HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PRACTICES AND ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT IN THE SARAWAK EDUCATION DEPARTMENT, KUCHING

By:

NORESTHERWATI ABDULLAH

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to determine the perception of Sarawak Education Department staff toward organizational commitment and the human resource management practices that influence it. Specifically, the objective of the study is to determine if there is any difference among staff with varied demographic characteristics such as gender, age, race, academic qualifications, and years of service in terms of their perception toward organizational commitment. Other objectives are to determine whether there is any significant relationship between organizational commitment and certain human resource management practices practiced in the workplace and the most dominant human resource management practice that influence organizational commitment of employees. The survey research methodology was used. The respondents consisted of 126 staff from all the eight sectors and divisions in the Sarawak Education Department in Kuching. Stratified sampling was used to determine the sample size required for the study. The findings of the study showed that the majority (92%) of the staff surveyed in the department have a positive perception toward organizational commitment. The results of the t-test for independent samples and the One-way ANOVA conducted showed that there is no significant difference among staff of varied demographic characteristics specifically gender, academic qualifications, and years in service in terms of their perception toward organizational commitment. However, the Post hoc analysis using Tukey test showed that there is a significant difference between the younger staff and the more senior staff in terms of their perception toward organizational commitment. Similarly, the analysis also showed that the Bidayuh staff has a different perception toward organizational commitment as compared to the other races surveyed in this study. The Pearson Correlation analysis showed that there is a significant relationship between organizational commitment and all the five human resource management practices surveyed in this study. They are leadership, training, empowerment, motivation, and compensation. In the Multiple Linear Regression analysis, motivation is the most dominant HRM practice influencing organizational commitment. This is followed by empowerment, leadership, and training. Compensation does not have a very strong influence on organizational commitment among the staff in the Sarawak Education Department.
ABSTRAK


CONTENTS

ABSTRACT
ABSTRAK
CONTENTS
LIST OF FIGURES
LIST OF TABLES

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction
1.1 Background of the Study
1.2 Statement of Problem
1.3 Objectives of the Study
1.4 Statement of Hypotheses
1.5 Conceptual Framework
1.6 Significance of the Study
1.7 Definition of Terms
  1.7.1 Perception
  1.7.2 Sarawak Education Department
  1.7.3 Education Department Staff
  1.7.4 Organizational Commitment
    1.7.4.1 Dimensions of Organizational Commitment
  1.7.5 Human Resource Management Practices
    1.7.5.1 Selected Human Resource Management Practices
1.8 Scope and Limitations of the Study

CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction
2.1 Concept of Organizational Commitment
2.2 Related Theories of Organizational Commitment
  2.2.1 Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs
  2.2.2 McGregor’s Theory X and Theory Y – Leadership and Motivation in Organizational Commitment
  2.2.3 Herzberg Two-Factor Theory
  2.2.4 Path-Goal Theory – Styles of Leadership and Organizational Commitment
  2.2.5 Exchange Theory – Non-situational, Contemporary Models of Leadership
  2.2.6 Relationship Theory and Organizational Commitment
  2.2.7 Expectancy Theory – Incentives Increases Organizational Commitment
  2.2.8 Social Exchange Theory – Motivation and Organizational Commitment
  2.2.9 Lawler Choice Process Theory
2.3 Human Resource Management Practices and Organizational Commitment
  2.3.1 Leadership
  2.3.2 Training
CHAPTER III : METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction
3.1 Research Design
3.2 Population and Sample
3.3 Instrument
   3.3.1 Section A : Demographic Data Characteristics
   3.3.2 Section B : Perception of State Education Department Staff toward Organizational Commitment
   3.3.2 Section C : HRM Practices Influencing Organizational commitment
3.4 Data Collection
3.5 Data Analysis
   3.5.1 Descriptive Statistics
   3.5.2 Inferential Statistics
   3.5.3 Independent Samples T-Test
   3.5.4 Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)
   3.5.5 Pearson Correlation Analysis
   3.5.6 Multiple Regression Analysis
3.6 Summary of Data Analysis Methods
3.7 Summary

CHAPTER IV : FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.0 Introduction
4.1 Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents
   4.1.1 Gender
   4.1.2 Race
   4.1.3 Age
   4.1.4 Academic Qualifications
   4.1.5 Years of Service
4.2 Perception of Sarawak Education Department Staff toward Organizational Commitment
4.3 Perception of Sarawak Education Department Staff toward Organizational Commitment based on their Demographic Characteristics
   4.3.1 There is no significant difference between male and female staff in terms of their perception toward organizational commitment
   4.3.2 There is no significant difference among staff of varied age in terms of their perception toward organizational commitment
   4.3.3 There is no significant difference among staff of varied races in terms of their perception toward organizational commitment
   4.3.4. There is no significant difference among staff with varied academic qualifications in terms of their perception toward organizational commitment
4.3.5 There is no significant difference among staff with varied years of service in terms of their perception toward organizational commitment

