

## **Relationships between Leadership Communication Practices and Organisational Commitment in a Selected Higher Education Institution**

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**Keywords:** Leadership communication practices, organisational commitment, Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) Theory

### **ABSTRACT**

The main objective of this study was to examine the relationship between leadership communication practices and organisational commitment among the staff in a selected institution of higher education. The chosen organisation is located in the Klang Valley and was established 37 years ago. Stratified random sampling was used for sample selection and a total of 235 respondents participated in this study using a questionnaire survey method. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, t-test, Pearson Product Moment correlation, and Multiple Regression using both enter and stepwise methods. With regard to the levels of organisational commitment, the study shows that the employee's affective, continuance and normative commitments are moderate. Correlation analysis showed significant relationships between leadership communication practices and organisational commitment. While communication climate tended to be a good predictor of organisational commitment. Through effective leadership communication practices, a leader is able to influence and convince employees to be more committed towards their organisation in order to achieve organisational objectives. In conclusion, this research shows that leadership communication practices can contribute towards higher staff commitment in an organisation.

### **INTRODUCTION**

Leadership communication entails nurturing and maintaining a workplace environment in which communication flows freely and quickly in all directions (Mai and Akerson, 2003). Thus, leadership communication is one of the essential elements in management. Good communication in the workplace results in mutual understanding, harmony and action while poor communication only wastes time and resources, forestalls goal accomplishment and sours relationships. Communication is thus the key to effective leadership and without effective communication, a manager is not an effective leader (Barrett, 2006). Communication has been linked to organisational commitment in several ways. Allen (1992), for example, found that, especially in organisations involved in total quality management, communication variables explained up to 59 percent of the variance in organisational

commitment. McDonald and Gandz (1991) suggest that commitment is especially important for the human relations within the organisation. Commitment noticeably underpins contemporary management goals of organisational learning, quality management and employee empowerment and motivation (Linstead *et al.*, 2004; Tourish and Hargie, 2004; Weick, 1995). Commitment is a vital component in any effective organisation but more so in service organisations such as educational institutions. High level of commitment towards the organisation is important because committed members are viewed as stable, productive, and more likely to accomplish organisational goals (Larkey *et al.*, 1995).

Furthermore, it appears that organisational commitment is directly linked to educational success. Armon (1995) concludes that faculty commitment is one of the most important factors in the success of a higher education institution

(Oberholster and Taylor, 1999). In higher education, a leader has influence over constituents in the organisation such as faculty, staff, students, and others. Effectiveness of educational organisations depends on many factors, one of which is the interaction between leaders and staff. It is clear that good leadership communication inspires people to excel and contributes as much as 80-90 per cent to an organisation's success. This type of leadership can be exercised only through quality communication (Wells and Spinks, 1992). Leaders develop visions and strategies, and inspire commitment, which in turn, improve job satisfaction and performance, consequently increasing productivity and profitability.

Numerous studies have focused on exploring the links between organisational commitment and a number of critical in-role behaviours, including performance, absence, tardiness, and turnover. These studies consider organisational commitment to be a bond between employees and the organisation (Sulaiman, 2003). This study attempts to assess the relationship between leadership communication practices and organisational commitment.

It is hoped that the findings of this research may benefit research regarding leadership communication practices. In terms of academic research, the findings may provide and contribute to theoretical aspects of organisational communication practices. This contribution to organisational communication practices would hopefully be useful to administrators to improve leadership communication, and then monitor the quality and commitment of the staff of an educational institution.

### OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The main objective of this study was to investigate the relationship between leadership communication practices and organisational commitment among staff in a selected higher education institution. The specific objectives of the study were to:

1. Determine the level of evaluation by employees on the leadership communication practices in the organisation.
2. Identify the level of organisational commitment among staff in the organisation.
3. Determine the relationship between leadership communication practices and organisational commitment.

### THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

#### *The Role of Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) Theory*

Leaders in higher education have been greatly criticised for their failure to apply the literature on leadership and management to maintain and advance their institutions in today's increasingly complex internal and external environments (Tucker *et al.*, 1992). Thus, in realising the relationship-oriented between the leader and member, Leader-Member Exchange theory has been rendered as one of the most extensive elaborations of leadership as a relationship in the leadership's communication (Pierce and Newstrom, 2006) and theoretical approach to understanding leadership at work (Gerstner and Day, 1997; Graen and Uhl-Bien, 1995; Liden *et al.*, 1997; Schriesheim *et al.*, 1999). LMX describes how leaders, over time, develop different exchange relationship with their various followers. The relationships developed between the leader and his/her followers vary in terms of the 'quality of their exchange relationship', when a high level (quality) leader-member exchange relationship exists, followers perceive themselves as having a good working relationship with their leaders. For example, employees in higher quality relationships report higher levels of satisfaction (Graen *et al.*, 1982) and commitment to the organisation (Nystrom, 1990) compared to employees in lower quality relationships.

In communication-focused studies of LMX, Fairhurst and colleagues (Fairhurst, 1993; Fairhurst and Chandler, 1989) found that high quality relationships were characterised by communication that reflects both greater depth and breadth than compared to that of low quality relationships. For instance, communication between leaders and subordinates in high quality relationships involved convergence of values between leader and subordinate, challenging questions to the member, and/or brainstorming with the member, distinct address forms and jargon that establish common ground between leader and member, and leader's encouragement of the member to negotiate their organisational role. By comparison, interaction between leaders and subordinates in low quality relationships was relatively narrow and superficial (Sias, 2005). Understanding the LMX process can aid leaders in improving communication with subordinates, reducing unwanted turnover, and improving worker performance (Graen and Scandura, 1987; Scandura and Graen, 1984).

### *Organisational Commitment*

Organisational commitment has received substantial attention in past research due to its significant impact on work attitudes such as job satisfaction, performance, absenteeism, and turnover intentions. Employee commitment is not a singular construct; rather commitment comprises of a number of components (Meyer *et al.*, 1997; Varona, 1996). According to Cohan (1995), job commitment refers to the belief about a job and is a product of employees' job satisfaction. Anderson and Martin (1995) argue that commitment is defined as an employee's adoption of, or identification with an organisation's values, involvement and loyalty. Liou and Nyhan (1994) argue that organisational effectiveness is largely determined by employee commitment. They suggest that there are two approaches to employee commitment - attitudinal (attitude) and behavioural (behaviour exhibited by employees), the communication construct can affect empowerment of employees, which in turn affects job commitment. In addition, the way the organisational goals are communicated to employees and their role in achieving them, strongly affects job commitment (Anderson and Martin, 1995). Moreover, communication mechanisms for establishing and sustaining trust - affect commitment (Mayfield and Mayfield, 2002). Allen and Meyer (1990) identify three general themes in attitudinal conceptualisations of organisational commitment:

### *Affective Commitment*

This refers to the extent to which an employee becomes emotionally attached, identifies with and believes in the organisation. The feelings of belonging are in turn related to personal characteristics and work experiences such as role clarity and skill variety (Hartmann and Bambacas, 2000). There is a significant positive relationship between affective commitment and job satisfaction (Mathieu and Farr, 1991; Mathieu and Zajac, 1990) and communication (Clampitt and Downs, 1993) and an inverse relationship between affective commitment and turnover, intent to leave and stress (Mathieu and Zajac, 1990).

### *Continuance Commitment*

Continuance organisational commitment refers to the extent to which an employee feels committed to the organisation based on years of service. It is often referred to as the "perceived

cost of leaving" and a perceived lack of alternatives (Hartmann and Bambacas, 2000). Mathieu and Zajac's (1990) research suggests a positive relationship with job satisfaction and an inverse relationship with intent to leave and stress. In addition, Allen and Meyer's (1990) research suggests an inverse relationship with perceived job alternatives and a positive relationship with commitment to a particular community. Moreover, the research by Meyer *et al.* (1989) suggests an inverse relationship with perceived ability to be promoted and a positive relationship with job performance. Hence, if organisational processes associated with appraisal and/or promotion were deemed fair and achievable, then it is likely that employees would be motivated to work effectively, continuance commitment is enhanced when employees come to the realisation that they have a lot invested in the organisations and that there are a few good alternatives (Finegan, 2000).

