RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ORGANIZATIONAL CLIMATE, COMMUNICATION CLIMATE AND TEACHERS' ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT: A CASE STUDY OF SCHOOLS IN SENTUL ZONE (KUALA LUMPUR)

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ABSTRACT

The teaching profession has received a tremendous amount of pressure from the public, parents and society alike. The teachers are blamed for the rising social and discipline problems. They are also burdened by the heavy workload; both traditional and contemporary.

The aim of this study was to disclose the relationships between the education system's internal environment, its organizational climate and the communication climate with the organizational commitment of the teachers.

The findings showed that there is a positive relationship between organizational climate and organizational commitment. Communication climate and organizational commitment are also found to be positively related. Lastly, it is also established that the higher the organizational commitment, the longer the tenure.

APPROVAL PAGE

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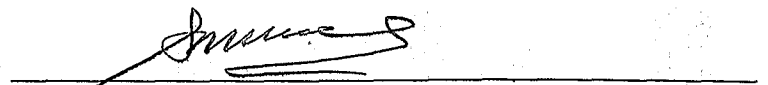Signature:

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this project is the result of my own investigations, except where otherwise stated. Other sources are acknowledged by reference notes and a bibliography is appended.

Date: 20th February 1997   Signature ....

Name: FARIDZAH ABDULL AZIZ

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this project is the result of my own investigations, except where otherwise stated. Other sources are acknowledged by reference notes and a bibliography is appended.

Date: 20th February 1997   Signature ....

Name: FARIDZAH ABDULL AZIZ

DEDICATION

To

Mohammad Taufik Abdul Aziz:

my husband and best friend, who showers me with love, laughter,

encouragement and support, and has remained my best friend

throughout this effort.

Abdulaziz Arief, Abdulaziz Azrai and Cahaya Azureen:

my children, who are very special to me. Thanks for sharing your laughter and joy.

You are truly the sunshine in my life,

and

Imas Suryani:

my maid, whose without help in looking after the kids,

I could not have completed this study completely.

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I would like to extend my appreciation to Associate Professor, Dr. Syed Abdul Hamid Al-Junid, the Executive Director, IIUM Management Center, and Assistant Professor Dr. Ahmad Zohdi Abdul Hamid, the Head of the Master of Management Program, for their support and guidance throughout the course.

I am also thankful to the Ministry of Education and Institut Aminuddin Baki for giving me the opportunity to pursue this graduate course and for providing the avenue for me to broaden my knowledge and to excel in my profession. I would like to express my gratitude to Dr. Ibrahim Ahmad Bajunid specifically, for making this program possible.

I wish to thank the principals and the teachers who participated in the study, and to all those not mentioned who have helped me in making this study possible.

I would like to extend my heartiest and warmest appreciation to my friends in MOM/Cohort 2 for the wonderful 14 months together. We really fulfilled the pledge to 'sink' or 'swim' together for indeed we are a "team".

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The education system in Malaysia is facing many diverse and complex challenges. With projects like Multimedia Super Corridor[1], education plays a bigger role to ensure that the nation's cultural, social and intellectual assets, its skill and inventiveness and the strength of its human resources are sufficient to cater to what would be demanded in the future. The range of skills needed to respond to these challenges encompasses both specific sectoral management (agriculture, irrigation, construction, transportation, urban planning, water and power supply etc.) and the more functional skills of project planning and implementation, the setting up of realistic development goals, and scheduling and mobilizing of these resources.

At its simplest, we must increase the productivity of development, to have the most effective utilization of resources and to ensure that technologies are economically and socially appropriate. With all these tasks, one cannot dismiss the important role of the education system and its management. To be the hub of education in this region, Malaysia has to plan well ahead. The educators have to be committed to suit the demand for tomorrow.

In the light of the above, the researcher thinks that there is a need to study the organizational commitment of the teaching staff. The researcher does this by studying

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[1] Multimedia Super Corridor is an area encompassing the Kuala Lumpur City Center, Putrajaya and the new Kuala Lumpur International Airport which will be developed as a high-growth center. Within this area a multimedia catalyst center will be located. World-class multimedia corporations will be invited to locate their business units and R&D facilities here to be used as a springboard to serve the regional and world market for multimedia products and services(http://www.Jaring.my.msc)

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how the organizational climate and communication climate of the education organization relate to the teachers' organizational commitment.