4.4 Relationship between Organizational Commitment and Human Resource Management Practices

4.4.1 There is no significant relationship between leadership and organizational commitment

4.4.2 There is no significant relationship between training and organizational commitment

4.4.3 There is no significant relationship between empowerment and organizational commitment

4.4.4 There is no significant relationship between motivation and organizational commitment

4.4.5 There is no significant relationship between compensation and organizational commitment

4.4.6 There is no dominant human resource management practice influencing organizational commitment of Sarawak Education Department staff

4.5 Summary

CHAPTER V: SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

5.1 Summary of the Study

5.2 Conclusion

5.3 Suggestions and Recommendations

BIBLIOGRAPHY

QUESTIONNAIRES
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>Conceptual Framework showing Independent Variables that influence Organizational Commitment among Staff in the Sarawak Education Department</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>The Exchange Process between Employee and Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>Social Exchange Theory – Interchangeable Process between Organization and Employees</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
LIST OF TABLES

Table 2.1 : Leadership Styles in Path-Goal Leadership Theory .................................................. 14
Table 3.1 : Population of State Education Department and Sample Size ..................................... 25
Table 3.2 : Respondents’ Response Rate ..................................................................................... 25
Table 3.3 : Table of Data Analysis Methods .............................................................................. 30
Table 4.1 : Distribution of Respondents based on Demographic Characteristics ....................... 31
Table 4.2 : Perception of Sarawak Education Department Staff toward Organizational Commitment .......................................................... 33
Table 4.3 : Results of T-Test and Mean Values for Perception toward Organizational Commitment based on Gender ............................................. 34
Table 4.4 : Results of One-way ANOVA and Mean Values for Perception toward Organizational Commitment based on Age .............................................................................. 34
Table 4.5 : Results of Post hoc Analysis using Tukey Test on Perception of Staff toward Organizational Commitment based on Age ...................................................... 35
Table 4.6 : Results of One-way ANOVA and Mean Values for Perception toward Organizational Commitment based on Race .............................................................................. 36
Table 4.7 : Results of Post hoc Analysis using Tukey Test on Perception of Staff toward Organizational Commitment based on Race .............................................................................. 36
Table 4.8 : Results of One-way ANOVA and Mean Values for Perception toward Organizational Commitment based on Academic Qualifications .............................................................................. 37
Table 4.9 : Results of One-way ANOVA and Mean Values for Perception toward Organizational Commitment based on Years in Service .............................................................................. 38
Table 4.10 : Results of Correlation Analysis on Organizational Commitment and Human Resource Management Practices ...................................................... 39
Table 4.11 : Results of Multiple Linear Regression Analysis on Organizational Commitment and HRM Practices .......................................................................................... 41
Table 4.12 : Summary of Hypotheses Testing on Perception of Sarawak Education Department Staff toward Organizational Commitment based on Demographic Characteristics ...................................................... 43
Table 4.13 : Summary of Hypotheses Testing on Relationship between Organizational Commitment and HRM Practices in the Sarawak Education Department .............................................................................. 44
1.0 Introduction

Human Resource Management (HRM) is concerned with the growth and development of people toward higher level of competency, creativity, and fulfillment. This is because people are the central resource in any organization and in any society. Human resource management practices should be supportive in order to help employees to become better, more responsible people and at the same time it has to create a climate in which employees can contribute to the limits of their improved abilities. In other words, human resource management practices are crucial in cultivating the commitment of employees in their work and to the organization. Commitment of employees or employee loyalty that is also commonly known as organizational commitment is an attitude that reflects an individual’s identification with and attachment to the organization and wants to continue actively participating in it. Like a strong magnetic force attracting one metallic object to another, it is a measure of the employees’ willingness to remain with an organization in the future. It often reflects the employees’ belief in the mission and goals of the organization, willingness to expend effort in their accomplishment, and intentions to continue working there.

It is believed that good human resource management practices are vital in creating and cementing strong organizational commitment among employees. Democratic transformational and relationship oriented styles of leadership have been a reason for many employees to plan a long tenure with the organization, and master more effort in performance. Likewise, if the organization treats its employees fairly and provides reasonable rewards and job security, employees are not only intrinsically and extrinsically motivated to work but are also more likely to be satisfied and committed to the organization. Empowerment that allows employees to participate in decision-making is another human resource management practice crucial in developing organizational commitment among employees (Barney & Griffin, 1992).

Continuous training on the job and off the job reinforces employees’ loyalty to stay with the organization. Organizational commitment strengthens with an individual’s age and years of service with the organization. Commitment is also stronger among those who have experienced personal success in the organization, and those working with a committed employees group. Organizationally committed employees will usually have good attendance records, demonstrate a willing adherence to company policies, and have lower turnover rates. In particular, their broader base of job knowledge often translate into loyal customers who buy more from them, make referrals resulting in new customers, and even pay a premium price (Newstrom & Davis, 1997).