### *Normative Commitment*

Normative involvement refers to a type of organisational commitment based on an employee feeling obligated to remain in the organisation because it is considered the right thing to do (Allen and Meyer, 1990). Morita *et al.* (1993) suggest that firms can predict the likelihood of employees leaving the organisation prematurely by measuring whether the employee has a high or low initial commitment, organisational commitment increases when an organisation expresses its expectations of the employees (Hartmann and Bambacas, 2000). In turn, this may increase the employees' effort and feelings of obligation. Normative involvement has received less research attention (Brunetto and Wharton, 2004). Ostroff (1992) reports that committed employees are associated with better organisational performance, have a low turnover rate, and have low absenteeism. According to Truckenbrodt (2000), it is essential, therefore, that supervisors understand the significance of building a positive relationship with their respective subordinates. Thus, enhancing the subordinate's commitment to the organisation.

Allen and Meyer (1990) Organisational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ) is used to measure employees' commitment to their organisations, and consists of 23 items of three components: affective, continuance, and

normative commitment pertaining to the respondent's level of organisational commitment. A 5-point scale ranging from (1= strongly disagree, and 5= strongly agree) was employed. The above modification was made to the original questionnaire to suit the context, in this case, Malaysian organisations.

*Conceptual Framework of the Study*

Fig. 1 depicts the conceptual framework of the study. The independent variable of the study is leadership communication practices and the dependent variable is organisational commitment.

Based on the review of literature, three hypotheses were developed for this study:

- H1: There is significant positive relationship between leadership communication practices and affective organizational commitment
- H2: There is significant positive relationship between leadership communication practices and continuance organizational commitment
- H3: There is significant positive relationship between leadership communication practices and normative organizational commitment.

**RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This study was conducted using a survey research design and the study focused on a selected higher education institute which had been established 37 years ago in the Klang Valley, Malaysia. The population of the research was drawn from among academic and support staffs. According to a sampling table formulated by

Krejcie and Morgan (1970), for a population of 489, the sample size should be 217 at least. The sample distributions came from 13 schools/ departments in which stratified random sampling was employed for sample selection. The number of respondents selected from each school/ department was done proportionately according to the sample size in relation to the actual population. Then, the respondents from each sample were divided according to subdivisions so that each sub divisions was proportionately represented in the sample (Shao, 2002). Unit leaders and the researcher placed the names of the respondents in a container and the names were selected until a total of 235 respondents was obtained.

The research instrument used for the study consisted sections on demographic variables, Leadership Communication Practices and Organizational Commitment. The Leadership Communication Practices were measured based on the four dimensions of leadership communication practices namely;

- i. Satisfaction communication (Statements 3 to 7, 16, and 23). Satisfaction communication emphasizes the amount of supervision given, leadership style, communication effectiveness use of their interpersonal skills (Hunt et al., 2000).
- ii. Communication climate (Statements 1, 2, 8, 12, 13, 15, 17, 21, and 24). Communication climate measures the respondents' level of transparency in communication, supportiveness and information adequacy with their jobs and their commitment to the organisation (Robertson, 2003).

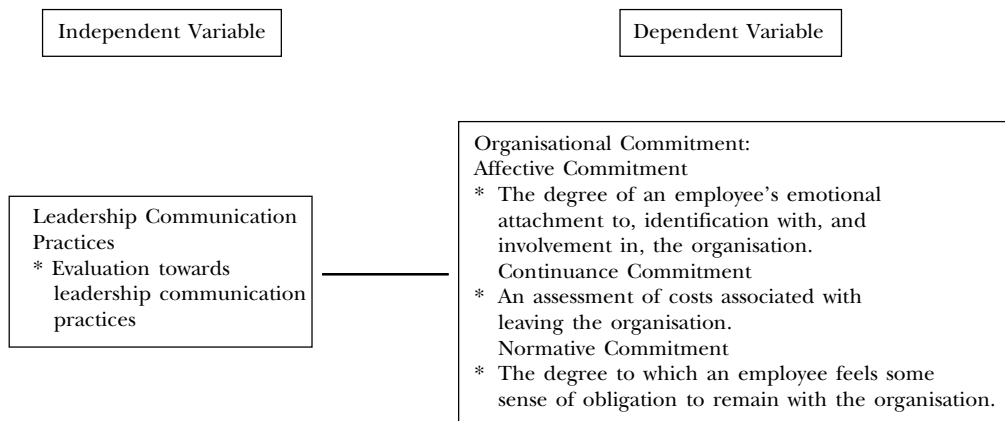


Fig. 1: Conceptual framework of the study

- iii. Job involvement (Statements 10, 11, 14, 22, and 25). Job involvement refers to the staff's personal belief and values, objectives, and behaviour of the organisation, involved in planning and goal setting, areas of responsibility (Shaffer, 1998).
- iv. Feedback process (Statements 9, 18, 19, and 20). Feedback process focuses on the respondents' level of information received with regard to performance evaluation, recognition of achievements, and quality of feedback received (Azhar, 2004).

