

TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP, JOB PERFORMANCE AND EMPLOYEE PERSPECTIVES: AN EXPLORATION

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to investigate the influence of transformational leadership on job performance among operators in one multinational company located in the southern region of Malaysia. In this study, transformational leadership was measured by using the Transformational Leadership Questionnaire (TLQ), while job performance was assessed by the Individual Work Performance Questionnaire (IWPQ). A total of 103 operators in one multinational company located in the southern region of Malaysia were chosen as the respondents of the study. Findings from SmartPLS reveal that there is a significant relationship between transformational leadership and job performance among the studied respondents. It explains that if a leader sets a good example for his or her team, the members of the team will work well together to complete the assigned work. Besides that, a few recommendations were given to the studied company and future research. For the studied company, the leader should provide opportunities for its members to express their opinions and creative solutions for any encountered problems. Meanwhile for future research, it is suggested to conduct this similar study by using a mixed-mode approach which combines qualitative and quantitative methods of data or information collection.

Keywords: *transformational leadership, job performance, multinational company*

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Job performance is defined as an individual's total expected value to the organization during a given period of discrete behavioural episodes (Li et al., 2022). Every organization recognizes job performance as one of the most important elements. To survive and succeed in today's competitive world, every organization has to improve employee progress regularly (Breevaart et al., 2015). Human resources are seen as the most valuable assets in the organization, having the ability to inspire any kind of innovation and transformation (Kelidbari et al., 2016). Work design, talents and expertise, leadership style, knowledge, personality, work motivation, organizational culture, work environment, work discipline, job satisfaction, dedication, and loyalty are all elements that might impact job performance (Pawirosumarto et al., 2017). One of the most important factors of effective job performance is leadership style (Basit et al., 2017). Besides, Manzoor et al. (2019) stated that low job performance is a key problem in today's workplace, manifesting itself in several ways, including low productivity, low output, service abandonment and resignation, entrance and exit delays, lower production, resource wastage, and job satisfaction. This might result in lost customers or orders, decreased client satisfaction, and eventually reduced profits and corporate security for the company. In Malaysia, failing to meet Key Performance Indications (KPIs) demonstrates an employee's incompetence because they are essential indicators of an employee's performance in the organization.

One of the leadership styles that can improve job performance is transformational leadership (Khan et al., 2020). Employees are instilled with a strong vision of their team's growth opportunities, encouraged to think critically about change initiatives, enhanced their confidence in dealing with adaptation, and emphasized the importance of performance while transcending self-interests for the team's sake by transformational leaders (Carter et al., 2012). Through changing individual attitudes and beliefs and creating collective change, transformational leadership inspires fundamental changes at the organizational level (Ghasabeh et al., 2015). According to Jyoti and Bhau (2015), transformational leaders strengthen the emotional connection or identification between the supervisor and the follower, making the follower more confident in his or her ability to achieve above and beyond expectations. According to Pinck and Sonnentag (2017), a leader's role is to ensure that the organization's employees are doing their job to enable them to reach their goals by organizing, managing, and monitoring their work in order to achieve personal achievement and company success. Religious reasons, legal and regulatory frameworks, and historical lessons have all been implemented to advance and demand transformational leaders in both public and private organizations. Transformational leadership has a direct impact on follower work outcomes such as job performance, organizational citizenship behaviours (OCBs), and innovation (Chang et al., 2021). As a result, it is crucial to understand how transformational leadership influences how successfully workers do their jobs in a company.

According to Ariyani and Hidayati (2018), transformational leadership is a style of leadership in which leaders encourage, inspire, and motivate employees to innovate and create change that will help the organization develop and succeed in the future. Buil et al. (2019) defined that transformational leadership produces positive changes in those who are led and are engaged in the success of each person involved in the process. Based on Jaiswal and Dhar (2015), transformational leadership is a management concept that stimulates and inspires individuals to innovate and develop new ways for a company to improve and grow in the future. Yasin et al. (2013) stated that the process by which leaders and followers help each other progress to a higher level of morality and motivation is how transformational leadership is described. In this study, transformational leadership refers to the leaders who can motivate their employees to become innovative employees for the success of the organization. Furthermore, the researcher will adopt a set of questionnaires which is the Transformational Leadership Questionnaire (TLQ) by Jyoti and Dev (2015) in order to measure the level of transformational leadership in an organization. There are four dimensions that are being measured in this research which are idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration.

