

Relationship between Leadership Style, Self Esteem and Organizational Commitment among Students from Research Universities in Malaysia

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Abstract

Research showed that leadership styles could influence the organizational commitment of workers in work organization. Failure of leadership at work could cause undesirable impact on workers as well as organizations, such as affecting the efficiency and performance which could bring burden to the organization as a whole. This study aimed to observe the relationship between leadership styles, self esteem and organizational commitment among students who joined student organizations in five research universities in Malaysia. In this study, leadership styles were categorized into transformational leadership, transactional leadership and Laissez-Faire leadership. Organizational commitment was divided into three dimensions which are affective commitment, continuance commitment and normative commitment. Questionnaires were distributed through purposive sampling to one hundred and seven respondents from five research universities in Malaysia. Correlation analysis exposed that transformational leadership has a positive and significant relationship with self esteem and three dimensions of organizational commitment. Transactional leadership did not show a significant relationship with self esteem and organizational commitment. Laissez-Faire leadership showed a negative and significant relationship with self esteem and three dimensions of organizational commitment. These findings specify that leaders are encouraged to practice transformational leadership and avoid Laissez-Faire leadership in order to achieve organization aims.

Keywords: Leadership Styles, Self-Esteem, Organizational Commitment, Students Organization/Club.

Introduction

Students are an important asset to guarantee the country's future excellence. Those groups bear the obligation of society to improve their own skills to fulfill the vision of the university and even the vision of the country. As one of the main alternatives, most universities in Malaysia have provided a foundation or platform which is student organization activities that

are expected to be able to produce students who have soft skills in various aspects. In general, student organizations are organizations, clubs or associations established and managed by university students themselves. Examples of student organizations that exist in local Malaysian universities include university student representative councils, state student clubs, college student executive councils, faculty student associations, clubs and uniformed bodies such as SUKSI Kor, BSMM and PALAPES TD.

According to Rosch's book (2017), student organizations function as units that can develop leadership skills, values and behaviors and are closely related to the success of professional organizations in the community. Sidik et al (2020) also stated that student involvement in various activities will equip them with knowledge and skills in line with current educational developments. Hazilah et al (2013) defined soft skills as skills that focus on the formation of personal skills, humanity and relationships with people. While Sabil et al (2021) stated soft skills as an element that uses generic skills that cross various learning domains that include aspects of personality and group work. Soft skills such as communication skills, leadership skills, working in groups and personal appearance are important for prospective graduates to learn in order to improve their marketability when entering the workplace in the future. In fact, the National Education Philosophy also states that the main goal of the national education system is to produce individuals who are balanced and harmonious in terms of physical, emotional, spiritual and intellectual aspects based on a firm hold and faith in God. The need for competent young national leaders may be more critical than what society expects. According to the former Minister of Youth and National Sports, Yang Berhormat (YB) Syed Saddiq, young leaders should not be considered the future leaders of the country anymore, but are the leaders of today (Kamarudin, 2020). A statement from YB Syed Saddiq, one of the famous youth leaders in Malaysia, has shown that the country is in dire need of a new generation of leadership these days. The former Prime Minister of Malaysia, Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad also stated that many young Malaysians have the potential to become great leaders if given the opportunity and polished in the right way (Musa, 2019). Indeed, the country of Malaysia needs more young leaders with potential and quality to ensure that the country of Malaysia continues to move forward.

The involvement of female students in the activities of student organizations at local universities can have a positive impact on the development of various aspects for these female students who are potential future leaders. Smith and Chenoweth's (2015) study shows that students who are involved in extracurricular organizations rate themselves higher in leadership traits and behaviors, compared to students who are not involved in student organizations. Phillips et al (2015) also found that the involvement of pharmaceutical students in professional organizations has a strong influence on leadership skills, collaboration, confidence and time management. However, if the students do not give a high commitment in the organization they participate in, the low level of participation will result in the project or organization's plan being seriously affected. For example, representative organizations of student leaders including the Student Representative Council that do not get a high level of commitment from their members will face difficulties in carrying out their responsibilities to guarantee the welfare and defend the rights of students. At the same time, the commitment given by members in the organization will cause the level of tendency of members to leave the organization to be higher (Luz et al., 2018). Such a situation will cause an organization to

lose human resources and may face difficulties in continuing the organization's operations. In the long run, the organization may be difficult to sustain due to insufficient human resources.

