



## Leadership Style and Perception of Effectiveness: Enlightening Malaysian Managers

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### Abstract

In the past, the leadership style of Malaysian managers has been different from our Western counterparts due to strong cultural differences. However, with the advent of knowledge economy and the transformation of workforce, leadership style of Malaysian managers is said to be altered. This research explored the current state of leadership style among Malaysian managers and its effect on the perception of effectiveness. A survey method was employed and the data was drawn from subordinates who were working in private and public sectors in the Klang Valley area. When compared to past literature, the results imply that a shift has taken place primarily with regards to autocratic leadership. Respondents attributed leadership effectiveness to the use of participative and nurturant-task leader behavior. Gender differences were not significantly evident.

**Keywords:** Malaysian managers, Leadership, Gender

### 1. Introduction

Reading most Management textbooks would readily reveal that leadership is one of the four management function that needs to be assumed by any manager. Although numerous studies of effective leadership style for managers have been undertaken in the past, interviews conducted with practitioners and indications identified through literature review revealed that the leadership styles that were perceived to be effective in the Malaysian context formerly may no longer bear significance in the current scenario. For example, several managers and subordinates who were interviewed in the process of this study strongly stated that autocratic style that used to be predominant in Malaysian organizations can no longer be relied upon. In fact they felt that they have the competence needed to carry out their job effectively without needing their superior to keep a watchful eye over them or to tell them exactly what or how to do their job. Fundamentally, they perceive their superior (managers) to be effective if their display a personalized and flexible leadership style. The informal interviews conducted further revealed another pertinent finding. Subordinates who perceived their leaders to be effective readily divulged that they feel more respect towards their superior and therefore were willing to exert more effort to achieve the objectives set.

This study is a very basic study that intends to empirically explore the type of leadership style embraced by managers in Malaysia, and determine if the style adopted would significantly influence subordinate's perception of managerial effectiveness. Three main dimensions—autocratic/directive, participative, nurturant-task—is used to represent leadership styles in this study. However, readers should take note that these three leadership styles would be referred to as leader behavior interchangeably as these dimensions were measured using statements that represented leader

behavior. We compared our empirical results with the findings of past research on the same topic to determine if a transformation is evident. Furthermore, we intend to investigate the effect of gender differences onto the relationship between leadership style and perception of managerial effectiveness.

## **2. Leadership among Malaysian managers: The past**

Leadership in Malaysia has long been associated with preference for both -hierarchy and relationship (Ansari, Ahmad, & Aafaqi, 2004). With high power distance, Malaysia is characterized as a “situation where leaders have virtually ultimate power and authority, and the rules, laws and regulations developed by those in power, reinforce their own leadership and control” (Hofstede, 2001). “Seniors (superiors or elders) are respected and obeyed. They are the decision-makers and subordinates are obliged to implement. In general, societal norm dictates that juniors do not disagree with seniors. Thus anger and hostility against a superior are suppressed and displaced, and the tendency is to appease the superior” (Ansari, et al., 2004, p.115).

On the other hand, compared to the Western culture, the Malaysian culture has a lot more of a personal human side to it (Abdullah, 1994; Abdullah, Book, Chin, Joon, Long, Noh, Pihie, Saxena, Thong, & Yong, 1999; Hofstede, 2001). Malaysians generally give more importance to the group as a unit and therefore is categorized as a collectivist society. Collectivist cultures value group goals, group concerns, and collective needs over individual concerns (Hofstede, 2001). “Harmonious relationships are emphasized; hence many supervisors and managers shudder at giving negative feedback to their subordinates” (Ansari, et al., 2004, p.115). Fundamentally, leaders are also expected to use their personal power and establish relationship to successfully influence employees.

Ansari et al. (2004) have succinctly reported the attribution of leadership effectiveness based on the findings of several researches (e.g Govindan, 2000; Mansor & Kennedy, 2000; Nizam, 1997; Saufi, Wafa, & Hamzah, 2002). Basically, in the Malaysian context, leader behavior characterized by hierarchy and relationship was found to contribute to the perception of leadership effectiveness.

