
Effect of Leader-Member Exchange, Psychological Empowerment, Workplace Spirituality towards Transformational Leadership and Organizational Citizenship Behavior among Nurses

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Abstract Transformational leadership, leader-member exchange (LMX), workplace spirituality and psychological empowerment have been given the credit of bringing success to organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) in an organization. Thusly, this research will investigate the role of transformational leadership on OCB especially within the context of Malaysia's nurses. Furthermore, it is expected that the efficient role of transformational leadership relies on LMX on interaction to OCB. Additionally, the presence of workplace spirituality as a moderator among subordinate may affect relationship between LMX and OCB. Lastly, the effect of psychological empowerment as a moderator between transformational leadership and OCB also will be studied. The research method will be conducted as a cross-sectional study which the data will be collected by using questionnaire-based survey. Transformational leadership will be measured by adapted from Multiple Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) by Bass (1985), OCB from Organ (1988), LMX adapted from LMX-7 by Graen and Uhl-Bien (1995), workplace spirituality from Milliman et al., (2003) and psychological empowerment will be adapted from Spreitzer (1995). The total population of this research is 5084 and a minimum sample size is 1396. The hospitals will be divided into five zone clusters. The fishbowl technique and systematic sampling design will be applied. The data will be analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM).

Keywords: Transformational Leadership, Psychological Empowerment, Workplace Spirituality, Transformational Leadership, Organizational Citizenship Behaviour

1. Introduction

Transformational leadership is one of the most prevailing come ones to understanding individual, group and organizational effectiveness (Bass, 1985). Transformational leaders exhibit certain types of trait that include raising subordinates to a higher level of achievement, enabling them to go beyond their personal interests for collective welfare, focusing on their abilities to enhance personal growth, and developing their intellectual ability to approach problems in new ways (Bass, 1985). Studies have shown that in order to improve organizational performance such as organizational citizenship behavior, type of the leadership play an important role (Bass & Riggio, 2005; Wang, Courtright, & Colbert, 2011). As a leader, they are directly contact with employees and thus affect them directly. Transformational leadership is one of type of leadership that able to instill values in subordinates so that their activities or goals are congruent with their own authentic interest and values (Piccolo & Colquitt, 2006).

In order to enhance the relationship between transformational leadership and organizational citizenship behavior (OCB), leader-member exchange (LMX) will be conducted in this research as a mediator variable. There have been several calls for a theoretical integration of the transformational leadership and LMX literatures (Avolio, Sosik, Jung, & Berson, 2003; Gerstner & Day, 1997; Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995). Stated alternatively, the assumption has been that it is the quality of the leader-member exchange through which transformational leadership influence subordinate OCB. Consistently with this reasoning, the researcher will develop and test a structural model in which LMX mediates between transformational leadership and OCB.

Over the past century, the increasing organization goal to gain the better efficiency have made employees (as individuals) to identify a greater need and purpose of life (Milliman, Czaplewski, & Ferguson, 2003) and organizations (as employers) to recognize the need of workplace spirituality (Neal & Biberman, 2003).

This problem became more challenges when employees need to face life stress and it finally might result decreasing desire of helping each other. The increasing relevance of workplace spirituality is indicative of workplace environment that focuses on the formation of collective vision to fulfill needs higher than only physical support. Workplace spirituality development in organizations has been as important as mind development at workplaces (Steingard, 2005). Spirituality in workplaces is sharing and experiencing attraction, usual attachment and being together in work as a unit and in the organizations as a whole (Neal & Biberman, 2003). This new perspective has been considered to improve greater OCB (Pawar, 2009).

Leadership, in an organizational context, can be understood as the process that unites a diverse group of people to work effectively as a team toward a common purpose (Hoigaard, et, al., 2008). How a leader, or coach in the case of this study, unifies people is determined by the different characteristics of the leader. Study indicates that a positive relationship between transformational leadership and psychological empowerment (Conger, 1999).

Employees who are psychologically empowered feel good about the tasks they are doing and perceive them to be meaningful and challenging (Spreitzer et, al., 1999). Thus, the chances of a psychologically empowered employee performing well and conforming to OCB are higher. Research suggests that empowerment appears when companies implement practices that distribute power, information, knowledge, and rewards throughout the organization (Lawler, et, al., 1992; Nezakati, et, al., 2010). With respect to the service sector, there is a positive relationship between psychological empowerment and measures of OCB. So, psychological empowerment can act as a moderator in relationship between transformational leadership and OCB.

