



UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA

**THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PERCEIVED LEADERSHIP
BEHAVIOURS AND JOB SATISFACTION OF MIDDLE
MANAGERS IN TENAGA NASIONAL BERHAD
(TNB) MALAYSIA**

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(TNB) MALAYSIA**

By

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**Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	ii
LIST OF TABLES	vii
LIST OF FIGURES	ix
ABSTRACT	x
ABSTRAK	xiii
CHAPTER	
I INTRODUCTION-----	1
Background of the Study -----	1
Statement of the Problem -----	6
Objectives of the Study-----	7
Significance of the Study-----	8
Scope of the Study-----	9
Definitions of Terms-----	10
Perceived Leadership Behaviour-----	10
Consideration-----	10
Initiating Structure-----	11
Top Management-----	11
Middle Managers-----	11
Job Satisfaction-----	12
Sense of Achievement-----	12
Degree of Responsibility-----	12
Authority and Responsibility Held-----	12
Job Security-----	13
Creativity-----	13
Independence-----	13
Opportunities for Social Service-----	13
Opportunities for Advancement-----	13
Policies-----	13
Remuneration-----	14
Supervision-----	14
Working Conditions-----	14
Interpersonal Relationship-----	14
Overall Job Satisfaction-----	14
II REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE-----	15
Introduction-----	15
Definitions of Leadership-----	16
Leadership Theories-----	18
Trait Approach-----	19



	The Behaviour Approach-----	24
	Situational Approach-----	29
	Path Goal Approach-----	31
	Theories of Job Satisfaction-----	32
	Leadership Behaviour and Job Satisfaction -----	37
	The Trait Approach-----	38
	The Behaviour Approach-----	39
	Situational Approach-----	42
	Path Goal Approach-----	43
	Hypotheses-----	46
III	RESEARCH METHODOLOGY-----	47
	Research Design-----	47
	Hypotheses Testing-----	49
	Data Gathering Instruments-----	49
	Personal Information Questionnaire (PI)-----	50
	Leader Behaviour Description Questionnaire - Form XII-----	50
	The Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ)-----	52
	Reliability and Validity of Instruments-----	54
	Leader Behaviour Description Questionnaire - Form XII-----	55
	Personal Characteristics-----	57
	Sample and Procedure of Data Collection-----	58
	Statistical Techniques for Data Analysis-----	61
IV	DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION-----	63
	Introduction-----	63
	Demographic Characteristics-----	63
	Gender, Race and Marital Status-----	64
	Education and Place of Education-----	64
	Position and Salary-----	65
	Age and Tenure-----	67
	The Level of Job Satisfaction of Middle Managers of TNB-----	68
	Overall Level of Job Satisfaction-----	68
	Achievement-----	69
	Degree of Responsibility-----	71
	Authority and Responsibility-----	72
	Security-----	73
	Creativity-----	74
	Independence-----	76
	Opportunities for Social Service-----	77
	Opportunities for Advancement-----	78
	Policies-----	80
	Remuneration-----	81
	Supervision-----	82
	Working Conditions-----	83

Interpersonal Relationship-----	84
Job satisfaction (Single Item)-----	85
Level of Job Satisfaction-----	86
The Level of Perceived Leadership Behaviours of Middle Managers of TNB-----	
Perceived Level of Initiating Structure-----	89
Perceived Level of Consideration-----	89
Job Satisfaction Categories in Relation to Leadership Behaviours--	90
Initiating Structure-----	90
Consideration-----	92
The Relationship Between Job Satisfaction and Leadership Behaviours-----	93
The Relationship between Level of Consideration and their Job Satisfaction-----	94
Job Satisfaction and Selected Demographic Variables-----	104
Job Satisfaction and Gender-----	104
Job Satisfaction and Age-----	105
Job Satisfaction and Tenure-----	107
Job Satisfaction and Race-----	108
Summary-----	110
V CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS-----	113
Conclusion and Discussion-----	114
Level of Job Satisfaction of Middle Managers of TNB-----	114.
Perceived Leadership Behaviours at TNB and its Relation with Job Satisfaction-----	115
The Relationship between Leadership Behaviours and Job Satisfaction-----	116
The Relationship between Job Satisfaction and Demographics of Respondents-----	119
Recommendations-----	123
Limitations of the Study-----	125
Suggestions for Future Research-----	125
BIBLIOGRAPHY-----	127
APPENDICES	
I .Section A, B, C (Questionnaires)-----	142
II Section A (Sample of Introduction Letter by TNB to the Respondents) Section B (Sample of Introduction Letter by Researcher to the Respondents)-----	157
BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH-----	160



