters to determining its effects on performance outcomes. This development supports the logic of the current SLR, in which mechanism is stressed over individual relationships.

Second, transformational leadership is always the most powerful leadership style in the Malaysian GLCs. Most of the studies reviewed indicate that strong and statistically significant correlations between transformational practices and job satisfaction are found, with correlation coefficients often in excess of 0.60, and regression coefficients reflecting significant effect sizes. Transformational leadership behaviours, including inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation and individualised consideration, can be seen to be effective especially in the semi-bureaucratic organisation of GLCs. Employees working in hierarchical and formal governance may react well to leaders who communicate vision and individual contribution and psychological empowerment. The fact that the findings were consistent across various states in Malaysia indicates that there were contextual strengths and not organisational peculiarity.

On the contrary, transactional leadership exhibits less consistent results. Although the operational efficiency is supported through the various transactional mechanisms that are linked to reward and performance indicators, they are less reliably correlated with long-term job satisfaction. A number of studies have shown that transactional methods can deliver compliance but not intrinsic motivation. This deviation implies that, despite the fact that transactional leadership continues to be operationally pertinent in the context of GLCs, it is transformational behaviours that are more likely to trigger the performance improvements that are motivated by satisfaction.

Third, strategic communication has become a more eminent precursor of job satisfaction. Even though the leadership is the most influential independent variable in Table 3, the importance of internal and strategic communication in influencing employee perceptions is becoming increasingly evident in the literature. The statistically significant correlations between the effectiveness of communication and job

satisfaction show that transparency, clarity and alignment of organisational goals increase the morale of employees. Interestingly, the research that incorporates leadership and the strategic communication report more powerful relational patterns compared to investigations of the two variables separately. Such convergence suggests that leadership behaviours and quality of communication are interrelated phenomena that jointly affect the level of satisfaction.

The most regular trend throughout Table 3 is the mediating role of job satisfaction. A significant percentage of the studies reviewed specifically test satisfaction as an intervening variable between leadership and performance, or between communication and other outcomes of the organisation, including commitment, retention and engagement. The estimated mediation coefficients are always found to be significant indicating that managerial practices do not have a direct impact on performance very often. Rather, leadership and communication influence the psychological states of employees, which then can be converted into the behavioural results. This trend is consistent with social exchange theory where employees pay back supportive leadership and open communication with the better performance in terms of better satisfaction.

In addition to performance, job satisfaction also mediates relationships between organisational commitment, morale and turnover intention. This implies that satisfaction is a multidimensional stabilising mechanism of Malaysian GLCs. Instead of being a peripheral attitudinal outcome, it is a core organisational resource that makes loyalty stronger, the risk of turnover less and the engagement more active. The theoretical centrality of this is highlighted by such consistency in a variety of organisational outcomes.

The studies are methodologically cross-sectional and survey-based in overwhelming numbers, and the sample sizes usually range between 150 and 400 respondents. Although such designs offer statistical strength and reproducibility, they restrict the ability to make causal inferences. The high and steady correlations that are found in the studies can also indicate common method variance because of self-reported instruments. Very few studies utilize mixed-method method or qualitative research approach implying the possibility of conducting longitudinal and multi-source studies in future to enhance the causal clarity. However, the overlap of the results of the independent samples increases cumulative confidence in the mediation patterns observed.

The sampled studies include several states of Malaysia and nationwide samples, which endorse contextual generalisability in GLCs. Nevertheless, there are very limited studies that directly question the moderating role of bureaucratic governance structures in the relationships through the power distance or the pressure of public accountability. This contextual silence is a research opportunity in the future.

In summary, Table 3 shows that the empirical results are converging in favor of having a structured pathway whereby the leadership style and strategic communication impact on employee performance in terms of job satisfaction. Transformational leadership always has the most positive impact, strategic communication improves the alignment and trust, and job satisfaction is the psychological transmission process that connects the inputs of managers and the outputs of the organisations. Although methodological limitations inhibit the application of causality, the cumulative evidence is quite strong in supporting the suggested conceptual model in the manuscript.