The respondents were asked to indicate on a 5 point scale ranging from 1= strongly disagree to 5= strongly agree.

The section on Organizational Commitment consisted of 23 items from which 8 items were for Affective Commitment, 7 items for Continuance Commitment and 8 items for Normative Commitment. The response relating to a person's commitment to an organisation, respondents were required to rate each item using a five-point scale (1= strongly disagree, and 5= strongly agree).

The level of Leadership Communication Practices scale was divided into three levels; low, moderate, and high. Determination of this level is based on the highest score= 5, minus the lowest score= 1, and divided by 3. Thus, the low level of leadership communication practices ranged from 1.00 to 2.32, moderate being 2.33 to 3.66, and high was 3.67 to 5.00. Whereas, the Organisational Commitment measurement were categorised into three levels based on the items and score using the equal class interval method. There were low, moderate, and high and were

calculated as follows: the minimum score for affective commitment was 8 points (1 point x 8 item) and the maximum score was 40 points (5 points x 8 items). The class interval was (40-8)/3= 10. The level of affective commitment was then categorised into: Low (8-18), moderate (19-29), and high (30-40).

The data were processed using SPSS for Windows Release 13.00. Statistical analyses used in the study were descriptive statistics analyses generating frequencies, percentages, means, standard deviations, and inferential statistics such as Pearson Product Moment correlation and regression. The hypotheses were tested at the 0.05 level of significance.

The research instrument for the study was pre-tested on 20 respondents. The results from the pre-test showed that the three variables achieved reliability scores ranging from 0.716 to 0.927. After achieving the reliability needed for the research instrument, the actual study was conducted. The reliability scores (Table 1) of the actual data ranged from 0.834 to 0.941.

### FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents and discusses the results of the study and are organised into four sections namely; characteristic of the respondents, the level of evaluation employees of the leadership communication practices in the organisation, the level of organisational commitment among staff in the organisation, relationships between leadership communication practices and organisational commitment, and leadership communication practices predictor of organisational commitment.

TABLE 1  
Reliability scores of pre-tests and actual data

No.	Variables	Cronbach Alpha (a)	
		Pre-test (n=20)	Actual Study (n=235)
1.	Leadership communication practices (25 items)	0.927	0.938
2.	Affective commitment (8 items)	0.850	0.913
3.	Continuance commitment (7 items)	0.716	0.838
4.	Normative commitment (8 items)	0.778	0.834
5.	Overall organisational commitment (23 items)	0.910	0.941

*Characteristics of the Respondents*

Results shown in Table 2 reveal that a majority of the respondents were females who constituted about two thirds (64.3%) and slightly more than one third (35.7%) were males. In terms of age, the results showed that the largest group were from the 26 to 30 years age group (36.6%), followed by those below 25 years age group (15.3%), and 31 to 35 years age group (14.0%).

Looking across tenure, 50.2% of the respondents had been in the institution for between 1 to 5 years, 23% had been with the institution between 6 to 10 years, below 1 year (9.4%), and 2.6 per cent had served between 16 to 20 years.

Slightly more than half of the participants (54.9%) had been in the current position from 1 to 5 years, followed by the 6 to 10 years

(23.8%), below 1 year (10.6%), 11 to 15 years (5.5%), 21 years and above (3.0%), and the lowest percentage (2.1%) had served in their current positions for between 16 to 20 years.

A total of 119 academic and 116 administrative members participated in this study, the proportion of academic and administrative staff was almost equal (50.6% academic and 49.4% administrative staff). In terms of position, about two thirds (67.2%) were in the professional group and one third (32.8%) from the support group.

