

# Change-Centered, Employee-Centered and Product-Centered Leadership Behaviours and Organizational Commitment

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**Abstract**—This study is aimed at examining the relationship between leadership behaviours (change-centered, employee-centered and product-centered) and organizational commitment among academic staff; to determine the frequency level of leadership behavior of deans; and the level of agreement of organizational commitment among academics. A total of 240 academics from three faculties in one public higher institution in Selangor, Malaysia were selected to participate in this study. The results show that only two components of organizational commitment (normative and affective) are significantly related to all three leadership behaviour components. Findings also indicate that the highest frequency of leadership behavior which is change-centered and the highest level of agreement on organizational commitment is affective commitment.

**Index Terms**—Change-centered, employee-centered, leadership behaviour, product-centered, organizational commitment.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Organizational commitment has been the interest of organizations and the subject for many researches. Both the positive and negative effects of organizational commitment on many aspects of work behaviour have been the driving force to the study of organizational commitment. Among the positive effects of organizational commitments are higher job performance, improved attendance, and job satisfaction [1] while the negatives effects are absenteeism, tardiness, and turnover [2]. Besides the knowledge of the effects of organizational commitment, the factors that influence employees' organizational commitment has also been the interest of many researchers. Hence, many studies on the predictors or factors influencing organizational commitment were carried out. Among the predictors studied was leadership behavior. Studies on organization employees in a variety of industries including social workers, information technology professionals, fire-fighters, correctional facilities employees and educational institutions employees have been carried out. Studies have also indicated that the higher the commitment an employee has to his/her organization the lower is the turnover intention [3]. Based on the assumptions

Manuscript received November 25, 2014; revised March 7, 2015.

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of higher organizational behavior exhibited by employees who are highly committed to their organization, it is thus important to examine the commitment of academics as their behaviour could influence the success of their institution. As stated by [4] teachers' organizational commitment is a critical aspect in determining the success of education reform and school effectiveness which is important in the rapidly changing environment.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

### A. Organizational Commitment

The definitions of organizational commitment take on two different perspectives – behavioural and attitudinal. Behavioural approach focuses on an individual action towards its organization, while attitudinal looks at an individual feelings of attachment [5]. Although there are different definitions of organizational commitment, the core concept of organizational commitment in its definitions is the attachment an individual feels towards the organization and the willingness to be involved in the achievement of the organization's goals. Organizational commitment has been viewed as a unidimensional or multidimensional construct. Among the multidimensional constructs of organizational commitment are compliance, identification and internalization [6]; affective, continuance and moral [7]; and affective, continuance and normative [8].

This study adopts the Meyer and Allen's [8] three-component model of organizational commitment; affective, normative and continuance commitment.

### B. The Dimensions of Organizational Commitment

**Affective Commitment:** Affective commitment has been the most studied component of Meyer and Allen's three component commitment. Affective commitment signifies an emotional attachment to, identification with and involvement in the organization [8]. This definition is very similar to the definition of organizational commitment by Mowday et al.'s [6] and Porter, Steers, Mowday and Boulian's [9] internalization dimension.

**Normative Commitment:** Normative commitment refers to the feeling of obligation to continue employment [8]. This commitment has been reported to be highly correlated to affective commitment. However, Meyer and Parfyonova [10] argued that the mind-set of obligation underlying normative commitment is distinguishable from the mind-set of desire underlying the affective commitment.

**Continuance Commitment:** Continuance commitment

denotes the awareness of the costs associated with leaving the organization [8]. Employees remain with an organization for fear of losing benefits and might be forced to stay due to lack of alternatives.

### *C. Leadership Behaviour*

Leadership is “the process by which one individual influences others to accomplish desired goals” [11]. Yukl [12] defined leadership as a process of interaction between leaders and subordinates where a leader attempts to influence the behaviour of his or her subordinates to accomplish organizational goals. Research have argued on the use of many different theories to explain leadership and leadership effectiveness. These theories are divided into three categories: trait theories, behavioural theories and situational theories [13].