LIST OF TABLES

Table		Page
1	Reliability Coefficients of the Study Variables Using Cronbach Alpha Coefficient-----	54
2	Reliability Coefficients - LBDQ- Form XII-----	55
3	The Reliability Coefficients Score (MSQ)-----	56
4	Sample Profile by Gender, Race, and Marital Status-----	64
5	Sample Profile by Education and Place of Education-----	65
6	Sample Profile by Position and Salary-----	66
7	Sample Profile by Age and Tenure-----	67
8	Overall Level of Job Satisfaction-----	69
9	Level of Satisfaction with Achievement-----	70
10	Level of Satisfaction with Degree of Responsibility-----	72
11	Level of Satisfaction with Authority and Responsibility-----	73
12	Level of Satisfaction with Job Security-----	74
13	Level of Satisfaction with Creativity-----	75
14	Level of Satisfaction with Independence-----	77
15	Level of Satisfaction with Opportunities for Social Service-----	78
16	Level of Satisfaction with Opportunities for Advancement-----	79
17	Level of Satisfaction with Policies-----	80
18	Level of Satisfaction with Remuneration-----	82
19	Level of Satisfaction with Supervision-----	83
20	Level of Satisfaction with Working Conditions-----	84
21	Level of Satisfaction with Interpersonal Relationship-----	85



22	Level of Manager’s Self Assessment of Job Satisfaction (single item)-----	86
23	Level of Job Satisfaction of Middle Managers-----	88
24	Categories of Perceived Level of Initiating Structure -----	89
25	Categories of Perceived Level of Consideration -----	90
26	Categories of Job Satisfaction in relation to Initiating Structure----	92
27	Categories of Job Satisfaction in relation to Consideration -----	93
28	Relationship between Job Satisfaction and Consideration-----	94
29	Correlation Coefficient Between Items of Job Satisfaction and Consideration -----	96
30	Correlation Coefficient Between Items of Job Satisfaction and Initiating Structure-----	98
31	Relationship Between Job Satisfaction and Initiating Structure-----	99
32	Multiple Regression Results(Dependent Variable, Job Satisfaction)	100
33	A comparison of High-High and Low-Low categories of Job Satisfaction-----	102
34	Testing for differences in Job Satisfaction of the four categories of Leaders Behaviours-----	104
35	The Relationship between Job Satisfaction and Gender-----	105
36	The Relationship between Age and Job Satisfaction-----	106
37	The Relationship between Tenure and Job Satisfaction-----	107
38	The Relationship between Race and Job Satisfaction -----	109



LIST OF FIGURES

Figure		Page
1	Theoretical Framework of the Relationship between Leadership Behaviours and Job Satisfaction-----	46
2	Conceptual Relationship between Leadership Behaviours and Job Satisfaction-----	48



Abstract of the dissertation submitted to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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The problem investigated in this research is whether perceived leadership behaviours of the superiors namely, initiating structure and consideration, will have an impact on the job satisfaction of the middle managers of Tenaga Nasional Berhad (TNB).

The survey instrument used was a questionnaire comprising three sections. The first section sought respondents' personal information while the second section, a modified version of the Leader Behavior Description Questionnaire, measured managers' perception of the leadership behaviours of their superiors. The final section, a modified version of the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire, was aimed at gauging the level of job satisfaction of middle managers of TNB.

