

# The Influences of Job Satisfaction and Performance on Employees Followership Styles: A Survey in the Malaysian Health Institution

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## Abstract

The present study examined the influences of job satisfaction and job performance on followership style among employees from one of the public health institution in the Northern Malaysia. This study utilized the questionnaire method. A total of 210 respondents including the administrative staff, medical officer and nurses participated in this study. The findings presented that employees in this institution have moderately high levels of followership style (mean=3.67), job satisfaction (mean=3.67) and job performance (mean=3.37). Results presented that job satisfaction is significantly related to followership style ( $\beta=.72$ ,  $p=.00$ ); and job performance is not significantly related to followership style ( $\beta=-.11$ ,  $p=.12$ ). Thus, it is found that only job satisfaction has a significant influence on followership style among employees in this institution. This study contributed some fruitful knowledge which can be suggested to all of the Malaysian public health institution, particularly to improve the level of followership style. Implications of the results are discussed; and limitations of this study are briefly highlighted.

**Keywords:** Followership Style, Job Satisfaction, Job Performance

## 1. Introduction

The terms of leadership and followership are interconnected. In other words, these two terms are mutually inclusive between one and other. However, in the field of organizational psychology, the domain of leadership has received a special treatment since it had built a major focus of interest which related to human influences in most of organizations. In accordance to that, limited knowledge is known in the domain of followership styles. This argument is supported by<sup>1</sup> who stated that little literature is available on followership area. Therefore, more empirical evidences need to be revealed in the domain of followership styles. This is because the results which obtained from the followers' roles are deemed important to the success and failure of all organizations.<sup>2</sup> Leaders need to gain support from their followers. This is because past scholars<sup>3</sup> claimed that leadership and followership are interdependent with each other. Thus, understanding about leadership process will be increased to a high level if more focus on the followership domain is given an attention to be explored<sup>3-4</sup> Without followership, a leader at any level will fail to produce an effective organization.<sup>5</sup> In organizational psychology, it is assumed that followers will transfer a good thing or benefits to the organization, in which they are obtained from a good leadership. Thus, to attract leaders, the study of the followership domain is a need to be produced in order to gain an additional knowledge towards increasing the leadership influences.

In accordance to that, this kind of study can be done in any type of sector included of the health institution or any else as long as there

are leaders and followers in the particular organizations. For instance, the relationship between employees and employers exists when they work together in organization such as in the health institution. Employees in health institution could be consisted of the administrative staff, medical officer and nurses. In health institution, employees' strength in leadership and followership can have a major impact on the total healthcare delivery system as well as on the care of the individual client. Thus, implicit in this study is the belief that excellence in employees' role requires strong and effective followership styles. In the foreign context, healthcare literature have been revealed on the effective distributed leadership practices which are necessary to improve healthcare workplace cultures, patient safety and quality of care.<sup>6</sup> However, little is known about how these processes in the healthcare institution which are experienced by the followership styles. Thus, in this paper we seek to understand better on how the notion of followership has been embedded into the healthcare practice through the analyses on how job satisfaction and job performance can be identified as the construct of the followership styles. As stated by<sup>7</sup> this lack of attention in followership area has been evidenced in<sup>8</sup> who claimed that over the 19-year period from 1990 to 2008, only 14% of the articles had some version of the word follower in the abstract or title, which is reduced even more to a handful of articles when the search is narrowed to include the word followership. Thus, the researchers decide to give an attention into this topic in the Malaysian healthcare context. In addition, few empirical investigations on leadership styles have been reported in the local context of health institution.<sup>9-11</sup> However, at the same time, a lack of evidence is found on the area of followership styles, especially in the Malaysian health institution. Therefore, the researchers at-

tempt to contribute for some early information on followership styles in the Malaysian context, particularly in the health institution. This is hopeful can boost the study of followership style in the context of Malaysia. Recognizing the importance of one out of seven pillars for health system transformation which is related to people skills and expertise as well as their change and adoption (Malaysian Ministry Health Institution, 2017), therefore the element of followership styles may become very crucial to realize this targeted pillar. Hence, the efforts of this initiative are to contribute some knowledge in the domain of followership styles in the health institution which can be the indicator to achieve the focus pillars. This finally will turn to create an impact towards the current health transformation and maybe able to place Malaysia in the status of the developed nation by Year 2020. Therefore, the researchers would like to focus on several factors which may create influences on followership styles among employees in the Malaysian public health institution.