*Evaluation of Respondents towards Leadership Communication Practices in Organisation*

In responding to the 25 items of evaluation, the results of the analysis showed that the mean score ranged from 2.49 to 4.09. The item 'Leadership communication practices strengthen

TABLE 2  
Distribution of respondent by demographics  
(n=235)

Demographic Factors	Frequency	%
Gender		
Male	84	35.7
Female	151	64.3
Age		
below 25 years	36	15.3
26-30 years	86	36.6
31-35 years	33	14.0
36-40 years	28	11.9
41-45 years	26	11.1
46-50 years	13	5.5
above 51 years	13	5.5
Mean=33.28 S.D.=8.72		
Tenure		
below 1 year	22	9.4
1-5 years	118	50.2
6-10 years	54	23.0
11-15 years	14	6.0
16-20 years	6	2.6
above 21 years	21	8.9
Mean=7.27 S. D.= 7.41		
Current Position		
below 1 year	25	10.6
1-5 years	129	54.9
6-10 years	56	23.8
11-15 years	13	5.5
16-20 years	5	2.1
above 21 years	7	3.0
Mean= 5.63 S. D.= 5.42		
Category of Position		
Academic	119	50.6
Administrative	116	49.4

my commitment towards this organisation' had the highest mean of 4.09 (S. D.= 0.86), followed by the statement 'The leader should always discuss with the subordinate to work together to implement a task' which received a response mean of 4.05 (S. D.= 0.94). The results show that friendly climates encourage members to communicate in an open, facilitative communication (Hunt *et al.*, 2000), and reciprocal LMX relationship form the 'in-group', in group members typically experience increased job involvement and are more dedicated to the organisation, and tend not to leave (Hochwarter, 2005). Blau (1985) revealed that a consideration leadership style was found to have a greater influence than a concern for structure leadership style (or task-oriented style) on commitment. Confirmation is found in Williams and Hazer's (1986) study that found consideration leadership style to be one of their antecedents to commitment.

The important role of superiors in aspects of organisational commitment was also shown by Benkhoff (1997) who found that employees who regard their superiors as competent, trustworthy and having a good management style report, significantly more often, that they share the values of the organisation and feel proud to be members (Dick and Metcalfe, 2001). Achieving good relations between leaders and subordinates helps to embed employees, and thereby provides a disincentive for employees to quit (Morrow *et al.*, 2005). Leadership communication practices, if effective, motivate the subordinate and develop stronger employee commitment towards greater organisational achievement (Ab. Aziz Yusof, 2003). The Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) theory of leadership, which focuses on the two-way relationship between leaders and subordinates, establishing positive interactions between the two and a significant relationship exists between the quality of the leader-subordinate relationship and subordinates' commitment (Truckenbrodt, 2000). LMX quality and supervisory communication practices have found evidence that there is increasing quality of LMX and the communication practices of coordination and participation in higher-quality supervisor-subordinate (Yrle *et al.*, 2002). The item 'The leader and I discussed my performance in work' got the lowest mean of 2.49 (S. D.= 1.18). The overall mean score of 3.41 (S. D.= 0.70) shows that respondents moderately rated

the leadership communication practices in the organization (Table 3).

#### *Organisational Commitment*

**Affective commitment:** Affective commitment means the degree of an employee's emotional attachment to, identification with, and involvement in, the organisation. To what extent were the respondents affectively committed to their organisation? The findings on the level of affective commitment showed that the mean scores for the eight items ranged from 2.95 to 3.65 (Table 4). One sample t-test with a test value of 3.0 found that positive tendency with a significance of  $p=0.000$  among the respondents toward effective commitment.

The item 'This college deserves my loyalty' had the highest mean (3.65). This was followed by the statement 'I would be very happy to continue working in this college (mean=3.60) and thirdly by the statement 'I am proud to say that I am part of this college' (mean=3.60). The item with the lowest mean score was 'I would feel guilty if I leave the college right now' (mean=2.95). The overall mean score of 3.38 (S. D.= 0.82) demonstrated that the respondents were of moderate level of affective commitment.

**Continuance commitment:** Employee's continuance commitment refers to the assessment of costs associated with leaving the organisation. Table 5 illustrates the employees' level of continuance commitment. Looking across the items, the mean scores ranged from 2.80 to 3.15. The item 'For me, this college is the best college where I have worked compared to any other organisations' scored the highest mean, and the item 'I stay in my current post because I have to and not because I'm willing to' had the lowest mean. The respondents' feedback on the items related to continuance commitment were slightly low (overall mean of 2.99, S. D.= 0.79). One sample t-test with a test value of 3.0 revealed positive tendency with a significance of  $p=0.000$  among staff toward continuance commitment.