The questionnaire was then distributed to a randomly selected sample of 350 middle managers of TNB. One hundred and twelve of them responded but only 106 of the questionnaires were complete. Descriptive and inferential statistical procedures, namely, frequencies, t-test, one-way ANOVA, correlation and multiple regression were used to analyze the data.

Ninety percent of the respondents were males, with an average age of 42 years and an average working experience of 17 years. Most of the respondents were engineers with Bachelor of Science in Engineering degrees.

The four hypotheses tested revealed the following:

1. The majority of middle managers had low levels of job satisfaction.
2. Managers who perceived their leaders as low on leadership behaviours tended to be less satisfied with their job, suggesting a positive relationship between job satisfaction and perceived leadership behaviours of superiors.
3. Demographic variables such as gender, age and tenure were found to have no significant effect on job satisfaction.
4. Differences in job satisfaction were found between the three races, with the Indians having greater satisfaction with respect to job security; and the Chinese and the Malays having higher satisfaction scores on supervision than the Indians. The Chinese had greater satisfaction with regards to independence than the Malay middle managers. Among the three groups, the Malay middle managers showed greater dissatisfaction with regards to job security and independence.

5. Interpersonal relationship was rated highly by TNB middle managers, irrespective of their race. This indicates middle managers' great sense of belonging to the organization.

A number of implications were derived from the above findings.

A positive relationship was found to exist between job satisfaction and perception towards leadership behaviours. Thus, the implication to management is that it should improve its concern for the welfare of its middle managers by paying attention to degree of responsibility, creativity, opportunities for social service, opportunities for advancement, remuneration, policies, supervision , working conditions and overall job satisfaction.

On a positive note, the middle managers were satisfied with the management on the issues of sense of achievement, authority and responsibility, job security, independence and interpersonal relationship.

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**PERHUBUNGAN DI ANTARA PERSEPSI TABIAT KEPEMIMPINAN
DAN KEPUASAN PEKERJAAN DI KALANGAN PENGURUS
PERTENGAHAN TENAGA NASIONAL BERHAD,
(TNB) MALAYSIA**

Oleh

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Julai, 1998

Pengerusi: Profesor Madya Dr. Abu Daud Silong

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Masalah yang diselidik dalam kajian ini tertumpu kepada sama ada tanggapan tingkahlaku kepimpinan pegawai atasan khususnya dari segi penggerak dan pertimbangan pembentukan struktur mempunyai kesan kepada kepuasan kerja di kalangan Pengurus Pertengahan Tenaga Nasional Berhad (TNB).

Instrumen kaji selidik yang digunakan ini terdiri daripada soal selidik yang mengandungi tiga bahagian. Bahagian pertama bertujuan mendapatkan maklumat peribadi responden, Bahagian kedua soalan selidik *Leadership Behavior Description Questionnaire* yang telah diubahsuai untuk mengukur persepsi tingkahlaku kepimpinan ketua mereka. Bahagian akhir pula ialah versi soal selidik *Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire* yang juga telah diubahsuai, bertujuan mengukur tahap kepuasan kerja di kalangan Pengurus Pertengahan TNB.

Soal selidik ini telah diedarkan kepada 350 orang sampel terdiri daripada Pengurus Pertengahan TNB yang telah dipilih secara rawak. 112 daripada responden telah memberi jawapan dan daripada jumlah tersebut hanya 106 melengkapkan soal selidik yang diberi. Prosedur statistik deskriptif dan statistik inferen khususnya kekerapan, ujian t, skala ANOVA, korelasi dan regresi berganda telah diguna untuk menganalisis data.

Sembilan puluh peratus responden terdiri daripada kaum lelaki, secara puratanya mereka berumur 42 tahun dengan pengalaman kerja purata selama 17 tahun. Kebanyakan responden bertugas sebagai Jurutera dengan kelulusan Sarjana Muda Sains dalam bidang Kejuruteraan.

