**UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA**


**THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN DIRECTORS'
TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP BEHAVIORS AND
SUBORDINATES' ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT AT THE
NATIONAL SPORTS COUNCIL ?BY KOK MONG LIN.**


**FPP 2005 20**

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By

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Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies Universiti Putra Malaysia, in Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Science

February 2005

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**February 2005**

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This research sought to examine the correlation between directors' transformational leadership behaviors and subordinates' organizational commitment at the National Sports Council of Malaysia. Data were collected from 150 proportional stratified samples. Two instruments were used: 1) the Transformational Leadership Inventory (TLI) developed by Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Moorman and Fetter (1990) measuring employees' perception of transformational leadership behaviors of their divisional directors; 2) the Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ) developed by Mowday, Porter, and Steers (1979) to measure employees' organizational commitment. The research design used is of descriptive correlational type. Data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation, t-tests, stepwise multiple regression, and ANOVA. The relationship between directors' transformational leadership behaviors and subordinates' organizational commitment was found to be strong and positively significant. Male perceived

higher level of commitment than female workers. Demographic factors such as gender and educational status contributed significantly to organizational commitment, with educational status being the best predictor of the outcome variable. Significant difference was found in the perceptions of transformational leadership behaviors and organizational commitment among the six divisions in NSC. Significant gender difference was also noted in the perceptions of transformational leadership behaviors. It is hoped that the findings of this study will contribute towards the wider knowledge of this leadership paradigm, and more practical application and manifestation of this leadership in various organizations in this changing world of globalization. Possible instrument limitations and future research needs are also reviewed.

Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia
sebagai memenuhi keperluan untuk ijazah Master Sains

**HUBUNGAN ANTARA TINGKAH LAKU KEPEMIMPINAN
TRANSFORMASIONAL PENGARAH DENGAN KOMITMEN ORGANISASI
SUBORDINAT DI MAJLIS SUKAN NEGARA**

Oleh

**KOK MONG LIN**

**Februari 2005**

**Pengerusi:  Aminuddin B. Yusof, PhD**

**Fakulti:      Pengajian Pendidikan**


Kajian ini cuba mengenalpasti hubungan antara tingkah laku kepemimpinan

transformasional pengarah dan komitmen organisasi subordinat di Majlis Sukan

Negara Malaysia (MSN).  Data dikumpul daripada  150 orang sampel yang

dipilih secara berkadar strata.  Dua instrumen di gunakan : 1) Inventori

Kepemimpinan Transformasional oleh Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Moorman dan

Fetter (1990) yang mengukur tingkahlaku kepemimpinan transformasional

pengarah yang dipersepsikan oleh pekerja di bahagiannya; 2)  Soalselidik

Komitmen Organisasi oleh Mowday, Steers dan Porter (1979) yang mengukur

komitmen pekerja terhadap MSN. Rekabentuk kajian adalah jenis korelasi.

Data dianalisis dengan menggunakan statistik deskriptif, Pearson korelasi,

ujian-t, stepwise regresi pelbagai, dan ANOVA.  Dapatan kajian menunjukkan

hubungan antara tingkah laku kepemimpinan transformasional dan komitmen

organisasi adalah kuat, positif dan signifikan.  Subordinat lelaki menunjukkan

tahap komitmen yang lebih tinggi daripada subordinat perempuan. Faktor demografik seperti jantina dan status pendidikan menyumbang secara signifikan terhadap komitmen organisasi, dengan staus pendidikan sebagai peramal terbaik kepada komitmen organisasi. Perbezaan yang signifikan terdapat pada persepsi tingkah laku kepemimpinan transformasional dan komitmen organisasi antara keenam-enam bahagian dalam MSN. Perbezaan antara jantina dalam persepsi tingkah laku kepemimpinan transformasional juga menunjukkan keputusan yang signifikan. Diharapkan dapatan kajian ini dapat menyumbang kepada ilmu pengetahuan paradigma kepemimpinan ini yang lebih luas, serta lebih aplikasi dan manifestasi kepemimpinan ini dalam pelbagai organisasi di dunia globalisasi yang semakin berubah ini. Cadangan untuk kajian masa depan juga dibincangkan.