Followership is interactive.<sup>12</sup> For the purpose of this research; we seek to prove on the theory of followership styles based on employee's interaction such as their satisfaction and performances. This is because the interaction between these two factors is expected to boost the level of followership styles as well as the organizational development. This has been supported by<sup>13</sup> who stated that followership styles can lead to the organizational development. In addition, as suggested by<sup>14</sup> the future researchers need to relate followership style with job satisfaction in the context of healthcare. Other researcher<sup>15</sup> proposed for a study which should be done on followership styles in health institution particularly in the aspects of job performance. Thus, in this study, the researchers attempt to look on how employees' satisfaction and performances can create the impacts of employees' followership styles in the Malaysian health institution. Therefore, by focusing on employees' satisfaction and performances, all organizations including of the healthcare sectors may increase their employees' followership style in order to obtain the excellent results.<sup>14</sup>

## 2. Literature review

The aim of this section is to provide the related literature based on past empirical studies. Specifically, in the first place, this section reviews the importance of followership style. Then, literature reviews the concept of job satisfaction. Next, the concept of job performance is discussed. At the same point, related empirical studies on the relationships between the selected predictors and followership style are explained in order to develop the research hypotheses.

### 2.1 followership styles

Many researches tend to focus on the study of leadership rather than followership.<sup>16</sup> supported this argument and claimed that leadership is a hot topic for most researchers. However, there is still a progress on research about followership even though the topic is not popular as the topic of leadership.<sup>17</sup> Followers play an active role in the leadership process for at least two reasons. First, without followers, no one can be a leader; and second, all leaders are followers at times.<sup>18</sup> Thus, knowledge in leadership and its impact will remain incomplete without further understanding of the role that followership in the workplace.<sup>19</sup>

The study on followership received an attention in the 1990s, especially when<sup>20</sup> did their researches in this domain. As stated by these researchers, it can be said that if the institutions have a leader, there also must need to have a follower. Followers are really important to help leaders to achieve their goals and objectives. Without followers; leaders cannot afford to continue the struggle

to achieve their objective. As stated by<sup>13</sup> there is not that clear cut for the definition of followership styles.

As defined by<sup>12</sup> followership is a priori choice (self-conscious) of the individual in the context of his or her relationship to the nominal leader. However as stated by<sup>21</sup>, the crux of followership is appropriate skills and behaviors for optimized performance, which contributes to upholding organizational development. Leaders who have a followership may depict images of being blindly which has not contributed anything or did not give any idea.<sup>22</sup> The consideration or critical thinking is not important when of viewpoint on members can manage a group blindly.<sup>23</sup> Followers might think that they as a partner with the leaders to achieve the goal of the organization, particularly towards the organizational development. As defined by<sup>24</sup> followership is a chance to get the best direction to get in line behind the program, to be a part of a team and sent what expect from the followers, and his will show how success the follower follows the led from the leaders.<sup>24</sup> added that to be good followers; follower must have a number of qualities. Good followers must have a work ethic which is motivated, committed and make the effort. Follower must being a good worker in order leaders take a responsibilities to create a quality environment.

There are five followership categories which are namely as exemplary, conformist, alienated, passive and pragmatist followers.<sup>15</sup> Exemplary followers have the most desirable followership style because it is a combination between engagement in organization and power of critical independent thinking. Exemplary followers have a high in independent thinking and active engagement; meanwhile the conformist followers have a low independent thinking, but high in active engagement.<sup>24</sup> Usually conformist followers present example participation, even though they do not have any abilities in critical thinking in the organizations.<sup>25</sup> Alienated followers have a high in independent thinking but not well in active engagement.<sup>24</sup> These followers can solve a problem but do not do a proper work and low quality. This is because they always give a reason when leaders make a decision according to the work. Passive followers are referred to as sheep<sup>26</sup> that unquestioningly follow the leader but only after being given constant direction.<sup>27</sup> When completing task, the passive follower typically waits for direction before beginning the next task.<sup>28</sup> Last but not least, the pragmatist followership is those who has a moderate level of engagement and portrays a moderate level of critical thinking. They are uncommitted and wait to see where things are going before they take action and tend to maintain the status quo and wait for crises to pass before taking action.<sup>29</sup>

### 2.2 job satisfaction

As stated by<sup>30</sup> job satisfaction is a variation of mental, physiological and natural conditions that cause a man sincerely to state 'I am happy with my employment'. Job satisfaction is referred by<sup>31</sup> as how far the employees happy and excited about their job, whether he or she satisfied or not. Meanwhile,<sup>32</sup> in his definition on job satisfaction focus on the part of the representative in the workplace.