Therefore, ample empowerment, relevant training, dynamic styles of leadership, fair compensation, and different modes of motivation are believed to be able to develop and nurture employees’ job satisfaction, attachment, and undivided loyalty to the organization. Higher committed employees feel that their personal goals and values are similar to the goals and values of their organization and hence are ever willing to take initiatives to achieve these goals.

1.1 Background of the Study

The Sarawak Education Department is one of the biggest organizations in Sarawak. As a government machinery, it plays a vital role in managing the education scenario in the state.
In line with the *Falsafah Pendidikan Negara* and the Education Democratization Policy, the Sarawak Education Department has formulated its own mission and vision. Among its major objectives are to improve the quality of its educational services, the professionalism of all its staff, its work culture, its organizational management, the personalities of its staff, and the academic performance of students statewide.

Basically, the Sarawak Education Department is headed by the Director of Education assisted by the Assistant Director. Under them, the Sarawak Education Department is divided into eight sectors or divisions, namely the Inspectorate of Schools Division, the Educational Technology Division, Assessment and Examination Division, Education Services Management Sector, Academic Management Sector, School Management Sector, Human Development Management Sector, and the Islamic and Moral Education Sector. Each sector or division plays a vital role in imparting its invaluable services not only to all the Divisional and District Education Offices, but also to all the schools in Sarawak and its staff as well as to the public at large.

In line with the reformation of education in Malaysia, the Ministry of Education has to materialize two interrelated goals, specifically the establishment of a world-class education system in Malaysia and making Malaysia a regional center for education excellence. To achieve these goals, Johari Mat stressed “the changes in the field of education is a continuous process and would require commitment from everyone in order to achieve perfection in the various aspects of education” (1997:7).

As such all the State Education Department has an equally important role to play to achieve these goals. To achieve educational excellence needs the strong commitment of all parties involved. This is clearly stated by Najib Tun Razak, “It would be irresponsible for us to merely just survive and not strive and further. Education knows no limit nor boundaries. We should not rest until we have reached the end of time – and this, as we know will never come. In other words, education is a life-long affair and as such we have a life long commitment towards educational excellence” (1999a: 74-75). Matnor Daim shared the same views on organizational commitment for excellence. He invited all education officers to “increase and draw upon our internal strengths and commitment to realize the intended goals that we have set especially to make Malaysia a center of academic excellence known world over” (1997:9). In his address to education officers in the National Education Conference (1998), Najib Tun Razak again stressed on the importance of commitment to achieve excellent performance. He reiterates, “Having embarked on our educative reforms, we are committed towards the creation of a system that strikes to achieve excellence, commensurate with the times of the day” (1999b:159). In a national level Teachers’ Day Celebration held in Kuantan, Pahang in 1997, Najib Tun Razak commented on the lack of commitment towards responsibilities. Because of this he stated, “Saya ingin menyeru semua pihak yang terlibat & jentera pendidikan agar bersedia untuk mengubah minda dan jiwa. Dengan demikian kita akan lebih bersedia untuk melakukan perubahan dan melaksanakan tanggungjawab kita dengan sepenuh komitmen” (1999c:34). In his address during the Ministry of Education’s Quality Day Celebration (1997), Najib Tun Razak again stressed on the importance of organizational commitment. He said, “Kita menghargai sumber serta pegawai-pegawai yang memiliki kepakaran. Apa yang perlu ialah semangat kerjasama yang kuku serta komited terhadap tanggungjawab yang diamanahkan” (1999d:45). The Prime Minister, Mahathir Mohamad (cited in Ibrahim Mamat Bajunid, 1999:13) also talked on the issue of commitment towards tasks and organization. As a dynamic leader himself, he talked on transformational leadership to “facilitate a people’s mission and vision so that there is a renewal of their commitment towards organization and in getting particular tasks performed”. 

2
To conclude, commitment is not a new issue in organizational management. As we can see, it is an organizational behaviour that has been the focus of much concern in the last decade. There is much talk on work culture and eroding employees' commitment to their tasks and to the organization they work for. In the Ministry of Education and in State Education Departments diverse factors have been identified to erode organizational commitment. Among them are work process that is not systematic and not clear, employees who do not understand their own goals and organizational goals, non-dedication, insincerity, and lack of required expertise to perform their tasks (Najib Tun Razak, 1999e). To rectify these weaknesses, several parties specifically the Minister of Education (Najib Tun Razak) has repeatedly called on all education officers to be more strongly committed in achieving excellent performance.

1.2 Statement of Problem

In the current political scenario state education departments are expected by the state governments to play a more macro role in planning the education structure for the state. Consequently state education departments need more strategic division of time and resources to cope with their roles as the policy and program implementers, the evaluation of local implementations, the financial resource center for schools in their jurisdiction, and as planners for the future goals of the education system in their states.

