# INTERPERSONAL RELATIONS ORIENTATION AND LEADERSHIP STYLES OF MALAYSIAN MANAGERS: RELATIONSHIP AND IMPACT OF DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES

by

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Specially dedicated to:

my father, V.Odayappan, my beloved wife Shamala Krishnasamy,

my son Harvind Selvaraj, family members and loved ones

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# ABSTRAK

Kajian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji pertalian antara Gaya Orientasi Interpersonal Antara-Insan yang juga dikenali sebagai gaya Antara-Insan dengan gaya kepimpinan yang dipraktikkan di kalangan pengurus di Malaysia. Pada waktu yang sama, pengkaji juga telah melihat pada pengaruh faktor demografi ke atas kedua-dua gaya yang telah dibincangkan. Gaya Orientasi Interpersonal Antara-Insan akan dikaji mengikut tiga dimensinya iaitu sikap agresif, sikap pasif dan sikap assertif. Walhal, dari perspektif gaya kepimpinan pula dinilai mengikut empat jenis gaya kepimpinan iaitu, gaya memberitahu (telling), gaya menjual (selling), gaya penyertaan (participating) dan gaya pengutusan (delegating). Sebanyak 240 set soal selidik telah diedarkan kepada pengurus-pengurus di Pulau Pinang, hanya seratus empat puluh lima set soal selidik yang lengkap telah diterima untuk tujuan penganalisaan. Mengikut kajian lampau, dapat dibuktikan bahawa wujud perkaitan antara kedua-dua gaya yang dikaji. Hasil kajian ini mengatakan bahawa pengurus lelaki yang muda memaparkan sikap agresif dan lebih cenderung dalam menggunakan gaya kepimpinan berunsur pemberitahuan. Padahal pengurus yang matang usianya dan juga dari segi perlakuannya pula mempunyai sikap yang asertif dan mengamalkan gaya kepimpinan berunsur penglibatan. Dari segi pertalian antara kedua-dua gaya yang dibincangkan ini, ia melihatkan wujudnya perhubungan. Umpamanya, pengurus yang bersikap agresif lebih menggunakan gaya kepimpinan memberitahu, pengurus yang bersikap asertif pula menggunakan gaya kepimpinan penglibatan manakala pengurus yang bersikap pasif menggunakan gaya kepimpinan berunsur pengiklanan. Maka, dapat dirumuskan bahawa sememangnya wujud satu pertalian antara sikap keperibadian pengurus dengan gaya kepimpinan mereka. Implikasi kajian ini dipercayai dapat menyedarkan golongan pengurus akan sikap dan gaya kepimpinan mereka. Lantaran itu mereka akan dapat menilai semula keadaan dan mengatur langkah

untuk mengatasinya untuk dirinya dan juga untuk pengikutnya. Maklumat ini juga dapat

digunakan untuk melatih kakitangannya megikut keperluan ketua kumpulan tersebut.

# ABSTRACT

This research attempts to study the relationship between interpersonal relations orientation which is also known as interpersonal style and the leadership styles adopted by Malaysian managers. It also seeks to examine the impact of demographic variables between these two styles. The interpersonal relations orientation in this study comprises aggressive, submissive and assertive behavior and the leadership style measures telling, selling, participating and delegating leadership styles. A total of 240 questionnaires were administered to managers in Penang, however only 145 completed questionnaires were used for the final analysis. The literature review of this research has shown that there is a relationship between demographic variables and interpersonal relations dimensions and also with leadership style. The results indicated that young and male managers are aggressive and have adopted more of the telling leadership style. It also indicated that older managers are more assertive and this groups was adopting the participating and delegating leadership style. It was also found that there is a positive correlation between the dimensions of interpersonal relations orientation and the dimensions of leadership styles. The managers who are aggressive in their interpersonal relations orientation are more inclined to adopt telling leadership style. Managers who are submissive in their interpersonal relations orientation tend to practice selling leadership style. Managers who are found to be assertive in their interpersonal relations orientation are more prone to use the participating and delegating style of leadership. Thus this finding indicates that there is a strong relationship between the dimensions of interpersonal relations orientation style and leadership styles.

# Chapter 1

## INTRODUCTION

The word leader refers to a person who creates vision and goals, and then energizes others to voluntarily commit to that vision. While leadership explains as the act of providing direction, energizing others and obtaining their voluntary commit to that vision. A vision is an articulated picture of the future that conveys purpose, direction and priorities. It illuminates the conditions, events, products and qualities that could be attained through focused human energy and selective use of resources (Cook, 1997). Leaders are thus concerned with bringing about change and motivating others to support that vision of change.