Based on Motowidlo and Kell (2012), job performance is defined as an individual's discrete behavioural episodes throughout a specific time's overall expected value to the company. Job performance refers to how successfully or badly an employee performs their work responsibilities and how quickly they achieve deadlines or demands (Kundi et al., 2020). Pradhan and Pradhan (2015) stated

that job performance is the efficiency with which job occupants do their given responsibilities, which leads to the accomplishment of the organization's vision while compensating both the organization and the individual accordingly. Job performance, according to Wu (2019), is defined as the work results accomplished for each job function during a certain time. For an operational definition, job performance is defined as a result of work achieved by a person in performing the tasks assigned to them based on experience, skill, and diligence including time. In this study, the researcher will adopt the Individual Work Performance Questionnaire (IWPQ) by Koopmans et al. (2014) to measure the level of job performance in the organization which consists of three dimensions. The dimensions are task performance scale, contextual performance scale, and counterproductive work behaviour scale. The objective of this article is to identify the relationship between transformational leadership and job performance among operators in one multinational company located in the southern region of Malaysia.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Transformational Leadership

2.1.1 Overview of Transformational Leadership

According to Jaroliya and Gyanchandani (2021), transformational leaders motivate their high-level demands for growth and development, accomplish performance beyond expectations, create a climate of mutual trust, and inspire their colleagues to go beyond their self-interests for the sake of the group. Employees are more likely to respond positively to change, both behaviorally and attitudinally, as a result of such leadership influence (Dubey et al., 2023). However, Buil et al. (2019) argued that transformational leadership is currently the most widely accepted paradigm in the leadership literature and is defined as a style of leadership that transforms followers to rise above their self-interest by altering their ideals, morals, values, and interests motivating them to perform better than initially expected. Furthermore, Cetin and Kinik (2015) stated that transformational leaders change followers' personal beliefs to support the organization's vision and goals by creating an atmosphere conducive to relationship development and generating a climate of trust in which visions may be shared. Transformational leadership has gradually become the approach of choice for most of the study and implementation of leadership theory as a result of such an influence on followers.

Moreover, this style of leadership is a key prerequisite for developing the collective confidence or strength necessary for organizations to succeed when dealing with difficult challenges (Whiteoak, Abell and Becker, 2023). Transformational leadership, according to Seltzer and Bass (1990) is a purposeful process that provides instruments for organizational growth through shared empowerment and trusted leadership. Transformational leaders show a clear understanding of the organization's viewpoints while serving as an ideal role model for improving acceptance of the group's objectives and goals assisting the organization's workforce in achieving the intended goals (Mortazavi and Nikkar, 2014). Based on Alqatawenah (2018), transformational leadership may inspire individuals to reach higher mental states by motivating them to perform at their best and developing their skills. According to the theory of transformational leadership, a leader is someone who inspires followers to act in the best interests of the group as a whole and to look out for one another's interests (Odumeru and Ifeanyi, 2013). Through several factors, transformational leadership improves followers' motivation, morale, and performance. Based on Siangchokyoo et al. (2019), the basis of the theory of transformational leadership is the idea that followers change as a result of their interactions with certain leaders. The transformational leadership theory aims to explain variations in leadership efficiency. This model is being used to develop a research instrument by Jyoti and Dev (2015). The dimensions used by these two researchers were similar and very related to each other. In this study, the researcher will use the transformational leadership model rather than the previous model. This is because the components in this model are more convenient to be investigated and this model can consider long-term vision.