However, state education departments encounter many problems and obstacles in perfecting this macro role. Jamaliah Abdul Hamid (1999) identified one of the major obstacles as the staff shortage in state education departments. Most state education departments have to concentrate on its limited human resource available. But according to Najib Tun Razak (1999d), it is not a problem of lack of staff. According to him, a more serious constraint lies in the staff itself whereby there exists “kelemahan dalam proses kerja bagi keluaran dan perkhidmatan pendidikan, khususnya pekerja tidak memahami matlamat kerjanya, tidak komited, tidak ikhlas, dan kurang mempunyai kepakaran melaksanakan tugas-masing” (1999d: 40). Therefore Najib Tun Razak suggested that “langkah membaikinya harus dibuat dengan pantas, iaitu keseluruhan warga Kementerian Pendidikan harus menghayati budaya kerja yang berkualiti yang menekankan bahawa komitmen semua pihak memainkan peranan yang penting dalam menjayakan pengurusan pendidikan yang berkualiti dan cemerlang” (1999d: 40).

Since one of the issues touched here is commitment of the employees, therefore this study would like to find out whether employees in the State Education Department harbour a strong sense of commitment in their work and to the organization or otherwise through their perception towards organizational commitment and at the same time to find out whether certain human resource management practices influence organizational commitment. If so these human resource management practices should be reinforced to garner stronger commitment among employees, if otherwise, drastic measures have to be taken to improve on these human resource management practices to instill better commitment among employees.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

This study intends to:

(i) determine the perception of Sarawak Education Department staff toward organizational commitment;
(ii) determine whether there is any significant difference among the Sarawak Education Department staff with varied demographic characteristics in terms of their perception toward organizational commitment;

(iii) determine whether there is any significant relationship between organizational commitment and selected human resource management practices; and

(iv) determine if there is any dominant human resource management practice influencing organizational commitment.

1.4 Statement of Hypotheses

The following hypotheses are formulated based on the objectives of the study:

1.4.1 To determine if there is any difference in the perception of Sarawak Education Department staff toward organizational commitment, the null hypotheses are:

(a) There is no significant difference between male and female staff in terms of their perception toward organizational commitment.
(b) There is no significant difference among staff of varied age in terms of their perception toward organizational commitment.
(c) There is no significant difference among staff of varied races in terms of their perception toward organizational commitment.
(d) There is no significant difference among staff with varied academic qualifications in terms of their perception toward organizational commitment.
(e) There is no significant difference among staff with varied years of service in terms of their perception toward organizational commitment.

1.4.2 To determine the relationship between organizational commitment and selected human resource management practices, the null hypotheses are:

(a) There is no significant relationship between leadership and organizational commitment.
(b) There is no significant relationship between training and organizational commitment.
(c) There is no significant relationship between empowerment and organizational commitment.
(d) There is no significant relationship between motivation and organizational commitment.
(e) There is no significant relationship between compensation and organizational commitment.
(f) There is no dominant human resource management practice influencing organizational commitment.

1.5 Conceptual Framework

In this study, the dependent variable is organizational commitment whereas the demographic characteristics and human resource management practices are the independent variables. The relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable is illustrated in Figure 1.1.
### 1.7 Definition of Terms

The following terms are defined as they are used in the context of this study.

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<th>Independent Variables</th>
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<td><strong>Demographic Characteristics</strong></td>
<td><strong>Organizational Commitment</strong> (Dimensions of Organizational Commitment)</td>
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<td>• Gender</td>
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<td>• Age</td>
<td>• Initiative</td>
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<td>• Satisfaction</td>
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1.7.1 Perception

In this study, perception refers to the unique way in which each employee views, organizes, and interprets things and situations that occur around him in the workplace. Employees differ in their personalities, needs, demographic characteristics, and past experiences, therefore they may perceive organizational commitment differently.

1.7.2 Sarawak Education Department

The Sarawak Education Department refers to the State Education Headquarters located at the ground floor, floors four, nine, ten, and eleven in the Tun Datuk Patinggi Tuanku Haji Bujang Building at Jalan Simpang Tiga. It is headed by the Director of Education assisted by an Assistant Director. There are eight sectors and divisions in the hierarchy of the organizational structure, each headed by a Principal Assistant Director (Ketua Penolong Pengarah). Altogether there are approximately 469 employees in the Sarawak Education Department.

1.7.3 Education Department Staff

In this study, education department staff refers to all the employees working in all the eight sectors and divisions in the Sarawak Education Department disregard their academic qualifications, posts held, and their salary category. Not included in this study are the Director of Education and the Assistant Director of Education.

1.7.4 Organizational Commitment

The concept of organizational commitment in this study refers to the employees' commitment in their tasks and to the organization they are working for. In this study, the dimensions of organizational commitment include loyalty, initiative, satisfaction, and internalization (Mowday, 1982).

1.7.4.1 Dimensions of Organizational Commitment

(a) Loyalty
Loyalty refers to the feeling of strong attachment to the organization, being proud to be a part of the organization, and a willingness to stick with it through thick and thin.

(b) Initiative
Initiative refers to self-determination or a resoluteness to put in extra effort to perform something extra for the organization without being directed to do so. It is an extra enthusiasm to achieve organizational goals.

