UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA

MEDIATING EFFECT OF JOB SATISFACTION ON RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LEADER ATTRIBUTES AND EMPLOYEE LOYALTY AMONG PUBLIC ADMINISTRATORS IN MALAYSIA

MOHAMED AFIQ BIN MOHAMED ANWAR

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By

MOHAMED AFIQ BIN MOHAMED ANWAR

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

April 2016

DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this thesis to my family members. The backbone of my life

today, my mum, Salehati and dad Mohamed Anwar,

my siblings, Nur Atikah, Mohamed Athir, Mohamed Adib and Nur Afiqah.

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Chairman : **Lailawati Mohd Salleh, PhD**
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Previous research shows that employee loyalty is crucial for an organization. Literature shows that factors that contribute to employee loyalty include job decision making, rewards and recognition, and job satisfaction. Also, leader attributes can influence employee loyalty. Studies done on the relationship between leadership factors that contribute to employee loyalty and job satisfaction is scarce particularly those done in Malaysia. The general objective of the study was to determine the level of employee loyalty among Generation Y (Gen Y) Management and Professional group in the Malaysian public service. The study also examines the relationship between employee loyalty, job satisfaction and leader attributes. The study further examined the perception of Gen Y public administrators of their leader attributes (behavior, personality and communication) and whether or not this leader attributes (behavior, personality and communication skill) influence employee loyalty. Job satisfaction was included to determine mediation effect between this relationship.

This study employs SEM to analyze the data. The sample of the study is the Gen Y of the Management and Professional group from the Malaysian public sector located in Putrajaya. It involves 495 respondents from eight (8) ministries in Putrajaya. Instruments administered for the research were adopted from Employee Loyalty Acid Test and Loyalty Scale, Mohrman-Cooke-Mohrman Job Satisfaction Scale (MCMJSS), Leadership Practice Index (LPI), USM Personality Inventory (USMaP-i) and Communication Competence Questionnaire (CCQ). All the instruments had high reliabilites.

The result of the study showed that leader personality had no significant relationship between employee job satisfaction and employee loyalty. However, there is a strong significant relationship between leader behavior and leader communication skill with employee loyalty. Finally, employee job satisfaction was found to partially mediate the relationship between leader behavior and leader communication skill with employee loyalty.

i

Contribution of the study to literature is contrary to existing studies, where the relationship between job satisfaction and loyalty was found not to be significant. This may indicate that job satisfaction may not be a pertinent factor among Gen Y public administrators to be loyal. What could be more important are the leader behavior and communication skills.

The study suggests that the public sector organization to create awareness and where required training among the leaders on increasing behavior and good communication skill that would garner loyalty among the public administrators. Future research may conduct a similar on the private sector for the group of administrators among Gen Y.

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

KESAN PENGANTARA KEPUASAN KERJA KEPADA HUBUNGAN DIANTARA SIFAT-SIFAT PEMIMPIN DAN KESETIAAN PEKERJA DI KALANGAN PENTADBIR AWAM DI MALAYSIA

Oleh

MOHAMED AFIQ BIN MOHAMED ANWAR

April 2016

Pengerusi : Lailawati Mohd Salleh, PhD
Fakulti   : Sekolah Pengajian Siswazah Pengurusan, UPM

Kajian lepas menunjukkan bahawa kesetiaan adalah amat penting bagi organisasi. Sorotan literatur menunjukkan faktor yang menyumbang kepada kesetiaan pekerja termasuk keputusan pembuatan kerja, ganjaran dan pengiktirafan, dan kepuasan kerja. Juga, sikap pemimpin boleh mempengaruhi kesetiaan pekerja. Kajian yang telah dilakukan keatas perhubungan diantara faktor kepimpinan yang menyumbang kepada kesetiaan pekerja dan kepuasan kerja adalah sukar didapati terutamanya pada perlaksanaannya di Malaysia. Objektif umum bagi kajian ini adalah untuk menentukan tahap kesetiaan pekerja dikalangan kumpulan Pengurusan dan Profesional Generasi Y (Gen Y) khidmat awam. Kajian juga mengkaji hubungan diantara kesetiaan pekerja, kepuasan kerja dan sifat-sifat pemimpin. Kajian ini juga mengkaji persepsi pentadbir awam Gen Y tentang sifat-sifat pemimpin (sikap, personality dan komunikasi) mereka dan samaada atau tidak sifat-sifat pemimpin (sikap, personality dan komunikasi) ini mempengaruhi kesetiaan pekerja. Kepuasan kerja turut dimasukkan untuk menentukan kesan pengantara diantara hubungan ini.