As the front line of healthcare providers, nurses have the most frequent interactions with patients. The value of services that major healthcare organizations and hospitals hope to deliver to patients is transmitted through their nurse's attitudes and behaviors (Altuntas & Baykal, 2010). In an ideal management system, it is nearly impossible to attain the high level of organizational effectiveness needed for employees to effectively perform more than just their assigned duties (Tsai & Wu, 2011). Most management systems encourage some extra behavior that is called OCB to increase organizational effectiveness (Organ, Podsakoff, & MacKenzie, 2006). Since nurse's positive behaviors strongly influence respective patient satisfaction, which significantly increases the quality of healthcare services (Hassmiller & Cozine, 2006), it is useful to investigate the concept of OCB in the hospitals.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Transformational Leadership

Transformational leadership refers to a leader who tries to raise the need of employees, promote dramatic change of individuals and motivates them to perform beyond their expectations (Bass, 1985; Boehnke, et, al., 2003). In other words, this type of leadership facilitates the redefinition of people's mission and the leaders motivate subordinates by getting them to prioritize for collective reason rather than personal interest (Roberts, 1885). This leadership attempts to elevate the needs of their subordinate in line with the leader's own goals and objectives (Bass & Steidlmeier, 1999). Transformational leaders influence their subordinates by putting goals away from personal interest towards collective mission and subordinates are motivated by the fear of disappointing the leader (Reuvers et. al., 2008). Transformational leadership refers to four dimensions namely idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation and individual consideration as introduced by Bass (1985). Idealized influence refers to employees' respect and admiration towards their leaders who communicate important values. Next is inspirational motivation that explains about the leaders' ability to raise employees' enthusiasm through providing them with challenges. Meanwhile, intellectual stimulation is regarded as the leader's initiative to invent new ways of solving workplace problems among employees. And the last is individual consideration that refers to the leaders' ability to recognize the uniqueness of each employee for organizations benefit.

2.2 Leader-member Exchange

Leader-member exchange (LMX) is the quality of the relationship that develops between a leader and a subordinate. It is refer to the mutual affection members of the dyad have for each other based primarily on interpersonal attraction rather than work or professional values. It is also the expression of public support for the goals and personal character of the other member of the LMX dyad. The perception of the amount, direction, and quality of work-oriented activity each member puts forth toward the mutual goals (explicit or implicit) of the dyad will be calculated in LMX. Finally, LMX is consisting of the perception of the degree to which each

member of the dyad has built a reputation, within or outside the organization for excelling in his or her line of work.

2.3 Workplace Spirituality

Workplace spirituality refers to the involvement of the effort to find one's ultimate purpose in life, to develop a strong connection to co-workers and other people associated with work, and to have consistency (or alignment) between one's core beliefs and the values of their organization (Milliman et al., 2003). In this study, workplace spirituality refers to three dimension namely meaningful work, sense of community and alignment with organizational values that based on Milliman et al., (2003). Meaningful work refer to a fundamental aspect of spirituality at work involves having a deep sense of meaning and purpose in one's work. This dimension of workplace spirituality represents how employees interact with their day-to-day work at the individual level.

Next is sense of community that explains workplace spirituality occurs at the group level of human behaviour and concerns interaction between employees and their co-workers. Community at work is based on the belief that people see themselves as connected to each other and that there is some type relationship between one's inner self and the inner self of other people. And the last is alignment with organizational values that refers to the values involves the concept that employees desire to work in an organization whose goal is to not just be a good corporate citizen, but an organization that seeks to have high sense of ethics or integrity and make a larger contribution than the typical company to the welfare of employees, customers, and society.

2.4 Psychological Empowerment

Conger and Kanungo (1988) defined empowerment as a process of enhancing feelings of self-efficacy among organizational members through the identification of conditions that foster powerlessness and through their removal by both formal organizational practices and informal techniques of providing efficacy information. Researchers have also considered empowerment from a cognitive perspective which is from the perspective of the worker's cognitions, which they term psychological empowerment. Psychological empowerment was later defined as consisting of four dimensions or individual cognitions (Thomas & Velthouse, 1990) that have been empirically validated by Spreitzer (1995). Thus, this research will used the definition from a cognitive perspective which is psychological empowerment consists of an individual's judgment of meaning, competence, self-determination, and impact. Together, these four dimensions display active employee status (Spreitzer, 1996).