This kind of impact on student organizations in universities is great because student organizations are one of the important platforms to train and produce potential graduates who are capable not only in the academic field but also in the aspect of soft skills. Failure to maintain an organization in the university is a great loss to the university because of the loss of a platform to form students who are balanced in every aspect. The quality of graduates will decline and may affect outside industries due to a decrease in the level of ability for future labor resources. In fact, a graduate tracking study conducted by the Ministry of Higher Education in 2018 has found that almost 60% of 51,000 university graduates are still unemployed one year after graduation (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2018). This problem should not be underestimated because it has the potential to have a negative influence on the local economy and even the national economy in the future. In the organizational context, psychological factors including the level of self-esteem play an important role in ensuring that the followers in the organization are in a healthy state both physically and mentally. According to Gonzalez et al (2015), self-esteem was found to have a relationship with stress factors related to emotions. Furthermore, the study of Carter and Garber (2011), negative thoughts related to appreciation and self-evaluation are among the main factors that cause stress and even depression symptoms. Supported by the study of Yawen et al (2021) found that lack of self-esteem can contribute to the level of stress of international students who continue their studies in China. Based on the findings of the study above, the level of self-esteem should be emphasized in ensuring that followers are always in a healthy state, especially mentally. If the level of self-esteem of followers is low in an organization, the negative impact on the emotions and behavior of followers will cause difficulties in carrying out their duties and responsibilities well. This possibility will also affect the functionality and smooth operation of an organization.

A leader is a very important role or example in an organization. The same goes for student leaders in university organizations. University organizations need authoritative and qualified leaders to guide other students to meet operational objectives. Oktavyana (2021) also stated that leadership style can be formed through student involvement in university organizations. If an organization is not led by a suitable leader, the leader will lose the trust and confidence of his followers. For example, Breevaart and Zacher's (2019) study shows that trust in leaders and leader effectiveness decrease when leaders display a Laissez-faire leadership style. Over time, conflicts will occur in the organization and subsequently the image of the organization will be affected. As a result, organizations whose image is damaged in the university are unable to attract current and new students to join the organization. In the long run, the organization may have difficulty continuing operations and eventually be forced to liquidate. The dissolution of the organization that carries the university's name may also have a negative impact on the university's image. In that context, the leadership style possessed by the student leader plays an important role in determining the development of the organization. Apart from student organizations in universities, the influence of leadership styles can also be seen in industrial organizations today. Due to globalization factors and the increasing level of competition, organizations or corporations are increasingly emphasizing the quality of leaders to ensure corporate development in the long term (Baporikar, 2017). In fact according to Mukherjee (2020), effective leadership is a predominant requirement for every organization

to survive in the global market. Furthermore, today's real industrial organization is not only focused on profit, but also needs to maintain the ability to compete. In order to maintain these abilities, industrial organizations need to constantly identify the leadership styles that the youth have today, as well as how different leadership styles can affect the context in an organization. Quality or suitable new leaders are needed to ensure that organizations and corporations in the industrial world can continue to compete with the outside world.

If the leadership style is not suitable for a specific organizational context, then various problems in the organization are likely to arise, among which are the instability of the organizational structure and the confusion of human resources. As a result, the country's economy may experience great challenges. Due to leadership problems that exist in a country, foreign investors may lose confidence in the development of the local industry. According to the statement of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development in January 2021, foreign direct investment in Malaysia has decreased by two-thirds to only 2.5 billion US dollars in 2020. This drastic decrease has been attributed by experts with the problem of political leadership that is risky in Malaysia in these few years (Teoh, 2021). The scenario shows that the appropriate leader not only affects the country's economy indirectly, but also has a direct impact if seen from the country's political perspective. Therefore, industrial organizations and corporations need to know about the appropriate leadership style to ensure stability in the organization, and then lead the organization, corporate and even the country to continue to grow in the future.