(c) Satisfaction
Satisfaction refers to a feeling of being pleased and content to be working for the organization. Employees regard the organization as the best place to work in and the best place to work for.

(d) Internalization
In this study, internalization refers to goal and value internalization. Goal internalization occurs when employees regard organizational goals as their own goals to achieve. Value internalization occurs when employees find their personal values are very similar with
organization’s values and are resolute in fulfilling the mission and vision of the organization.

1.7.5 Human Resource Management Practices

The concept of human resource management practices refers to all the practices involved in staffing an organization. It may begin with recruitment, followed by practices to retain employees in the organization such as training, motivation, performance appraisal, compensation, and so on (Hendry, 1995). However, for the purpose of this study, only five human resource management practices are selected, namely leadership, training, empowerment, motivation, and compensation.

1.7.5.1 Selected Human Resource Management Practices

(a) Leadership
In this study, leadership refers to the democratic and relationship oriented styles of leadership that allows both supervisors and employees to work amicably and to communicate effectively on matters related to work performance.

(b) Training
Training refers to the on the job and off the job training conducted throughout the year specifically for employees to gain new knowledge and to acquire new skills relevant for improving their work performance.

(c) Empowerment
The concept of empowerment in this study refers to the sharing of power or the delegation of authority by the Principal Assistant Directors to their respective staff in the eight sectors and divisions to deal with problems that arise in the workplace and to make certain decisions regarding their job.

(d) Motivation
Motivation refers to both the intrinsic and extrinsic drive that spurs employees to achieve excellent performance. Employees are intrinsically motivated when the work performed is meaningful, important, and gives satisfaction. Extrinsic motivation includes congenial working conditions, acknowledgement, and praise.

(e) Compensation
Compensation can be in the form of monetary and non-monetary rewards such as benefits and incentives. Employees feel that they are well compensated when their salary and other incentives are proportionate to their efforts as well as opportunities to develop on the job and promotion.

1.8 Scope and Limitations of the Study

This study is limited to the Sarawak Education Department Headquarters at Jalan Simpang Tiga in Kuching City South. Data will be collected from all the staff in all the eight sectors and divisions in the department. This data collected will be enough and relevant to this study because no comparison is carried out in this study. The demographic characteristics of respondents included in this study are gender, age, race, academic qualification, and years of service in the department. Apart from this, the more important coverage of this study is to find out whether certain human resource management practices influence organizational commitment among employees.
This study uses a set of questionnaires to collect data as required to answer the research questions. The use of questionnaires for the purpose of data collection in this study is relevant and appropriate based on the topic and objectives of this study. This survey research is conducted because there is very limited studies and documentation on organizational commitment in the state education departments in the local context of Malaysia generally and in Sarawak specifically.
LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

Human resource management (HRM) involves all management decisions and practices that directly affect or influence the people or human resources who work for the organization. In recent years, increased attention has been directed to how organizations manage human resources. This increased attention comes from the realization that an organization’s employees enable an organization to achieve its goals, and the management of these human resources is critical to an organization’s success.

Apart from its mission and vision every organization has its goals and objectives. In the case of human resources, the goal is to orient the choices that constitute human resource management practices in such a way that they result in and continuously reinforce the specific behaviours needed to achieve the organization’s strategy. According to Fisher et al. (1993) most human resource management practice choices are oriented to produce desired results in total quality and product development and to respond to customer needs, effectively utilize resources, and manage through teamwork and cooperation. Fisher et al. (1993) organizes these human resource management practice choices into six categories, namely staffing choices, training and development, participation and empowerment, leadership and teamwork, motivation, and compensating choices.

According to Hendry (1995), one of the issues of most concern in human resource management is organizational commitment. Commitment to the work group and to the organization is influenced by different variables. Specifically these variables are human resource management practice choices (Fisher et al, 1993). For the purpose of this study, five human resource management practices will be researched on to determine whether they have any influence on organizational commitment. These human resource management practices are leadership, training, empowerment, motivation, and compensation.

2.1 Concept of Organizational Commitment

Basically, commitment refers to attachment and loyalty. As defined by Porter et al (1974), organizational commitment refers to an employee’s attachment and loyalty to the organization he is working for. It is the relative strength of the employee’s identification with, and involvement in the organization. Organizational commitment generates as a result of:

(i) a strong desire to remain a member of the organization;
(ii) a strong belief in, and acceptance of the values and goals of the organization; and
(iii) a readiness to exert considerable effort on behalf of the organization.