2.5 Organizational Citizenship Behaviour

Organizational citizenship behaviour (OCB) is characterized as the behaviour of individuals in the organization, defined as extra-role behaviours rather than defined roles and responsibilities (Organ, 1990; Tepper, et, al., 2001). When an individual moves out of the frame of his or her job description and works in a pro-social manner (Karriker & Williams, 2009; Puffer, 1987), this can be termed OCB. OCB was defined by Organ (1988) as an individual behaviour that is discretionary, not directly or explicitly recognized by the formal reward system, and that in the aggregate promotes the effective functioning of the organization. Based on this definition, Organ (1997) identified five dimensions of OCB which are altruism, conscientiousness, sportsmanship, courtesy, and civic virtue. Thus, it can be said that OCB is characterized by the individual's willingness to voluntarily meet and exceed expectations. These individuals have the desire to demonstrate such behaviour despite knowing that the extra effort will not be rewarded.

2.6 Proposed Model and Hypotheses

Transformational leadership, defined as influencing subordinates by broadening and elevating subordinates' goals and providing them with confidence to perform beyond the expectations specified in the implicit or explicit change agreement (Dvir, et, al., 2002), has been demonstrated to be a valid determinant of desirable employee outcomes, including organizational citizenship (Organ et al., 2006; Piccolo & Colquitt, 2006). It is expected that,

H₁: Transformational leadership will give positively effect to organizational citizenship behavior.

Traditionally, an assumption made in the organizational literature is that transformational leadership is a universally positive management practice, and transformational leaders influence employee work behaviors in beneficial ways across many organizational settings (Bass, 1997). Consequently, numerous studies have focused on examining how transformational leaders drive their subordinates' behaviors (Avolio, et, al., 2004; Gong, et, al., 2004; Piccolo & Colquitt, 2006; Pillai, et, al., 1999), while paying less attention to the question of when transformational leadership is more (or less) functional. As a result, we know less about the contingencies

modifying the relationships between transformational leadership and subordinate behaviors (Kirkman, et. al., 2009). In this study, the researcher will provide such qualification by drawing on one of the configurations presented in the substitutes for leadership framework, using leader-member exchange as a mediator in relationship between transformational leadership and OCB. The variables of leader-member exchange will become as mediator. Thus,

H₂: Transformational leadership will give positively effect to leader-member exchange.

H₃: Leader-member exchange will give positively effect to organizational citizenship behavior.

H₄: Leader-member exchange will mediate the positive relationship between transformational leadership and organizational citizenship behavior.

There has been a growing body of literature on workplace spirituality. However, many of them have more intensified on depicting definition and describing personal spiritual experiences at work, rather than on the impact workplace spirituality dimensions on the individual work attitudes and behaviors (Milliman et al., 2003). Since team working, as groups, and alignment with organization goals have been more considered to improve organizational citizenship behavior (Hyatt & Ruddy, 1997), the influence of workplace spirituality as a moderator will be investigate in this study and the hypotheses as below.

The integrity of workplace spirituality has been still important to improve (Ashmos & Duchon, 2000; Krishnakumar & Neck, 2002). It is important to indicate that growing knowledge of workplace spirituality and their positive outcomes are the main reasons to create the workplace environments that can support the spiritual components. Indeed, spirituality in workplaces has been studied and understood in its influence, relatedness and practical importance in working environments (Bosch, 2009). When organizations promote hope and happiness, employees are better able to deal with stressors in the work environment further contributing to organization performance (Jurkiewicz & Giacalone, 2004). With personal fulfillment needs, spirituality comes into the workplace to decrease distrust, unhappiness, stress full environment arise from modern organizations, emotional exhaustion and job insecurity. Therefore, for reviewing employess and moving to organizational goals in the workplace challenge, workplace spirituality has been offered as an appropriate concept to address these challenges for both employees and organizations.

There is a strong feeling among the employees that they are part of a family and that the employees take care of each other as well as their customers. In addition, an important challenge for an organization is to ensure that its employees align their work habits with the core values of the firm. Therefore, spirituality can be examined at both organizational and individual levels (Milliman & Ferguson, 1999). Therefore, it is important to indicate that three core dimensions of workplace spirituality include purpose on one's work or meaningful work (individual level), having a sense of community (group level), and being in alignment with the organization's values (organization level) can be considered influencing organizational attitudinal and behavioral outcomes to increase the organizational citizenship behavior. Thus, the fifth hypotheses of this research is,

H₅: Workplace spirituality will moderate the positive relationship between leader-member exchange and organizational citizenship behavior, such that the relationship will be stronger when workplace spirituality is high.