Based on the discussion above, three study objectives have been formed in accordance with the purpose of the study. The objectives of the study specifically are;

- i. Identify the leadership styles possessed by students who become leaders of student organizations in five Malaysian research universities.
- ii. Examine the pattern of the level of self-esteem owned and the level of organizational commitment of students in participating in student organizations in five Malaysian research universities.
- iii. Examine the relationship between leadership style and the level of self-esteem, the relationship between leadership style and organizational commitment, as well as the relationship between the level of self-esteem and organizational commitment of students involved in student organizations at five Malaysian research universities.

Literature Review

According to Northouse (2001), leadership is explained as a process by which an individual influences a group of other individuals to achieve a common goal. Kotter (2001) defines leadership style as a leader's method to guide, implement plans and motivate others. Fitria et al (2017) also defined leadership style as a model used by organizational leaders to influence followers, with the aim of directing and mobilizing all activities that lead to organizational goals. Leadership style also refers to the behavior or characteristics of a leader in directing, motivating, guiding and managing a group of individuals (Cherry, 2019).

The study of Barbuto and Cummins-Brown (2007) has explained that the ability to use and apply leadership behavior as a whole is the aspect that distinguishes effective leaders from ineffective ones. The Full Range Leadership Model expressed by James Macgregor Burns in 1978 has categorized leadership styles into transformational styles and transactional styles.

In general, transformational leaders are more focused on the development of followers and motivating followers to achieve success, while transactional leadership style involves a leadership approach through social conversion. Transformational leadership style includes four main elements, namely ideal influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation and individual consideration (Stafford, 2010). Transactional leadership style consists of elements of contingent rewards, neutral management and Laissez-Faire leadership (Barbuto & Cummins-Brown, 2000). Based on Stafford (2010), Laissez-Faire leadership style is not categorized as one of the elements in transactional leadership style because Laissez-Faire leaders do not actually play the role of leaders.

According to Mcleod's article (2008), Carl Rogers defined self-esteem as the degree to which an individual likes, accepts and agrees with himself, as well as the extent to which an individual considers himself a valuable person. Self-esteem involves the level of self-evaluation that can be divided into positive views and negative views. For individuals who have a high level of self-esteem, among the characteristics they possess include confidence in their own abilities, self-acceptance, not worrying about what others think and being optimistic. While for individuals who lack in terms of self-esteem, the characteristics they have are lack of confidence, the desire to be like others, always worrying about what others think and being pessimistic. Organizational commitment refers to the tendency to engage in an organizational activity consistently based on an individual's view of the gains or losses associated with the continuation of the activity (Metin & Asli, 2018). The study of Novitasari et al (2020) also define organizational commitment as an aspect of followers' feelings that bring about desires, needs and responsibilities towards the organization. Among the theories of organizational commitment include the concept introduced by John Meyer and Natalie Allen (Meyer & Allen, 1984, 1997; Allen & Meyer, 1990). According to Meyer and Allen, organizational commitment can be divided into three, namely affective commitment, continuance commitment and normative commitment. Affective commitment exists when individuals fully accept the organization's goals and values. Continuance commitment refers to individuals who choose to remain in the organization for the rewards that will be received after contributing to the organization. Normative commitment refers to the commitment of individuals who remain in an organization based on the level of social norms and expected behavior.

Muhammd, et al., study (2020) found that leadership behavior can affect job satisfaction, organizational culture and organizational commitment among heads in public universities in Malaysia. In line with the findings of a study by Ali & Fauzi (2021) which shows that the leadership style in the university is able to influence the achievement of performance among the university lecturers involved. According to the study of Arokiasamy and Tat (2020), transformational leadership has a positive and significant influence on work morale and work engagement. Raman and Thannimalai's (2020) study shows that both transformational and transactional leadership styles have a significant influence on the commitment of school teachers. However, the transactional leadership style has a more significant influence compared to the transformational leadership style.