**Normative commitment:** Normative commitment is defined as the degree to which an employee feels some sense of obligation to remain in the organisation. Table 6 presents the results on the commitment level of the respondents in terms of normative commitment. The mean scores of the items ranged from 2.94 to 3.64 (Table 6). The item 'I care about the future of this college' had the highest mean,

TABLE 3  
 Evaluation by respondents on leadership communication practices  
 (n=235)

Leadership Communication Practices	Mean	S. D.
1. Leadership communication practices strengthen my commitment towards this organisation.	4.09	0.86
2. The leader should always discuss with subordinate to work together in order to implement a task.	4.05	0.94
3. The leader must be able to accept sincere criticism from subordinate for the good of the organisation.	3.98	1.02
4. Failure in implementing the organisation's objective because of weakness in leadership communication.	3.72	1.13
5. Problem in communication practices with my leader will disrupt my involvement and work commitment	3.66	1.07
6. Communication in my organisation makes me feel a part of the organisation.	3.54	1.00
7. My leader encourages me to report any faults on the task which I do.	3.53	1.00
8. I don't have any problems in my communication practices with my leader.	3.48	1.09
9. My leader uses correct communication channel in giving instructions task to me.	3.45	1.08
10. My leader gives very clear instructions to me.	3.44	1.15
11. Willing to communicate well in handling a conflict quickly.	3.44	1.07
12. The leadership communication style of my leader supports team work and high involvement among the members.	3.40	1.15
13. My leader is very trustworthy, willing to give support, cooperate and has high commitment towards the job.	3.37	1.21
14. My leader has communication skills to communicate with subordinate regarding his/her task and organisation's objectives.	3.35	1.12
15. The leader needs to change current practices of giving instructions.	3.34	1.09
16. The leadership communication style of my leader is based on principle, sets up a high standard and path to achievement.	3.31	1.13
17. My leader always provide guidance and assistance for me in completing any given task.	3.30	1.10
18. My leader practices an open communication and is willing to share information fully.	3.29	1.20
19. My leader practices a two way communication.	3.24	1.13
20. My leader shares with me the organisation's mission and vision and this will encourage me to improve the organisation.	3.23	1.13
21. The method/technique of communication from my leader is very effective.	3.22	1.11
22. My leader has a high ability in transforming the organisation's objectives.	3.18	1.14
23. My leader makes critical decisions through consensus (collective agreement).	3.12	1.13
24. My leader is willing to communicate to distribute the resources and rewards equally.	3.09	1.16
25. The leader and I discussed my performance in work.	2.49	1.18
Overall	3.41	0.70

Based on 5-point Likert scale



TABLE 4  
Affective commitment of respondents  
(n=235)

Items	Mean	S. D.
This college deserves my loyalty	3.65	0.96
I would be very happy to continue working in this college	3.60	0.94
I am proud to say that I am part of this college	3.60	0.97
I am very happy because I chose to work in this college compared to other options I had before	3.55	1.08
I tell my friends, this college is an excellent college for me to work	3.41	1.09
I feel a sense of emotional connection with my college where I work	3.17	1.05
I realised that my values and the college values are the same	3.08	1.01
I would feel guilty if I leave the college right now	2.95	1.19
Overall	3.38	0.82

Based on 5-point Likert scale

TABLE 5  
Continuance commitment of respondents  
(n=235)

Items	Mean	S. D.
For me, this college is the best college where I have worked compared to any other organisations	3.15	1.12
I will be facing problems to adapt myself with a new job compared to working in this college	3.09	1.18
I would not leave this college to another organisation because it may not match the overall benefits I have here	3.09	1.11
There will be a lot of problems in my life if I leave the college now	3.00	1.17
I need to sacrifice a lot if I plan to leave this post now	2.93	1.11
I have a few options if I consider to leave this college	2.87	1.01
I will carry out any job in order to keep this work in this college	2.80	1.11
Overall	2.99	0.79

Based on 5-point Likert scale

TABLE 6  
Normative commitment of respondents  
(n=235)

Items	Mean	S. D.
I care about the future of this college	3.64	1.00
I think that people these days move from organisation to organisation too much	3.60	1.06
I am willing to give more effort than before in order to achieve success	3.56	0.95
Even though it is to my advantage, I do not feel it is right for me to leave this college now.	3.20	1.07
I feel obligated to remain with my employer now	3.15	1.07
I feel that my college's problems are my problems too	3.04	1.04
I would not leave this college because I feel a sense of obligation to the people in this organisation	2.98	1.07
It is difficult to leave this college now even though I want to do so	2.94	1.10
Overall	3.26	0.71

Based on 5-point Likert scale

and the item 'It is difficult to leave this college now even though I want to do so' had the lowest mean. The overall mean score of 3.26 (S. D.= 0.71) shows that the respondents exhibited a moderate level of commitment in relation to the statements concerning normative commitment. Once again, one sample t-test with a test value of 3.0 showed positive tendency with a significance of  $p=0.000$  among the respondents towards normative commitment.