Leadership Style as a state of mind is the beyond personality traits and observable behaviors, how the leader view himself or herself when in the leadership role. Leadership style involves the cognition (the motive, attitudes, goals, and sources of satisfaction that exist in the mind of the leader) that guide interaction with group members (Cook, 1997).

In view of the above, the leadership style becomes an important factor to determine on the success and failure of the leaders. The role of these leaders becomes so prominent in today's competitive environment. As such, the success and survival of leaders are very much dependent on their personal factors and the situational elements. Even though there are many types of leadership styles, there are also many factors contributing to the style of leadership that one adopts.

Basically, this study attempts to analyze the demographic factors and also the interpersonal relations orientation (aggressive, submissive and assertive) factors that

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determines the leadership style on whether they are practicing the telling, selling, participating or the delegating type of leadership.

## 1.1 Research Problem

There are many factors that determine the leadership style that one practices as a leader. It has been a great concern on why some of the leaders are different from the others, in terms of their leadership style. There are many types of leadership styles that have been identified and established. The question is why and what is the reason that one end up practicing as a leader. This practice may be with or without one's own intention or knowledge. There have been continuous studies on various factors that influenced leader's leadership style. Therefore this research will focus on what is the relationship between interpersonal style and leadership style among Malaysian managers.

## 1.2 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to investigate the relationship of the demographic factors as well as the individual leader's interpersonal relations orientation on whether they are aggressive, submissive or assertive and the relationship with their leadership style whether they are of the telling, selling, participating or delegating type.

The present study aims at studying the leadership style of managers and study what are the main contributors for them to practice such leadership style. First, we will study the impact of demographic variables of managers on their interpersonal relations orientation and on their leadership style. Secondly, we will study the relationship between their interpersonal relations orientation and their leadership styles.

Ultimately, this study hopes to throw some light on the study of leadership style and dimensions of interpersonal relations orientation. It is hoped that this study will benefit future researchers who may use as a base to delve deeper into finding out of the effectiveness of the leadership styles discussed.

## 1.3 Scope of the Study

The scope of study will cover from Supervisors, Executives and Managers who are known for leading a group of people and making decisions for their group. These groups of respondents will be from Penang consisting of different disciplines and business activities ranging from manufacturing to service sectors. This includes employees from local and foreign owned companies.

## 1.4 Significance of the Study

Even though there are many studies done on topics of leadership, scientific research on leadership style in Malaysia is still at a scanty level. This research will aid organizations as well as individual leaders to understand their leadership styles and factors contributing to it. This research is also to provide information on the profile of interpersonal relations orientation of Malaysian managers. Thus, the results reflected by the research would be a guide to formulate and design new training programs for leaders who find their leadership styles ineffective. This could also provide an opportunity for leaders for 'self actualization' in terms of their interpersonal relation orientation.

## 1.5 Definition of terms

The word leadership itself has a wide scope of definitions, while the leadership styles are also interpreted differently by different scholars. In this research, the writer will focus on the definitions presented by Hersey and Blanchard (1969) who grouped leadership styles

as either Telling, Selling, Participating and Delegating leadership styles. The definition for each style are as follows:-

Telling:             providing specific instructions and closely supervise performance.

Selling:             explaining decisions and provide opportunity for clarification.

Participating:       sharing ideas and facilitate in making decisions.

Delegating:          turning over responsibility for decisions and implementation (Hersey and Blanchard, 1969).

**1.5.1 Interpersonal Relation Orientation Style.**

Interpersonal relation orientation style according to Bowen (1982) is the emphasis one places on passive, aggressive, and assertive behavior. Alberti and Emmons in 'Your Perfect Right' (1970) have identified three contrasting modes of interpersonal relation orientation styles. Those are, aggressive behavior, non-assertive behavior and the assertive behavior. The aggressive behavior is defined as one denying the rights of others, non assertive is defined as denying one's own rights while assertive is defined as acknowledging your own rights and those of others.

**Submissive** behavior is inhibited and passive. Individuals with this behavior seek to avoid conflicts and tend to sublimate their own needs and feelings in order to satisfy other people.

**Aggressive** behavior is the opposite of passiveness; it is domineering, pushy, self-centered, and without regard for the feelings or rights of others.