These authors characterized job satisfaction as emotional introductions with respect to people toward work parts which they are rapidly having. Job satisfaction is considered to be a critical success factor for organizations.<sup>33</sup>

Job satisfaction is associated with that individual's leading the work put. It refers to a specialist's feeling of achievement and success at work. It suggests doing something one acknowledges, doing it well and being remunerated for one's endeavors. Job satisfaction additionally infers excitement and delight with one's work. It is the key fixing that prompts to acknowledgment, pay, ad-

vancement, and the accomplishment of various objectives that prompt to a sentiment satisfaction.<sup>30</sup>

As presented by<sup>7</sup> employees high on active followership perceived greater job satisfaction and to the knowledge, the first empirical study based on a cross-sectional survey tested on the effects of active followership on employee job satisfaction. However, in this study, our primary contribution is to test the impact of employees' satisfaction on followership style in the health institution. This is something new to the existing literature since in this paper we seek to look on the impact of employees' satisfaction of the followership style. Thus, new knowledge will be revealed especially when once is solidly associated and have a specialist's feeling of achievement and success at work (job satisfaction), then in which kind of his leading work (followership styles) will be taken into account. Therefore, this was something different compare to what have been presented by the previous scholars.<sup>7,29</sup> Thus, the specific hypothesis is developed as H<sub>1</sub>: There is a significant relationship between job satisfaction and employee's followership style.

### 2.3. job performance

The idea and importance of job performance has become critical in academic research over the span last 15 to 20 years. As stated by<sup>34</sup> job performance relates to the act of doing job. However, according to<sup>35</sup> job performance must be recognized from viability and from profitability or productivity. Meanwhile<sup>31</sup> stated that job performance related to how far an individual can solve the needs of their description. Job performance is a very significant factor affecting profitability of an organization.<sup>36</sup> As per claimed by<sup>37</sup> inefficient job performance will bring about a tragedy to the organization as associated with lower productivity, profitability and impairment of overall organizational effectiveness. As noted by<sup>30</sup> employees are hired to perform with efficiency and effectiveness. Hence to perform with efficiency and effectiveness, it is sound that an employee should display good practices of followership. This is because followership may lead to leadership and as presented by the previous authors<sup>38-39</sup> leadership will create an important impact of organizational effectiveness and efficiency.

Based on the existing literature, few evidences have been reported on the impact of followership styles on employees' job performance. For example,<sup>19</sup> found a positive association between active followership and organizational performance. Also, findings of<sup>40</sup> indicated a significant positive relationship between followership styles and job performance. However, in this study, we seek to investigate the impact of employees' performance on followership styles. In other words, we attempt to reveal whether employee performance will become a good antecedent of the followership styles among employees in this health institution. Therefore, the results of this study may become very fruitful and can contribute something new to the existing literature. Given that, the second hypothesis is developed as H<sub>2</sub>: There is a significant relationship between employee's performance and followership style.

## 3. Methodology

This study has utilized the quantitative method (eg. questionnaire). In this research, the relationship between followership style, job satisfaction and job performance among employees in this institution have been tested through a survey method among employees in one of the public health institution in the Northern Malaysia. The population of this study included of 2084 employees from the positions of administrative staffs, medical officers and nurses in this institution. In this research, we used the simple random sampling. Thus, the characteristic of the samples provided with the right to represent the population in all ways is referred as representative.<sup>41</sup>

As for the followership measure, we utilized the 5 Likert scale questions which consisted of 20 items which have been adapted from<sup>20</sup>. Based on the scoring guide described in<sup>20</sup>, the followership questionnaire was scored per individual. The self-reported scores result in categorization into one of the five followership styles. Having each respondent fall into one followership style, a single number was assigned to designate the type of followership style.<sup>20</sup> 20 items of<sup>42</sup> job satisfaction scale has been adapted. Meanwhile, 7 items of<sup>43</sup> scale of job performance has been adopted. The usable questionnaire sets have been used for analysis by using SPSS software (version 22). Multiple regressions have been run to test the predictive power of the independent variables on followership styles accordingly to the hypotheses. Out of 250 questionnaires set which have been distributed, only 230 of them are returned. However, usable questionnaires are only 210. Thus, the response rate is 84 percent, divided by the number of the sample and the survey was well-executed.