Kajian ini menggunakan SEM untuk menganalisis data. Sampel dalam kajian ini adalah kumpulan pengurusan dan profesional Generasi Y dari sektor awam yang bertempat di Putrajaya. Ia melibatkan 495 responden dari lapan (8) kementerian di Putrajaya. Instrumen yang digunakan untuk kajian ini diambil dari "Employee Loyalty Acid Test" dan "Loyalty Scale", "Mohrman-Cooke-Mohrman Job Satisfaction Scale (MCMJSS)", "Leadership Practice Index (LPI)", "USM Personality Inventory (USMaP-i)" dan "Communication Competence Questionnaire (CCQ)".

Hasil kajian menunjukkan bahawa personaliti pemimpin tidak mempunyai perhubungan ketara diantara kepuasan kerja pekerja dan kesetiaan pekerja. Walaubagaimanapun, terdapat perhubungan yang kuat dan ketara diantara sikap pemimpin dan kemahiran komunikasi pemimpin dengan kesetiaan pekerja. Akhir sekali, kepuasan kerja pekerja didapati sebahagiannya menjadi pengantara hubungan

antara sikap pemimpin dan kemahiran komunikasi pemimipin dengan kesetiaan pekerja.

Sumbangan kajian ini terhadap literatur adalah betentangan dengan kajian yang sedia ada, dimana hubungan diantara personaliti pemimpin dan kesetiaan pekerja adalah didapati tidak signifikan. Ini boleh menunjukkan bahawa personaliti pemimpin mungkin tidak menjadi faktor yang penting dikalangan pentadbir awam Gen Y untuk menjadi setia. Apa yang lebih utama adalah sikap pemimpin dan kemahiran komunikasi.

Kajian ini menyarankan agar organisasi sektor awam dapat mewujudkan kesedaran dan yang mana latihan dikalangan pemimpin untuk meningkatkan sikap dan kemahiran komunikasi mampu memupuk kesetiaan dikalangan pentadbir awam. Kajian yang akan datang boleh dikendalikan secara sama pada sektor swasta bagi kumpulan pentadbir dikalangan Gen Y.

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"Jazak Allahu Khayran"

"May Allah Reward You With Goodness"

I certify that a Thesis Examination Committee has met on 18 April 2016 to conduct the final examination of Mohamed Afiq Bin Mohamed Anwar on his thesis entitled "Mediating Effect of Job Satisfaction on Relationship between Leader Attributes and Employee Loyalty among Public Administrators in Malaysia" in accordance with the Universities and University Colleges Act 1971 and the Constitution of the Universiti Putra Malaysia [P.U.(A) 106] 15 March 1998. The Committee recommends that the student be awarded the Master of Science.

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Declaration by graduate student

I hereby confirm that:
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viii

Declaration by Members of Supervisory Committee

This is to confirm that:
- the research conducted and the writing of this thesis was under our supervision;
- supervision responsibilities as stated in the Universiti Putra Malaysia (Graduate Studies) Rules 2003 (Revision 2012-2013) are adhered to.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

xiii

LIST OF FIGURES

LIST OF ABBREVATIONS

AGFI	Adjusted Goodness-of-Fit
AVE	Average Variance Extracted
CFA	Confirmatory Factor Analysis
CFI	Comparative Fit Index
CR	Construct Reliability
EFA	Exploratory Factor Analysis
EJS	Employee Job Satisfaction
EL	Employee Loyalty
GFI	Goodness-of-Fit Index
GOF	Goodness-of-Fit
LB	Leader Behavior
LC	Leader Communication
LBDQ	Leadership Behavior Descriptive Questionnaire
LP	Leaders Personality
LPI	Leadership Practice Inventory
MCMJSS	Mohrman-Cooke-Mohrman Job Satisfaction Scale
RMSEA	Root Mean Square Error Approximation
SEM	Structural Equation Modelling
USMaP-i	Universiti Sains Malaysia Personality Inventory