According from an academic point of view, efforts to better understand the relationship between empowerment and employee and organizational outcomes have resulted in mixed and inconsistent findings. Several authors found positive relationships between empowerment cognitions and outcomes at the level of the individual employee. However, turning to the organizational level of analysis, the relations seem less clear. Staw and Epstein (2000) for example, in assessing the effects of popular management techniques on firm outcomes, found that focusing on empowerment did have a significant effect on firm reputation but not on firm performance.

In recent years the traditional, autocratic, superior-subordinate model followed by management professionals has given way to a more democratic approach in which leadership, decision making, responsibility, and authority are shared. The core concepts of this new approach fall within the realm of transformational leadership (Bass & Avolio, 1993; Bass, 1985; Burns, 1978), psychological empowerment (Kanter, 1979; Spreitzer, 1995), and organizational citizenship behavior (Organ, 1990). The OCB construct emphasizes the extra-role behavior (Organ, 1990) that an employee plays in executing responsibility. Numerous researchers have studied OCB in order to identify the positive outcomes it offers to individuals, such as enhanced performance and effective goal realization (Bolino & Turnley, 2003; Bowler, 2006). Psychological empowerment gives employees increased feelings of competence, resilience, and responsibility for their work (Kanter, 1983; Spreitzer, 1995).

Transformational leadership facilitates the behavioral changes that are required to make individuals perform better (Bass, 1985; Bolino & Turnley, 2003; Bowler, 2006). In accordance with this, the role of leaders has shifted from control toward guidance and the coordination of organizational work processes. Previous research on transformational leadership has considered the positive impact it has on subordinates' thought processes, while directing them toward making appropriate decisions. According to Prabhakar (2005), good

leaders do inspire confidence in themselves, but a truly great leader inspires confidence within the people they lead to exceed their normal performance level. This can be interpreted as the way in which the concept of OCB emerges in the presence of transformational leadership. Transformational leaders empower others to modify their ways of working (Bowler, 2006). They bring about moral, attitudinal, and process change in individuals and as a consequence in the organization as whole (Pearce et al., 2003; Sims & Manz, 1996).

Therefore, the purpose of this research is to study transformational leadership and psychological empowerment as antecedents for the occurrence of OCB in service sector. This research also examines the moderating role of psychological empowerment in the relationship between transformational leadership and OCB. Thus, the last hypotheses for this research is,

H₆: Psychological empowerment will moderate the positive relationship between transformational leadership and organizational citizenship behavior, such that the relationship will be stronger when psychological empowerment is high.

Nurses are the largest group of professionals in hospitals, and they are directly involved in patients' care. Since customer satisfaction hinges on the employee's ability to extend the quality of services and performance (Heskett, Jones, Loveman, Sasser, & Schlesinger, 1994), the quality of hospital services is also strongly dependent on nurses' performance, which significantly influences patient satisfaction. Nurses' quality of service is dependent on their performance (Hassmiller & Cozine, 2006), it is useful for hospital managers to attract and retain employees who are competent in exhibiting these behaviors (Bolon, 1997).

Based on the above discussion, it will lead to the below conceptual framework study that stated on Figure 1.1 .