## 4. Demographic data

Demographic data of respondents are included of their gender, age, marital status and academic background. In this study, a higher distribution of gender is female which contributed of 67.6%, the remaining percentage which was 32.4% went to male. In terms of age, majority of the respondents are between 30 to 39 years old about 59.0%. The least of the respondents are between the ages from 40 to 49 years old which contribute of 6.2%. The total percentage of respondents for ages between 20 to 29 years old was 21.0%, between 50 to 59 years old was 13.8% and no respondents reported for ages more than 60 years and above. Most of the respondents are married which equals to 83.3%, whereas 13.8% of the total respondents are single and about 2.9% is reported that come from other categories. With regards to the education background, the majority of the respondents have STPM/Matriculation certification which contributed a percentage of 33.81%. This figure was followed by Degree (24.76%), Diploma (21.43%), and SPM (15.71%). The minority of respondents have Master certification which contributed of 4.29%. No respondent has been reported to have the PhD and others qualification.

### 4.1 reliability analysis

Table 4.1 indicated that the Cronbach's Alpha for followership style is equal to 0.73, job satisfaction is equal to 0.85 and job performance is equal to 0.77. Thus, it can be concluded that the Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficients of all variables in this study are ranged from acceptable to good.<sup>44</sup>

Table 4.1. Reliability Analysis

Variables	N	Cronbach's Alpha	Remarks
Followership Styles	210	0.73	Acceptable
Job Satisfaction	210	0.85	Good
Job Performance	210	0.77	Acceptable

### 4.2 Mean, sd, min, max results

Descriptive analysis examines general statistical description of variables that use minimum, maximum, mean and standard deviation of all variables. As indicated in Table 4.2, the minimum order of respondents' answers for followership style is 2.75. It indicated that some respondents do not agree with those statements and almost all either agreed or strongly disagreed about the variable using the scale given from 1 to 5. As for independent variables; job satisfaction, a minimum of 2.75 and job performance, a minimum of 2.43 indicated some of respondents have lower level of agreement with job satisfaction and job performance. Besides that,

the table also showed that maximum value of these three variables about 4.25, 4.35 and 4.14 respectively. It showed that most of the respondents agreed with these three variables.

**Table 4.2:** Mean, SD, Min and Max Values

Variables	N	Mean	SD	Min	Max
Followership Styles	210	3.67	0.29	2.75	4.25
Job Satisfaction	210	3.67	0.38	2.75	4.35
Job Performance	210	3.37	0.39	2.43	4.14

Means for followership style, job satisfaction and job performance are reported at 3.67, 3.67 and 3.37 each. It means that all the respondents agreed with the question in general. When examining the value in the standard deviation (SD), automatically we will know the variability where measures the amount of variability in the distribution of a variable. The SD value for followership style is reported at 0.29 which is smaller from the mean value, and showed a more concentrate. Meanwhile, the SD values for job satisfaction and job performance are reported at 0.38 and 0.39 each.

### 4.3. Correlation analysis

The correlation procedure is subjected to a two-tailed test of significant at difference level which is highly significant ( $p=0.01$ ) level and significant ( $p=0.05$ ) level.<sup>44</sup> The relationship between two independent variables (job satisfaction and job performance) and dependent variable (followership style) is presented in Table 4.3. The correlation between job satisfaction and followership style showed that  $r$ -value is equal to 0.642 or 64.2 percent at 99 percent confident interval ( $p.<01$ ). Thus, this can be categorized as a moderate relationship (moderate correlation). Next, the correlation between job performance and followership style showed that  $r$ -value is equal to 0.387 or 38.7 percent confident interval ( $p.<01$ ). Thus, this figure showed a kind of a low relationship (low correlation).