The present study tries to discover the relationships between communication climate, organizational climate and organizational commitment of teachers in selected schools in Kuala Lumpur. The education setting is chosen as the focus of the study for several reasons. Firstly, with the challenge to make Malaysia as the center of education in this region, it is important for the managers of an education institution to study the effects of staff commitment to the organization. Secondly, with the findings of the study, it is hoped that the authority can be made aware of and act accordingly to improve on both organizational and communication climate of schools to create and increase the commitment and loyalty of the teaching staff.

1.1 The Problem Statements

The increased complexity of work organizations combined with the significant technological changes that have taken place in recent years make the notion of commitment especially important. The emerging views in this area are that to create a successful workplace, an organization must concentrate its energies on both economic and social performance, and invest on employee-commitment rather than compliance. Building commitment and loyalty is regarded as one of the most important functions of organizational socialization (Schein, 1988)

The present study deals primarily to analyze the relationships between communication climate, organizational climate and organizational commitment in selected schools in Kuala Lumpur.

1.2 The Purpose Of The Study

The main objectives of this study is to provide further evidence to the following primary statements:

a) The climate of the organization is positively related to the commitment of the organization.

b) Climate of the communication is positively related to the climate of the organization.

c) The relationship between organizational climate, communication climate and organizational commitment is moderated by tenure (length of service)

This study is a progression of a study done by Razali Mat Zin (1996). He suggests that organizational clarity is an aspect of organizational climate. He also proposes that participation as an aspect of communication climate is a significant predictor of employees' level of commitment to the organization.

It appears that when changes are taking place in the organization, employees try to maintain their commitment to the organization if they sense the form of clarity or orderliness exists for work activities, goals, procedures and the like. They will maintain their commitment to the organization if they are allowed to participate in

making recommendations and in decision making processes and if they perceive that management shares accurate information with them. Razali (1996) finds that the importance of clarity and strength of these relationships varies with the tenure of the employees.

Stemming from the above research, the present study seeks to generalize Razali's findings (1996) focusing on the education system and the school scenario.

1.3   Limitations of The Study

The sample of the study was taken from the teachers, both female and male, currently teaching in selected secondary schools within the Sentul Zone[2] in Kuala Lumpur. The teachers working in the state education department were excluded.

The researcher did not take into account the difference in the educational background of the teachers.

1.4   The Definitions Of Terms

For the purpose of this study, the following terms are defined as follows:

1.4.1 Organizational Climate:

Schneider et al. (1994) defined organizational climate as the atmosphere that employees perceived is created in their organization by practices,

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[2] The zone system was established to ease coordination and management by the State Education Department . Policy implementation and planning are done through the State Education Department or District Education Office.

procedures, and rewards. These perceptions, based on executives' behavior and the actions they reward, are developed on a day-to-day basis. It describes an organization and distinguishes one organization from another.

1.4.2 Organizational Communication:

Based on Greenberg (1996), this is the process by which an organization transmits information to another person, group or organization. It is done in writing, electronically by computer, by word of mouth, face to face, and also non-verbally.

1.4.3 Organizational Commitment:

Organizational commitment is defined as "the strength of an individual's identification with and involvement in a particular organization. It involves the feelings of the employee toward the organization's goals and the willingness to continue working toward the accomplishment of those goals. (Francis and Milbourne, 1980).

1.4.4 Teachers and staff:

The term refers to all qualified or trained (degree or certificate holder), full-time teachers of the secondary schools in Kuala Lumpur. This includes principals, senior assistants, and all teacher on extension of service.

1.4.5 Organization:

This term refers to the Ministry of Education and also the school where the teachers work.

1.5 The Assumptions

The present research was done with these assumptions:

1.5.1   the researcher assumes that the respondents' age, gender and marital status do not influence the level of organizational commitment.

1.5.2   The researcher also makes the assumption that respondents' educational background and income level do not influence organizational commitment.

1.6 The Importance of The Study

Based on the literature research, the researcher notes that higher level of commitment is linked with the desire to remain with the organization. It is also distinguished that an employee commitment and attachment to the organization can be increased through effort to improve the organization's social atmosphere and sense of purpose.

Studies on organizational commitment are still few and it is the researcher's intention to contribute to the lists of findings related to the topic specifically in determining the factors contributing to the deteriorating perception of the public toward the Malaysian education system and its personnel.