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.0   Overview

Managing human is not easy. Dealing with employees is a challenge for Human Resource Department as employee needs and preferences are different (Tolbize, 2008). Human Resource Department has a tough job in ensuring employee high performance through training and development, performance appraisal, compensation management, and industrial relations. Moreover, a good human resource management team can handle retention of the employees, the performance of the employees, and the knowledge adequacy of the employees to ensure that the organisation has a competitive advantage (Caliskan, 2010). Conversely, employees should display positive behaviour and attitude towards the organisation.

Employee turnover is one of a crucial problems faced by today's organisations (Anvari, Syafiqa, Seyyed & Siavash, 2013) and in Malaysia, the turnover rate of Malaysian financial service sector increased from 7.4% in year 2012 to 13.3% in 2013 (Koh, 2013). Apart from the turnover issue, employee performance, especially in the government sector, also needs attention (Siddique, 2006). According to Schawbel (2011), the increasing turnover rate in year 2011 had a high record among Gen Y employees where 70% of them left their first jobs within two years of working. From this record, it should trigger organisations that they need to be cognizant of their employee issues and problems, particularly the cause of this high turnover rate. This is more important as the seemingly more loyal employees, the baby boomers, are retiring while the generation Y (Millennial or Echo Boomers) is entering into the workforce.

Turnover may be an indication of employee loyalty towards an organisation. Maloney (2013), agrees that employee turnover is a signal of whether an employee is loyal or not to the organisation, an issue which the organisation needs to attend to. This is because, knowledge owned by these employees will be taken away with them if they leave hence retaining them is vital (Matzler & Renzl, 2006). Generally, an employee who is loyal towards their organisation will perform their best to upkeep the good name of the organisation (Yee, Yeung & Cheng 2010). In relation to this issue, Rahman, Noraida, Rashidi, Harnizam, et al. (2009) suggest that one way employers may address this issue is through employee satisfaction.

For instance, employee satisfaction can be achieved by fulfilling employees' expectations such as higher salaries, strong reputation, and benefit-in-kind (Yin, Fen, Meng, Yin, et al., 2012), career advancement, performance appraisal, and employees' more significant role (Rahman, et al., 2009). On another note, Schrag (2001) found management theorists believe that loyalty can be promoted through recognition and reward. As employee loyalty keeps an organisation going, we need to understand the factors that may influence employees' loyalty.

1.1 Background of the Study

In Malaysia, the government is the largest employer to the workforce. Based on the *Ministry of Human Resources* website, as of the second quarter of 2014, there were approximately 1.6 million civil servants out of 13.2 million employees in Malaysia. Abdullah (2014) stressed the importance of high performing employees in driving a successful organisation. He viewed that apparently the problems rooted in the public sectors need to be taken care of by improving the performance of civil servants.

To further enhance the performance of the Malaysian workforce, in 11th Malaysian Plan, the government of Malaysia has announced six strategic thrusts of the plan where the third thrust is "Accelerating Human Capital Development for an Advanced Nation". By accelerating the development of human capital, it is hoped that the growth of the organisations could drive the nations into succession.

In addition, Rahman, et al. (2009) state that the growth of an organisation is influenced by employees' loyalty. Bakker & Schaufeli (2008) further highlight that the tendency of an employee being more dedicated to the job or being committed to the organisation is important for the durability and performance of the organisation. This was confirmed by the findings from Maznah, Kamaruzzaman, and Harniyati (2010) where employee loyalty can be seen from their affective commitment with their employers. Other than that, Aityan and Gupta (2012) state that a better understanding on ways to promote employee loyalty could decrease the number of employee turnover within the organisation and boost the durability of the organisation during hard times.