**Assertive** behavior expresses their ideas and feelings openly, stand up for their rights, and do so in a way that makes it easier for others to do the same. The assertive person, therefore, is straightforward, yet sensitive to the needs of others. Assertiveness

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facilitates more effective interactions because it lessens defensiveness, domination, putting down other people, "wishy washiness," and similar dyfunctional behaviors. The Oxford English Dictionary defines 'assertive' as 'The action of stating positively, declaring or claiming'.

## 1.6 Summary and Organization of Remaining Chapters

Chapter One of this report begins with the introduction of the research project. It discusses the research problem, purpose of the study, signification of the study and defining all the key terms used in this research.

Chapter Two will fully focus on the literature review of leadership style study. Chapter three will be on methodology, describing the theoretical framework of the study, the measuring instrument, sampling method and the method of data analysis. Chapter Four will report the outcome of the analysis and the concluding chapter will discuss the findings, conclusion, limitation of the study and offer suggestions for future research.

# REVIEW OF LITERATURE

## Introduction

This chapter presents the literature review. The literature review is divided into four sections. The first section will review list of leadership approaches and trace the history and development to understand further. The second section will review the concepts of interpersonal personal relations orientation style. The third section will briefly review the list on the demographic, the forth section will briefly review leadership study in Malaysia and finally, the summary of this chapter will be in section five.

## 2.1 Review on Leadership Approaches

Leadership is one of the world's oldest preoccupations. The understanding of leadership has figured strongly in the quest for knowledge. Purposeful stories have been told through the generations about leaders' competencies, ambitions, and shortcoming; leaders' rights and privileges; and the leaders' duties and obligations. The study of leadership rivals in age the emergence of civilization, which shaped its leaders as much as it was shaped by them.

Although the Oxford English Dictionary (1933) noted the appearance of the word leader in the English language as early as the year 1300, the word 'leadership' did not appear until the first half of the nineteenth century in writings. And the word did not appear in the most other modern languages until recent times.

In spite of the extensive research on the topic of leadership, its definition has proven to be an elusive problem. However, an essence of agreement has been found in defining leadership in-group effectiveness. Campbell (1956) illustrates this point when he defines

leadership as "the contribution of a given individual to group effectiveness, mediated through the direct efforts of others rather than himself. Stogdill (1950) writes, "Leadership is the process of influencing group activities toward goal setting and goal achievement. Pigors (1935) defined leadership as " a process of mutual stimulation which, by successful interplay of relevant differences, controls human energy in the pursuit of a common cause". Hempill (1954) is in agreement with Pigors when he indicates, "Leadership is the interaction of acts which result in a consistent pattern of group interaction directed towards the solution of a mutual problem".

There are almost as many different definitions of leadership as there are persons who have attempted to define the concept. Different definitions and conceptions have been reviewed briefly by Morris and Seaman (1950), Shartle (1951a, 1951b, 1956), L.F. Carter (1953), C.A. Gibb (1954), Bass (1960), Stogdill (1975), and Schriesheim and Kerr (1977). Moreover, as Pfeffer (1977) noted that, many of the definitions are ambiguous. Yukl (1989) concluded that most or almost all leadership theories are within these three following models: Trait model, behavioral model and situational or contingency model.

For years researchers in the behavioral sciences have tried to discern why some people are successful leaders and others aren't. If there were simple answers, all leaders will be successful. Because there isn't a simple answer, there are libraries full of books and articles and on the topic. The following section will look at three basic theoretical approaches to leadership: Traits model, which focuses on the personal characteristics of leaders; behavioral models, which concentrate on leaders' behaviors; and contingency models, which examine the relationship between the situation and the leaders' behavior. Each model uses a different set of factors to describe and predict what styles of leadership are most effective.

## 2.1.1 Traits models / Approaches.

Trait models are based on the assumptions that certain physical, social, and personal characteristics are inherent in leaders. According to this view, the presence or absence of these characteristics distinguishes leaders from non-leaders.

If the leader is endowed with superior qualities that differentiate him from his followers, it should be possible to identify these qualities. This assumption gave rise to the trait theories of leadership (Kohs & Irle, 1920). Trait theory suggests that we can evaluate leadership and propose ways of leading effectively by considering whether an individual possesses certain personality traits, social traits, and physical characteristics (Barrow 1977). There were few explanations on leadership in terms of traits personality and characters (L.L. Bernard, 1926, Bingham, 1927, Tead, 1929, Page, 1935, and Kilbourne, 1935).