2.1.2 Theory and Dimensions of Transformational Leadership

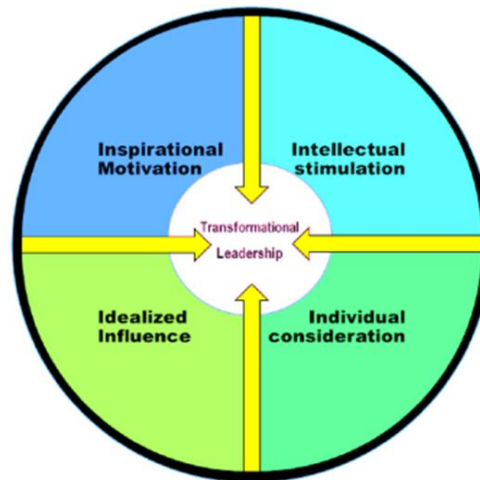


Fig 1: Transformational Leadership Model
(Source: Bass and Avolio, 1994: 28)

Figure 1 shows the transformational leadership model proposed by Bass and Avolio (1994). Bass and Avolio (1994) comprise four dimensions which are idealized influence, inspirational motivation, individualized consideration, and intellectual stimulation. Bass and Avolio (1994) are among the first researcher in the transformational leadership field. There are four dimensions that will measure the transformational leadership variable as suggested by Bass and Avolio (1994). Those dimensions are idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration (Jyoti and Dev, 2015). The first dimension of transformational leadership is idealized influence. Idealized influence is the potential of the leader to gain the admiration and respect of his followers, causing them to follow the leader (Alqatawenah, 2018). The two types of idealized influence are idealized influence behaviour and idealized influence attributes, where leaders behave admirably and are willing to put others' interests ahead of their own to advance the goals of their workgroup (Afshari, 2023).

The second dimension of transformational leadership is known as inspirational motivation. Inspiration motivation is influenced by how well leaders motivate and appeal to followers by setting ambitious goals and showing excitement about achieving those goals. High expectations are expressed, symbols are used to focus impacts, and significant aims are expressed by transformational leaders to motivate their followers to do great accomplishments. Transformational leaders frequently serve as mentors to their subordinates and pay great attention to the different characteristics among them (Ugoani et al., 2015). According to Belias and Koustelios (2014), this conduct entails creating and expressing an alluring vision, directing the activities of subordinates through symbols and imagery, and modelling acceptable behaviour. Meanwhile, intellectual stimulation is the third dimension of transformational leadership. Ddiniyah (2014) stated that the function of leaders in stimulating followers' creativity and invention is addressed through intellectual stimulation. The leader encourages followers to investigate innovative approaches, possibilities for learning, and solutions to challenging issues. They promote imagination and creativity by challenging assumptions about conventional methods of accomplishing things. Additionally, they refrain from openly criticizing failures, mistakes, errors, or opposing viewpoints or methods. When solving problems, these leaders promote and use both reasoning and intuition (Nusair et al., 2012).

Last but not least, the fourth dimension of transformational leadership is individualized consideration. This dimension is one of the most crucial parts of transformational leadership as the leaders are responsible for paying attention to each person individually (Jandaghi et al., 2009).

Chaoping and Kan (2008) stated that individualized attention involves offering each follower support, coaching, and encouragement at the workplace. The leader interacts with his or her followers depending on their potential and individual characteristics. Individuals are shown personalized interest by the leader in order to form a solid partnership with them by providing fresh learning opportunities based on their skills and problems. This might be quite useful in growing employees' diverse talents in the workplace so that they can better contribute to the organization's operation and performance (Sakat and Ye, 2021).

2.2 Job Performance

2.2.1 Brief Overview of Job Performance

Employees are critical aspects of an organization and their performance is a major determinant in the company's success (Wambugu, 2014). This statement is supported and agreed upon by Shamsuddin and Rahman (2014), who argue that job performance is an organizational practice that has a substantial impact on organizational outcomes. Employees' performance is defined as a set of behaviours that may be evaluated, whether they are positive or negative (Jalalkama et al., 2016). Othman and Muhsin (2020) stated that in order to finish their work in terms of performance, it is the component that the company works by assigning tasks to employees. According to Jalalkamali et al. (2016), job performance includes values, grades, achievement, and outcomes related to work. Other than that, job performance involves employees' behaviour that is under their control and contributes to organizational goals (Campbell and Wiernik, 2015). Based on Mihalcea (2014), performance should be understood as both an activity and an evaluation process. Siddiqui (2014) compiled data from prior studies that suggested that maximum employee performance leads to organizational profits and success. Furthermore, performance is defined as the fulfilment of organizational values, the attainment of standards, or the achievement of organizational goals (Othman and Muhsin, 2020). Inefficient work performance, on the other hand, has been connected to decreased productivity, organizational effectiveness, and earnings (Okoye and Ezejiofor, 2013). In addition, the capacity to measure performance with the appropriate instruments is just as important as defining it (Ramos-Villagrasa, 2019).