Another prominent issue in the attribution of leadership effectiveness is gender differences. Manjulika, Gupta and Rajinder (1998) revealed that female managers in Malaysia found that they were discriminated against for promotion to higher ranks even though they performed well. Although the Government implemented the 30% policy of women's representation at decision making levels in the public sector in August 2004, the under representation of women at the decision making levels especially in top managerial positions was still evident. The Statistics on Women, Family and Social Welfare 2006 showed that women at decision making level in public sector consists of 14.8% Secretary General, 10.3% Director General (Federal) and 12.1% are Chief Executive (Federal Statutory Bodies). Whereas in private sector, 7.6% of women are members of Board of Directors and 14.3% is President, Vice President, Managing Director, Chief Executive Officer, Chief Operating Officer, Senior General Manager or General Manager.

Generally, one of the typical barriers for women moving up to senior management position that was highlighted by Oakley (2000) was gender-based stereotypes. In the Malaysian context, Jayasingam (2001) found that compared to most successful female corporate entrepreneurs, least successful female entrepreneurs possessed more of harsh power such as the power to order and punish. However their male counterparts' success was not significantly different in terms of their assertiveness. Several Western based research could provide some insight to this phenomenon of gender role stereotypes. Fundamentally, there is the tendency to respond more favorably to men who are self-promoting and to women who are modest (Giacalone & Riordan, 1990; Wosinska, Dabul, Whetstone-Dion, & Cialdini, 1996). In conducting a stereotype research, Embry, Padgett, and Caldwell (2008) found that while keeping the gender of the manager unknown in the vignette, individuals were more likely to assume a male identity for managers who displayed masculine style, and similarly, assume a female identity for managers who displayed feminine styles. Groves (2005) found female leaders naturally scored higher on social and emotional skills and therefore obtained higher rating for charismatic leadership. But then again, women who are modest will appear less competent (Rudman, 1998). In a nutshell, the choice of leadership style is expected to match the gender role stereotypes, and this expectation is even more evident in the case of women managers.

## **3. The call for transformation**

At the time of Merdeka, the Malaysian economy was primarily agriculture based and followed by industrialization to encourage import substitution (EPU, 2004; EPU, 2007). Eventually, the country moved into an industrial-based economy by the 1980s with the agriculture sector continuing to be an important sector (EPU, 2004). During this era, foreign MNCs were encouraged to set up their assembly and test operations here (EPU, 2007). In 1981, the promotion of domestic capacity building was evident primarily through the creation of HICOM (EPU, 2007). This strategic initiative was followed by the institutionalization of the Malaysian Institute of Microelectronic Systems (MIMOS) with the focus on encouraging microelectronics R&D activities in small organizations (EPU, 2007). Eventually, these sectors evolved “from being labor intensive to being capital intensive, and now are transiting to a technology- and knowledge intensive stage with greater emphasis on higher-end and value-added activities.” (EPU, 2004, p.xi).

The advent of the knowledge based economy paved the path for a new generation of workers-- workers who are not only skillful but knowledgeable to cope with the fast pace of changes in the competitive environment. This new generation of workers is often referred to as "gold-collar" workers with the underlying notion that these workers are essentially different from other workers (Amar, 2004; Hislop, 2003; Ribiere & Sitar, 2003). Knowledge workers are highly knowledgeable and thus confidently exercise self-control and self-learning (Awad & Ghaziri, 2004). They look forward to have better work responsibilities, autonomy and empowerment (Tom, 2002; Gapp, 2002; MacNeil, 2003; Jayasingam, Jantan & Ansari, 2007). They do not take pleasure in working under close supervision or rigid control (Kubo & Saka, 2002). They are also willing to take risks and expect to learn from their mistakes. In a nutshell, knowledge workers "have substantially different expectations of their employers than ordinary workers" (Kelley et al., 2007, p. 208).

This calls for a transformation of leader behavior (Gapp, 2002; Jayasingam, Jantan & Ansari, 2008; MacNeil, 2003; Viitala, 2004;). In the speaking notes for Claire M. Morris, Deputy Minister, Human Resource Development Canada on 9 December 1999, she stressed the crucial need to transform leadership skills in accordance to the changing workforce. She further added that, a leader must be able to manage changes and support employees as they move to the new roles whilst holding more responsibilities. More closer to home, the Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Mohd Najib Tun Razak has highlighted an important point whereby he stated that the most vital aspects of leadership in the 21st century is the need to transform and perform. He emphasized that organizations should seriously consider the questions of leadership and making the learning and developing a leader as an investment (Abdul Razak, 2006). Managers should recognize that the global market is so competitive and as a result, a traditional way of instructing subordinates to work will no longer be effective (Awad & Ghaziri, 2004). With the numerous calls for transformation, the first objective of this study is **to determine if Malaysian managers have embarked on the quest for transformation and its influence on the perception of leadership effectiveness.**