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to express my gratitude and appreciation to my supervisor, Dr. Aminuddin B. Yusof, for his encouragement, constant guidance and patience throughout the production of this thesis. Special thanks to the Associate Professor, Dr. Mohd Majid B. Konting, and Tuan Sheikh Kamarudin B. Sheikh Ahmad as members of the supervisory committee, for their invaluable guidance and suggestions towards the successful completion of this thesis.

I wish to thank the director of Maktab Perguruan Ilmu Khas and the Teacher Education Division for granting me the study leave and permitting me to pursue a 12 weeks research course whereby enabling me to have time off to complete this research, besides gaining new insight in the research method. I thank the Director General of the National Sports Council who had granted me permission to collect data for this study as well as all the staffs who had participated in this study for their co-operation and patience in responding to the questionnaires.

I also wish to thank the Scholarship Division, Ministry of Education, for granting me scholarship and study leave for this Master programme. Last, but not least, I would like to register my appreciation to my family and a host of friends and colleagues for their constant support, encouragement, understanding and patience throughout this study.

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| | |
|---|---|
| MSN | Majlis Sukan Negara |
| NSC | National Sports Council |
| NSP | National Sports Policy |
| TLI | Transformational Leadership Inventory |
| OCQ | Organizational Commitment Questionnaire |
| MLQ | Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire |
| LBQ | Leadership Behavior Questionnaire |
| UPM | Universiti Putra Malaysia |
| SPSS | Statistical Package for Social Science |
| ANOVA | Analysis of Variance |
| S.D. | Standard Deviation |
| DV | Dependent Variable |
| IV | Independent Variable |
| r | Correlation |
| p | Probability |
| $R^2$ | Multiple R squared |
| $\Delta R^2$ | Multiple R Squared Change |

# CHAPTER I

# INTRODUCTION

## 1.1    Research Background

Leadership is a popular topic for research, especially in the business and industrial settings.  Bennis and Nanus (1985) noted that thousands of empirical investigations of leaders have been conducted in the last 90 years alone.  This is further supported by Bass and Stogdill"s *Handbook of Leadership* (1990) which contains over 7500 citations.  However, Bennis and Nanus (1985) also commented that despite many researches done on leadership, yet there were few consensus for a common leadership construct.  This feeling has not prevented sport management scholars in their pursuit to arrive at an applicable and valid concept of leadership.  According to Weese (1994), the reason for this lack of consensus for the leadership construct might be that empiricists have concentrated on less effective forms of leadership such as the exchange of promises from the leader for compliance by the follower as a kind of transaction.  Minimal attention has been directed toward the actual "makers and shakers" who lead organizations.

The study of leadership has evolved through several phases, beginning with the trait approach of the 1930's to the behavioral and situational approaches of the 1950's and 1970's respectively. A relatively new phase, which Bryman (1992) labeled the "new leadership" perspective, received its impetus from Burn's (1978) description of two distinct forms of leadership – transactional and transformational. Transactional leadership, according to Burns, involves a leader-subordinate exchange relationship in which the subordinate receives some reward related to lower-order needs in return for compliance with the leader's expectations. In contrast, a transformational leader encourages a subordinate to maximize his or her potential in the pursuit of higher-order needs and group goals. These leaders move followers to emotionally attach to the leader and the organization, and are hypothesized to bring about a 'quantum leaps in subordinates' performance" (Bass, 1985).

The success of the new millenium's sport organization depends on unleashing and maximizing the talents of its work force. Transformational leadership practices are essential to building commitment (Weese, 1994). As the sport organization strives to increase efficiency, improve performance, and do more with less, the willingness and ability of subordinates to take initiative becomes critical. Doing more with less often calls for subordinates to demonstrate levels of commitment. One of the ways to promote and develop organizational commitment of subordinates is through transformational leadership, since these leaders have the ability to inspire followers to go beyond acceptable levels of

commitment and contributions (Weese, 1994). Specifically, if organizational commitment is indeed influenced by transformational leadership behaviors, perhaps sport administrators may be able to motivate subordinates to be more committed to achieving higher goals and to do more for the organization with fewer resources. This is especially so in the pursuit of excellence in sports today, where most programs are currently being downsized (NSC Annual Report, 1999).

