FEMALE TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP AND TEACHERS' COMMITMENT: MEDIATING EFFECT OF PERCEIVED ORGANISATIONAL POLITICS

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ABSTRACT

Gender has been identified as one of the key factors that influences the degree of transformational leadership practiced by the leaders and has an effect on job outcome. This study investigates the characteristics and level of female principals' transformational leadership and interrelationship between the leadership with Perceived Organizational Politics (POPs) and teachers' commitment in Malaysian secondary schools. Further, the mediating effect of POPs on the relationship between transformational leadership and teachers' organizational commitment are also investigated. In total, 208 teachers from secondary schools in Penang led by female principals were selected as respondents. The results found that the level of transformational leadership practiced by female principals was moderately high. The female principals tended to inspire and motivate teachers but displayed their idealized influence characteristics in leadership less. The results also revealed that the level of POPs and organizational commitment of teachers led by female principals were moderate. In addition, the hierarchical linear regression results indicated that POPs partially mediated the relationship between transformational leadership and teachers' organizational commitment. This study indicates that teachers' organizational commitment can be improved by transformational leadership that is practiced by their leaders as well as the POPs at their schools.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Women have increasingly moved toward greater gender equality at home and in the workplace. As a result, the statistics have revealed a consistent increase in women's leadership in education and non-education organizations. The percentage of women in leadership position had increased from 24 percent in 2017 to 28 percent in 2018 and for education sector, almost half of the secondary schools (49%) in Malaysia, reported by Ministry of Education (2015), are led by women principals. In Malaysian public universities, Ismail and Rasdi (2006) reported that the percentage of female professors, referred as academic leaders, in 17 Malaysian public universities increased from 9.6% in 1997 to 16.9% 2000. Further, Gender Diversity Benchmark for Asia 2011 (CB 2011) as cited by Cho et al. (2015), proclaim that Malaysia performed best (27.6% against the average of 18.3%) in terms of the women representation in senior positions compare to Hong Kong and China which rated as the highest percentage female employees of the respective countries' workforce.

Thus, gender has become one of the most important antecedents investigated by previous researchers as an explanation of leadership behavior (Sánchez-Moreno et al., 2015). Many researchers agree that gender has a significant effect on the outcome of many leadership situations (Bass & Avolio, 1994; Zeinabadi, 2013). Though transformational leadership is believed to be typically linked to female leaders (Christiane et al., 2015), a study conducted by Reuvers et al. (2008) in Australian public hospitals indicated that employees report more committed when the transformational leadership is displayed by male leaders in comparison with female leaders. Therefore, Reuvers et al. (2008) suggests that organizations are called on to re-analyse and expand their perceptions of what constitutes transformational leadership as it does not only relate to skills and knowledge of the leaders but also gender.

Recent researchers have proposed transformational leadership as one of the most inspiring leadership styles (Bass & Avolio ,1990; Dierendonck et al., 2014) that involve the leaders' capability of promoting intellectual stimulation through inspiration. According to Avolio et al. (2004), transformational leaders are able to influence organizational commitment of their subordinate by promoting higher levels of intrinsic value associated with goal accomplishment. By doing so it emphasizes the linkages between the followers' efforts and goal achievement. The organizational commitment could also be promoted by creating a higher level of personnel commitment on the part of the leaders and followers to achieve a common vision, mission, and organizational goals (Mercurio, 2015).

Moreover, researchers (i.e. Vigoda-Gadot & Beeri, 2011) proclaim that transformational leaders also able to reduce the negative perceptions of employees on politics in an organization. In principle, organizational politics refers to political behaviour in an internal environment of the organization. However, Riaz (2013), Cropanzano et al. (1997) point out that individual perception towards political games in the organization is more important and relevant to be studied compared to the real organizational politics. According to Ferris et al. (1994), the claim that perceived organization political game is formed by a set of beliefs defined by the employees and individual reaction to what they perceive, is not necessarily true. Vigoda-Gadot (2007) and Abbas and Raja (2014) refer to this concept in their study as Perceived Organisational Politics (POPs). The perceived politic is expected to have a negative impact on the organization (Kacmar & Carlson, 1997), and show a direct relationship to the work outcome, i.e. organizational commitment (Cropanzano et al., 1997; Vigoda, 2000).