The second objective of this study is to examine the **link between managerial gender differences and its influence of perception of leadership effectiveness.** We believe that the role and status of women in Malaysia have also undergone a deep transformation. Education and employment opportunities have enabled Malaysian women progressively to be well educated and developed them to participate in decision making level at top management positions regardless of public sector, private sector or even political decision making processes in the building and developing of the nation. Despite these developments, women participation at the decision making level at both private and public sector is still unsatisfactory (Manjulika et al., 1998; Statistics on Women, Family and Social Welfare, 2006). Gender role expectations could be a major reason for women being unable to be perceived as effective enough to be allowed into the decision making level. We would like to determine if indeed gender role stereotypes influences the appropriate leadership style to be embraced by women in order to be perceived more effective.

#### **4. Leader behavior and perception of leader effectiveness**

Leadership is one multifaceted experience that is growing and has been addressed from different outlooks. A review of the literature (Pearce, Sims, Cox, Ball, Schnell, Smith, and Trevino, 2003; Yukl, 2006) on leadership divulged that there are innumerable leadership models that have been developed to define leadership behavior. Leaders have been explained in terms of character, mannerism, influence and persuasion, relationship patterns, role relationships and as administrative figures. Deciding on one best model is definitely an impossible task as these models have been proven empirically in various contexts. An analysis of the literature revealed that most of these models tend to have overlapping dimensions which can be summarized into three main dimensions—autocratic/directive, participative, nurturant-task.

These three dimensions are employed accordingly in this study. These 3 leadership styles would be referred to as leader behavior interchangeably as these dimensions were measured using statements that represented leader behavior. The effectiveness of this model has been reported in several studies (see reviews of those of Ansari, 1990, Bhal & Ansari, 2000). In summary, the model that is tested in this study is as depicted in Figure 1.

##### *4.1 Autocratic leader*

An **autocratic** leader is a leader who is very strict, directive, makes use of his power of influence from his position to control rewards and force the followers to comply with his instruction (Blau & Scott, 1963; Daft, 2005; Jogulu & Wood, 2006). This type of leader dominates and controls all the decisions and actions by giving instruction and direction to the followers on what to do and how to carry out a task whereby restricting follower's creativity and innovativeness. In most previous studies (see Ansari, et al., 2004), Malaysian managers who were autocratic and directive were deemed effective. However, in view of globalization and the knowledge economy, autocratic leadership may no longer be accepted by the subordinates who are becoming more competent, independent and knowledgeable (Tom, 2002; Gapp, 2002; MacNeil, 2003; Viitala, 2004; Jayasingam, et al., 2007). Hence, it is hypothesized in this study that:

**H1:** Autocratic leader will be perceived as ineffective by the subordinates

#### 4.2 Nurturant-task leader

**Nurturant-task**—a leadership style originally proposed by Sinha (1980)—is a combination of task and relationship oriented behavior with a blend of nurturance. The Nurturant-task style is considered to be a forerunner of the Participative style in the reciprocal influence processes between a leader and his/her subordinates. The uniqueness of the NT model is the priority attached to productivity over job satisfaction (Ansari et. al, 2004). This particular style has been advocated as suitable for Indian organizations (Ansari, 1986, 1990; Sinha, 1980, 1994) and due to the similarities between Indian and Malaysian organization, the nurturant task is regarded another style that can adopted well here in Malaysia. A lot of past studies had evidenced that Nurturant Task leadership is effective (Ansari, 1986; Sinha, 1983; Sinha, Pandey, Pandey & Sinha 1986; Ansari, 1987; Ansari & Shukla, 1987) (cited by Ansari, 1990, p.11-12). With reference to the Malaysian society that is collectivist in nature but with diminishing preference for directives, we hypothesized that:

H2: Nurturant-task leader will be perceived as effective by the subordinates

#### 4.3 Participative leader

**Participative** leadership involves consultation, encouragement and facilitation between the leaders and subordinates in making a decision (Daft, 2005; Yukl, 2006). Given the notion that workforce are more knowledgeable and are equipped with relevant skills, subordinates would prefer managers who would give them the opportunity to be heard. Instead of suppressing the disagreement to appease their superior as done previously, the new generation of workers would definitely want to have a part to play in decision making. The emergence of this preference for participative style was evident in the findings of several researchers. For example, Govindan (2000, cited in Ansari, et al., 2004) reports that Malaysian prefer consultative and participative leadership. In addition, successful Malaysian entrepreneurs were rated higher on participative style compared to their unsuccessful counterparts (Ansari, et al., 2000). Therefore, we hypothesize that:

H3: Participative leader will be perceived as effective by the subordinates

#### 4.4 Gender and leadership effectiveness

There were ample of researches on gender differences in leadership behavior and leadership effectiveness. Although women have been found to be similar to men in many qualities, stereotypes about their belief and perceptions indicated that they have been rated less influential than men (Burke, Rothstein, & Bristor, 1995). Stereotyping often leads to the belief that women generally have lower level of competence and expertise than men do. Thus, they are perceived to be less influential than men. In order to be considered equally competent with men, women actually have to outperform men (Foschi, 1996). Unlike their male counterparts, women who appear to be too assertive are viewed as violating expectations about appropriate behavior for women (Meeker & Weitzel-O'Neil, 1985). In fact, people tend to assume a manager is male if they portray masculine leadership styles (Embry, et al., 2008). In summary, a female manager that practices autocratic leadership which is more masculine in nature will be rated even more poorly than their male managers in terms of effectiveness because they have violated the gender role stereotype. Therefore we hypothesize that:

H4: The negative effect of autocratic leadership style on the perception of leadership effectiveness would be greater for women managers compared to their male counterparts.

On the contrary, people expect women to be warm, expressive, understanding, compassionate, and concerned about others feelings (Groves, 2005; Martin, 1987; Ruble, 1983; Williams & Best, 1990). Eagle and Johnson (1990) found that effective women managers practiced more participative leadership (cited by Yukl, 2006, p.429). This finding can be attributed to women's nature in general which can be characterized by good attributes and character in interacting with people, possessing better human relation skills, sharing the information and enhancing people's self-worth (Groves, 2005). Therefore the display of leadership behavior reflective of their nature enabled them to be rated highly and slightly more effective than men (Rosener, 1990; Rutherford, 2001). Thus, we hypothesize that:

H5: The positive effect of participative and nurturant-task leadership style on the perception of leadership effectiveness would be greater for women managers compared to their male counterparts.

### 5. Research design

#### 5.1 Dependent measures

This study is carried out by using a survey approach. There were two sections in the questionnaire—one section looks at the independent and dependent measures whereas the second section focused on the demographic information of respondents.

The initial section measured leadership behavior and effectiveness. The measurement for leader behavior included 30 pre-tested single statement items that looked into three leader behavior dimensions: autocratic, nurturant-task and

participative. These items were adopted from Ansari, (1990), Bhal and Ansari, (2000), and Sinha, (1994). The measure for perceived leader effectiveness incorporated items adapted from Slechta Randy ([http://www.lmi-inc.com?Articles/The\\_Up\\_Front\\_Manager.pdf](http://www.lmi-inc.com?Articles/The_Up_Front_Manager.pdf)), Daft (2005) and Yukl (2006). These 6 items were submitted for a pilot test to managers and academicians. Based on the feedback received, several items were reworded to enhance understanding.

### 5.2 Procedure

Self-administered questionnaires were distributed to employees in both, private and public sector. The respondents were asked to rate their immediate manager or supervisor in terms of the leadership behavior displayed and their perception of the manager's effectiveness. We ensured that only subordinates who had worked with his or her immediate superior for more than 1 year received the vignettes. This was to ensure that the respondents had better understanding of their superior's leadership behavior and therefore would be able to provide a more accurate assessment.

Keeping their immediate superior in mind, the respondents were then asked to rate their superior on a scale of 1 (Strong disagree) to 5 (Strongly agree) for the statements that represented the three leader behavior dimensions of this study: autocratic, nurturant-task, and participative and for statements that represented managerial effectiveness.

## 6. Research site and sample

400 questionnaires were distributed to employees of various industries from private and public sector. The respondents were selected among part time students who were currently pursuing the Postgraduate degree, specifically a Masters degree in Business Administration. Respondents were drawn from the pool of MBA students as they fairly represented a wide variety of industries that encompassed both the private and public sectors. The snowballing method was also employed when MBA students were requested to pass on the questionnaires to their friends who have recently graduated from the MBA program. Only 269 questionnaires were completed and returned, giving a response rate of approximately 70 percent. Table 1 presents the demographic profile of respondents.