A list of 79 traits from 20 psychologically oriented studies was compiled (Bird, 1940). A similar review was completed (Smith and Krueger, 1933) for educators and by W.O Jenkins (1947) for military leaders. Until the 1940s, most research about leaders and leadership focused on the individual traits of consequence. Being popular in the 1940s and 1950s, trait theory attempted to predict which individuals successfully became leaders and whether they were effective. Leaders differ from non-leaders in their drive (achievement, ambition, energy and initiative), desire to lead, honesty and integrity, self-confidence, cognitive ability and knowledge of business (Kirkpatrick and Locke, 1991). Skills, vision, and the ability to implement the vision are necessary to transform traits into leadership styles.

Further research has identified negative traits that hinder a person from reaching leadership potential (Yukl, 1989). A similar research has also identified three traits that kept group members from competing for a leadership role (John G. Geier, 1967). These three traits were, in order of importance, the perception of being uninformed, of being non-participants, or of being extremely rigid. Whereas, (McCall and Lombardo, 1983), have examined the differences between executives who went all the way to the top and those who were expected to go to the top but were 'derailed' just before reaching their goal. They concluded that both winners and losers were a patchwork of strengths and weaknesses, but those who fell short seemed to have one or more of what McCall and Lombardo claimed as 'fatal flaws'.

Trait research continued with another five year study on ninety outstanding leaders and their followers (Bennis, 1984) This study identified four common traits or areas of competence shared by all ninety leaders: (management of attention, management of meaning, management of trust, and management of self).

Recent research conducted at Academy of Management Executive, using a variety of methods, has made it clear that successful leaders are not like other people. The evidence indicates that there are certain core traits, which contribute to business leaders' success. It is also stressed that leaders do not have to be great men or women by being intellectual geniuses or omniscient prophets to succeed, but they do need to have the 'right stuff' and this stuff is not equally present in all people (Kirkpatrick and Locke, 1991).

The use of the trait approach has more historical than practical interest to managers, even though recent research has once again tied leadership effectiveness to leader traits. A study of senior management job suggests that effective leadership requires a broad

knowledge of work and solid relation within the industry and the company, and excellent reputation, a strong track record, a keen mind, strong interpersonal skills, high intergrity, high energy, and a strong drive to lead (Kotter, 1988).

In summary, empirical research studies suggests that leadership is a dynamic process, varying from situation to situation with changes in the leader, the followers, and the situation. Because of this, while there may be helping or hindering traits in a given situation, there is no universal set of traits that will ensure leadership success. The lack of validation of trait approaches led to other investigations of leadership. Among the most prominent areas were the behavioral approaches (Bennis, 1986).

## 2.1.2 Behavioral Models.

After discovering that leaders don't have a uniform set of personal traits, researchers turned their attention to isolating behaviors that are characteristic of effective leaders. Behavioral models of leadership focus on differences in the actions of effective and ineffective leaders actually do; how they delegate tasks to subordinates, where and when they communicate to others, how they perform their roles, and so on. Unlike traits, behaviors can be observed and learned, individuals can be trained and lead more effectively (W.Slocum, 1999).

The main period of the behavioral approaches to leadership occurred between 1945, with the Ohio State and Michigan studies and the mid-1960s, with the development of the Managerial Grid (R.Blake, 1985c). Researchers during 1950s viewed a person's behavior rather than the individual's personal traits as a way of increasing leadership effectiveness. This view also paved the way for later situational theories (Gordon, 1993). For example, the dimensions of the Managerial Grid, Concern for Production, and

Concern for People are behavioral. Concern may be defined as a predisposition or feeling towards or against production and people. In this section we will look specifically at three behavioral approaches to leadership: the Ohio State studies; the Michigan studies, including Rensis Likert's work; and the Managerial Grid.

The leadership studies initiated in 1945 by the Bureau of Business Research at Ohio State University attempted to identify various dimensions of leader behavior (Stogdill and Coons, 1957). Leadership was defined as behavior of an individual when directing the activities of a group towards goal attainment, eventually narrowed the description of leader behavior to two dimensions: Initiating Structure and Consideration.

Initiating Structure refers to the leader's behavior in delineating the relationship between himself and members of the work group and in endeavoring to establish well defined patterns of organizations, channels of communications, and methods of procedures. Employees' reactions to initiating-structure leaders depends on whether they also believed that the leaders were considerate. If so, their behavior was viewed as effective. Otherwise, however, subordinates viewed their behavior as 'watching over employees' shoulders (C.Murphy and Stogdill, 1974).