While empirical evidence regarding the direct influence of transformational leadership on teachers' organisational commitment in educational organizations are extensive (Bass & Avolio, 1994; Reuvers, et al. 2008; Vigoda, 2000), the mediating effect of POPs on the relationship between the two variables is relatively scarce in the context of schools led by female principals in Malaysia. Therefore, this issue needs to further investigated as the number of women leaders including at schools is increasing from time to time. As reported by Bernama (2018), the percentage of women as senior leaders in Malaysia has increased from 24 per cent in 2017 to 28 per cent in 2018. The increasing number also occurs in women principals in Malaysian schools (Mannan et al., 2016). In 2017, female teachers represent about 72% from the overall of teachers in Malaysia, and 37.2% of them are school leaders (headmistress and principals) (Anas, 2017).

Though the percentage of female school leaders in Malaysia is still lower than male, the increment of the number from year to year has led to the influence of feminism in leadership among principals in Malaysia. As mentioned by Kawatra and Krishnan (2004), female leaders tend to demonstrate feminine traits in their transformational leadership. Thus, this study aims to answer three main questions namely;

a) What are the characteristics of transformational leadership exhibited by female principals in Malaysian schools as perceived by teachers?
b) Is there any significant relationship between female principals' transformational leadership, POPs and teachers' organisational commitment?
c) Does POPs become a significant mediator on the relationship between organizational commitment and transformational leadership?

The following research framework in Figure I is developed in which transformational leadership styles (Bass & Avolio, 1994) work as the independent variable, teachers' commitment as a dependent variable and POPs (Kacmar & Carlson, 1997) as the mediator on the relationship between independent and dependent variables. The framework based on the mediator model as proposed by Kenny (2016).

Figure 1: Research Framework
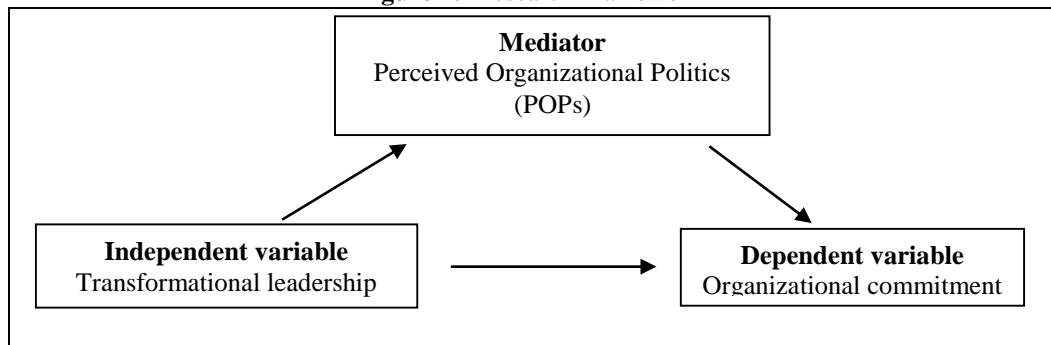
2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 *Transformational Leadership*

Transformational leadership refers to a leadership approach that causes changes in individuals and social systems. The transformational leaders could influence their followers by various means, for instance, establishing a vision for a better future, inspiring followers as opposed to controlling them and leading through role modelling (Ismail, 2018). They also contribute to their subordinates' intellectual stimulation, enhance the meaningfulness of goals and behaviors, fulfil their followers' self-actualisation needs, empower their followers through intrinsic motivation, exhibit confidence in their subordinates' capabilities to attain higher levels of achievement and enhance collective identity.