According to Koopmans et al. (2011), the many dimensions are not only linked to the overall factor of job performance but also to one another. Task performance is separate from contextual performance, yet they are highly connected. The distinction between task and contextual performance may become more blurred as the nature of today's work changes (Daryoush, 2013). When task performance is defined as what a person "will do" in general, it is more strongly linked to counterproductive work behaviour than when task performance is defined as what a person "can accomplish" maximally. This is attributable to the fact that actual job performance is generally evaluated over a longer time, during which time counterproductive work behaviours are more likely to occur (Dalal et al., 2014). The components in this model focus on the changing nature of job performance as a result of the interconnection and unpredictability of work systems. It is considered that job performance theory is a comprehensive theory that addresses the sources of work system uncertainty from a variety of perspectives. Furthermore, this theory makes it easy to measure pertinent employee behaviours or activities because all three dimensions are connected to one another. It is difficult to detect or quantify employee performance since numerous dimensions describe the parts of job performance in a limited direction. As a conclusion, using this theory to examine the output of work performance level is the best theory in this research.

2.2.2 Theory and Dimensions of Job Performance

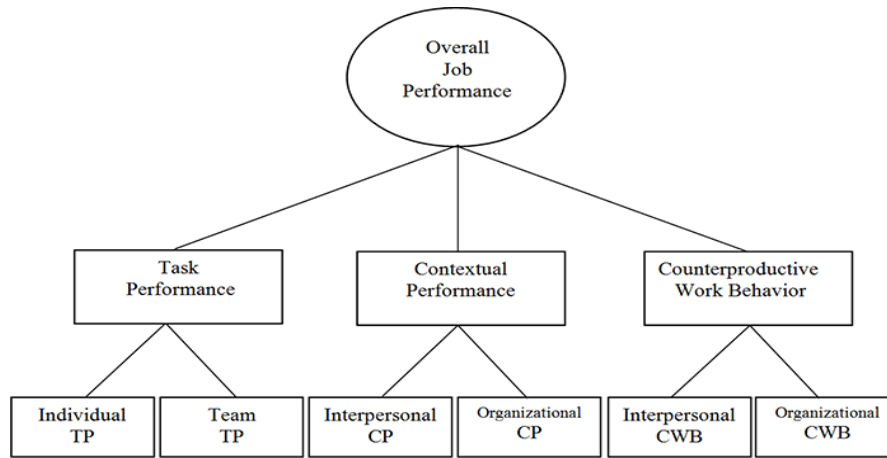


Fig 2: Job Performance Model

(Source: Koopmans, Bernaards, Hildebrandt, Schaufeli, Vet and Beek, 2011)

Based on the Koopmans et al. (2011) model, there are three dimensions will be used to measure job performance which are task performance, contextual performance, and counterproductive work behavior. According to Koopmans et al. (2011), one of the job performance dimensions is task performance. Jalalkamali et al. (2016) stated that task performance is seen to be the most important component of work behaviours, referred to as "overall job performance" in earlier studies. Task performance is defined as the skill with which individuals do the core substantive or technical tasks fundamental to his or her profession and has typically received the most attention (Koopmans et al., 2014). Task performance is also defined as the ability to satisfy requirements while also demonstrating knowledge and expertise. A part of that, contextual performance also plays an important role in examining job performance in an organization. Behaviors that support the organizational, social, and psychological context in which the technological core must operate, are defined as contextual performance. Unlike task performance, contextual performance is based on one's attitude and compassion toward others rather than one's ability or talent (Pradhan and Pradhan, 2015). Daryoush (2013) stated that contextual performance refers to activities that are not directly connected to an employee's job but nonetheless have a good impact on the company. Other than proactive personality, work-related tasks, teamwork, enthusiasm, and initiative are all examples of contextual performance (Koopmans et al., 2011).