Empat hipotesis yang diuji menunjukkan:

1. Kebanyakan pengurus pertengahan mempunyai tahap kepuasan kerja yang rendah.
2. Pengurus yang menganggap pimpinan mereka lemah dari segi tingkahlaku kepimpinan, didapati kurang kepuasan positif dalam kerjaya mereka, ini menunjukkan hubungan positif antara kepuasan dan tanggapan tingkahlaku kepimpinan pegawai atasan.
3. Pembolehubah demografi seperti jantina, umur dan tanggungjawab, didapati tidak mempunyai kesan signifikan terhadap kepuasan kerja.
4. Walaupun begitu, terdapat perbezaan kepuasan kerja di kalangan tiga kumpulan ras, dengan menunjukkan keturunan India mempunyai

kepuasan tinggi terhadap keselamatan kerja, golongan Cina dan Melayu skor kepuasan yang tinggi dari segi penyeliaan berbanding India. Keturunan Cina mempunyai kepuasan yang tinggi dari segi kebebasan berbanding pengurus pertengahan Melayu. Di antara tiga golongan ras ini, pengurus pertengahan Melayu menunjukkan kepuasan yang tinggi berhubung dengan keselamatan dan kebebasan.

5. Hubungan interpersonal telah dinilai taraf sebagai penting oleh golongan pengurus pertengahan TNB sama ada mereka dari ras yang berbeza. Ini menunjukkan sikap kesepunyaan yang tinggi terhadap organisasi.

Beberapa implikasi dapat dirumus hasil daripada dapatan di atas. Pertama, didapati wujud hubungan positif antara kepuasan kerja dan persepsi terhadap tingkahlaku kepimpinan. Oleh itu, implikasinya, pihak pengurusan atasan perlu meningkatkan tumpuan kepada kebajikan pengurus pertengahan dengan memberi penekanan kepada tahap tanggungjawab, kreativiti, peluang perkhidmatan sosial, peluang peningkatan, ganjaran, polisi, penyeliaan, keadaan kerja dan kepuasan kerja keseluruhan.

Dari segi positifnya, didapati pengurus pertengahan berpuashati dengan pihak pengurusan berkaitan kesedaran terhadap kejayaan, kuasa dan tanggungjawab, keselamatan kerja, kebebasan dan hubungan interpersonal.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

The Malaysian economy has undergone impressive growth over the last decade. The economy has undergone transformation from one that was basically agrarian to one that is now very much characterised by manufacturing industries. There are economic indices that also reflect this remarkable growth. Average per capita incomes have doubled over the last decade and the Gross Domestic Product has increased by an average of 8 percent per annum. All these are signs that the country is on its path to achieve the goals enshrined in Vision 2020.

At this critical juncture, the energy sector plays a pivotal role not only in servicing other sectors of the economy but also in sustaining this growth momentum. The country's electrical industry is dominated by Tenaga National Berhad (TNB), a company which was incorporated by the British as a public utility in 1894.

This more than a century-old company which is a virtual monopoly, has not, of late, shown the kind of profitability one would expect of an entity enjoying this unique position. For example, though the company's assets increased from RM19.7 billion in 1992 to RM26.0 billion in 1995, TNB's pre-tax profit recorded a marginal increase of only 7.19 percent between 1993 to 1994 and even declined by 17.4 percent for the period 1994 to 1995 (KLSE Annual Companies Handbook, 1996)

The sluggish growth in the company's profit is a symptom of some underlying weaknesses and given the stature of TNB, this deserves to be researched upon.

It is the researcher's belief that one of the key variables that affect the profitability of an organisation is the manner in which it is managed. And it is a well-documented fact that management style affects an organisation's employees who play a crucial role in its success.

It is also the researcher's contention that TNB's less than impressive performance could be in part, due to issues of job satisfaction of middle managers and leadership behaviours of its superiors.