Majority of the respondents were highly educated with more than 60% having at least a Bachelor's degree or postgraduate qualification. This may be due to the respondents being mostly officers/executives and managers/senior managers. Only a small proportion of the respondents had a secondary school level of qualifications. This finding supports this study's underlying notion that the workforce are becoming more knowledge-based and therefore may be ready for a transformation in the way they are led.

We had an approximately equal distribution of male (55.8 %) and female managers (44.2%). A large proportion of respondents (74.7%) had worked in their current company and with their immediate manager for 1 - 5 years. A fair distribution in the industry sector was noted with most respondents working in sectors such as banking and finance, manufacturing and professional services. In terms of organization size, most of the respondents were from the large scale companies which had above 151 employees and locally owned company.

## 7. Results and Discussion

### 7.1 Goodness of measure

#### 7.1.1 Leadership style

Responses to the 30 leadership style items were submitted to a direct oblimin rotated principal axis factor analysis. Only factors with the eigenvalue more than 1.0 were considered. The factor loadings and cross loadings were examined using the pattern matrix. Finally, only three meaningful and interpretable factors that cumulatively explained 53.66% of the variance were retained. Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy was 0.855 and the Bartlett's Test of Sphericity was significant (Chi square = 1092.954,  $p < 0.01$ ).

Table 2 presents the factor structures and the factor loadings of each item and their corresponding cross loadings to other factors. The results confirm that each of the leadership style subscales is unidimensional and factorially different and that all items used to measure a specific subscale loaded on a single factor. A total of 13 significant items were included in the final scale. All these items had factors loadings greater than .40. The other items that were dropped had high cross loadings that were rather close to the factor loadings or low factor loadings (below 0.40).

Table 3 depicts descriptive statistics, inter-correlation among factors, and reliability coefficients. The three subscales documented fairly adequate reliability coefficients, ranging from .68 to .85. These values were close or slightly beyond the recommended .70 level of acceptance (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). Furthermore, from Table 3, it can also be inferred that the subscales were moderately inter-correlated (average  $r = .39$ ), indicating a great deal of independence of the three subscales. Since participative and nurturant-task were conceptually close, they were closely tied with each other. Although the two were interrelated, the  $r$  value did not exceed the coefficients of alpha. As one would expect on theoretical grounds, autocratic leadership style was negatively correlated with participative style implying that these two styles were considered to be on the opposite sides of a continuum. The means scores revealed that participative ( $M=3.24$ ,  $SD=.73$ ) and nurturant-task ( $M=3.23$ ,  $SD=.72$ ) were predominant among Malaysian managers compared to

autocratic style ( $M=3.07$ ,  $SD=.82$ ).

#### 7.1.2 Perceived leadership effectiveness

Factor analysis was also performed on the leadership effectiveness to ensure the 6 items represent one factor. The table of the factor loading for leadership effectiveness is shown in Table 4 as follows.

The analysis extracted one factor only as hypothesized. The scale documented a reliability coefficient of 0.89 which was far beyond the recommended value of 0.70 level of acceptance (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). The mean value of 3.38 implies that Malaysian managers are perceived to be moderately effective.

#### 7.2 Hypothesis testing

We conducted hierarchical regression analysis to test H1 to H5. In the hierarchical multiple regression, leader's styles (participative, autocratic, and nurturant-task) were entered together in the first step followed by gender of the manager in the next step. The interaction terms between leader's style and manager's gender were entered third.

From Table 5, we can see that autocratic leadership negatively influences the perception of leader effectiveness whereas participative and nurturant-task style positively effects the perceptions of leader effectiveness. Thus H1, H2, and H3 are substantiated.

The interaction terms for manager gender and leadership style was only significant for participative style. Manager's gender was found to be a moderating variable only for the relationship between participative leadership style and perceived leadership effectiveness. Therefore, H4 is not supported whereas H5 is only partially supported. The interaction between manager's gender and participative style is further shown in Figure 2.

From Figure 2, it is noticeable that when participative style is low, women managers received lower effectiveness ratings than the men. However, this difference was minute. A larger effect was noted when moderate to high levels of participative style was used. Women managers who practiced moderate to high level of participative leadership were perceived to be more effective than the men.