With the paradigm shift in this new leadership, it would be interesting to investigate the influence of transformational leaders on their subordinates' organizational commitment. This research is to examine the relationship between transformational leadership behaviors of divisional directors and subordinates' organizational commitment at the National Sports Council at Bukit Jalil, Kuala Lumpur.

## 1.2 Theoretical Rationale

Transformational leadership theory, which was first proposed by Burns (1978), and later by Bass (1985), who has had considerable influence on the research on this new leadership and its relationship with organizational outcomes, is the basis and source of reference in this research.

The central focus of Burns' work is to contrast transformational leadership with transactional leadership. The latter involves the leader in some form of transaction with subordinates. The leaders exchange pay or prestige for subordinates' compliance with their orders, but there is no enduring bond that holds them together. In contrast, transformational leadership involves "leaders and followers raising one another to higher levels of motivation and morality" (Burns, 1978: 20). Transformational leaders work by appealing to the ideals and values of subordinates. They seek to unite subordinates as they work toward a common purpose (Slack, 1997).

Bass (1985), using Burns' work as his point of departure, acknowledged that another concept is required to go beyond transactional terms. According to him, followers' attitudes, beliefs, motives and confidence need to be transformed from a lower to a higher plane of arousal and maturity. Bass suggests that transformational leaders enhance their subordinates' confidence and increase awareness of selected goals and how they may be obtained. For Bass, transformational leaders may be charismatic; they provide personal attention to the needs of subordinates, seek to empower them, and provide them with new ideas and challenges. As for Brown and Sheppard (1996), transformational leader has a sense of purpose, a vision, and a focus. Leaders and subordinates should develop shared images of the future that both wish to create. This vision must include the principles and guiding practices that will

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help them to achieve their collective vision. This will bring a sense of commitment in the group.

According to Bass (1985), a leader is considered transformed when he or she manifests one of the four transformational elements which he called the "four I's", namely, intellectual stimulation, individual consideration, inspirational leadership (which includes charismatic leadership), and idealized influence. As to the measurement of the effectiveness of this leadership, Bass (1990) suggested three variable outcomes that can be used, that is, job satisfaction, performance, and commitment.

Organizational commitment is a critical outcome variable because it underscores a worker's whole-hearted participation in organizational activities, exertion of his or her efforts and performance in those activities (Chelladurai, 1999). This researcher's interest in organizational commitment stemmed from the fact that unless members of an organization are committed to the organization and to its goals and processes, they are not likely to discharge their duties to the best of their abilities. An organization may have all the resources it requires, but it cannot reach its potential unless the members are committed to the organization. From a different perspective, organizational commitment creates a sense of belonging among members and contributes to their well being. In the absence of organizational commitment, members operate in an alienated environment that may cause undue stress and

unhappiness. Therefore, organizations and their leaders must focus on cultivating organizational commitment for the benefit of both the organization and its members. Can transformational leaders achieve this goal? Considering the fact that few research studies conducted in the sport settings showed conflicting results (which was discussed under literature review in Chapter II), there is a need to examine the actual relationship between transformational leadership behaviors and subordinates' organizational commitment, specifically in the Malaysian sports context. Using the framework provided, Porter, Steer, Mowday and Boulian's (1974) organizational commitment theory hypothesized that transformational leadership behaviors of divisional directors will have a direct relationship with subordinates' organizational commitment. As mentioned by Chelladurai (1999), organizational commitment is a collection of commitments to management, supervisors, work-unit, and co-workers. Conceptually, it can be categorized by at least three factors (Porter et al., 1982): a) a strong belief in and acceptance of the organization's goals and values; b) a willingness to exert considerable effort on behalf of the organization; and c) a strong desire to maintain membership in the organization.