On the other hand, Consideration was referred as 'behavior indicative of friendship, mutual trust, respect, and warmth in the relationship between the leader and the member of his staffs' (W. Halpin, 1959). The Ohio State staff developed the Leader Behavior Description Questionnaire (LBDQ) to be filled up by leaders' followers and the Leader Opinion Questionnaire (LBQ) which was scored by the leaders themselves. In studying leader behavior, The Ohio State staff found that Initiating Structure and Consideration were separate and distinct dimensions (Zander, 1960).

In the early studies at the University of Michigan, there was an attempt to approach the study of leadership by locating clusters of characteristics. It looked at managers with an employee orientation and a production orientation yielded similar results (Fleishman, Harris, and Burtt, 1959). These two orientations parallel the democratic (relationship) and authoritarian (task) concepts of the leader behavior continuum of the Tannenbaum-Schmidt model.

Highly productive supervisors spent more time in planning departmental work and in supervising their employees; they spent less time in working alongside and performing the same tasks as subordinate, accorded their subordinates more freedom in specific task performance, and tended to be employee oriented (Kahn and Katz, 1953). Continuations from the earlier research found that 'supervisors with the best records of performance focus their primary attention on the human aspects of their employees' problems and on endeavoring to build effective work groups with high performance goals (Rensis Likert, 1961a).

In discussing the Ohio State, Michigan, and Likert leadership studies, two theoretical concepts were being emphasized; one concentrating on task accomplishment and the other stressing the development of personal relationship. Robert R. Blake and Jane S. Mouton (1964) have modified these concepts in their Managerial Grid and have used them extensively in organization and management development programs.

## 2.1.3 Contingency/Situational Model.

Situational or contingency models differ from the earlier the earlier trait or behavioral model in asserting that no single way of leading works in all given situations. It is argued that it is more appropriate behavior depends on the circumstances at any given time. To

become an effective manager, one must diagnose the situation, identify the leadership style that will be most effective, and then determine whether they can be implemented in a particular situation.

Fred E. Fielder (1967) developed the contingency theory of leadership. Leadership, according to Fielder, is an output of many interrelated, dynamic, overlapping and constantly changing variable, that cannot singularly explain leadership, but when used collectively, can account for many factors comprising leadership.

Fielder's Contingency model of leadership effectiveness postulates that the group's success is contingent on the interaction of two factors. One is leader motivation, which is the style of the leader in relation to the group members and two is the situation favorableness which is the extent to which the leader can exert influence over the group. The model suggests that certain leadership styles may be effective or ineffective, depending on the important elements of the situation.

Three situational factors, identified by Fielder could demonstrate leader effectiveness. Three factors are leader-member relations, task structure and position power. Fielder measured leadership style by evaluating leader responses to the Least Preferred Co-worker (LPC) questionnaire. Subjects who rate the least preferred co-worker in favorable terms are considered people-oriented leaders with supportive behavior.

On the other hand, subjects who rate the least preferred co-worker in less than favorable terms are considered task-oriented leaders. The three dimensional model of contingency leadership suggests that leaders who are supportive and leaders who are task oriented function best in specific situation. Fielder's theory is unique that it suggests that leaders

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should not be required to change leadership style to fit the situation; rather, the leader should be assigned to a situation that favors the style of the leader.

### 2.1.4 Path-Goal Theory of Leadership

The Path-Goal Theory of leadership was popularized by Robert House and is based on interaction and expectation concepts (Robert J., 1971). Path-to-goal is the performance variable and the leader, by coaching, guiding, and making reward contingent on performance, clear the path to goals.

The leader's role in the Path Goal Theory of leadership is (1) recognizing and stimulating subordinates needs for reward, (2) rewarding goal achievements, (3) supporting subordinates efforts to achieve goals, (4) helping to reduce barriers to goal achievements, and (5) increasing the opportunity for subordinates personal satisfaction. The leader must provide structure and rewards contingent of performance in order to obtain subordinate effectiveness.

### 2.1.5 Vroom-Yetton and Vroom – Jago Models

A model of situational leadership developed by Vroom and Yetton (1973) identifies five styles, ranging from authoritarian to fully participate. They also encourage managers to seek the 'feasible set of alternatives' in choosing a leadership style to accommodate a given problem or a situation at a particular time. An extension to the above, Vroom and Jago, (1988), introduced another model by emphasizing greater on quality of the managerial decision and the nature of the manager's commitment to it. They also cautioned against otherwise good decisions that were too costly or cumbersome to implement and urged that decisions be made with the view of developing the abilities of others involved in the decision.