The study of Katper et al (2020) found that transformational leadership style has a significant impact on organizational commitment while transactional leadership style has a less significant influence on organizational commitment. The study of Harb et al (2020) found that

both transformational and transactional leadership styles were positively correlated with organizational commitment. The study of Widyanti et al (2020) showed that the diversity of leadership styles significantly affects organizational commitment. Overall, it has been proven that an effective leadership style is able to influence the performance and characteristics of its followers in an organization. However, research aimed at student organizations in universities is still under-implemented and it needs attention so that all potential future leaders know and are wise to use the appropriate leadership style to carry out their responsibilities in the future.

Methodology

Research Design

The research method used by the researcher is a quantitative method through a questionnaire survey method. The questionnaire survey method was adapted in this study to collect demographic information, leadership style, level of self-esteem and level of organizational commitment. The questionnaire was distributed to the respondents through an online method which is the distribution of Google Form links.

Sample Study

In this study, the purposive sampling method was applied by focusing on students who joined student organizations in five Malaysian research universities, namely Universiti Malaya (UM), Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM), Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM), Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM)) and Universiti Teknologi Malaysia (UTM). Five research universities were chosen as study locations because many famous leaders are alumni of those universities. For example, the 4th and 7th Prime Minister of Malaysia, Tun Dr. Mahathir bin Mohamad from UM, the current Director General of Health Malaysia Dr Noor Hisham Abdullah from UKM, the current Chief Minister of Penang Chow Kon Yeow from USM, the current Vice Chancellor of UPM Prof. Dr. Mohd Roslan Sulaiman from UPM, the 7th Chief Minister of Melaka State YAB Tuan Haji Adly Zahari from UTM. The success of these leaders has proven that research universities have the potential to produce competent future leaders.

Research Instrument

The questionnaire used in this study includes four parts. Part A is related to the leadership style of individuals who are perceived as leaders by respondents. Part B is related to the respondent's level of self-esteem while Part C is related to the respondent's level of organizational commitment. Part D is related to demographic information of respondents. In this study, the leadership style of the respondents was measured using the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) (Avolio & Bass, 1995; Cristina Lopez, 2020). The format of the short version of the leader evaluation form was used to collect information on the respondents' evaluation of the leader being evaluated. This test tool has been translated from the English version to the Malay version using the back translation method. The scale used in the MLQ is a five-point likert scale from blank to four. The MLQ test tool used contains 36 items that are divided into three dimensions of leadership style, namely transformational, transactional and Laissez-Faire leadership styles. In order to complete the MLQ test, respondents need to choose one of the other individuals in the participating organization, and then make an assessment of the leadership behavior of that individual. Regardless of the status difference in terms of position rank, the respondent is free to choose anyone in his organization who is considered to have leadership characteristics. Before making the

evaluation, the respondent is required to provide information about the leader being evaluated, including the position of the leader, the name of the organization he is involved in and the difference in rank between the respondent and the leader being evaluated. Next, respondents need to evaluate the frequency of leadership behavior for leaders who are evaluated based on the statements listed. The original version of the MLQ test tool has a high level of reliability based on past studies. The value of the reliability coefficient or Cronbach's alpha for the MLQ ranges from 0.60 to 0.92. (Avolio et al.; Gray, 2005). Nuttuwuth Muenjohn's study (2008) also found that the analysis of the level of reliability of the original version of the MLQ produced Cronbach's Alpha = 0.86.

The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale or RSES (Rosenberg, 1965) was used to measure the level of self-esteem of respondents. This test tool includes 10 items that use a four-point likert scale from one to four. Respondents have to rate their self-esteem by filling in a score based on the extent to which the statements in the item describe themselves. According to Swami (2011), the Malay version of the RSES has a high level of reliability and validity, which is good internal consistency with a Cronbach's alpha = 0.72. Based on the same source, this test tool was also found to have good construct validity by being significantly correlated with life satisfaction, subjective happiness and the Big Five Factors of Extraversion and Neuroticism. While the respondents' organizational commitment was measured using the Organizational Commitment Scale (OCQ) developed by (Allen and Meyer, 1990). The original OCQ measurement tool contains as many as 24 items and after making adaptations to adapt the items to the context of the study, the OCQ used contains as many as 15 items. Respondents have to evaluate their level of organizational commitment by choosing a score that reflects the extent to which they agree with the statements listed based on a five-point likert scale. In addition, the OCQ is divided into three dimensions, namely the affective dimension, the continuous dimension and the normative dimension. According to Syauta et al (2012), the OCQ test tool has obtained a value of Cronbach's alpha = 0.825. While the study of Suryani and Tentama (2020) found that the OCQ test tool obtained a value of Cronbach's alpha = 0.875. Both studies prove that the OCQ test tool has a high level of trust with a Cronbach's alpha value that exceeds 0.7.