Meier and Hicklin (2008) found that turnover does have an impact on the performance of the organisation where talented workers become harder to retain should the task within the organisation be tougher and economically, the cost of retaining these talents is even higher. Turnover may occur in any organisation due to the distinctiveness of the workers, jobs, organisations and markets (Ton & Huckman, 2008). In addition, turnover also might occur due to the employers' point of control such as family relocations, health problems, and retirements (Meier & Hicklin, 2008). Should turnover occur, the organisation needs to find new employees and when that happens, costs will incur (Anvari, et al., 2013) such as the training cost. More so, the time taken to have new employee acquires the skills and knowledge as the previous employee may also be a cost to the company. As commonly known, cost of maintaining an employee is lower than the cost of training new employees (Brum, 2007).

Meanwhile, Michlitsch (2000) states that having a loyal employee will add value to organisations. Antoncic & Antoncic (2011) state that long term business objectives can be achieved once employee loyalty is established within the organisation. This is because the growth of an organisation is partly influenced by the level of loyalty among employees (Rahman, et al., 2009). Furthermore, the existence of loyal employees projects a good image and attracts outsiders of the organisation (Bettencourt, Gwinner & Meuter, 2001). At the same time, a loyal employee has a bigger tendency to work harder, have more passionate about their job, and are willing to bear with their superior instructions. Rahman, et al. (2009) also added that

employee loyalty is one of the factors that influence employee turnover in the organisation.

The repercussion of employees not being loyal to the organisation is high. This includes the cost of hiring and retaining new employees, loss of job knowledge and skills, gain by competitors, and organisational reputation which may also be affected. Besides, leaders can influence employees' loyalty through effective communication (Mayfield & Mayfield, 2002) and leadership behaviours such as being appreciative and supportive (Lussier & Achua, 2016), and also promoting employee loyalty. Other attributes of an effective leader also consist of good behaviour and personality (Bass, 1990).

Apart from productive and dedicated employees, a superior performing organisation can result from leaders who are able to attract employees to remain in the organisation (Dinwoodie, Quinn, & McGuire, 2014). In Nigeria for instance, due to ineffective leadership, the Nigerian Public Service fell into a deteriorate condition where the employees were no longer loyal and became less effective to provide services in meeting the demands of the populace (Olanrewaju, 2009). This shows the need of a capable leader who knows how to lead the organisation towards succession.

Moreover, a leader also plays role in influencing employee job satisfaction within the organisation (Belias & Koustelios, 2014). Studies conducted on the Malaysian workforce which found that turnover among Malaysian was due to job dissatisfaction among employees (Fauziah & Kamaruzzaman, 2009). This statement is strengthened by the trend of employee turnover in Malaysia which results from job dissatisfaction among employees (Rohani, Nair & Haryanni, 2012). It was also found that job satisfaction promotes employees loyalty towards the organisations by being more committed (Fauziah and Kamaruzzaman., 2009; Rahman et al., 2009; and Amat, Muhammad, Ishfaq, Ishak & Mastura (2014).

1.2   Statement of the Problem

The interest on the concept of loyalty is high among academicians throughout the world. The concept of loyalty has been viewed from many perspectives such as engagement (Ibrahim & Falasi, 2014) and commitment (Iqbal, Tufail & Lodhi, 2015). For instance, a loyal employee can contribute towards the succession of the organisation where the customer of the organisation can be loyal and at the same time improve the performance of the organisation (Bloemer & Odekerken-Schroder, 2006). With loyalty, the organisation could also retain their employees despite higher offer paid by other organisation (Abdullah, 2011).

As of late, there is a disturbing trend of employees moving in and out of the organisation (Koh, 2013). The trend of job hopping is generally getting more attention by many organisations today (Meister, 2012) including Malaysia (Goh, 2012). One of the reasons known for why employees job-hop is a high competitive labour market and low unemployment rate, which opens up the opportunity for job hopping (Choi, Perumal & Ajagbem, 2012).

The trend of job hopping is getting serious (New Straits Times, May 23rd, 2012). As in Feb, 2012, it was reported by the Malaysian Employers Federation (MEF) that the non-manufacturing organisations surveyed from June 2010 to July 2011 had the attrition rate between 9.6% to 75% of their executives switching job within a year. This phenomenon costs the company a huge amount of loss (Goh, 2012), even worse some also quit the current job even they do not have a job in hand (Aruna, 2012) due to the feeling of not growing in the current organisation.