Within the behavioural paradigm one consistent theme is that behaviours can fit into a few categories: task-oriented, relational-oriented, change-oriented and passive leadership [14], [15]. Ekvall and Arvonen [16] highlighted a clear distinction among ‘employee-centered’, ‘production-centered’ and ‘change-centered’ leadership behaviours. They [16] proposed that change-oriented leadership is about a supervisor who creates vision, accepts new ideas, makes quick decisions and encourages cooperation.

### *D. Change-Oriented Behaviour*

Skogstad and Stale [17] argued that the change-oriented leader is a visionary, charismatic and creative leader. This leader sets new goals and identifies new methods for accomplishing them. [18], Ekvall and Arvonen [16] claimed also that a change-centered leader encourages discussions about future possibilities, promotes new ideas for change and growth, and stimulates new projects, products and ways of doing things. Two well-known change-oriented leadership theories are transformational and charismatic leadership.

This study adopts the change-centered, employee-centered and production-centered proposed by [16].

### *E. Leadership Behaviours and Organizational Commitment*

Numerous studies on the relationship between leadership and organizational commitment have been carried out. Findings on the relationship varied from low to high positive relationship. Transformational leadership had medium positive relationship with affective and normative commitment and small positive relationship with continuance commitment. Transactional leadership had medium positive relationship with affective and continuance commitment and small positive relationship with normative commitment [19].

A study done with employees of fortunes 500 organizations discovered that employees exhibited the highest organizational commitment when their leaders articulated the vision, promoted group goals, and provided intellectual stimulation [20]. A study carried out among teachers in Turkey on school principals’ leadership showed positive relationship [1].

This paper seeks to offer a contribution to the extant literature that highlights leaders as critical agents of change

by exploring the relationship between leadership behaviours and the three-component model of employee commitment within the educational setting.

## III. RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

This study is to:

- 1) examine the relationship between each component of leadership behaviour (change-centered, employee-centered and production centered) and the three dimensions of organizational commitment (normative, affective and continuance commitment).
- 2) determine the level of agreement on the three components of leadership behaviours implemented by deans
- 3) identify the level of agreement on the three components of organizational commitment of academics.

## IV. METHODOLOGY

This study is correlational in design as it is intended to examine the relationship between leadership behaviours and employees’ organizational commitment. Three faculties in a university were identified and a total of 80 sets of questionnaire were distributed to every faculty, thus a total of 240 sets of questionnaire were distributed. Respondents were given two weeks to answer the questionnaires. At the end of the two-week period, the questionnaires were collected. A total of 102 useable responses were returned and analyzed, suggesting 42.5% response rate. The respondents for this study were academic staff who are confirmed (permanent) in their position with the organization.

The instrument used was a questionnaire containing 30 items on leadership behaviours and 18 questions on organizational commitment. Measures for leadership behaviours were adapted from Ekvall and Arvonen. Respondents were required to response using a 5-point Likert scale with 1 being “seldom or never” to 5 being “always”. Measures for organizational commitment were adapted from Meyer, Allen and Smith. Respondents were also required to respond using a 5-point Likert scale with 1 representing “strongly disagree” and 5 representing “strongly agree”.

## V. RESULTS

### *A. Sample Description*

Out of 102 respondents, a total of 70 respondents (68.6%) were female and 32 (31.4%) were male. More than three quarter of the respondents (91.2%) were Malays while the rest (8.8%) comprise Chinese, Indians and others. 81.4% of the respondents held Masters degree, 15.7% had PhD and 2.9% had a Bachelor degree. In terms of the number of years of employment in current organization, more than half (67.7%) of the respondents had 10 years or less years of service while the others or 32.3% had 11 years or more than 20 years of service.

Table I shows the demographic distribution of the respondents.