Table 3: Summary of the Selected Article

No.	First Author	Year	Malaysian State/ Nationwide	Research Design/ Respondent (n)	Role of Job Satisfaction	Independent Variable	Key Outcome
1	Voon et al.	2010	Selangor	Survey; 200 respondents	Influenced productivity	Transactional and Transformational Leadership	Positive correlation ($r = 0.62, p < 0.05$)
2	Ali, N. N. K.	2016	Nationwide	Conference paper; MNC employees	Mediating variable between leadership and performance	Multiple Leadership Styles	Leadership significantly impacted job satisfaction, which resulted in higher performance.
3	Jamilah, J.	2016	Nationwide	Qualitative; 30 employees	Mediating variable between communication and reputation	Charismatic Leadership	Job satisfaction impacted reputation ($p < 0.05$).
4	Gharibvand et al.	2017	Penang and Kuala Lumpur	Survey, 180 respondents	Enhanced commitment	Leadership Style and Organisational Culture	High positive correlation ($r = 0.745, p < 0.001$)
5	Lim, A. P.	2017	Nationwide	Survey; 350 employees	Mediating variable between	Leadership Style	Job satisfaction directly impacted

No.	First Author	Year	Malaysian State/ Nationwide	Research Design/ Respondent (n)	Role of Job Satisfaction	Independent Variable	Key Outcome
					leadership and turnover intention		turnover intention ($\beta = 0.40, p < 0.05$).
6	Saugui, A. O.	2017	Nationwide	Survey; 150 employees	Mediating variable between leadership and performance	Leadership Style	Leadership profoundly impacted job satisfaction ($p < 0.01$).
7	Mohamad et al.	2018	Johor	Survey; 150 respondents	Increased engagement	Strategic Communication	Significant impact ($\beta = 0.55, p < 0.01$)
8	Khairuddin, S. M. H. S.	2018	Nationwide	Survey; 300 employees	Mediating variable between leadership and performance	Employee Engagement and Commitment	Positive relationship ($r = 0.67, p < 0.01$) between engagement and performance
9	Marchalina, L.	2018	Nationwide	Survey; 150 employees	Mediating variable between personality and commitment	Personality Traits	Job satisfaction was significantly associated with commitment and change acceptance (p

No.	First Author	Year	Malaysian State/ Nationwide	Research Design/ Respondent (n)	Role of Job Satisfaction	Independent Variable	Key Outcome
							< 0.05).
10	Rahman et al.	2019	Sabah	Cross-sectional; 120 respondents	Impacted morale	Leadership Style and Strategic Communication	Strong association ($r = 0.72, p < 0.01$)
11	Lim, S. H.	2019	Nationwide	Survey; 400 civil servants	N/A	N/A	Job performance was substantially correlated to job satisfaction ($r = 0.63, p < 0.05$).
12	Jawaad, M.	2019	Nationwide	Survey; 250 employees	Mediating variable between HR practices and commitment	HR Practices	Job satisfaction substantially influenced organisational commitment ($\beta = 0.60, p < 0.05$).
13	Wong et al.	2020	Kuala Lumpur	Mixed methods; 250 respondents	Enhanced retention	Participative Leadership	Favourably influenced satisfaction (mean = 4.2)
14	Supramaniam, S.	2020	Nationwide	Qualitative; 25 administrative	Mediating variable	Organisational Culture and Job	Organisational culture

No.	First Author	Year	Malaysian State/ Nationwide	Research Design/ Respondent (n)	Role of Job Satisfaction	Independent Variable	Key Outcome
				officers	between culture and performance	Satisfaction	significantly impacted job satisfaction, which resulted in higher job performance.
15	Rawashdeh, A.	2020	Nationwide	Quantitative; 200 employees	Mediating variable between transformational leadership and performance	Transformational Leadership	Job satisfaction served as a profound mediating variable ($\beta = 0.55, p < 0.01$).
16	Jameel, A. S.	2020	Nationwide	Survey; 100 academic staff	Mediating variable between leadership and performance	Leadership Style	Job satisfaction drove performance ($r = 0.65, p < 0.05$).
17	Ibrahim et al.	2021	Selangor	Survey; 300 respondents	Elevated loyalty	Leadership Style and Strategic Communication	Highly positive linkage ($r = 0.68, p < 0.01$)
18	Chin et al.	2021	Sarawak	Survey; 200 respondents	Increased satisfaction	Leadership Style and Strategic Communication	Strong association ($r = 0.75, p < 0.01$)
19	Halim, N. A.	2021	Nationwide	Survey; 200 teachers	Mediating variable	Leadership Style	Leadership positively