According to Harbet & Dudly (2007), among all generations populating the workforce, the Millennial or Generation Y (Gen Y) is the one more likely to seek for other jobs as compared to the baby boomers and Generation X (Gen X) workforce. For instance, Generation Y consists of those born in the era where computers and massive technological devices are rampant (Tolbize, 2008). Meanwhile, Generation X believes in taking challenges in work and was good in technical skills (Bhatt, 2014), but technology has changed how work is done. The years where Gen X grew up has passed and work has changed where tasks now are completed using technologies. This is indeed a challenge to Gen X. However the new workforce, Gen Y does not see this as a challenge but how work is done. To support this, Brown, Carter, Collins, Gallerson, et al. (2009) stated that Gen Y lives in an era of advanced technologies and this makes Gen Y's lifestyle and preferences different from the previous generation, thus making their demand for a new way of working style.

In order to manage these new sets of employees, measures need to be taken to ensure that the employees enjoy working and want to stay in the organisation. Supporting this argument, Korunka, Hoonakker, and Carayon (2008) found that job satisfaction among employees can reduce the possibility of an employee to quit from the organisation. On this note, being loyal can be reason for the employees to stay in the organisation. Moreover, Eskildsen & Nussler (2000) added that job satisfaction is the key to employee loyalty where the satisfaction can be derived from policies of the organisation, structure, knowledge and skills, and compensation. When an employee is loyal, the possibility of the employee leaving the job is low (Ding, Lu, Song & Lu, 2012).

To date, Generation Y employees have outnumbered other generations in the workforce (Fry, 2015). However, retaining these Gen Y employees is a challenge (Hoi, 2013), as Gen Y employees today have a high tendency to hop jobs (Queiri, Wan & Dwaikat, 2014). Schawbel (2011) mentioned that job hopping is a normal trend among them. Therefore, job hopping can signal poor loyalty among employees (Klehe, Zikic, Vianen & Pater, 2011).

Furthermore, Flauto (1999) found that it is important to examine leaders' attributes that may contribute to employees' loyalty. For example, Robbins (2001) and Mayfield (2002) found that employee loyalty can be earned from good communication between employees and the employer. In addition, Mayfield (2002) added that effective communication is a good medium in transmitting behavioural intent to employees, and at the same time creating the foundation of trust between the leader and the employee and subsequently, developing loyalty among employees.

Biro (2012) stated that before someone can become loyal, the leader needs to create a good relationship with the subordinates by being transparent, fair, and open. Biro further added that by being so, the leader is creating good rapport, understanding and trust, and making the employees feel that they need to be loyal. Other than that, Fernandez (2012) added that leader's behaviour can influence employee loyalty such as "giving recognition" because such behaviour is able to fulfil the essential need of human to be recognised. This feeling may make the employees happy and satisfied, thus can lead to loyalty (Eskildsen & Nussler, 2000). In line with this note, Eskildsen and Nussler (2000) look at the causal model of employee loyalty, and they found that employee job satisfaction can influence employee loyalty which can be contributed by three subsystems; cultural subsystem, social subsystem, and technical subsystem. Due to this reason, this model can be used as the basis for the study.

In the Malaysian context, a study on public administrator's loyalty is essential. This is because public administrators are the backbone of the government and it is important that they are loyal. Many studies on loyalty have been conducted in business but the researcher has not found any for the public sector.

Based on the discussion above, this study aims to identify the Malaysian leaders' attributes that may contribute to employee loyalty. With the scenario of Gen Y as the dominant workforce today, it is a challenge for the employers to understand leader attribute that can manage and have the Gen Y loyal to them. By having loyal employees, the organisation can increase the organisational performance and help grow the Malaysian economy in the long run.

1.3   Research questions

Based on the discussion above, we can look at a few questions in accordance to the relationship between perceived leadership attributes and employee's loyalty:

RQ1.   Are Generation Y public administrators in Putrajaya loyal to their leaders?

RQ2.   Is there a relationship between employee job satisfaction and employee loyalty among Gen Y public administrators in Putrajaya?