The characteristics of transformational leadership are the factors that make a transformational leader behave in certain ways compared to other leadership theories. Bass (1985) introduces four elements of transformational leadership namely:

(1) *Idealised Influence*: Leaders become a role model for high ethical behaviour, instil pride, gain respect and trust. They display very high moral standards and ethically conduct themselves, and thus can be counted on to do the right thing (Lippstreu, 2010).
(2) *Intellectual Stimulation*: Leaders stimulate and encourage creativity in their followers by challenging their thinking about problem-solving strategies and promote creativity and innovation (Seaver, 2010)
(3) *Individualised Consideration*: This refers to the leader's actions that guide followers towards reaching their respective levels of potential (Seaver, 2010).
(4) *Inspirational Motivation*: Transformational leaders engage in behaviors that articulate a vision that is appealing and inspiring to their followers (Iwuh, 2010; Lea, 2011; Martin, 2010).

This model has been imposed worldwide by previous researchers in their study about transformational leadership, including studies that focus on women leadership.

However, researchers in previous studies have been debating and deliberating on the issue of masculinity and femininity in differentiating between male and female leadership. Kark et al. (2003) in his article has explained about the sex role in leadership from the perspective of Gender Reform Feminism. This framework has asserted that both male and female are similar in their common humanity. Thus, gender differences in leadership cannot be merely based on biological reason. The main factor that leads to individual differences from the characteristics of male and female leadership is sex-role socialization. This role portrays the role of women that has been rendered to be less skilled than men by competing in the business context. Therefore, if women developed appropriate traits and skills, they could be in a better situation to compete with men.

Eagly et al. (2003) in their meta-analysis of 45 studies involving transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire leadership styles found that female leaders were more transformational than male leaders. Women leaders were believed to adopt a somewhat more democratic or participative style as compared to more directive and less autocratic style as what the men did. According to Judeh (2010), women may favour a transformational style as it allows them to avoid the overly masculine impression they can produce by exercising hierarchical control and engaging in narrowly agentic

leader behaviour. Thus, Hassan and Othman (2012) proclaim that women leadership can be more effectively conducted in today's less hierarchical organization as it promotes a participatory and collaborative effort among the followers in nature. Consequently, a more interpersonally oriented and democratic styles of leadership can be highlighted.

2.2 Teachers' commitment

Commitment refers to the voluntary behavior to pay efforts to provide conscious awareness to organizational objectives beyond passive loyalty to an organization (Iverson & Buttigieg, 1999; Steijn & Leisink, 2006). Employees who are committed to their organization, generally feel a connection with their organisation, feel that they fit in and, feel that they understand the goals of the organisation. The benefit of such employees is that they tend to be more determined in their work, show relatively high productivity and are more proactive in offering their support. In the school context, Ates and Buluc (2015) noted that commitment is one of the critical elements in increasing the performance of teachers and schools, as they are directly involved in the educational process and development as well as responsible for equipping students with the knowledge and good manners.

Meyer and Allen's (1997) have developed a three-dimensional model of commitment that corresponds with different psychological states. The three dimensions in the Meyer and Allen's commitment model are affective commitment, continuance commitment and normative commitment.

- *Affective Commitment* is defined as the employee's positive emotional attachment to the organization. It relates to how much employees want to remain at their organisation (Ross, et al., 2016; Chordiya et al., 2017)
- *Continuance Commitment* relates to how much employees feel the need to stay at their organisation. In employees who are continually committed, the underlying reason for their commitment lies in their need to stay with the organisation, for instance, their salary and fringe benefits will not improve if they move to another organisation (Khan et al., 2017).
- *Normative Commitment* refers to the feeling of obligation by individuals that causes them to commit and remain with the organization. This feeling may derive from a strain on an individual before and after joining an organization (Khan et al., 2017; Ross, Ghazwan & Hope, 2016).

These three constructs of organizational commitment were employed in this study to measure teachers' psychological attachment to their organization.

2.3 Perceived organizational politics

Perception is the crucial aspect that influences individuals' perceptions of a situation and usually distracts them from responding to an objective state of reality. Many organizational scientists (such as Ferris et al., 1989; Kacmar & Carlson, 1997; Cropanzano et al., 1997; Kacmar & Baron, 1999; Rosen et al., 2014) have emphasized this aspect in influencing employee's perception of organizational politics. Organizational politics exist in an organization when employees in the organization perform illegitimate actions that are directed towards their self-interests (Rosen et al., 2014; LePine et al., 2005). While perceived organizational politics (POPs) refers to the perception

of an individual toward the conducts of their colleagues who tend to fulfil their personal aims by ignoring other people's feeling and welfare as well as the organization's well-being (Kachmar & Baron, 1999).