TABLE I: DEMOGRAPHIC

Demographic Variables	Frequency (n=102)	Percentage
<b>Gender</b>		
- Male	32	31.4
- Female	70	68.6
<b>Race</b>		
- Malays	93	91.2
- Chinese	3	2.9
- Indians	3	2.9
- Others	1	1
- Missing	2	2.0
<b>Level of Education</b>		
- PhD	16	15.7
- Masters	83	81.4
- Bachelors	3	2.9
<b>Length of Service</b>		
- Under 3 years	4	3.9
- 3 -5 years	48	47.1
- 6 – 10 years	17	16.7
- 11 – 15 years	12	11.8
- 16 – 20 years	3	2.9
- More than 20 years	18	17.6

**B. Correlation between Variables**

The analysis for correlation was conducted using Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient. The result displayed in Table II indicates that there is a positive, however, low correlation between normative commitment and change-centered leadership ( $r=.239, p < .05$ ); positive, moderate correlation between normative commitment and employee-centered leadership ( $r=.307, p < .01$ ) and positive, low correlation between normative commitment and production-centered leadership ( $r=.213, p < .05$ ).

A positive, low correlation was found between affective commitment and the dimensions of leadership behaviour (change-centered:  $r=.203, p < .05$ ; employee-centered leadership:  $r=.249, p < .05$  and production-centered leadership:  $r=.159, p < .05$ ), there is a non-significant correlation between continuance commitment and the dimensions of leadership behaviour (change centered:  $r=.26$ ; employee centered leadership:  $r=-.55$  and production centered leadership:  $r=.84$ ).

TABLE II: CORRELATION AMONG VARIABLES

	Normative commitment	Continuance commitment	Affective commitment
Change-centered	0.239*	.026	.203*
Employee-centered	.307**	-0.55	.249*
Production-centered	.213*	.084	.159

Notes: \* significant at 0.05 level; \*\* significant at 0.01 level

TABLE III: MEAN, STANDARD DEVIATION

	Mean	Std Dev
Change centered leadership	3.61	0.81
Employee centered leadership	3.56	0.74
Production centered leadership	3.60	0.70
Normative commitment	3.51	0.63
Continuance commitment	3.37	0.64
Affective commitment	3.62	0.74

Descriptive statistics were used to analyse the data to obtain the mean and standard deviation of the variables. The mean value as indicated in Table III shows the highest score

for leadership behaviour was for change-centered leadership ( $M = 3.61, SD = 0.81$ ) and the lowest score was employee centered ( $M = 3.56, SD 0.74$ ). The highest level of agreement for organizational commitment was affective commitment ( $M = 3.62, SD = 0.74$ ) and the lowest was continuance commitment ( $M = 3.37, SD = 0.74$ ).

**VI. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION**

The main objective of this study is to examine the relationship between leadership behaviour and organizational commitment. Overall, the findings of the current study have provided answers to the research questions. It is evident that the academic staff viewed their leaders as practicing the three types of leadership behaviours (change-centered, employee-centered and production-centered).

The study suggests that the academic staff were committed to their institutions. The individual perceptions of academic staff concerning the type of leadership behaviour displayed by the supervisors or heads had an effect on the degree to which the academic staff could identify with and become involved in the institutions.

Employee-centered leadership which focuses more on the well-being and feelings of the employee has the strongest and significant correlation with normative and affective commitment which was the two commitment types that focus on attitude or feelings towards the institution. Continuance commitment on the other hand explains the employee commitment to the organization based on necessities or needs which have no relations to how they perceive their leaders' actions to be. Hence, the three types of leadership behaviours had no significant correlation with continuance commitment.

As for the second objective that is the level of leaders' behaviour, the highest mean is change-centered behaviour with slight difference between the other two behaviours. This is consistent with a research by [21] stating that change-oriented behaviour is usually more important for executives. Academics mostly agree that they are more committed to the organization affectively. This is most befitting since the profession of academics is more of a nurturing nature.

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