An overall analysis of organisational commitment in terms of affective, continuance, and normative commitments was conducted in order to ascertain the distribution of the respondents in terms of three levels of commitment: low, moderate, and high. The distribution of respondents in terms of organisational commitment is presented in Table 7. In terms of affective commitment, more than half of respondents (54.9%) showed moderate response levels, one third (36.2%) showed high level and only 8.9% showed a low level of affective commitment. The mean composite score of 27.0 (S. D.= 6.6) showed that the result was a moderate level of affective commitment. It can be concluded that the majority of the respondents had a moderate level of commitment in 'wanting' to stay and be part of the organisation.

With regard to continuance commitment, the distribution of respondents showed that about two thirds (64.6%) of the respondents showed moderate level of continuance commitment. Only 20.4% of them showed low level followed by high

level at 15.0%. The mean composite score of 20.9 (S. D.= 5.6) showed that the respondents showed moderate level of continuance commitment. This shows that most of the respondents felt that they 'need' to stay at the organisation. The possible reasons for this might be because of the competitive benefits offered by the organisation, in-house training, and openness in communication between superiors and subordinates.

For normative commitment, the majority of the respondents (64.7%) showed moderate level of commitment, while 26.8% and 8.5% were in group of high and low commitment respectively. With a mean composite score of 26.1 (S. D.= 5.7), the data showed that the respondents had moderate level of normative commitment. The result demonstrated that the majority of the respondents felt that they 'ought' to stay at the college since they felt obligated by the contribution provided by the organisation. In conclusion, the research results showed that the respondents were more affectively committed than the other two components. This is a positive finding as the literature suggests that affective commitment is the most desirable form of commitment (Meyer and Allen, 1991).

#### *Relationships between Leadership Communication Practices and Organisational Commitment*

This study examined the relationships between leadership communication practices and organisational commitment. The results in Table 8 show positive and significant relationships

TABLE 7  
Distribution of respondents by organisational commitment  
(n=235)

Components	Percentage		
	Low	Moderate	High
Affective commitment Mean =27.0 Std. Dev. =6.6 Low (8-18) Moderate (19-29) High (30-40)	8.9	54.9	36.2
Continuance commitment Mean =20.9 Std. Dev. =5.6 Low (7.00-16.32) Moderate (16.33-25.66) High (25.67-35.00)	20.4	64.6	15.0
Normative commitment Mean =26.1 Std. Dev. =5.7 Low (8-18) Moderate (19-29) High (30-40)	8.5	64.7	26.8

between leadership communication practices and organisational commitment, namely, affective, continuance, and normative commitment. The strength of the relationships between leadership communication practices and the three components of commitment was different. The r-values of affective commitment  $r = 0.64$  ( $p = 0.000$ ), continuance commitment  $r = 0.459$  ( $p = 0.000$ ), and normative commitment  $r = 0.595$  ( $p = 0.000$ ) respectively showed positive and significant relationship. Therefore, based on Guilford's rule of thumb (Bahaman and Turiman, 2002), the relationships are moderate. From the analysis, it could be concluded that leadership communication practices has significant and positive correlation with organisational commitment. This study is supported by the findings of Gerstner and Day (1997). Schriesheim *et al.* (1999) and Krishnan (2004) which noted that the quality of Leader-Member Exchange are found to be positively related to follower's organisational commitment and can affect the entire work experience in a positive manner, including performance and affective outcomes. Mathieu and Zajac (1990) show the importance of leader communication for commitment, suggesting that "a supervisor who provides more accurate and timely types of communication enhances the work environment and thereby is likely to increase employees' commitment to the organisation." This is in line with the finding that communication relationship satisfaction enhances the individual's sense of membership of the organisation (Putti *et al.*, 1990).

*Testing of Research Hypotheses*

The findings supported the three research hypotheses. Table 8 shows significant positive correlation between leadership communication

practices and organisational commitment. All three components of organisational commitment showed positive and significant relationship with leadership communication practices.