## 2.1.6 Hersey and Blanchard's Life Cycle Theory

Hersey and Blanchard's Life Cycle Theory of leadership appears to be the assimilation of components from Blake and Mouton's (1978) managerial grid postulations, Reddins (1970), Three-Dimensinal Effectiveness Model, and Argyris (1964) Maturity-Immaturity Continuum. The theory is based on the assumption that it is possible to access the maturity level of subordinate and to exhibit leader behavior as the model prescribes.

The components of maturity include the dimension of job maturity (a person's willingness-or motivation to perform a job). Once the appropriate maturity level of the subordinate has been determined, an appropriate leadership style must be demonstrated with the subordinate.

Leader behavior is plotted on a four-sided grid with extreme behavior of task and relationship behavior being the outer limits of the X and Y axis (see figure 2.1). The combination of task behavior dimension and relationship behavior dimension lead to the development of four leadership styles: telling, selling, participating and delegating.

Telling style is suggested when subordinates exhibit the minimum amount of job maturity and psychological maturity. Telling leadership style is focused on providing specific instructions and closely supervising performance of subordinates.

Selling behavior is suggested when the subordinate exhibits some job maturity and psychological maturity. Selling leadership style is focused on explaining decisions and providing opportunity for clarification. Participating behavior is suggested when the subordinate exhibits quite a bit of job maturity and psychological maturity. Participating leadership style is focused on sharing ideas and facilitating in making decisions.

Delegating behavior is suggested when a subordinate exhibits a great deal of job maturity and psychological maturity. Delegating leadership style is focused on turning over responsibility for decisions and implementations.

**Figure 2.1: Situational Leadership Style: (Hersey & Blanchard, 1982)**

**X** *Relationship Behavior*

*High*

| | |
|---|---|
| **High**<br>**Relationship**<br>**And**<br>**Low Task**<br><br>Participating　　　*S-3 Style* | **High Task**<br>**And**<br>**High**<br>**Relationship**<br><br>Selling　　　*S-2 Style* |
| **Low**<br>**Relationship**<br>**And**<br>**Low Task**<br><br>Delegating　　　*S-4 Style* | **High Task**<br>**And**<br>**Low**<br>**Relationship**<br><br>Telling　　　*S-1 Style* |

*Low*　　　　　　　*Task Behavior*　　　　　　　*High*　**Y**

**Maturity of Followers**

| M-4<br>High | M-3<br>Moderate | M-2<br>Moderate | M-1<br>Low |
|---|---|---|---|

## 2.2 Concept of Interpersonal Relation Orientation Style

In discussing various definitions, Feshbach (1970) has noted that aggression can be defined as injury at the descriptive level, some typing of aggression is necessary at the

construct level. Feshbach has classified aggressive acts into unintentional and intentional aggression which he has delineated (i.e., expressive, hostile, instrumental).

Other theorists (Dollard, Doob, Miller Mowrer & Sears 1939; Berkowitz, 1962), in delineating their field of inquiry, have concentrated on instrumental aggressiveness. Sears (1961) has classified Instrumental aggressiveness as used as pro-social aggressions which is supposed to be accepted by the moral standards of the group. Rule (1974) summarized that aggression refers to a response, some element of which is injury, but a response that requires typing for predictive value.

Further refinement was made by Phelps and Austin (1975), when they subdivided the aggressive mode into two, direct aggressiveness and indirect aggressiveness. Aggression, both direct and indirect, and non-assertiveness result in communication breakdown between individuals. This reduces the effectiveness of work teams as honest communication becomes impossible, and this has serious effects upon individuals, work group and organizations.

Hersey and Blanchard (1977) pointed out that , 'Our greatest failure as human beings has been the inability to secure cooperation and understanding with others'. Assertive behavior can give us the skills we need to overcome this failing. Study on the assertive person, as described by Alberti and Emmons (1970) is open and flexible, genuinely concerned with the rights of others, yet at the same time able to establish very well his own rights. An assertive statement expresses the speaker's thoughts and feelings directly and clearly, without judging or dictating to others. A complete assertive message usually contains five parts; behavior, interpretation, feelings, consequences and intention statement (Miller, 1975). Assertive behavior is open, honest and non-manipulative, needs

or opinions in a manner that is neither threatening nor punishing towards the other person (Glassi & Glassi, 1977).