Based on the transformational leadership and the organizational commitment theories as mentioned above, it is interesting to note that if a sport director practices transformational leadership, then there is reason to believe that he or she will use clear visions and missions in formulating goals and values that are acceptable by the subordinates; promoting new ideas, challenges and

opportunities in an effort to uplift the image of the organization. He or she will give personal attention to the *subordinates* in helping them to secure the resources and assistance needed to improve and attain their goals and that of the organization; inspiring them to feel valued, appreciated and critical to attaining the vision of the organization; and instilling confidence and commitment in them through charismatic influence (the four I's). Therefore, it is hypothesized that the levels of commitment of subordinates will be enhanced through the influence of transformational leaders. The purported benefits of this type of leadership, according to Bass (1990), include a more committed and empowered staff as well as a more focused and productive organization. As such, this theory should be used in different perspective in the sport settings so as to be able to contribute to the wider knowledge in leadership.

## 1.3    Problem Statement

Leadership theory has shown some promising results in the business setting. In the sport arena, there were few studies with limited support for the propositions of this theory. However, Aminuddin's (1999) study showed a significant relationship between transformational leadership behavior of athletic directors and coaches job satisfaction at both NCAA Division I and II institutions. Studies by Doherty and Danylchuk (1996), Prujin and Boucher (1995), Wallace and Weese (1995) were some of the work conducted in the sport settings showing conflicting results on the relationship between

transformational leadership behaviors and subordinates' commitment, job satisfaction, and performance. The mixed results in the sport setting could be due to the unique nature of the sporting environment, as the characteristics of the sport organizations, their leaders and subordinates, are very different from the industrial or business settings (Aminuddin, 1999). Therefore, using Transformational Leadership Inventory (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Moorman & Fetter, 1990), this research seeks to find support for the proposition of this theory in the sport setting.

The dismal performance of most of our sportsmen in Busan Asian Games (Basri Akil, 2002), the failure of the Badminton team to bring in any medals in the 2000 Olympic Games in Sydney, and the absence of participation of the soccer team since the 1972 Munich Olympic Games, coupled with the drop in performance in some of the sports in the XXVII Commonwealth Games in Manchester (Chef-de-mission report, 2002), taxes the limit of tolerance of all quarters, especially the fans, besides bringing to the attention of the sports ministry (Basri Akil, 2002). "The sports minister is anxious to see changes for the better and his actions through the Ministry and the National Sports Council should be the spark most needed to ensure proper direction in national interest" (Basri Akil, 2002: 22).

One of the factors for the above criticisms could be the leadership at the NSC. Being the highest authority for elite sports in the country, its directors within

each division play an important role in maintaining and improving the standard and performance of sports in Malaysia. How committed are the employees of the National Sports Council (NSC) to their organization, will depend on a large part on the leadership behaviors of the respective directors, which in turn, will have its profound impact on the organization's mission - ' to strive for excellence in sport'.

Leadership has many facets. Transformational leaders bring on changes and inspire followers to strive for higher performance. It is therefore, timely to study the state of transformational leadership in NSC, specifically, the relationship between directors' transformational leadership behaviors and the subordinates' organizational commitment at the NSC.

Coming from different backgrounds, the employees' commitment to NSC could also be influenced by demographic factors such as gender, age, experience in the current job, and position in the organization, as indicated in Mathieu and Zajac's (1990) study. It is therefore, interesting to find out whether these factors influence the different perspectives on transformational leadership and organizational commitment. Based on the above rationales, the purposes of this study are addressed in the next section.

## 1.4    Research Purposes

In general, this study hopes to find support for the proposition of transformational leadership theory in sport setting, and to address the decline in the standard of sports.  Thus, it chooses to examine the function of NSC, the organization in charge of promoting and maintaining excellence in sports.  The leaders or the directors in the various divisions being the main focus of this study.  The more specific purpose is to examine the perceived transformational leadership behaviors exhibited by these divisional directors and its relationship with the subordinates' organizational commitment at the NSC.

## 1.5    Research Questions

Based on the problem statements and the purposes of this research, the following research questions were developed:

Q1:    What is the relationship between transformational leadership behaviors of divisional directors and subordinates' organizational commitment at the National Sports Council (NSC)?

Q2:    Is there any significant difference between demographic factors such as gender, marital status, and position status, and subordinates' organizational commitment at the National Sports Council (NSC)?