Tenaga Nasional Bhd, (TNB) was formed after the National Electricity Board was corporatized on 1st September, 1990 by order of the Minister of Energy, Telecommunications and Post. In line with the Government's Privatization Policy, TNB was incorporated as a public limited company under the Malaysian Act, 1965 on 12th July, 1990 (TNB, 1992)

Since its incorporation, the company has undergone dramatic changes in ownership structure, with the government playing a less active role in the company. The transition from a wholly government owned entity, to a private organisation has been accompanied with changes in the management of the organisation. These changes are very likely to have brought about changes in leadership behaviour of top management and the job satisfaction of middle managers who have been exposed to a new leadership, and the new ownership structure of the company.

Numerous studies have been conducted on the TNB leadership and its related aspects. However, the findings have been inconclusive. The TNB has inadequate empirical information that could help enhance the overall perception of leadership behaviours and job satisfaction among TNB employees particularly, the middle managerial group. This group plays a key role in the operational activities of the corporation.

The change in the leadership of the company is expected to enhance, among others, the job satisfaction of subordinates, especially the middle managers. The enhancement of job satisfaction of middle managers is essential especially in view of the historically low level of job satisfaction of employees of the company. For example, in 1991, unhappiness with the new management led to industrial unrest and a picket at the TNB headquarters. Though 378 out of 600 executives were involved in the industrial unrest, a lasting solution to the problem was found only in June 1996 after a series of negotiations with the management.

Another change in the leadership of the corporation came following the August 3, 1996 blackout. This change saw the appointment of a former middle manager to the post of CEO with effect from 1 September, 1996 (Sunday Star, 18 August, 1996).

It is against the background of several changes in leadership and the signs of dissatisfaction among middle managers in TNB that this study is being carried out.

This study examines the relationship between leadership behaviours and job satisfaction an area that has been fairly well researched in the developed countries such as the United States and Britain (Lawler, 1973; Novak, 1975; Kalleberg, 1977; Roberts, 1984; Spokane, 1985; Kim, 1986; May, 1986; Klawitther, 1986; Nongmak, 1987; Jang, 1988; Randall, 1988; Doktor, 1990).

The findings of these studies generally indicated that leadership behaviour in terms of consideration and initiating structure was positively and negatively related to their subordinates' job satisfaction. In other words, the greater the leader's consideration of his subordinates the higher would be their job satisfaction. On the other hand, the higher the leader's initiating structure towards subordinates the lower was the employees' job satisfaction.

Clearly, the subject of job satisfaction and perceived leadership behaviour has been extensively researched especially in the industrial countries. Despite the phenomenal growth of corporations in Malaysian and in other Southeast Asian countries, the bulk of the research has been conducted in western countries.

Thus, there is a yawning gap in the literature on perceived leadership behaviour and job satisfaction in developing countries like Malaysia. The gap needs to be addressed due largely to the fact that studies on perceived leadership behaviour and job satisfaction conducted in other countries with different socio-economic settings have limited applicability in other cultural settings. In fact, Wright (1996) observes that “given the concentration of leadership research and theory in North America, and the cultural norms which prevailed at the time, this meant that statements concerning the characteristics, behaviour, success and effectiveness of leaders tended to be based on research on white, males, North American subjects....Thus, when assessing the practical implications of leadership research and theories, it is worth bearing in mind that prescriptions which are valid for one group, nationality or culture may not be valid for another” .

Owing to the dearth of literature on perceived leadership behaviour and job satisfaction in developing countries such as Malaysia, there are inadequate empirical studies that could be used in the formulation of policies to enhance subordinates' job satisfaction. Thus, the TNB has inadequate empirical information that might guide its efforts in enhancing overall leadership behaviour and job satisfaction among TNB employees particularly, the middle managerial group. This group is believed to be the “link-pin” of the TNB services with the vital role of ensuring that TNB policies and programmes in the new era of corporatisation are implemented effectively and efficiently.

The literature on perceived leadership behaviour and job satisfaction of employees of TNB is very limited, and the findings, very inconclusive.