Teachers' perception of political aspects in the organization, undoubtedly, do exist in a school context, as politic behaviour is an unavoidable element in any organization. In addition, as an organization that a practices bureaucratic administrative system, school tends to initiate the emergence of significant political games or teachers' perception of the games (Malik et al., 2012). According to Abdul Rahman et al. (2010), limited resources and opportunities that exist in schools, for instance, promotion, increment and social mobility have resulted in the rivalry among members of the organization (especially teachers) who have their own personal needs and interests in developing their career path. Thus, this study is an effort to investigate the occurrence of perceived organizational perception among teachers led by female principals. In previous researches, gender is claimed has indirect influence on organizational politics (Davey, 2008; Webster et al., 2018). For instance, Davey (2008) argues that there are much of the evidence for differences between male and female careers implicates the kind of informal behaviour associated with organizational politics. Drory and Beaty (1991) revealed that both male and female in an organization will identify members from their own sex as meaningful coalition and react to organizational events in view of the implication to members of their own gender.

Kacmar and Carlson (1997) in their study have suggested three elements that represent as POPs namely;

- General Political Behaviour relates to overt self-centred behaviours displayed by employees to attain valued outcomes. This political behaviour increases when rules and regulations are not available to govern actions, uncertainty in decision making and scarcity of valued resources (e.g., transfers, raises, office space, budgets) (Fandt & Ferris, 1990; Kacmar & Ferris, 1993).
- Go Along to Get Ahead relates to unrevealed self-centred behaviours by employees that are developed by their tacit understanding. They prefer to remain silent in order to achieve valued outcomes (Byrne, 2005) and this will leads to rivalry and conflicts among employees.
- Pay and Promotion Policies relates to organization-enacted policies that may cause dissatisfactions among employees. Even though organizational decision makers may not do so consciously, the human resource systems that are developed and implemented may reward individuals who engage in influence behaviours and penalize those who do not (Kacmar & Carlson, 1997). In the Malaysian school context, the pay and promotion for teachers' are based on a time-based schedule that clearly stated in government document and managed by the Malaysian Civil Servant Commission. However, for the purpose of this study, these elements will be measured according to their performance appraisal assessed by the school principal in each school. The results of this appraisal will eventually be used in teacher's selection for awards, for instance, outstanding teacher's award, promotion and scholarship.

2.4 The interrelation between variables and hypothesis development

As mentioned by vast numbers of previous study, transformational school leaders can change teachers' attitude to improve their commitment. Researchers such as Keskes et al. (2018) proclaim that transformational leadership has direct significant influence on organizational commitment and suggested that leaders need to understand the impact of transformational leadership on followers' commitment. Similarly, this promotes the effort of practicing this style of leadership so that such leadership behaviour has a positive impact on the organizations' outcome and performance. Besides transformational leadership, previous studies were also identified the significant influence of POPs on subordinates' commitment (Cropanzano et al., 1997; Vigoda, 2000; Vigoda-Gadot, 2007; Singh, 2012). Singh (2012) in his study found the significant relationship between POPs and organizational commitment among non- academic staffs in UiTM Sarawak. According to a study conducted by Durrani (2014), organizational politics has positive relationship with transactional leadership but negative relationship with transformational leadership. Based on these previous findings, the hypothesis 1 was develop:

Ha$_1$: There are significant relationship between female principals'
transformational leadership, POPs and teachers' commitment

While many researchers focused on the direct influence of transformational leadership, POPs and commitment, Vigoda-Gadot (2007) and Kimura (2012) proclaim that POPs also has mediating influence on the relationship between leadership and organizational performance. Kimura's (2012) study in Japanese company has revealed the role of POPs as partial mediator on the relationship between top management's transformational leadership and job satisfaction. Therefore, the hypothesis 2 for this study was:

Ha$_2$: There is mediating effect of POPs on the relationship between
female transformational leadership and teachers' commitment

3. MATERIAL AND METHOD

The study was based upon a survey in secondary schools in Penang, Malaysia. In total, 208 teachers from public secondary schools, which were led by female principals, were selected as respondents using random sampling. The results were drawn using mean, Pearson correlation and hierarchical linear regression on the data that were collected using a questionnaire. Necessary care was taken to conceal the identities of respondents for various reasons, no personal data or identification variables were obtained from the respondents. Further, it was clearly mentioned in the questionnaire that the obtained data were only for research purposes. A questionnaire consisted of four sections was used for data gathering, namely:

Section A: Demographics of the respondents and school

Section B: Transformational leadership was assessed using the multifactor leadership questionnaire (MLQ) developed by Bass and Avolio (1994). As the current study focused on transformational leadership, only four of the MLQ subscales were selected. The subscales identifying transformational leadership included idealized influence behavior (10 items), inspirational

motivation (10 items), intellectual stimulation (9 items), and individualized consideration (9 items). The factor loading of confirmatory factor analysis for items of each subscales were between 0.70 – 0.85.

Section C: The perceived organizational politic items were adapted from Kacmar and Carlson (1997) which originally consists of 15 items with a negative statement. However, all the items had changed into positive statements as advised by experts during the content validity and ethical panel in the researcher's university. This is because the negative items regarding organizational politic in school context will give a negative impact to the Ministry of Education. Thus, the items to measure POPS especially for the pay and promotion policies in this study were changed to positive statements consisting 16 items. The factor loading of confirmatory factor analysis for items of each construct were between 0.75 – 0.80.

Section D: The teachers' commitment items were adapted from Meyer and Allen's (1997) which consisted of 24 items for three constructs, i.e. affective, normative and continuance commitment. The factor loading of confirmatory factor analysis for items of each construct were between 0.70 – 0.90. All the items on the questionnaire B to D were measured using a 5-point Likert scale with a value of 1 = 'strongly disagree' to the 5 = 'strongly agree'.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The explanation of the results were divided into two parts according to the statistic measurements employed, i.e. descriptive analysis and inference analysis.

4.1 Descriptive analysis

The descriptive analysis was employed to measure the level of transformational leadership practiced by female principals in Malaysian schools. The interpretation of mean scores was based on Nunnally's (1978) interpretation mean scores range i.e. 1.00-1.80 (very low); 1.81-2.60 (low); 2.61-3.40 (moderate); 3.41-4.20 (moderately high) and 4.21-5.00 (high).

The results of the mean scores and standard deviation for the level of transformational leadership of female principals are displayed in Table 1. In general, the mean score = 3.47, sd = .70 show that the level of transformation of Malaysian female principals is moderately high. The inspirational motivation (M=.59, sd=.69) is higher than other constructs, namely intellectual stimulation (M=3.56, sd=.77), individualised consideration (M=3.39, sd=.76) and idealised influence (M=3.32, sd= .73).

Table 1: The Level of Transformational Leadership of Malaysian Female Principals.

Dimensions	Mean	SD	Level
Idealised influence	3.32	.73	moderate
Inspirational motivation	3.59	.69	moderately high
Individualised Consideration	3.39	.76	moderate
Intellectual Stimulation	3.56	.77	moderately high
Transformational leadership	3.47	.70	Moderately high

Based on these descriptive findings, it can be concluded that teachers under female principals' leadership perceived that their leaders have displayed fewer role model criteria in leadership. According to Lippstreu (2010), leaders who observed as a role model by their followers will display high ethical behavior in order to obtain respect and trust. However, teachers in this study believed that their female principals stressed on inspiring and motivating them in carrying out their job and responsibilities as well as stimulated them intellectually to become creative and innovative.