### 2.2.1 Interpersonal Relations and Leadership

In studying the relationship between interpersonal relations and leadership, Jacobson W. (1972) raised few questions: do personality characteristics have anything to do with effective leadership? If we are friendly and helpful to others, will they depend on us? Is aggressiveness a typical leader behavior? Should we display modesty of firmness when we attempt to lead? Is it necessary to display good judgement as a leader or is the appearance of good judgement sufficient?

In the attempt to answer these questions, he noted that a common belief in the importance of personality characteristics in determining leadership. Although these are not the primary basis of leadership, still we must consider certain personality characteristics as possible power for leaders. By displaying courtesy, cooperation, and a genuine interest in others, leaders undoubtedly create what psychoanalytic call "father substitution' in the attitudes of their followers. This image seems to engender in follower's feelings of submissiveness and dependence that can be detrimental or beneficial.

Gold's work (1958), showed gentleness, friendliness, and sociability are positively correlated with higher power rankings. In furthering social-emotional needs, a leader can be very helpful in promoting satisfying interpersonal relations if he displays courteous, helpful, and interested behavior towards members. Bales and Slater (1955), observed, however, that the leader who displays this type of behavior will not be a good 'idea man.'

Some research indicates that leaders who rate high in consideration of others are low in proficiency of task performance (Fleishman and Harris 1962). Leaders who are warm and understanding are less effective in promoting group productivity. This finding suggests that we can seldom be both social-emotional and task specialist. Therefore those of us who are leaders must decide in which area to concentrate our efforts, depending upon the relative importance of good group relations versus a good group product.

They further stressed that firmness and initiative power are effective only with particular leadership styles. Aggressiveness is rarely associated with successful power attempts and some to act as a negative factor in groups' relations. Leaders who are perceived as high power persons are usually regarded as being not aggressive, whereas lower power members are much more likely to exhibit aggressive behavior.

There are very few behavioral differences between leaders and non-leaders except in overall participation. We should realize, however, that other members do not regard frequent participation that is detrimental and non-facilitative as leadership (Morris & Hackman, 1969). A curious adjunct to frequency of communication is that any member can effect similar results if he is told that he is a power holder whether or not he is really one.

Modesty does not seem to be a trait strongly connected with successful leadership. Dependability and good judgement are also positively correlated with effective leader behavior. If others know that we have been successful on a task, they will trust our judgement and willingly accept our power attempts on similar tasks. Of course the dependability and judgement required many change from situation to situation. If we fail

to provide the services the group feels are mandatory, the members will look to others who can provide them (Clifford & Cohn, 1964).

Successful leaders usually display considerable degree of friendliness and optimism. French and Snyder (1959) reported that significant correlation exists between ratings of leadership effectiveness or popularity. However, the best-liked member is not necessarily the leader in idea development or guiding, but is so identified in satisfying the social-emotional of the groups.

## 2.3 Demographic variables, interpersonal relation and leadership style.

This section of literature review will look at other relevant demographic variables with leadership styles and interpersonal relations. First of all this literature review will look at relationship between gender and leadership style and interpersonal relations.

Traditional gender roles suggest that men and women approach interpersonal conflict with different goals in mind. Gender as a difference of consequences in the study of leadership has surged an importance only during the past two decades. By the late 1980's, there had been women prime ministers in Britain, India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, the Philippines and Norway (Stodgill, 1978). Umbach, (1993) attempted to measure the effects of individual leadership style, sex, and task structure on leadership effectiveness. Deaux (1984), Gilligan (1982), Kahn,O'Leary, Krulewwitz & Lamm (1980) found that females are seen as being more concerned with intimacy and maintaining interpersonal harmony in their relationship, whereas males are more interested in relationship in which status, individuality and achievement play a major role. In other research, women were found describing themselves as being more accommodating and less competitive in conflict situations (Knight & Dubro, 1984).

Broverman and Vogel (1972), regarded women as less aggressive, more dependent, and more emotional. They do not hide their emotions, were subjective, easily influenced, and submissive. Heller (1981) reported that women are reluctant to assert themselves for the fear of being seen as aggressive or to display their ambition to achieve for the fear of failure. Consistently, Hall and Donnel (1979), claimed that if a woman adopts more accommodative, participative leadership behavior, she faces criticism for being too passive. But if she adopts an autocratic or task-oriented leadership behavior or a more directive style, she may be seen as too aggressive and masculine.