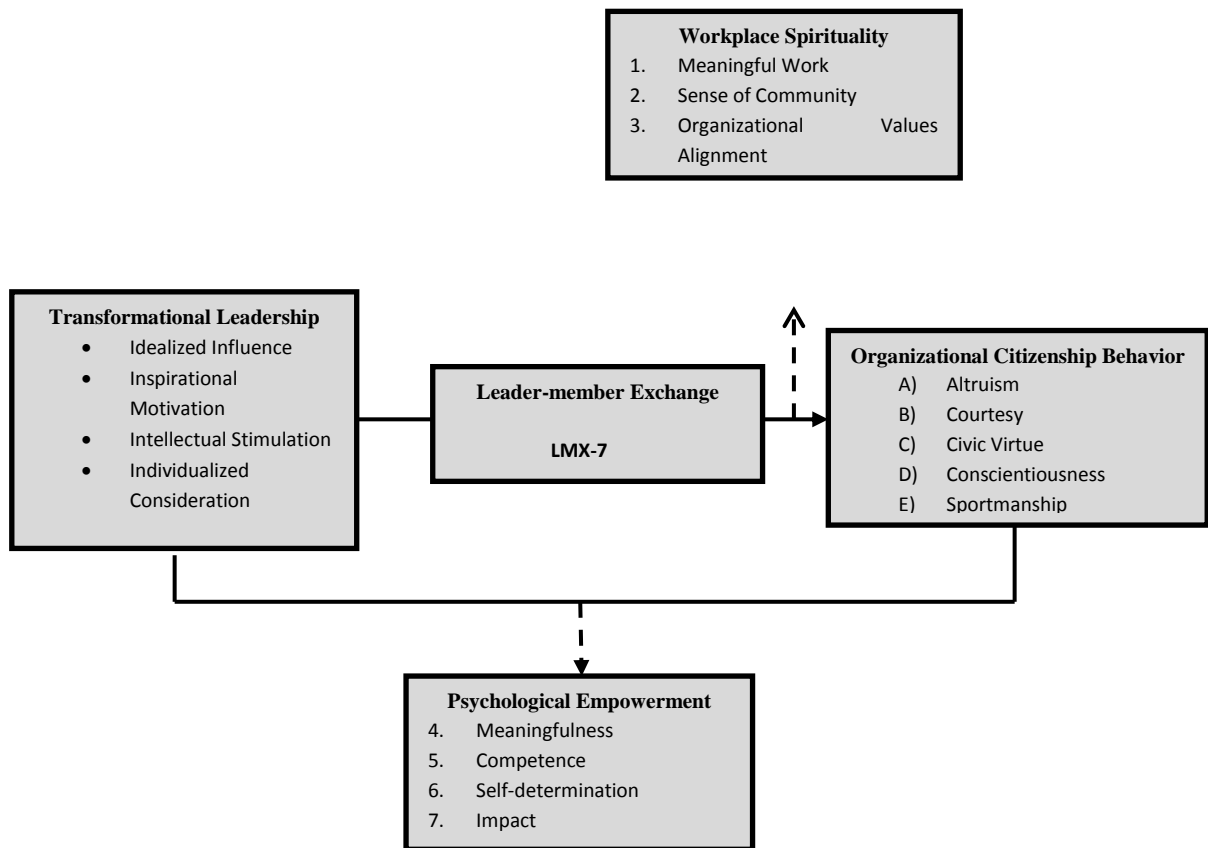


Figure 1.1: Conceptual Framework of the Research

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Instrument and Analysis Data

The questionnaire will be written in two languages which are Bahasa Malaysia and English. For the Bahasa Malaysia version, the translation process that will be used in this study is a method of back-translation (Brislin, 1970). Recommended by most-cultural researchers, back translation involves asking independent bilinguals to translate the original instrument from the source language to the target language, and then having different bilinguals translate it back to the source language.

Multiple Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) by Bass (1985) is used to measure transformational leadership of the respondents' leaders. It comprises four dimensions that are idealized influence (16 items), inspirational motivation (29 items), individualized consideration (7 items) and intellectual stimulation (3 items). MLQ comprises 72 items which measure two types of leadership that is transformational and transactional leadership. However, only 55 items are used to measure the transformational leadership. Five-point Likert scale is adopted to rate the items of MLQ (1=Rarely, 2=Seldom, 3=Quite frequent, 4=frequent, 5= very frequent).

Respondents assessed OCB behavior by using the five-dimensional scale developed by Podsakoff et al. (1990); the response options ranged from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The scale was based on Organ's (1988) dimensions of OCB. The five dimensions (altruism, courtesy, sportsmanship, conscientiousness, civic virtue) of OCB measured 22 items, the first two dimensions with 5 items and the last three dimensions with 4 items.

For the LMX variable, it will be measured by using LMX-7 questionnaire by Gerstner and Day (1997). This questionnaire will have seven items and will be answered by member because Gerstner and Day (1997) inferred that the LMX is better assessed through member reports than through leader reports.

While, for workplace spirituality variable, it will contain three dimensions which include meaningful work (6 items), sense of community (7 items) and alignment with organizational values (8 items). The instrument for this research will be adapted from Milliman et al. (2003) who initially convert workplace spirituality dimensions to practical scales for measuring its influence in the organizational outcomes. Five-point Likert scale (1-strongly disagree, 2-disagree, 3-neither agrees nor disagree, 4-agree, 5-strongly agree) will be applied to rate each questionnaire item.