RQ3.   Does Gen Y employee job satisfaction influence the relationship between leader attributes and their loyalty?

1.4   Purpose and Objectives of the Study

The main purpose of the study is to explicate leaders' attributes that may influence public Gen Y administrators' loyalty in public sectors. The specific objectives are:

1)   To determine the level of loyalty among Gen Y administrators in the public sector.

2)   To examine the relationship between job satisfaction and loyalty among Gen Y administrators in the public sector.

3)   To examine the perception of Gen Y public administrators of their leaders' attributes (behaviours, personality and communication).

4)   To examine the relationship between Gen Y public administrator's perception of their leaders' attributes and their loyalty towards the leader.

5

5)   To examine the influence of job satisfaction on the relationship between leader attributes (behaviours, personality, and communication) and Gen Y public administrators' loyalty.

1.5   Significance of Study

1)   Employee loyalty is known to be important in an organisation particularly to reduce cost. When employees are being loyal, it signals that the employees are satisfied with their management.
2)   Results from this study may indicate which leader attributes (behaviours, personality, and communication) can promote employee job satisfaction among Gen Y Public administrators.
3)   This study may contribute towards the understanding of leader attributes that can influence employee loyalty in the Malaysian public organisations.

1.6   Limitations of the study

This study has several limitations:
1.   Survey distribution by third party. The researcher only had 4 months to complete survey, data analysis, and thesis writing.
2.   Access to respondents. The researcher was not allowed to personally disseminate the questionnaire to the respondents.

1.7   Definition of terms

The following terms are provided for common understanding of the terms used.

1.7.1   Employee Loyalty

Characterised by the strong wish to continue membership of an organisation, loyalty plays a constructive role in retention of members in the organisation (Turkyilmaz et. al, 2011, p. 682). Reicheld (2001) stated that employee loyalty is about earning employees' enthusiastic commitment to a relationship that will improve their lives over the long run. However, employee loyalty in this study is the sense of emotional attachment and effort made by the employees towards the leader.

1.7.2   Employee Job Satisfaction

Employee job satisfaction refers to the employee's sense of well-being within his or her work environment (Carolina Population Centre, 2015). In this study, employee job satisfaction is referred as the state of the employee feeling that their basic needs are being fulfilled from the settings of the leaders.

1.7.3 Leader Attributes

The attributes of leaders can be described by their behaviour, personality, and communication in which the communication skill is represented through their ability to influence and persuade, while the inner quality can be seen from the behaviour and personality of the leader (Bass, 1990). The attributes of leaders in this study can be described by the quality of the leader which consists of behaviour, personality, and communication.

1.7.4 Leader Behaviour

Behaviour can be defined as the way in which one acts or conducts oneself, especially towards others (Oxford Dictionaries, 2013). Hence, leader behavior in these terms can be defined as the way in which the leader acts or conducts oneself, especially towards others. Kouzes and Posner (2007) stated that leaders need to clarify their value in order to model their behaviour to which will impact on employees. Thus, leader behaviour in this study is referred to as the leader's act when dealing with people around him/her.

1.7.5 Leader Personality

Personality is a predisposition to behave systematically. A trait is some unique dimension of that behaviour and reflects "stylistic consistencies in a person's behavior" (Hogan, 1991). Saiful et. al. (2010) defines personality as a sum total of mental, emotional, social, and physical characteristics that distinguish one person from another. This means that leader personality in this study is referred as the leader's emotional predisposition to behave towards others.

1.7.6 Leader Communication Skill

Communication is defined as skill in conveying information and mutual understanding process from one person to another (Lunenburg, 2010). In this study, communication skill is defined as the capabilities of a leader when handling written or oral communication with others.

1.8 Summary

The study focuses on Gen Y as management and professional employees in the Malaysian ministries. The study also looks into the factors that contribute to employee loyalty and tests employee job satisfaction as a mediator between leader attributes and employee loyalty. This study unveils the first three constructs of leader behaviour, leader personality, and leader communication competence, which generally summarises leader attributes in the literature, employee job satisfaction (fourth construct) and employee loyalty (fifth construct). A detailed review of the literature relevant to the above five constructs is depicted in Chapter 2.

7

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