This criterion may support a claim made by Kawatra and Krishnan (2004) who believe in the idea of women leaders focusing more on doing their tasks well and promoting a harmonious relationship instead of competitive success. The feminine traits in female leadership make them relatively submissive and passive and trying to have a good collaboration from their followers. As mentioned by Gregory (1990), though women leadership are very similar to men, they often score higher in a supporting role. Thus, it is not surprising that female principals tend to exhibit higher elements of inspirational motivation than other elements in their transformational leadership.

Further, the inference data analysis was employed to investigate the significant relationship between variables, i.e. Pearson correlation, while hierarchical linear regression was used to identify the significant mediator role of POPs on the relationship between transformational leadership and teachers' organizational commitment. The correlation test was employed as a requirement for further regression analysis. The results are exhibited in Table 2 and 3. The r values of Pearson correlation in Table 5 show that all the variables are significantly correlated to each other. This means that all the variables are significant for hierarchical linear regression analysis.

Table 2: Correlation between variables

	POPs	Transformational leadership	Teachers' organizational commitment
POPs	1		
Transformational leadership	.42**	1	
Teachers' organizational commitment	.39**	.53**	1

*Notes: * Significant at p<.05*

This study had utilized Baron and Kenny's (1986) approach to test the mediator role of POPs in the relationship between transformational leadership and the teachers' organizational commitment. The hierarchical linear regressions (HLR) was conducted with **transformational leadership** and **POPs** as the predictor variables while **teachers' organizational commitment** as the outcome variable. A summary of the results is shown in Table 3. The R^2 value indicates that the change of variance in the teachers' organizational commitment explained by the transformational leadership of female principals is 12 % (β=.53; p=.01). Table 3 also indicates that the R^2 = 32% (β= .45, p= .01) of the variance changes in the teachers' organizational commitment can be explained by transformational leadership and POPs. The significant three paths (direct and indirect) and the decrement of the β value of transformational leadership after the inclusion of mediator (POPs) dictate that POPs is a significant partial mediator (Baron & Kenny, 1986; Mathieu & Taylor, 2006) for the relationship between transformational leadership of female principals and organizational commitment of teachers led by female principals.

Table 3: The mediating role of POPs

Variable	Dependent variable		
	Mediator and DV	Teachers' commitment (without a mediator) (Model 1)	Teachers' commitment (with a mediator) (Model 2)
IV			
Transformational leadership		.53*	.45*
Mediator			
POPs	.34*		.20*
R	.34	.53	.56
R^2	.12	.28	.32
Adjusted R²	.11	.28	.31
F Value	27.07*	81.24*	81.24*

*Notes: * Significant at p<.05*

The results in Table 3 indicate that transformational leadership of female principals has a significant influence on teachers' organizational commitment. A similar significant influence of transformational leadership and employees' organizational commitment are revealed by previous studies, either focus on female transformational leadership or transformational leadership regardless the gender of the leaders (for instance, Hii, 2013; Veeriah, 2017; Zacharo et al., 2018; Ross & Gray, 2015). According to Ross and Gray (2015), transformational leadership had direct and indirect effects on teachers' commitment to the school mission and commitment to the professional learning community. Thus, it can be suggested that female leaders should engage in transformational leadership in order to enhance teachers' commitment. However, as exhibited in Table 1, among four dimensions of transformational leadership, Malaysian female principals tend to display their inspiring behaviour to motivate teachers followed by intellectual stimulation, individualized consideration and idealized influence. As mentioned by Curtis et al. (2009), subordinates' motivation makes a significant contribution to their emotional attachment to the organization. The appealing and inspiring conduct displayed by female principals causes teachers to have an emotional attachment to their organization, as revealed in Table 2 and this became the main reason for them to commit to their schools. Whereby, the organization needs to be very effective at communicating their goals, mission, and values to their workforce and is also capable at cultivating their mission, goals, and values across employee classifications in enhancing their subordinates' motivation (Curtis et al., 2009). In addition, the results in Table 3 found that POPs are the partial mediator on the relationship between transformational leadership of female principals and teachers' organizational commitments. This indicates that POPs have partially intervened the relationship between the independent variable and dependent variable. The increment of R^2 values R^2= 28 in Model 1 to R^2= 32 in Model 2 shows that there is an increment of variance change in the teachers' organizational commitments after the inclusion of mediator, i.e. POPs into relationship model between transformational leadership and organizational commitment.