**Table 4.3:** Correlation Analyses between Attitude towards Job Satisfaction, Job Performance and Followership Styles

Variables	1	2	3
1. Job Satisfaction	-		
2. Job Performance	.695**	-	
3. Followership style	.642**	.387**	-

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

### 4.4 Regression analysis

Results as summarized in Table 4.4 indicated the multiple regression equation of job satisfaction and job performance on followership style. The set of main effect of job satisfaction and job performance accounted for approximately 41.8% of variance in followership style ( $R^2=.418$ ). The value of  $F$  is equal to 74.48. Based on the results, job satisfaction is significantly related to followership style ( $\beta=.72$ ,  $t=9.78$ ,  $p=.00$ ).

Surprisingly, the results showed that job performance is not significantly related to followership style ( $\beta=-1.11$ ,  $t=-1.55$ ,  $p=.12$ ). Given that, Hypothesis 1 is supported, meanwhile Hypothesis 2 is not supported in this study.

**Table 4.4:** Regression Analyses between Job Satisfaction, Job Performance and Followership Styles

Main Effect	$\beta$	$t$	$p$	$R^2$	$R^2\Delta$	$F$ Change
Job Satisfaction	.72	9.78	.00*	.418	.13	74.48
Job Performance	-.11	-1.55	.12			

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

## 5. Conclusion

Despite the importance of followers for the organizations, there is still much to understand about followership. This paper presents 2 propositions of model on followership. In specific, this paper tested on two variables which are job satisfaction and job performance as the antecedents of the followership styles among employees in health institution in the Northern Malaysia. The objective is to extend the discussion on what factors enable to generate impact on followership styles since past authors look more on the consequences of followership styles.<sup>7,29</sup> It is important to know the consequences of employees' behavior such as their satisfaction and performance on the level of followership styles. This is because the more organization knows about the behavior, the more leaders can understand how followers will behave and interact. Thus, the more likely they can create an environment which can enhance the followers to come.

However based on the findings, it can be concluded that only job satisfaction predicted followership ( $\beta=.72$ ,  $t=9.78$ ,  $p=.00$ ), but not job performance ( $\beta=-1.11$ ,  $t=-1.55$ ,  $p=.12$ ) among employees in this health institution. At the same time, the findings indicated that employees in this institution have moderately high levels of followership style (mean=3.67), job satisfaction (mean=3.67) and job performance (mean=3.37). The previous research<sup>45</sup> reported a significant and predictive relationship between followership style and job satisfaction. Also, in this study it is found that job satisfaction is significantly and positively related to followership style. Therefore, employees' special feeling of achievement and success at work should be enforced by the management because employees' satisfaction is overall seen to be particularly associated with the effectiveness of followership style. A study of<sup>46</sup> also showed that 58% of government doctors in Malaysia hospital are satisfied with their work ( $M=4.34$ ,  $SD=0.59$ ). In addition, findings of<sup>47</sup> suggested that nursing staffs from the public sector hospital in the Northern are moderately satisfied with their job satisfaction.

Next, in the perspective of job performance, although the level of employees performance are reported as a moderately high however it was found not significantly related with the pattern of followership styles among employees in this institution. This may due to the reason that performance level might not create any impact on the followership style because it is the consequences of the domain. It may imply that the excellence in job performance will not lead to the engagement with any dimensions of followership styles. Because of the limited evidences on performance and followership, the researchers try to survey on the results between performance and leadership styles.

It was noted that past authors<sup>48</sup> also found indirect relationship between performance and leadership style and in their research their hypothesized that leadership as the antecedents of job performance, and not as the consequence.

Based on the measurement of job satisfaction in this study here are some suggestions which can be taken into consideration in order to let the employees have the high level of satisfaction: 1] Keep employees being able to keep busy all the time; 2] Give employees chance to work alone on the job; 3] Give employees chance to do different things from time to time; and 4] Allow employees chance to be 'somebody' in the community.

There are few limitations that occurred in this research. One of them pertaining the size of sample which was quite small. To decide whether there is a relationship between followership style and both job satisfaction and job performance in hospital, a sufficient example size is required. For this research the sample taken from one hospital and employees that involve in questionnaire is only 210 employees. Besides that, the second limitation is about the

self-rated report of questionnaires. One of the well-known problems associated with self-reports is the social desirability response bias.<sup>49</sup> As cited by<sup>49</sup> in<sup>50</sup> social desirability bias is a response bias that refers to the tendency for respondents to present themselves in a way that is untrue and projects a favorable image to the researcher. As for this research, it can be assumed that employees have answered the questionnaire honestly from their internal perspective.

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