Salancik (1977) shared the same view that organizational commitment is a state of being in which an individual becomes bound by his action to beliefs that sustain his activities and his own involvement in an organization. According to Salancik (1977), behaviour plays a vital role in generating organizational commitment. Certain behavioural characteristics bound individuals to their acts. Three behavioural characteristics have been identified to foster high organizational commitment. They are the visibility of the acts, the extent to which the outcomes are irrevocable, and the degree to which the person undertakes the action voluntarily. Salancik (1977) suggested that organizational commitment could be increased and harnessed through ploys such as empowerment and participation in decision-making. Undoubtedly, committed employees will support organization’s ends and interests.
The concept of organizational commitment was also highlighted by Walton (1985a) who described organizational strategy as a more rewarding approach to human resource management in contrast to the traditional control strategy. For instance, improved performance is a direct result of organizational commitment strategy. Employees respond best and most creatively not when they are tightly controlled by management, placed in narrowly defined jobs, and treated like an unwelcome necessity, but, instead when they are given broader responsibilities, encouraged to contribute and helped to achieve satisfaction in their tasks.

Pascale and Athos (1981) defined organizational commitment based on the Japanese model of excellence. Excellent achievement is derived through the wholehearted commitment of the workforce to the organization and the best way to motivate people to get their full commitment to the values of the organization is by leadership and involvement in the activities of the organization. These views was supported by Peters and Austin (1985) who elaborates on organizational commitment as a feeling shared by employees who believe that they own the business, and hence perform their best for the organization. High organizational commitment becomes a reality when employees are trusted and treated like adults, enthused by lively and imaginative leadership, and given sufficient opportunities for them to develop and demonstrate an obsession for quality.

Buchanan and Huczyuski (1985) defined organizational commitment based on three perspectives. They are:

(i) the goals towards which people aim. Goals such as the goals of the company, or effective performance at work, may provide a degree of motivation for more employees, who could be regarded as committed, in so far as they feel they own the goals;
(ii) commitment arises within individuals as a result of selected goals and objectives at work; and
(iii) the social process of motivating others to perform effectively. Strategies aimed at increasing motivation also affect commitment. It is true to say that where commitment is present motivation is likely to be strong, particularly if a long-term view is taken of effective performance.

Strong commitment to work is likely to result in conscientious and self-directed application to do the job, regular attendance, nominal supervision, and a high level of effort. Commitment to the organization will certainly be related to the intention to stay, in other words, loyalty to the company (Armstrong, 1993). Phillips (1996) on the other hand relates organizational commitment not only to passive loyalty but also an active relationship between employees and the management and a readiness to perform the best for the organization.

According to Sherman and Bohlander (1992) commitment refers to a kind of high intensity attachment to the organization. Building commitment to the organization means that employees acquire a feeling that their personal goals are conformant with the organization's goals. This requires a high level of involvement. The final means of increasing employee involvement in the organization is through the creation of commitment. A high level of commitment enables employee to see personal rewards as attainable through the success of the organization. It is believed that high organizational commitment can reduce the rate of turnover, enhances job satisfaction and increases the likelihood of career advancement in the organization (Sherman and Bohlander, 1992). Blyton and Morris (1992) also argued that higher organizational commitment could be generated through improved job security, high quality terms and conditions of service, and prospects of career advancement.
Hendry (1995) relates organizational commitment to policies adapted by an organization. Policies designed to bind the individual to the organization through rapid promotion, higher pay, and side benefits (such as health insurance, mortgage loans, and pensions) may encourage employees to ‘stick’ rather than stimulate high performance. In other words, certain policies implemented by organizations can foster high organizational commitment among its employees.

Meyer and Allen (1988) define organizational commitment based on three categories. They are:

(i) **continuance commitment** – that is staying with the organization through thick and thin, turnover is low because of costs involved if employees leave the organization and look for a new job;

(ii) **affective commitment** – comes from high job satisfaction and high job performance; and

(iii) **normative commitment** – commitment is nurtured as a result of employees’ loyalty and responsibility to the organization.

Walton (1985b) elaborates on the relationship between organizational commitment and human resource management practices. According to him, human resource management practices should promote the collective interests of employers and employees and as such has the potential to elicit commitment which will not only be manifested in the form of increased profitability for the organization but also improved well-being and development of individual employees. In a familiar vein, Beer at el (1985) observed that increased commitment has the potential of not only increasing profitability but also employee self-worth and dignity.

Mondy and Premeaux (1993) also defined organizational commitment as a product of human resource management practices. They believe teamwork, a popular practice in many modern organizations as a crucial factor influencing organizational commitment. Organizational commitment refers to whether or not the team or group is really working. Organizational commitment among the members of a team means they are not just going through the notions of work, instead every member is striving for the highest level of output and satisfaction. Amstrong and Long (1994) are of the same opinion that human resource management practices should stress on the importance of gaining employees’ commitment to the organization’s mission and values. In other words, human resource management practices should be “commitment oriented”.

Ware (1992) discussed on commitment in groups problem-solving. According to Ware (1992), employees who have been involved in the group deliberations will better understand the problem and its solution and will more readily accept and support the group decision. Their acceptance and commitment is doubly important especially when the solution includes an implementation effort involving several people. According to Gabarro and Harlan (1992), considerable research on group behaviour and alienation shows that the more influence people feel they have had on a group’s discussion, the more committed they are likely to be to its decisions, regardless of whether their own points of view have been adopted by the group.