For the last dimension, the psychological empowerment scale constructed by Spreitzer (1995) will be adapted to measure psychological empowerment. It is a self-report questionnaire designed to measure the four dimensions of psychological empowerment conceptualized by Thomas and Velthouse (1990) which are meaning, competence, self-determination, and impact. This instrument consists of 12 items, where 3 items for each dimension and it will be measured by using a seven-point Likert scale. Data of the research will be analyzed quantitatively by using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM).

3.2 Population and Sampling

To obtain the information required, data will be collected among nurses at government hospitals in Malaysia. The steps to select the sample are stated in Figure 3.1.

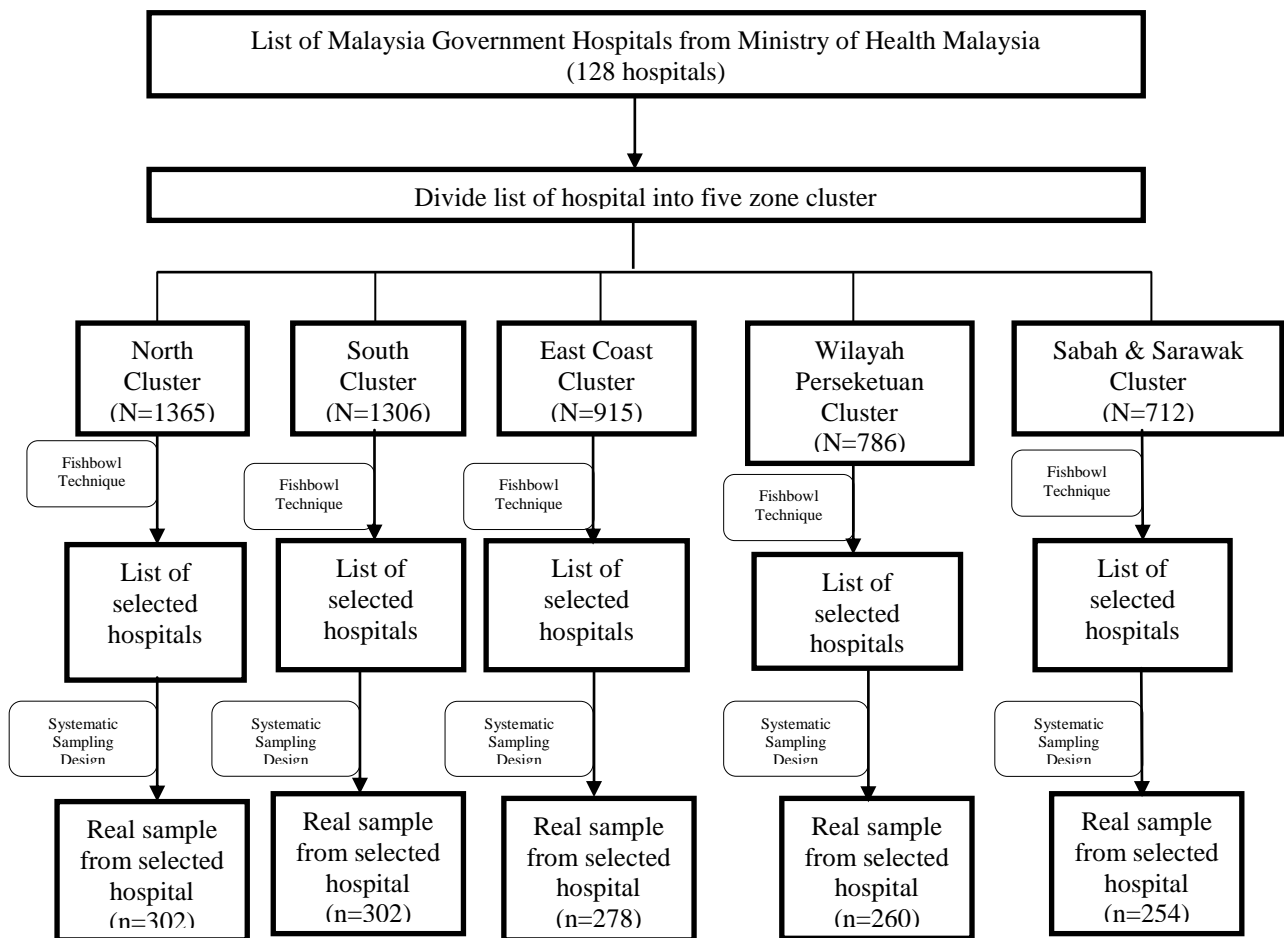


Figure 2.1: Sampling Process

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