A study by Lee (1994) on TNB executives indicates that the overall job satisfaction of TNB executives is neutral. That is, they do not have either high or low job satisfaction and are open to the possibility of being lured to join competitors like the Independent Power Plants (IPPs). The study also indicates that good leadership is wanting in TNB. The top management lacks leadership and management skills which are essential in leading, motivating and coaching their subordinates .

Statement of the Problem

The problem addressed by this study can be summarised by the following realisations:

1. The bulk of the literature on the relationship between job satisfaction and perceived leadership behaviour has its roots in and is based on research conducted in western industrial countries which have socio-economic and cultural settings fundamentally different from the local context.
2. Scholars such as Wright (1996) have argued persuasively that those studies conducted in the west have limited applicability to developing countries such as Malaysia.
3. Research conducted on this subject in Malaysia is very limited and the findings inconclusive. As a result, there is no conclusive evidence on the relationship between perceived leadership behaviour and job satisfaction.
4. Policy changes in Malaysia and the resultant privatisation of government-owned organisations such as TNB, have brought about transitions and re-orientation in the local corporate world. This provides an opportunity to examine leadership behaviours and its impact on employees.

Given these realisations, it is expected that the study would help bridge the existing gap by examining one pertinent question:

Does perceived leadership behaviours of the superiors have a relationship with job satisfaction of middle managers?

Objectives of the Study

The above-mentioned problems and the gap in the present literature point to the purpose of this research, the overall purpose of which was to study the relationship between perceived leadership behaviours and job satisfaction of middle managers at TNB.

Specifically, the study attempts to :

1. Determine the level of job satisfaction of middle managers of TNB
2. Determine the level of perceived leadership behaviours of middle managers of TNB
3. Determine the categories of job satisfaction in relation to leadership behaviours (i.e. initiating structure and consideration)
4. Establish the relationship between perceived leadership behaviours and job satisfaction of middle managers of TNB.
5. Determine the relationship between job satisfaction and selected demographic variables of the respondents

Significance of the Study

The study is an extension of past researches which have been carried out in an effort to understand the relationship between perceived leadership behaviour and job satisfaction of middle managers. Despite fairly extensive work that has been conducted in this field, especially in the West, the relationship between perceived leadership behaviours and job satisfaction of middle managers has not been very clear and it is still inconclusive. While this study intends to further clarify that issue, it will also focus on a number of other issues that will contribute to studies in the field of relationship between perceived leadership behaviours and job satisfaction.

Determining the relationship between perceived leadership behaviour and job satisfaction is valuable because this will assist managers, business executives, and other project/programme managers in extension agencies to increase job satisfaction and consequently, productivity in their respective organisations. They will then be able to fulfil this role because they will have knowledge of the relationship between perceived leadership behaviour and job satisfaction.

From the practical standpoint, the purpose of this study is to provide policy advice and make suggestions leading to the effective and efficient management of middle managers of TNB. However, it is also hoped that, the results of the study will enable practising managers and business executives in other organisations to develop policies and strategies to improve and increase job satisfaction in their own environments.

They can be helped in this effort if they recognize the relationship between job satisfaction and perceived leadership behaviour in their organisations.

Perhaps of greater significance is the fact that the study deals with a group of middle managers who form a sizable proportion of the management of a large national organisation. Their willingness to stay with the organisation is very crucial in sustaining the TNB in terms of generation and distribution of electricity to the nation. Further, since shortage of middle managers especially those with an engineering background is acute, a study of this nature would help the corporation to retain its managers, thus reducing the trend of job hopping to other independent power producers (IPPs).

Scope of the Study

This study examines the perception of middle managers towards the leadership behaviour of their superiors, and the relationship between this perception with their job satisfaction. To enable the achievement of the aforementioned objectives, the study confines itself to the perception of middle managers, excluding other categories of subordinate staff. The latter category is excluded to maintain the focus on the primary objective of this study. Another aspect related to the scope of this study is that the analysis will be based on the middle managers of one corporation - TNB, because of its unique position as the main generator and supplier of electricity to the nation. This unique position makes TNB necessarily different from the other corporations so a separate analysis of the company is desirable.