Another dimension explained in the Koopman et al. (2011) model is counterproductive work behavior. Counterproductive work behaviour is described as behaviour that is harmful to the organization's well-being (Koopmans et al., 2014). According to Marcus et al. (2013), counterproductive work behaviours (CWBs) are any voluntary conduct by employees that may threaten an organization's or stakeholders' legitimate interests or cause harm. Bragg and Bowling (2018) stated that empirical study on counterproductive work behaviour, on the other hand, demonstrates that multidimensional methods can be effective. Counterproductive work behaviour generates a stressful environment that has a negative impact on individuals' task and context performance, as well as organizational effectiveness (Rehman and Shahnawaz, 2018).

2.3 Relationship of Transformational Leadership and Job Performance

Some local and international studies have looked into the relationship between transformational leadership and job performance in the past. Various industries have been involved in this kind of research such as banking (Tse and Chiu, 2014), education (Jyoti and Bhau, 2015), service organizations (Carter et al., 2012), SMEs (Manzoor et al., 2019), medical (Lai et al., 2020), and hospitality (Buil et al., 2018). Khan et al. (2020) found that transformational leadership is correlated with job performance. Carter et al. (2012) described the quality of manager-employee interactions as representing social exchanges in which the two parties engage based on shared commitments, respect, and trust. Meanwhile, in study by Lai et al. (2020) described that different actions are displayed by transformational leaders in order to develop and strengthen the psychological states that contribute to members' job performance. Transformational leadership predicts work performance strongly, whereas corporate social responsibility (CSR) considerably moderates the influence of transformational leadership on job performance (Manzoor et al., 2019). Another study by Jyoti and Bhau (2015) stated that instead of just achieving compliance, transformational leadership motivates followers to exceed expectations by changing their beliefs, attitudes, and values. Therefore, the hypothesis is developed as follows:

H1: There is a significant relationship between transformational leadership and job performance among operators in one multinational company located in the southern region of Malaysia.

3.0 METHODOLOGY

The target population of this study was the operators in one multinational company in the southern region of Malaysia. A total of 103 operators in the studied company have been randomly selected as the respondents of the study. This study is a cross-sectional study and used a quantitative method to collect data via the distribution of a questionnaire. The transformational Leadership Questionnaire (TLQ) by Jyoti and Dev (2015) was used to measure transformational leadership. TLQ consists of 20 items with each question being a self-descriptive statement of the respondent's particular job performance. It measures four dimensions that consist of idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. The higher the score of each subscale, the greater the person identifies that particular dimension with their respective work environment (Hester, 2010). The score of answers ranged from very disagree (1) to very agree (5). On the other hand, The Individual Work Performance Questionnaire (IWPQ) was used to measure operators's job performance. This instrument has 18 items that employed a 4-point scale ranging from seldom (0) to always (4) and from never (0) to often (4). IWPQ consists of three sub-constructs that are task performance, contextual performance, and counterproductive work behavior. Both instruments were proven to be highly reliable after a pilot study to check on their reliability was completed (TLQ: $\alpha = 0.95$, IWPQ: $\alpha = 0.84$). A structural equation modelling analysis by adopting SmartPLS was used to investigate the relationship between transformational leadership and job performance in the studied company.