No.	First Author	Year	Malaysian State/ Nationwide	Research Design/ Respondent (n)	Role of Job Satisfaction	Independent Variable	Key Outcome
					between leadership and commitment		influenced organisational commitment ($\beta = 0.45, p < 0.01$).
20	Halim, H.	2021	Nationwide	Mixed-method; 150 hotel employees	Mediating variable between communication and retention	Workplace and Leadership Communication	Job satisfaction was positively correlated with retention ($p < 0.01$).
21	Almarshoodi, T. S. K. B.	2021	Nationwide	Not specified; qualitative approach	Mediating variable between communication and reputation	Charismatic Leadership Communication	Job satisfaction favourably influenced perceived reputation ($p < 0.05$).
22	Abdullah, S. S. B.	2021	Nationwide	Quantitative; 200 call centre employees	Mediating variable between leadership and commitment	Leadership Style	High job satisfaction was correlated with higher commitment ($p < 0.01$).
23	Majid, N. B. A.	2021	Nationwide	Survey; 300 employees	Mediating variable between	Internal Marketing	Job satisfaction was favourably impacted by

No.	First Author	Year	Malaysian State/ Nationwide	Research Design/ Respondent (n)	Role of Job Satisfaction	Independent Variable	Key Outcome
					marketing and satisfaction		internal marketing strategies ($p < 0.05$).
24	Zainal et al.	2022	Negeri Sembilan	Survey; 160 respondents	Affects performance	Leadership Style and Strategic Communication	Significant influence ($\beta = 0.60, p < 0.05$)
25	Hassan et al.	2022	Perak	Survey; 175 respondents	Influences outcomes	Leadership Style	Positive association ($r = 0.65, p < 0.01$)
26	Oyewobi, L. O.	2022	Nationwide	Survey; 300 facilities management employees	Mediator between leadership and commitment	Leadership Style	Strong linkage between job satisfaction and commitment ($r = 0.70, p < 0.01$).
27	Lim et al.	2023	Melaka	Survey; 240 respondents	Improves productivity	Strategic Communication	Profound impact ($\beta = 0.58, p < 0.05$)
28	Tan et al.	2023	Kuala Lumpur	Cross-sectional; 220 respondents	Drives performance	Leadership Style and Strategic Communication	Strong correlation ($r = 0.70, p < 0.01$)
29	Musa et al.	2023	Kuala Lumpur	Survey; 280 respondents	Increases motivation	Leadership Style	Substantial linkage ($r =$

No.	First Author	Year	Malaysian State/ Nationwide	Research Design/ Respondent (n)	Role of Job Satisfaction	Independent Variable	Key Outcome
							0.73, $p < 0.01$)
30	Omar et al.	2023	Johor	Survey; 150 respondents	Enhances engagement	Leadership Style and Strategic Communication	Strong positive relationship ($r = 0.76$, $p < 0.001$)
31	Nanjundeswaraswamy, T. S.	2023	Nationwide	Survey; 250 employees	Mediator between leadership and commitment	Leadership Style	Profound mediation of job satisfaction in the linkage between leadership and commitment ($p < 0.01$)
32	Aziz et al.	2024	Sarawak	Survey; 300 respondents	Influences morale	Leadership Style	Positive association ($\beta = 0.65$, $p < 0.01$)
33	Abdullah et al.	2024	Negeri Sembilan	Survey; 160 respondents	Improves retention	Strategic Communication	Profound influence ($\beta = 0.54$, $p < 0.01$)

Discussion

Transformational leadership practices were consistently associated with higher levels of job satisfaction. The integration of participative and transformational leadership practices and strategic communication could contribute to higher worker satisfaction among Malaysian GLCs. Existing empirical evidence has reflected a significant interaction among organisational leadership practices, communication effectiveness, and a conducive workplace to effectively foster job fulfilment. Furthermore, job satisfaction directly impacted workers' perceptions of personal job roles and duties and organisational climate. Transformational leadership practices also exerted a considerable influence by inspiring workers, elevating employee trust, and recognising worker contributions. Alshammari et al. (2023) uncovered those transformational leaders effectively enhanced commitment towards collective organisational goals by fulfilling intrinsic needs. Particularly, workers would become more engaged when perceiving themselves as part of the organisation, which contributed to higher job satisfaction and organisational excellence. Hence, higher degrees of organisational innovation and adaptability are necessary for GLCs to continuously transform internal structures. Nevertheless, transformational leadership practices are effective only when a conducive workplace and organisational culture are available. In addition, operational challenges owing to hierarchical and bureaucratic GLC structures can be resolved through transformational leadership practices. Conversely, prior scholars constantly demonstrated that transactional leadership led to decreased work satisfaction due to the priority of key performance indicators (KPIs) and rewards without clarifying respective obligations. Zainal et al. (2022) revealed that organisational motivation and purposeful orientation were limited, although transactional leadership specified job duties. Accordingly, GLC management should practise transformational and participative leadership to effectively boost job engagement and satisfaction. The rigidity of process compliance can be effectively accounted for by transactional leadership with the presence of other leadership styles.