Gudykunst and Kim (1984), claimed that even within the same culture, there are cognitive differences between old and young. Even in both Malaysia and Japanese cultures, being old has been associated to be wiser. Japanese have traditionally regarded age as synonymous with wisdom. A person is accorded more respect simply by being older and the Japanese regard for age is reflected in most large Japanese business organizations (Kato & Kato, 1992). Similarly, in Malaysia, Abdullah (1992), pointed out that Malaysians are expected to respect their elders in their speech and behavior.

Malaysians are often considered as respecting their leaders, leaders' authority is often unquestioned (Abdullah, 1992). Even in the Hosftede study (1980), he concluded that Malaysians generally accept the leaders' power. As much as they respect the elders, they also have respect for their job status.

In term of ethnic group, Jaouadi (2000) found that Malay managers were found to have a dominant behavioral style more frequently than other styles. The Chinese managers were found to have a dominant analytical style. Chinese tend to use more careful analysis. In terms of leadership style, Malays were found to have directive style than the Chinese in their decision making. These results were consistent with the findings of Muhamad

Sulaiman (1997). Further finding stated that Malay managers in public sector were found to be more directive than Malay managers in private sector. Yusuf (1999) reported the same, that directive style will be the most appropriate when dealing with Malays.

Chinese were found to prefer delegating style of leadership. This study confirms the earlier study conducted by Gill (1998). Thus, Yusuf (1999) confirmed that ethnicity have some effect on leadership style; telling, selling, participating and delegating.

## 2.4 Leadership Studies in Malaysia

In studying leadership in Malaysia, Asma Abdullah (1992) examined the value of the various ethnic groups that comprise the Malaysian workforce, and how this values are being manipulated at the workplace. She reported that the differences in the cultural values which influences the way the work is done can be seen in the behavioral patterns demonstrated by employees. She also presented her views to ensure all local and foreign managers should be sensitive to the peculiar ethnic values of the Malaysian workforce who origins from various ethnic group.

Ali, Hassan Mohamed (1984) conducted a study to pinpoint precisely on variable which were significantly correlated with leadership effectiveness. He concluded that age plays an important role in leadership effectiveness. Harchand Singh (1980) examined the relationship principles' leadership and teachers' leadership. Loke (1998), in studying leader behavior and effectiveness among secondary school principals, concluded that many researchers have now returned to basic trait approach and behavioral approach. This is to study the basic question of "what makes a good and effective leader?"

Yusoff (1999) examined the impact of demographic factors and culture on leadership preference among Malaysian managers concluded that there is a significant difference amongst the various ethnic and religious groups in their leadership preference. His detailed leadership styles was on the dimensions of telling, selling, participating and delegating. Jaouadi (2000), who studied about decision making styles among managers, claimed that very little is known about Malaysian managers. In another study by Asma Abdullah (1996), on cultural dimensions in Malaysian management, reported that culture is a mould and we are all in cast. It controls our lives in many ways and it is part of our behavior which we take for granted.

## 2.5 Summary of literature review

The overall literature review first of all suggests that there are many approaches to the study of leadership. Besides, the literature review states that there is a relationship between the demographic factors and the interpersonal relations orientation as well as the dimensions of leadership styles. Finally, it highlights the many perspectives on leadership studies.

# Chapter 3

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### Introduction

This chapter discusses the research framework and the methods used for obtaining the data needed in this study. A detailed explanation of the questionnaire used is given. This chapter also elaborates the sampling and statistical methods.

### 3.1 Research Framework

The schematic diagram of the research is shown in Figure 3.1. The dependent variable in this study is the leadership style. The dependent variable was operationalised into four dimensions, which is telling, selling, participating and delegating styles of leadership adapted from Hersey and Blanchard, (1982) in Yusoff (1999). This model is based on Hersey and Blanchard's life cycle theory. This theory assumes that it is possible to assess the maturity level of subordinate(s) and to exhibit the leader behavior as the model prescribes: telling, selling, participating and delegating. Furthermore, this model was found to be practical from the previous study conducted by Yusoff (1999) on leadership style of Malaysian managers.

This research attempts to test the relationship between respondent's demographics factors and their interpersonal relations orientation and leadership style. It also attempts to study the relationship between respondents' interpersonal relation orientation (interpersonal style) and leadership style. Interpersonal relation orientations as the independent variable will be researched through three dimensions as proposed by Stephen P. Robbins (1989). The three dimensions are aggressive, submissive and assertive. This research also tests on each dimension of its relationship to leadership style and also directly to demographic factors.

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