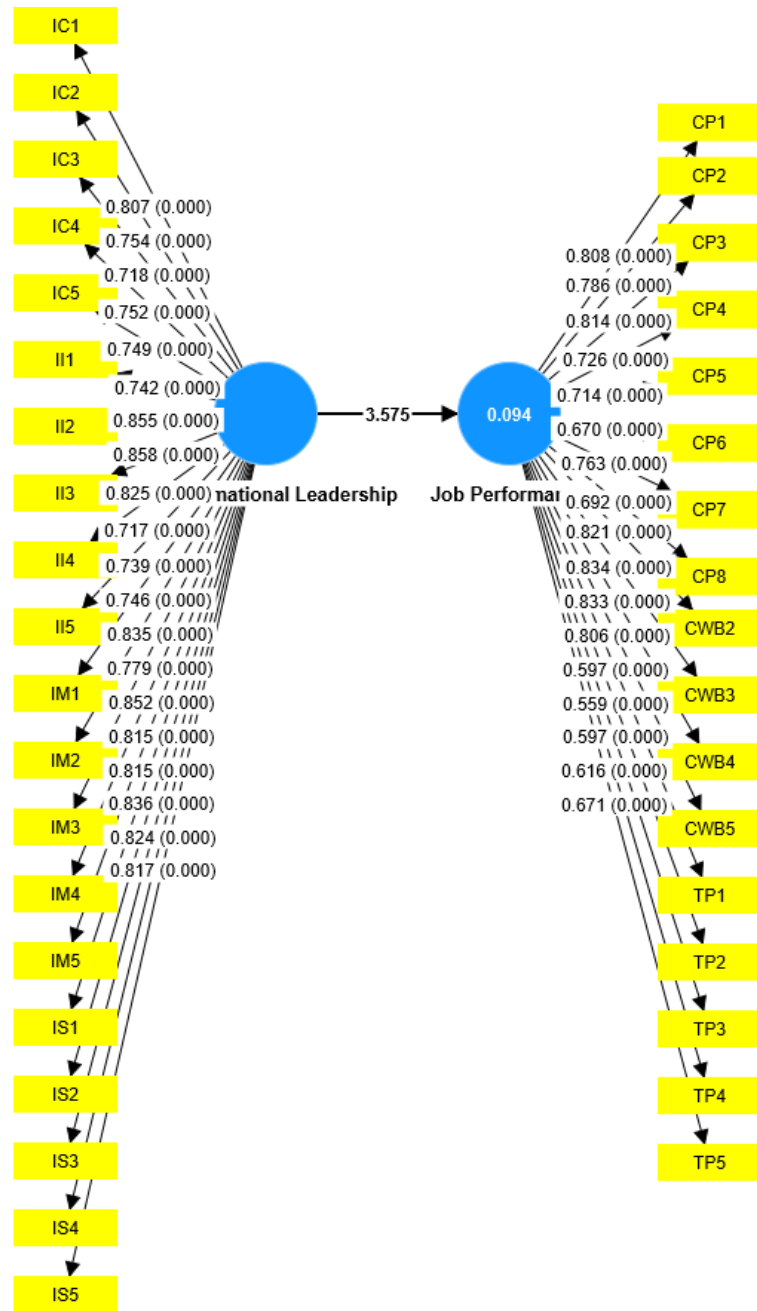
4.0 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The data obtained were analysed through Smart PLS version 4.0.9.5 statistics. This is because Partial Least Square (PLS) is able to analyse all the constructs involved at the same time (Farooq and Markovic, 2016). Thus, in this study, researchers use SmartPLS software based on structural equation modelling (SEM) using the PLS method. SEM is the second-generation multivariate data analysis method most commonly used for research in the social sciences because it can test theoretically supported linear and additional causal models (Haenlin and Kaplan, 2004). Thus, the findings of this study are presented in Table 1 and the analysis of a model to measure the relationship between transformational leadership and job performance is shown in Figure 3.

Table 1: Summary of analysis findings on the relationship between transformational

and job performance

Hypothesis	Relationship	Path Coeff	Std Error	t-value	Decision	R ²
H1	Transformational Leadership → Job Performance	0.406	0.086	3.575	Supported	0.094



II=Idealized Influence, IC=Individualized Consideration, IM=Inspirational Motivation, IS=Intellectual Stimulation, CP=Contextual Performance, TP=Task Performance, CWB=Counterproductive Behaviour

Figure 3 Analysis of the Model to Measure the Relationship between Transformational Leadership and Job Performance