The degree of Malaysian GLC employees being contented with their existing job duties was significantly shaped by the approaches utilised by leaders in communicating organisational vision, missions, values, and objectives across all levels. Effective and open communication could assist in fostering employee trust and organisational transparency while promoting higher contentment with present job roles (Guo, 2022). The positive influences emerged from equivalent treatment provided by leaders to all levels of employees. Simultaneously, collaboration across various organisational levels could contribute to higher perceived job

value and engagement among workers (Khairuddin et al., 2018). Enhanced team rapport and more positive perceptions of the current workplace would also be facilitated through frequent collaborations between different teams and departments. Meanwhile, Malaysian GLCs have constantly encountered obstacles in transparently and openly conveying organisational information across all levels. The obstacles originate from the rigid structures posed by inherent organisational bureaucracy and hierarchy, which have created a high degree of power distance. Rani et al. (2021) underscored the importance of effective, open, and transparent organisational communication to ensure that employees are satisfied with their present job responsibilities, which will translate into increased job motivation and engagement. Transparent channels for workers to convey personal perspectives, especially through virtual channels, may enable Malaysian GLC leaders to efficaciously address identified systemic and structural obstacles to higher employee trust and inclusivity.

Malaysian GLC leaders should practise increased degrees of proactive listening, cognitive empathy, emotional empathy, and alignment with workers' values, requirements, beliefs, and goals as part of the organisational communication strategies, apart from disseminating necessary information. Conveying organisational vision and missions through strategic approaches is also integral to elevating workers' job contentment and commitment towards accomplishing the stipulated organisational missions through a sufficient understanding of the importance of the missions to overall organisational effectiveness and success (Mat Yassin et al., 2024). Additionally, organisational leaders should pay closer attention to employees' satisfaction with their existing job roles and obligations, particularly in GLCs. The current SLR synthesised consistent evidence suggesting that job contentment is associated with the linkage between leadership practices and job productivity. Prior scholars, including Ahmad et al. (2021) and Ismail et al. (2023), uncovered and explicated the significance of job contentment among GLC employees for organisational leaders. Particularly, a satisfied workforce ensured a lower turnover rate, which could assist in preventing the loss of competent employees. Satisfied employees were also more committed and motivated in their present job duties to excel in every aspect, which would subsequently result in higher job performance. Concurrently, contented workers would bolster the positive influences exerted by organisational leadership practices to achieve organisational missions. Satisfied employees also perceived higher consistency with organisational goals and would exhibit more innovative demeanours and practices in daily tasks to sustain job efficiency, irrespective of different challenges posed by job responsibilities.

Similarly, long-term organisational sustainability could be contributed to strengthening by a satisfied workforce.

Both transformational and participative leadership styles should be adopted by Malaysian GLC leaders. The approaches can help reduce and address the challenges posed by inherent organisational hierarchy and bureaucracy. Effective, transparent, and accessible platforms that allow GLC employees to express their perspectives can further strengthen existing organisational communication approaches. Open communication channels also facilitate employee inclusivity and encourage input for continuous organisational improvement. In particular, digital tools and technologies enable employees to share their views more actively. Online meetings further expand opportunities for workers to express their perspectives on specific issues. Additionally, transformational leadership practices remain fundamental to organisational development. Hybrid leadership styles are equally important. Transactional leadership, when balanced with other leadership approaches, can help sustain employee motivation and operational efficiency. Both leadership practices and organisational communication should also correspond to organisational culture and values to generate higher job satisfaction (Hashim, 2025). Consequently, Malaysian GLCs can formulate more effective and adaptable work environments to improve job satisfaction, innovation, and performance. Figure 2 illustrates the proposed conceptual model, in which organisational leadership and strategic communication as independent variables, job satisfaction as the mediating variable, and employee performance as the dependent variable. Organisational leadership practices significantly influence communication approaches and workers' perceptions of job obligations.

Transformational leadership facilitates transparent and open communication and enhances job satisfaction and productivity. Contrarily, autocratic leadership practices pose communication barriers and diminish work satisfaction. Organisational leadership can assist in conveying worker needs and organisational objectives unambiguously to sustain transparent and engaged work relationships. Moreover, enhanced communication approaches can aid in promoting higher job contentment when adequate details are provided to thoroughly understand the organisational mission. Therefore, job satisfaction plays the mediating role in fostering workers' expression of workplace perceptions, such as workplace climate, organisational recognition, and professional developmental opportunities. Contented workers will also demonstrate enhanced job performance, fostered by increased levels of job motivation, engagement, and dedication. Job performance comprises

several key dimensions, including task achievement and contextual factors that promote higher team collaboration, creativity, the capability to constructively address difficulties, and effective innovation. The path-goal theory of leadership also affirms that organisational management plays a critical role in influencing job satisfaction, motivation, and performance among employees via intentional behavioural choices. Specifically, organisational leaders should appropriately calibrate and improve existing practices to sufficiently address worker needs by clarifying key organisational directions and providing effective support systems and inspiration to accomplish collective objectives. Open communication can also assist in elevating employee satisfaction and performance. Contrastingly, a directive approach will diminish organisational performance due to higher communication barriers.