*Leadership Communication Practices Predictors of Organisational Commitment*

Another objective of this study was to determine the significant predictive power of leadership communication practices variables in explaining organizational commitment. Multiple regression analysis using both enter and stepwise methods were conducted. Table 9 presents the results of multiple regression analysis of organisational commitment with dimensions of leadership communication practices. The R-value of 0.63 shows a moderate correlation between organisational commitment and the overall predictor variables. The analysis of variance with F value of 37.35 was found to be significant at 0.05 level of significant. While four predictors collectively contributed about 39% of the variation, the analysis clearly showed that only communication climate was identified as good predictors. Communication climate provided the greatest explanation of the variance in organisational commitment with a standardised Beta of 0.28.

Stepwise multiple regression analysis was carried out to determine which predictors contributed significantly on organisational commitment. As shown in Table 10, the results revealed that only one dimension contributed significantly towards the R Square value. Communication climate was found to be the only meaningful contributor towards the R square value of 0.37. This predictor variable explained 37% of the variation in organisational commitment among the respondents. The rest

TABLE 8  
Correlation between leadership communication practices and organisational commitment (n=235)

Organisational Commitment	Overall	
	Leadership Communication Practices	
	r	p
Affective commitment	0.641	.000
Continuance commitment	0.459	.000
Normative commitment	0.595	.000
Overall organisational commitment	0.614	.000

TABLE 9  
Multiple regression analysis of organisational commitment with leadership communication practices predictor variables

Method Enter		Dependent Variable		
Predictor Variables Dimensions		B	Beta	Sig. T
Satisfaction communication		0.11	0.13	0.206
Communication climate		0.25	0.28	0.024
Job involvement		0.18	0.19	0.107
Feedback process		0.10	0.10	0.185
(Constant)		1.05		0.000
R = 0.63	R Square=0.39	Adjusted R Square = 0.38		
F = 37.35	Sig. = 0.00			

TABLE 10  
Stepwise regression analysis of organisational commitment with leadership communication practices predictor variables

Variables	Organisational Commitment				
	R	R Square	R Square Changes	Beta	P
Communication climate	0.606	0.368		0.372	0.000
Job Involvement	0.621	0.386	0.022	0.270	0.010
(Constant)					0.000

of the predictor variables of leadership communication practices failed to be included in the regression equation.

### CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This findings can be generally used for discussions regarding interpersonal communication. Leaders seeking to obtain the high LMX may have to place greater emphasis on interpersonal relationships and find innovative ways to make leader-staff relationship more closely resemble friendships. Leaders can make the management more interpersonally-oriented to staff, communicate and listen more frequently, and make communications more personal and perceptual, significantly to work-related matters and personal matters. Sias and Cahill (1998), noted the importance of discussion of non-work topics for co-worker friendship development and found that the closer the friendship, the more difficult it was for individuals to leave the jobs and organisations.

Significant relationship exists between the leadership communication practices and organisational commitment. It is essential, therefore, that leaders understand the significance of building a positive relationship with their respective subordinates, build a corporate culture in which open two-way communication occurs at all levels, open communications are necessary to establish a sense of trust in the exchange relationship, and actively encourage subordinates to provide feedback and vice-versa. For success, leaders must strategically foster these relationships and take corrective steps, monitoring and correction largely depend on a good communication system between the leader and the subordinate. The results of leadership communication practices efforts are to be clarified in order to show how something as intangible as interaction is a key factor in organisational success. Thus, linking a satisfying communicative relationship between the leader and an employee to well-known attitudes and

perceptions like person-organisation fit and commitment can underline the contribution of communication to organisations (Vuuren *et al.*, 2007). As a whole, the results reflect the importance of the existence of the good communication climate in organisation, whereby this would enhance the staff commitment towards the organisation.

It is recommended that leaders and subordinates improve communication practices as the findings show that this would strengthen staff commitment towards the organisation. An effective means of communication in the appropriate circumstances may be able to keep them in closer touch with subordinates. Development and maintenance of a mature dyadic relationship will benefit not only the leaders and the subordinates, but also the organisation as a whole in the achievement of organisational growth and success. The conclusions might help policy-making management executives and human resource specialists to support initiatives such as employee training and leadership career development, and help positively shape the organisation's future.

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