In summary, only H1 to H3 was fully substantiated, whereas H5 was partially supported. H4 did not receive any support in this study. The next section will discuss the findings.

### 8. Discussion and conclusion

Our factor analysis and descriptive statistics results suggest that participative style is the most evident in the Malaysian context. Although autocratic and nurturant-task did emerge in the analysis, it only composed of three items and had reliability values that were slightly above or below the recommended level of 0.70. Therefore the results should be viewed with caution.

Participative style and nurturant-task were moderately correlated. This is expected as both of these styles are characterized by people and relationship oriented behaviors such as encouraging involvement in decision making, providing guidance and support and so on. On the other hand, participative style was negatively related to autocratic behavior. On a simple note, a leader who controls decision making naturally would not be allowing others to participate in the process. As these two behaviors are on the opposite sides of the decision making continuum, the negative relationship is justified.

Our main hypotheses received full support from the data. As hypothesized, the results of this study shows that managers need to practice participative and nurturant-task style and avoid using autocratic style. The use of more participative and nurturant-task style is in line with the collectivist culture of Malaysian employees. Collectivist cultures value group goals, group concerns, and collective needs over individual concerns (Hofstede, 2001). Therefore, employees generally prefer to function as a group and be part of the decision making process. In addition, they also prefer to be provided the needed guidance only when necessary.

Interestingly, we found autocratic power to have a negative influence on leadership effectiveness. In earlier studies (e.g. see Ansari, et al., 2004), Malaysian managers who were autocratic and directive were considered effective. This was attributed to the high power distance here in Malaysia which can be characterized as a situation where leaders' position gives them the authority and ultimate control (Hofstede, 2001). However, with the introduction of k-economy that brought about the birth of a renewed workforce with better skills, expertise and work responsibilities, employees have an increasing need for autonomy and empowerment (MacNeil, 2003). Therefore, they may no longer accept the mere use of position and authority to control them.

Gender role expectation was evident in the case of participative leadership. It was found that when women managers used moderate to high levels of participative style, they received higher ratings compared to the male managers. Similarly, the lack of participative behavior among female managers drew higher negative responses when compared to male managers. It is evident that participative behavior is strongly associated with women, and therefore the failure to fulfill the gender role expectation will draw stronger judgments from their employees. However these differences were

trivial in nature.

No gender differences were noticed for autocratic and nurturant-task behaviors. Generally, as autocratic leadership is deemed ineffective on the whole, it is possible that this style is no longer associated with effectiveness regardless of whether a man or woman manager utilizes it. On the other hand, it is possible that since the Malaysian culture is higher on collectivist culture (Hofstede, 2001), a nurturing style is a norm among both men and women managers.

Generally, the study is not without any limitations. There are many other possible moderating variables that could have been included in the model to obtain more practical results. For example, as the nurturant-task style was said to be the preliminary style for participative behavior, it would be interesting to determine if subordinate tenure and experience has an influence on their preference for leadership style. Although no predictions were made, such pattern was noted in this study. The existence of such pattern could have a significant influence on the ratings of leadership effectiveness. In addition, variables such as subordinates knowledge and skills, the type of industry, may influence the preference for specific leadership behavior. These other important factors were not addressed in this study but hold potential for future researchers. Furthermore, since this study is focusing in people's perception, it would be better for a mixed method to be employed. Although informal interviews were conducted with selected respondents, it is not sufficient to add weight to the findings of this study.

Limitation of this study should be addressed by future researchers. In addition, now that we have bridged the gap between leadership style of managers and its impact on perception of managerial effectiveness among subordinates, it would be interesting to expand this model to include the impact on subordinates work outcomes such as work performance, job satisfaction, turnover intention, or even commitment. The informal interview conducted in the process of this study has implied that subordinates who perceived their managers to be effective tend to have greater respect for them, and are therefore more willing to put in extra effort to please their managers. However, due to time constraints, this research did not empirically validate this finding. Undeniably, this would be an important and interesting area to explore further.

Overall the present research has some obvious implications. Our findings are meant for all managers—male and female. In simple words, autocratic style may no longer work in the Malaysian context. Instead, managers should focus more on treating their subordinates as partners and encourage participation.