In the demographic information section, respondents need to fill in personal information including age, gender, race, university name, level of study, year of study, position held in the organization and duration of holding the position in the organization they joined. The data collected was analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 25.0. Descriptive analysis was used to compare the overall mean for leadership style, the level of self-esteem possessed and the level of commitment of the study respondents. Correlation tests were conducted to examine the strength of the relationship between leadership style and organizational commitment, the relationship between leadership style and self-esteem and the relationship between self-esteem and organizational commitment separately.

Findings and Discussion

The study involved a total of 107 respondents consisting of 42 male respondents (39.3%) and 65 female respondents (60.7%). The majority of the respondents of this study consisted of 22-year-olds, with a frequency of 50 people (46.7%) of the total. While the number of respondents aged 25 and above is the lowest with a frequency of three people (2.8%). In terms of race, the majority of respondents involved in this study are Chinese, with a frequency

of 74 people (69.2%), followed by Malay respondents which are 23 people (21.5%). Nine respondents (8.4%) were Indian. Only one (0.9%) respondent does not belong to the three races mentioned above. Respondents from UKM are the majority group for this study's respondents, with a frequency of 67 people (62.6%). The number of respondents from UTM is the lowest, which is only seven people (6.5%). The study level of the respondents involved was 104 people (97.2%) at the undergraduate level and three people (2.8%) at the postgraduate level. A total of 56 respondents (52.3%) were third year students at their respective universities. Only five respondents (4.6%) were fourth year students. As for the rank of the respondent's position in the participating organizations, 44 respondents (41.1%) held positions as the highest council in their organization, including chairman, secretary and director-general. A total of 40 respondents (37.4%) held positions as exco members while a total of 23 respondents (21.5%) held positions as committee members in the organization. The majority of respondents in this study held their respective positions for seven to 12 months, with a frequency of 38 people (35.5%). Only six respondents (5.6%) were employed for less than one month in their respective organizations. Table 1 shows the demographic distribution of respondents in this study.

Table 1

Demographic distribution of respondents

Items	Categorize	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Men	42	39.3
	Women	65	60.7
Age	20 years old and below	12	11.2
	21 years old	13	12.1
	22 years old	50	46.7
	23 years old	23	21.5
	24 years old	6	5.6
	25 years old an above	3	2.8
Races	Melayu	23	21.5
	Cina	74	69.2
	India	9	8.4
	Others	1	0.9
Universities	UM	10	9.3
	UKM	67	62.6
	USM	11	10.3
	UPM	12	11.2
	UTM	7	6.5
Level of Studies	Undergraduate	104	97.2
	Postgraduate	3	2.8
Year of Studies	1	18	16.8
	2	28	26.2
	3	56	52.3
	4	5	4.6
Level of Positions	High Management	44	41.1
	Exco	40	37.4
	Committee Members	23	21.5
Tenure of Positions	Less than 1 month	6	5.6
	1 to 3 month	14	13.1
	4 to 6 month	32	29.9
	7 to 12 month	38	35.5
	More than 1 years	17	15.9

Table 2 shows the individual leadership style evaluated by the respondents in this study based on the mean score obtained from the results of the MLQ questionnaire. The leadership style most frequently applied by male and female students at five Malaysian research universities is the transformational leadership style ($M=2.93$), followed by the transactional leadership style (2.31). The analysis also found that Laissez-Faire leadership style is the least applied ($M=1.19$). In terms of each subscale based on dimensions, the aspect of inspirational motivation is most often used in transformational leadership style ($M=3.08$), followed by intellectual stimulation ($M=2.98$) and ideal influence ($M=2.93$). The aspect of individual consideration is the least frequently applied aspect of transformational leadership ($M=2.76$).