Ting (1997) attributes job satisfaction among federal government employees to high organizational commitment. Organizational commitment inspires trust and confidence on the values and goals of the organization. Committed employees harbour a feeling of pride and joy working in the organization. Guest (1989) relates high organizational commitment to behavioural commitment to pursue agreed goals, and attitudinal commitment is reflected
in a strong identification with the enterprise. Scarpello and Ledvinka (1988) believe that commitment to an organization is the outcome of a matching process between the individual’s vocational and job-related needs on the one hand and the organization’s ability to satisfy them on the other. Employees should be provided information about what to expect in the organization and on the job. The employee’s attraction to the organization over other organizations depends on whether the situation in the organization is more suited to his or her needs. Further, organizational commitment increases if the gratifications promised by the organization materialize after a short time on the job.

Commitment to an organization involves three attitudes. They are:

(i) a sense of identification with the organization’s goals;
(ii) a feeling of involvement in organizational duties; and
(iii) a feeling of loyalty for the organization (Reichers, 1985).

Research evidence indicates that the absence of commitment can reduce organizational effectiveness (Mowday, 1982). People who are committed are less likely to quit and accept other jobs (Cohen, 1993). Thus the cost of high turnover is not incurred. In addition, committed and highly skilled employees require less supervision. Close supervision and a rigid monitoring control process are time-consuming and costly. Furthermore, a committed employee perceives the value and importance of integrating individual and organizational goals. The employee thinks of his or her goals and the organization’s goals in personal terms.

Intrinsic rewards are especially important for the development of organizational commitment. Organizations able to meet employee needs by providing achievement opportunities and by recognizing achievement when it occurs have a significant impact on commitment. Thus, managers need to develop intrinsic reward systems that focus on personal importance or self-esteem, to integrate individual and organizational goals and to design challenging jobs (Ivancevich and Matteson, 1996). Kelley (1992) on the other hand believes that committed employees are usually committed to something – a cause, a product, an idea – in addition to the care of their own lives and careers. Commitment is contagious. Most people like working with colleagues whose hearts are in their work. Morale stays high and employees who begin to wander from their purpose are jostled back into line. Projects stay on track and on time. In addition, an appreciation of commitment and the way it works can give managers an extra tool with which to understand and channel the energies of loyalties of their subordinates.

Over the past twenty years, companies have experimented at the plant level with a radically different workforce strategy, namely the commitment strategy. General Foods at Topeka, Kansas; General Motors at Brookhaven, Mississippi; Cummins and Gamble at Lima, Ohio have shown how great and productive the contribution of a truly committed workforce can be. In this commitment-based approach to the work force, jobs are designed to be broader than before, to combine planning and implementation, and to include efforts to upgrade operations, not just maintain them. At the center of this philosophy is a belief that eliciting employees’ commitment will lead to enhanced performance. Commitment is a boost to plant quality, lower warranty costs, cut waste, raise machine utilization and total capacity with the same plant and equipment, reduce operating and support personnel, reduce turnover and absenteeism, and speed up implementation of change. In addition, some managers place direct value on the fact that the commitment policies promote the development of human skills and individual self-esteem (Walton, 1992).

Commitment, trust, and responsibility arise when employees’ values fall into line with the employer’s “organizational” values, a congruence that is achieved through the exercise of
human resource management practices. Of these, the existence of charismatic or "transformational" leadership is crucial, along with the fostering of an organizational culture that is characterized by widely shared and strongly held implicit and explicit values (Legge, 1989). Today, managers build commitment by offering project opportunities. The new loyalty is not to the boss or to the company but to projects that actualize a mission and offer challenges, growth, and credit for results (Kanter, 1992). However, the level of commitment can change. It can start low and increase or it can start high and decrease, or any other combination (Lussier, 1998).

2.2 Related Theories of Organizational Commitment

Some of the related theories of organizational commitment are the Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs, McGregor’s Theory X and Theory Y, Herzberg’s Two-Factor Theory, Path-Goal Theory, Exchange Theory, Relationship Theory, Expectancy Theory, Social Exchange Theory, and Lawler Choice Process Theory.

2.2.1 Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs

Maslow (in Gordon, 1993) stated that individuals have five needs arranged in a hierarchy from the most basic to the highest level namely physiological, safety, belongingness and love, esteem, and self-actualization. One of the major characteristics of organizational commitment is self-esteem and self-actualization. Esteem needs relate to a person’s desire to master his or her work, demonstrate competence and accomplishments, build a reputation as an outstanding performer, hold a position of prestige, receive public recognition, and feel self-esteem. Self-actualization needs reflect an individual’s desire to grow and develop to his or her fullest potential. An individual often wants the opportunity to be creative on the job or desires autonomy, responsibility, and challenge. Therefore, to gain organizational commitment from employees, it is very crucial that human resource management practices should satisfy the self-esteem and self-actualization needs of employees.