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Table 1. Respondents Profile

<b>Demographic variable</b>	<b>Frequency N=269</b>	<b>%</b>
<b><u>Education</u></b>		
High School/SPM/STPM	13	4.8
Certificate/Diploma	45	16.7
Bachelor's Degree	135	50.2
Postgraduate	47	17.5
Professional	28	10.4
Others	1	0.4
<b><u>Position</u></b>		
Clerical	23	8.6
Officer/Executive	165	61.3
Manager/Senior Manager	63	23.4
Head of Department	8	3.0
Others	10	3.7
<b><u>Tenure in current position</u></b>		
1-5 years	201	74.7
6-10 years	42	15.6
11-15 years	17	6.3
16-20 years	4	1.5
21 years and above	5	1.9
<b><u>Industry</u></b>		
Banking & Finance	38	14.1
Manufacturing	37	13.8
Professional Service	71	26.4
Others	123	45.7
<b><u>Organization Size</u></b>		
100 and below	77	28.6
101-150	31	11.5
151 and above	161	59.9
<b><u>Nature of Organization</u></b>		
Foreign owned	73	27.1
Locally owned	196	72.9
<b><u>Gender of Superior</u></b>		
Male	150	55.8
Female	119	44.2
<b><u>No. of years working with superior</u></b>		
1-5 years	239	88.8
6-10 years	22	8.2
11-15 years	7	2.6
16-20 years	1	0.4

Table 2. Rotated Factors and Factor Loadings of Leadership Styles Measures

Items	Factor		
	1	2	3
<b><u>Participative Leadership</u></b>			
1. Lets his/her workers solve problems jointly	<u>.627</u>	-.004	-.105
2. Mixes freely with his/her workers	<u>.680</u>	-.116	.000
3. Goes by the joint decisions of his/her group	<u>.497</u>	-.178	-.076
4. Allows free and frank discussions whenever situation arises	<u>.628</u>	-.276	-.166
5. often takes tea/coffee with his/her workers	<u>.607</u>	-.020	.178
6. Makes his/her workers feel free to even disagree with him/her	<u>.621</u>	-.263	-.051
7. Is informal with his/her workers	<u>.605</u>	.122	.039
<b><u>Autocratic leadership</u></b>			
1. Keeps important information to himself/herself.	-.025	<u>.667</u>	.037
2. Behaves as if power and prestige are necessary for getting compliance from his/her workers.	-.121	<u>.526</u>	-.136
3. Demands his/her workers to do what he/she wants them to do	-.061	<u>.485</u>	.047
<b><u>Nurturant-task leadership</u></b>			
1. Goes out of his/her way to help those workers who maintain a high standard of performance	.040	.218	<u>-.401</u>
2. Encourages his/her workers to assume greater responsibility on the job	.385	.151	<u>-.521</u>
3. Takes personal interest in the promotion of workers who work hard	.399	.021	<u>-.582</u>
Eigenvalue	4.502	1.843	1.167
% of Variance	32.16	13.16	8.34

Note. Underlined loadings indicate the inclusion of that item in the factor.

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics, Cronbach's Alpha , and Correlations of Leadership style measures

Bases of Power	1	2	3
1. Participative	.85		
2. Autocratic	-.39**	.68	
3. Nurturant-task	.38**	.17	.71
<u>M</u>	3.24	3.07	3.23
<u>SD</u>	0.73	0.82	0.72
No.of Items	7	3	3

Note. N = 305; \*\* p < .01; \* p < .05; Diagonal entries indicate Cronbach's coefficients alpha.

Table 4. Factor loading of Leadership Effectiveness

Items	Factor
1. Point out specific behaviors of workers that need to be changed	0.513
2. Works with workers to improve their skills in specific situations	0.883
3. Invest time helping workers to stay focused on their goals and to increase their productivity	0.884
4. Empowers workers to carry out their responsibilities	0.820
5. Work with each workers to identify specific problems and to outline action steps each can take to produce better results	0.866
6. Provides clear instructions and explanations to workers when needed	0.819
Eigenvalue	3.917
% of Variance	65.291
Cronbach's Alpha	0.890
Mean	3.38
SD	0.83

Table 5. Hierarchical Regression Results Using Manager's gender as a Moderator in the Relationship between Leadership style and Perceived Leadership effectiveness