Notwithstanding the consistency of findings, it is important to acknowledge that the majority of included studies employed cross-sectional and observational designs. While these studies demonstrate robust associations between leadership styles, strategic communication, job satisfaction, and employee performance, they do not permit definitive causal inference. The observed mediation patterns should therefore be interpreted as associative rather than strictly causal relationships. Longitudinal and experimental research designs are necessary to establish temporal precedence and stronger causal claims.

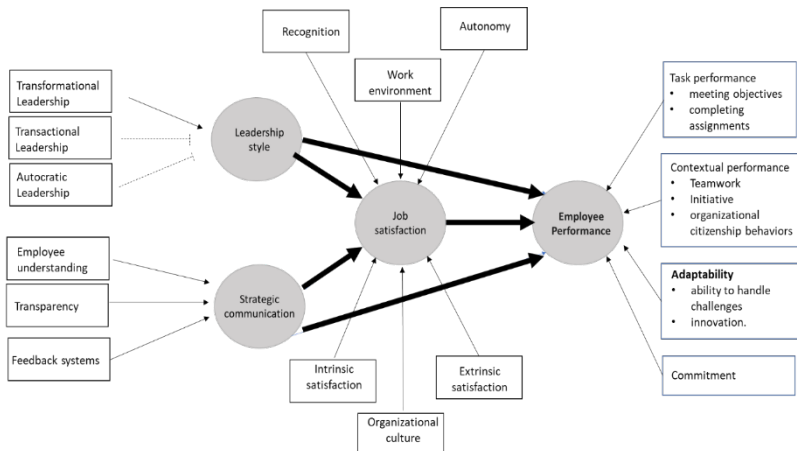


Figure 2: Proposed Conceptual Model

Limitations

This systematic review is subject to several limitations. First, most of the included studies employed cross-sectional and other observational designs, which restrict the ability to infer causality. The relationships reported between leadership styles, strategic communication, job satisfaction, and employee performance should therefore be interpreted as correlational rather than causal. Second, heterogeneity in measurement instruments, sample characteristics, and organisational contexts may limit the comparability of findings across studies. Third, the review relied on published journal articles, which may be affected by publication bias, as studies with non-significant results are less likely to be published. Finally, the focus on Malaysian GLCs enhances contextual relevance but may constrain the generalisability of the findings to private-sector organisations or GLCs in other national settings. Future research employing longitudinal or experimental designs would provide stronger evidence regarding the directionality and mechanisms underlying the observed relationships.

Conclusion

Malaysian employees anticipate organisational leaders to sustain open communication. Particularly, GLC management should effectively align leadership practices with organisational culture and values to boost employee satisfaction. Existing empirical evidence has demonstrated multiple key challenges in increasing job contentment. Significant disparities also exist in the current knowledge corpus. A plethora of scholars in the current discipline have concentrated on quantitative techniques compared to qualitative methodologies. Qualitative studies can offer more nuanced and enriched insights into how employees experience workplaces to illuminate the actual role of leadership practices and organisational communication in promoting worker satisfaction. Additionally, Malaysian GLCs constantly encounter bureaucratic obstacles to open communication and employee interactions. Leaders should develop open channels to gather employee feedback, which can aid in boosting trust across all organisational levels. Hence, more investigations can be performed in the future to thoroughly delineate the dynamics between leadership, strategic communication, and employee satisfaction by accounting for diverse organisational cultures and external environmental factors. Adaptable leadership practices and strategic communication approaches can adequately

prepare organisations to manage emergencies or unexpected challenges. Given the predominantly observational nature of the synthesised evidence, the conclusions drawn should be interpreted with caution. Future research employing longitudinal or quasi-experimental approaches would strengthen causal understanding of the mediating role of job satisfaction.

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Author's Declaration

This article has not been published previously, not under consideration for publication elsewhere. This publication has approved by all authors for publication and not been published elsewhere, printed, or electronically in the same form or in any other language without the written consent of the copyright-holder, which is Forum Komunikasi.

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