2.2.2 McGregor’s Theory X and Theory Y – Leadership and Motivation in Organizational Commitment

Theory X and Theory Y was developed by Douglas McGregor. Theory X managers are tasks oriented and practice autocratic leadership whereas Theory Y managers are relationship oriented and practice a wide range of leadership styles to give employees more freedom to make decisions on the job. Theory X managers assume employees are lazy, extrinsically motivated, and not committed to organizational goals. They need to be motivated to achieve high performance and productivity. This study will survey whether tasks oriented leadership under Theory X will influence organizational commitment. On the other hand, Theory Y managers assume employees are intrinsically motivated and are committed to their responsibilities and to the organization. They enjoy high self-esteem (Hicks and Gullet, 1985). This study will survey whether task oriented and relationship oriented leadership styles and motivation have any effect on organizational commitment.

2.2.3 Herzberg Two-Factor Theory

The Two-Factor Theory is Herzberg’s classification of needs as hygiene and motivators. Herzberg (1966) combines lower level needs (physiological, safety, social/existence, and relatedness) into hygiene, and higher level needs (esteem and self-actualization/growth) into motivators. Hygiene are also called extrinsic factors because attempts to motivate come from outside the job itself such as pay, job security, and job title; working conditions;
fringe benefits; and relationships. Motivators are called intrinsic factors because motivation comes from the job itself, such as achievement, recognition, challenge, and advancement. This study will survey whether these hygiene and motivators as classified in the Two-Factor Theory has any effect on organizational commitment.

2.2.4 Path-Goal Theory – Styles of Leadership and Organizational Commitment

According to Path-Goal Theory (in Gordon, 1993) the leader attempts to influence subordinates’ perceptions of goals and the path to achieve them. Leaders can choose among four styles of leadership namely directive, supportive, participative, and achievement oriented styles.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Leadership Style</th>
<th>Characteristics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Directive Leadership</td>
<td>Leaders are authoritative and direct their subordinates. Subordinates understand what is expected from them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supportive Leadership</td>
<td>Leaders are supportive and easy to discuss with. They are sensitive to the needs of subordinates.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participative Leadership</td>
<td>Leaders communicate well with subordinates and encourage them to participate by giving suggestions on management. Leaders make decisions based on their own rationale.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Achievement Oriented Leadership</td>
<td>Leaders state challenging goals for subordinates. Leaders are confident their subordinates can achieve these goals.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2.1: Leadership Styles in Path-Goal Leadership Theory

In selecting a style, the leader acts to strengthen the expectancy, instrumentality, and valence of a situation, respectively, by providing better machinery or training for employees, reinforcing desired behaviours with pay, praise, or promotion. In other words, the right choice of leadership can greatly influence organizational commitment. The supportive, participative, and achievement oriented leadership styles are believed to be capable of increasing job involvement, employees’ performance, participation in decision-making, and inducing organizational commitment among employees.

2.2.5 Exchange Theory – Non-situational, Contemporary Models of Leadership

Exchange Theory (cited in Steers, 1991) emphasizes the leader’s interaction with the group he or she supervises. The leader exchanges resources, such as increased job latitude, influence on decision making, and open communication for members’ commitment to higher involvement in organizational functioning. By behaving to increase the exchange of resources between leaders and members, a leader can increase follower productivity, job satisfaction, and satisfaction with supervision. In other words, organization that invests in good pay, benefits, status and recognition, job opportunities, and social opportunities will gain in exchange strong employee commitment whereby they will be willing to sacrifice time, expend effort, knowledge, skills, and creativity for the benefit of the organization. Therefore in order to attract and retain a productive workforce the employee must be given interesting work and fair compensation. This study will survey whether human resource
management practices invested by the Sarawak Education Department will gain organizational commitment from its staff in exchange.

The Employee
- Wants interesting work and fair compensation

Employee Invests:
- Time
- Effort
- Knowledge
- Skills
- Creativity

The Organization
- Wants to attract and retain a productive workforce

Organization Invests:
- Pay
- Benefits
- Status and recognition
- Job opportunities
- Social opportunities

Figure 2.1: The Exchange Process between Employee and Organization

2.2.6 Relationship Theory and Organizational Commitment

Relationship Theory (cited in Steers, 1991) focuses on employees’ needs. Employees expect something from their contribution to the organization. Supervisor is expected to be considerate in their relationship with their subordinates. The assumption in this theory is employees are more committed to organization if supervisors treat them well and are conscientious to employees’ welfare. The supervisor is regarded as an expert in relationship in the Relationship Theory. The supervisor is a trainer, communication expert, and a peacemaker. The supervisor must be skillful in interpersonal relationship and communication. They must be able to convey employees’ needs to their managers and at the same time convey the objectives and messages of the organization to their subordinates.

The Sarawak Education Department has many sectors and units well managed by heads of sectors or supervisors. Each one of them acts as a mediator who must be able to convey messages vertically (managers to employees and otherwise) so that all tasks in the organization can be carried out smoothly. At the same time the supervisor plays the role of a trainer to train and guide work procedures. Training is conducted so that employees know the basic principles of learning process and incentives in the organization. This study will