Independent Variable	Std Beta Step 1	Std Beta Step 2	Std Beta Step 3
<b><u>Model Variables</u></b>			
Autocratic	-0.110*	-0.106*	-0.094
Participative	0.597**	0.604**	0.500**
Nurturant-task	0.201*	0.200**	0.270
<b><u>Moderating Variable</u></b>			
Manager's gender (dummy)		0.038	-0.084
<b><u>Interaction Terms</u></b>			
Manager's gender*Autocratic			-0.026
Manager's gender *Participative			0.483*
Manager's gender *Nurturant task			-0.338
R <sup>2</sup>	0.553	0.554	0.566
Adj R <sup>2</sup>	0.548	0.548	0.554
R <sup>2</sup> Change	0.553	0.001	0.011

\* p &lt; 0.05, \*\* p &lt; 0.01

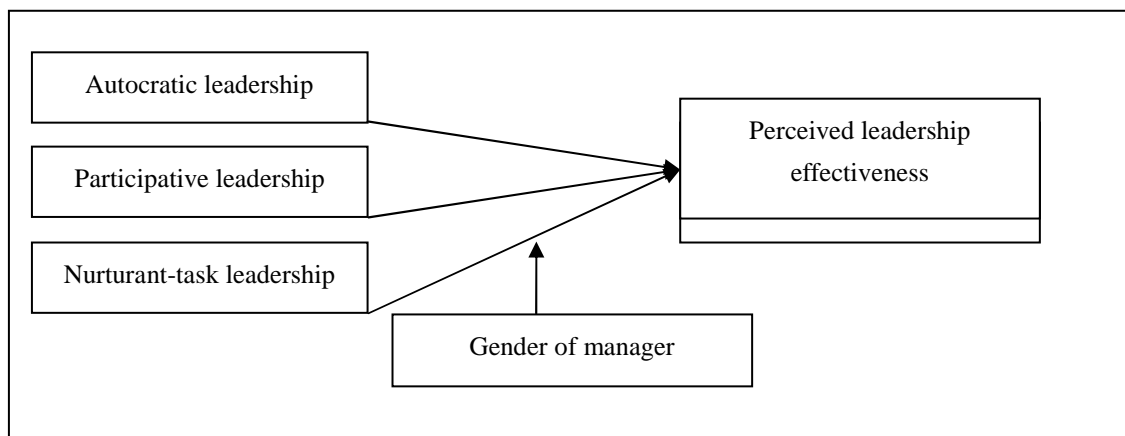


Figure 1. Proposed theoretical framework

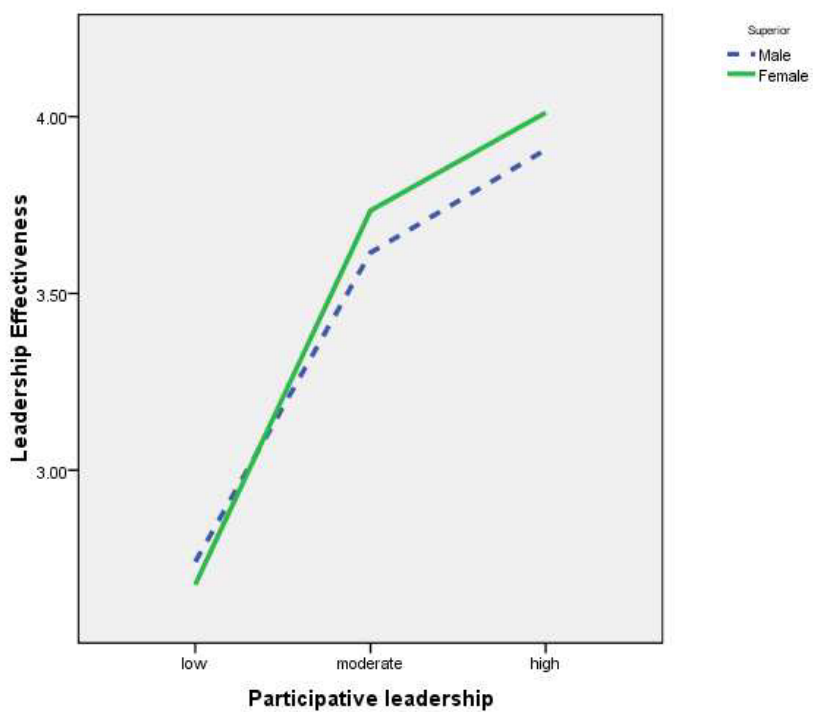


Figure 2. Moderating effect of manager gender on participative leadership and perceived effectiveness