Based on Ramayah et al. (2018), the effect of the relationship between two relationships can be known through the analysis of R^2 . The findings show that the value of R^2 obtained is 0.094. This means that the effect of transformational leadership on job performance is 9.4% in this study. The t-value obtained is 3.575 and according to Ramayah et al. (2018), this t-value explains that the relationship between these two variables is significant. As a result, the hypothesis of the study is supported. It describes that good practices on transformational leadership among leaders contribute to better job performance among its members. This is due to the fact that when leaders show a positive role model for their members, the members will respect the leaders in return. As a result, they will follow all the orders from the leaders and eventually improve their skills to complete the task well. This is in line with the findings of Manzoor et al. (2019) which highlight that supportive leaders play a significant role in inspiring employees to perform well at work. On top of that, transformational leaders are essential to reduce the number of unproductive employees inside the organization. Due to the individualized consideration trait in transformational leadership, the leaders will be able to provide the incompetent employees more attention and guide them to perform in the desired manner. This finding corroborates the study of Tanuwijaya and Jakaria (2022) that transformational leaders can treat underperforming employees as individuals in need of attention by giving them the skills they need to finally perform better.

5.0 CONCLUSION

Evidence from the Department of Statistics Malaysia (2016) and Bank Negara Malaysia (2017) reveals that poor productivity among employees contributes to a decline in job performance in Malaysia's manufacturing sector. This is the result of ineffective leaders who failed to take into account how to manage their followers that fit in today's work environment. The current study was designed to investigate the relationship between transformational leadership and job performance among operators in one multinational company located in the southern region of Malaysia. According to the empirical findings, it is interesting to note that motivating followers to do better at work requires leaders who are aware of and responsive to their followers' needs. The leaders need to understand that each follower enters the organization with a distinct drive due to the different academic background, upbringing and social pressure. Therefore in order to improve employee performance, the leaders must be able to identify the differences and address them through the use of transformational leadership. Although the current study is based on a small number of samples, these significant findings have added to the body of knowledge about transformational leadership and job performance particularly in the context of a multinational company operating in Malaysia.

As a suggestion to the studied company, top management should nurture and allow an open organizational culture among its employees. This culture includes practising a dynamic approach to leading followers by encouraging, inspiring and motivating employees to shape their future success. In this matter, transformational leaders need to encourage employees to express their opinions to allow employees to come up with creative solutions for new problems. By allowing everyone to voice their opinions, it can help to boost inspiration in team members. For instance, a team leader needs to give the chance for team members to voice and express their opinions because critical thinking is needed in decision-making and solving problems. Team leaders must encourage team members to make decisions on their own, evaluate results, and teach them to regularly make wise judgments in support of desired

objectives and outcomes to solve problems. These essential requirements must be met if employers want their employees as well as the leaders to perform at their best.

Moreover, instead of making suggestions to the organization, a recommendation is also made to future scholars who could be interested in working on this subject. For example, a future researcher may consider using a qualitative method, which might produce richer and depth results than those of a quantitative approach. In contrast to qualitative research, where the researcher acts as the tool for data gathering, quantitative research uses questionnaires as its primary data collecting method. The process of interviewing respondents will include the researcher in order to get the data. Compared to quantitative-based research, it will provide more specific data. However, it will take considerably longer than using a questionnaire, which is less costly and better suited to gathering data from a large number of respondents. More objective data will be provided by the questionnaire, and software may quickly generate the output from the result.

Despite all the findings and recommendations, the present study has several limitations that can be identified from this research. The quantitative method applied in this study is the first of several limitations that may be found in this research. The questionnaires prevent the researcher from asking more questions by only providing a limited number of information sources. However, as compared to qualitative approaches, the benefit of this quantitative method is its ability to eliminate biases during data collection. The information in the qualitative method is most likely biased, especially during the interviewing process. Since researchers are human, they tend to be biased and might have various perspectives on different people because they will often reflect behaviours and weaknesses. Therefore, using a combination of procedures, such as distributing questionnaires and conducting interviews with respondents, is a more effective way to get high-quality data.

Secondly, the fact that this study only included one multinational company also became another limitation of this study. As a result, the data can only reflect the company itself, making it impossible to generalize the information and the outcome is not transferable to another company. However, it may serve as a case study for a study that aims to establish the relationship between the transformational leadership and job performance of the operators in a multinational company. It would be beneficial to this research if other studies were conducted in the same area of study and helped in the development of a trend. In conclusion, this study contributes to the literature by demonstrating that good transformational leadership correlates with good job performance in the organization.

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