Based on the results, it can be concluded that schools led by female transformational leaders require a positive perception of teachers on organizational politics in order to enhance their organizational commitment. According to Kark et al. (2003), Eagly et al. (2003) and Judeh (2010), the feminine traits such as more democratic and participative of female principals has led to the harmonious relationship between leaders and subordinates. By adopting the feminine traits in their leadership,

female principals are more concern in giving inspiration to motivate their subordinate as well as to stimulate their intellectual to become effective in the organization. This supporting role (as called by Gregory, 1990) has managed to promote the positive work environment and encourage teachers to be more committed in their job. The results in this study contradicted from the previous ones. For instance, Islam et al. (2013) and Saleem (2015) who found POPs are negatively related to leadership and organizational commitments. The change in the negative statement in the original items to positive statement causes POPs positive mediating role in this study. According to Saleem (2015), the significant mediating effect of POPs indicates that an effective leader will not only assist the organization in achieving its aims but will also be responsible for creating a fair and healthy atmosphere that caters to the needs and expectations of the employees. This is as mentioned by Vigoda-Gadot (2007) who claims that the success of any organization is contributed by a balanced and fair relationship between the leaders and employees. By strengthening the fair social exchange relationship, the level of politics in an organization might be reduced, which ultimately influence the organizational commitment in a positive manner. Thus, leaders should know about the merits and demerits of their leadership style as it affects the perception of the employees towards organizational politic which will ultimately damage the employees' organizational commitment and performance.

5.   IMPLICATION, LIMITATION AND FUTURE STUDY

This study provides information and prior knowledge about the influence of female transformational female leadership and POPs on teachers' commitment. Theoretically, this study has proved that female principals in Malaysia have developed their leadership skills and traits in order to be as effective as their male counterparts from the theory mentioned in Gender Reform Feminist Theory. Furthermore, this study provides information and prior knowledge regarding the criteria of female transformational leadership that eventually that assists the Ministry of Education in providing training to future female principals.

The present study is not as it is without its limitations and weaknesses. The data of this study was based on quantitative data that gathered from self-answered questionnaire from teachers' perspective only. They provided their responds according to the questionnaire items that were solely based on their personal experience as subordinate to female principal which varies among teachers. Thus, there is lack of explanation on the process of how female principals practicing transformational leadership and influence teachers towards POPs and become committed. Future studies should aim to conduct similar research using female leaders as respondents and qualitative approach in data collection, to investigate the process and possible leadership behaviour in influencing the organizational politics and teachers' work behaviour.

6.   CONCLUSION

Previous studies have shown that leadership styles fundamentally affect employee's perceptions of organizational politics which in turn affects their job outcomes. This study was conducted with the aim of enriching the knowledge about the link between these variables by focusing on female principals in the school context. This study found that the level of female principals' transformational leadership was moderately high, and their inspirational motivation dimension was

higher than other dimensions. The results of this study also revealed that POPs became the significant mediator on the relationship between transformational leadership and organizational commitment in the context of schools that led by the female principals. Based on the results, it can be concluded that the empowerment leadership to female leaders in Malaysian schools has provided them with an opportunity to execute transformational leadership attributes similar to male leaders. However, the influence of feministic aspect in performing transformational leadership had caused female principals to have less focus of being the ideal leaders and competitive success but stressed more on promoting harmonious relationship and good collaboration from their subordinates. This has mentioned by previous researchers that female leaders exhibit democratic and participatory characteristics in their leadership and tend to give supporting role to their subordinates. In addition, the attributes of transformational leadership performed by female principals also affected the view of their subordinate on the political games that occurred within the schools' organization, that eventually influence their commitment to the schools. Thus, female leaders have to consider exhibiting well-mannered leadership attributes in order to create a healthy organization environment and promote a balanced and fair relationship between them and their subordinates.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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