For the transactional leadership style subscale, the aspect of actively neutral management is most often used ($M=2.68$), followed by contingent rewards ($M=2.65$) and passively neutral management ($M=1.59$).

Table 2

Individual leadership styles evaluated by respondents based on subscales

Leadership Styles	Subscale	Min Score (M)
Transformasional	Ideal Influence	2.93
	Inspirational motivation	3.08
	Intellectual Stimulation	2.98
	Individual considerations	2.76
	Overall mean	2.93
Transaccional	Contingent reward	2.65
	Neutral management (active)	2.68
	Passive (passive) training	1.59
	Overall mean	2.31
Laissez-Faire	-	1.19

Table 3 shows the level of self-esteem of the respondents based on the RSES mean score. The determination of the level of self-esteem is based on Pimentel (2019). According to his suggested level determination, a very low level of self-esteem is 1.00 to 1.75. The mean score for low self-esteem levels ranged from 1.76 to 2.51. The mean score from 2.52 to 3.27 represents a high level of self-esteem, while the mean score for a very high level of self-esteem is from 3.28 to 4.00. The overall mean score of the respondents' level of self-esteem based on is 2.89 (s.p.=0.48). Overall, the level of self-esteem of the respondents is at a high level.

Table 3

Mean score of respondents' self-esteem level based on RSES

Variable	Min	Standard deviation
Level of Self-esteem	2.89	0.48

Table 4 shows the level of organizational commitment of respondents based on the mean score of each dimension in the Organizational Commitment Scale instrument or OCQ (Allen and Meyer 1990). The level determination is based on Pimentel (2019). His level determination for the five-point likert scale is very low for a score of 1.00 to 1.79, low for a score of 1.80-2.59, moderate for a score of 2.60-3.39, high for a score of 3.40 to 4.19 and very high for a score of 4.0 to 5.00. In this study, the level of affective commitment of respondents was high (M=3.67, s.p.= 0.82), followed by the level of normative commitment which was also at a high level (M=3.65, s.p. = 0.84). The level of continuous commitment is at a moderate level (M=3.13, s.p.=0.79).

Table 4

Mean score of the level of organizational commitment based on the OCQ dimension

Dimensions	Min	Standard deviation
Affective commitment	3.67	0.82
Continuous commitment	3.13	0.79
Normative commitment	3.65	0.84

The inferential analysis continued with a correlation test between the leadership style variable of self-esteem level and organizational commitment. The first correlation analysis shows that the value of Pearson's coefficient, r , is .33, which is a moderate and highly

significant ($p < 0.01$) positive relationship between transformational leadership style and self-esteem. Transactional leadership style and self-esteem show the Pearson coefficient value, r is -0.08 , which is a strong negative relationship but not significant ($p > 0.05$). Laissez-Faire leadership style and self-esteem showed a moderate and highly significant negative relationship ($p < 0.01$). As for the correlation analysis between leadership style and organizational commitment, transformational leadership style and affective organizational commitment show the value of Pearson's coefficient, r , is $.56$ which is a moderate and highly significant positive relationship ($p < 0.01$). Transformational leadership style and continuous organizational commitment show the value of Pearson's coefficient, r , is $.41$ which is a moderate and highly significant positive relationship ($p < 0.01$). Transformational leadership style and normative organizational commitment show the value of Pearson's coefficient, r , is $.49$ which is a moderate and highly significant positive relationship ($p < 0.01$). Table 5 shows the correlation between the variable dimensions in this study as a whole.

Table 5

Correlation analysis between variable dimensions

	Self-esteem	Affective commitment	Continuous commitment	Normative commitment
Transformational leadership style	.33**	.56**	.41**	.49**
Transactional leadership style	-.08	-.04	.12	.02
Laissez-Faire leadership style	-.37	-.46**	-.20*	-.38**
Self-esteem	1	.36**	.15	.23*

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

* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Transactional leadership style and affective commitment show that the value of Pearson's coefficient, r , is -0.04 , which is a weak and insignificant negative relationship ($p > 0.05$). The transactional leadership style and continuous commitment show the value of Pearson's coefficient, r , is 0.12 which is a weak and insignificant positive relationship ($p > 0.05$). Transactional leadership style and normative commitment show the value of Pearson's coefficient, r , is 0.02 which is a weak and insignificant positive relationship ($p > 0.05$). Laissez-Faire leadership style with affective commitment shows the value of Pearson's coefficient, r , is $-.37$ showing a moderate and highly significant negative relationship ($p < 0.01$). Laissez-Faire leadership style with continuous commitment shows the value of Pearson's coefficient, r , is $-.46$ which is a moderate and highly significant negative relationship ($p < 0.01$). The leadership style with normative commitment shows the value of Pearson's coefficient, r , is $-.38$ which is a moderate and highly significant negative relationship ($p < 0.01$).

For the relationship between self-esteem and affective commitment, correlation analysis shows that the value of Pearson's coefficient, r , is $.36$, which is a moderate and highly significant positive relationship ($p < 0.01$). Self-esteem and continuous commitment show the value of Pearson's coefficient, r , is $.15$ which is a weak and insignificant positive relationship ($p > 0.05$). Self-esteem and normative commitment show that the value of Pearson's coefficient, r , is $.23$, which is a weak and significant positive relationship ($p < 0.05$). This finding shows that the transformational leadership style is suitable to be applied to increase the level

of self-esteem and organizational commitment of followers in an organization; as found in a study by (Salim and Abdul, 2021). The student leaders should pay attention to the leadership style applied so as not to affect the self-esteem factor and organizational commitment of the followers. Compared to the transformational leadership style, the transactional leadership style did not show a significant relationship with self-esteem and the three dimensions of organizational commitment. The findings of this study are in line with the findings of Katper et al (2020) who found that transformational leadership style has a significant impact on organizational commitment, while transactional leadership style has a less significant influence on organizational commitment.

Another research finding that should be emphasized is that the Laissez-Faire leadership style was found to have a negative and significant relationship overall with all three dimensions of organizational commitment. This finding shows that the Laissez-Faire leadership style can contribute to a decrease in the level of organizational commitment of followers. This finding is in line with the study by Dharejo et al (2021) who showed that the Laissez-Faire leadership style does not contribute to the performance and commitment of his subordinates and it was found that this leadership style is not recommended to be applied in an organization. However, it is different from the findings of a study by Khan and Saleem (2021) that saw that Laissez-Faire leadership style can affect employee performance while also helping to make employees more creative and innovative.

Conclusion and Suggestion

This study shows that transformational leadership style has a positive and significant relationship with self-esteem and the three dimensions of organizational commitment, namely affective commitment, continuous commitment and normative commitment. The organization needs to be smart in handling followers with an appropriate leadership style so that the work process, the commitment of the employees and the well-being of all members of the organization can be maintained and further help contribute to the acquisition of work quality and encouraging productivity. For the improvement of research in the future, the researchers are suggested to reach a larger number of respondents to improve the accuracy of the research analysis. The location of the study can also be expanded to increase the ability of the study findings to be generalized. Variation in the race of the respondents is also highly encouraged to ensure that the research findings do not contain elements of stereotypes or bias. Face-to-face and non-online data collection methods are also encouraged to ensure that the respondents are qualified as the research sample to be studied. Further analysis such as regression analysis can also be carried out to examine more deeply the cause-and-effect relationship between the variables in this study.

This study is expected to increase understanding of how different leadership styles relate to self-esteem and organizational commitment, particularly in student organizations in five Malaysian research universities. Students should be more aware of the leadership style applied when leading their respective student organizations to ensure the stability of human resources in the organization is not affected. The findings of the study are expected to help the male and female students to carry out their duties as leaders more effectively not only in the student organizations they participate in now, but also when they venture into their respective fields of work in the future, further contributing to the development of the country's economy.

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