Information gained can be used to help improve the work conditions of the teachers. Such information can help the Ministry of Education to maximize the potential of attracting and retaining talented teachers for school teaching effectiveness (Abdul Roning Pading, 1994). It is hoped that by improving the climate conducive to the needs of the teachers, the Education Ministry can attract better candidates and at the same time retain the best teachers in the education organization.

1.7 The Organization of the Study

This study is organized into five chapters. Chapter 1 discusses the problem statements, the purpose of the study, the limitations of the study, the definitions of terms, the assumptions and the importance of the study. The literature reviews on organizational commitment, organizational climate and communication climate are covered in chapter 2. Chapter 3 describes the research design and methodology used. The type of study, sample and sampling technique, data collection technique, instrument and data analysis technique are described in the chapter.

Chapter 4 consists of data analysis. It examines the respondents' characteristics and psychometric properties of the inventory used. The hypothesis tests are carried out. Chapter 5 presents the conclusion of the study. The major findings are discussed, followed by discussion of the limitations, implications and recommendations for future researches.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter is divided into 2 main sections. The first section briefly describes the issues on organizational commitment and its importance. The second section illustrates some of the factors affecting organizational commitment such as management styles, .

2.1 Organizational Commitment:

Organization commitment can be measured in a number of ways depending on how it is defined and used. In the 1960's, it was defined as a single component; however, most researchers generally agree that two views of organizational commitment now dominate literature: (1) attitudinal approach and (2) the behavioral approach (Liou & Nyhan, 1994).

The attitudinal approach refers to the attitude that an employee has towards one's organization. For example, an employee who has high organizational commitment will: (1) strongly believe in and accept the organization's goals and values; (2) exert a significant effort for the firm's benefit; and (3) desire to remain a member of the organization (Liou & Nyhan, 1994)

The behavioral approach states that an employee becomes attached or committed to an organization based on one's individual investment of time, money, or training that would be lost if one left the organization (Liou & Nyhan, 1994). Both of these approaches have one thing in common – organizational commitment requires active involvement by the employee with the organization. Organizational commitment extends beyond an employee's beliefs: it is displayed daily by one's actions on the job (Mowday, Steers & Porter, 1979)

Meyer and Allen (1991) labelled the three components of organizational commitment as affective, continuance and normative commitment. Affective commitment is defined as an employee's emotional ties and involvement with the organization . Continuance commitment refers to the cost that one associates with when resigning from an organization. Examples of such costs include: pensions, vacation time, and foregone future awards and promotions. And, normative commitment is defined as an employee's feeling or obligation to stay with the firm. These can be feelings of loyalty to a supervisor or to the organization's mission.

In another attempt to identify the antecedents of commitment , and their related effects, Balfour & Wechsler (1991) reported that higher level of commitment were linked with the desire to remain with the organization, but found no systematic connection between overall comitment and the extent of employee willingness to undertake efforts on behalf of the organization. Consequently, they argued that efforts to increase organizational commitment are probably not effective mechanisms for increasing employee effort and performance. Employee commitment and attachment

to the organization can be increased through efforts to improve the organization's social atmosphere and sense of purpose (Brooke & Price, 1989). In this perspective, Odom and his colleagues (Odom et al, 1990) highlighted a paradox. The predominant dimension of organizational culture within the sample organizations was bureaucratic, and was found to be least conducive to the creation of employee commitment, job satisfaction, and work-group cohesion.

Positive attitudinal reactions, in the format of greater loyalty and attachment to the adoption of more flexible management styles are relatively sharper. O'Reilly (1989) observed that amongst the factors that tend to create positive cultures and a commitment to the firm are the existence of: systems of participation that rely on processes of increasingly stronger commitment; a management style that helps employees interpret their own reasons for working. Bourantas & and Papalexandris (1992) stated that organizational commitment is more likely to be found amongst employees who believe that they are being treated as resources to be developed rather than as commodities to buy and sell.

2.2 Importance Of Organizational Commitment

Clearly, the increased complexity of work organizations combined with the significant technological changes that have taken place in recent years, make the notion of commitment especially important. The emerging views in this area are that to create a successful workplace, an organization must concentrate its energies on both economic and social performance, and invest on employee commitment rather than

compliance. Building commitment and loyalty is regarded as one of the most important functions of organizational socialization (Schein, 1988)

Abdullah (1984) states that commitment brings about professionalism where one willingly commits to use one's knowledge and skill towards the improvement of the quality of life of the general public that goes beyond the person's basis for income, job security and life-long career. Jain (1984) believes that the competence and commitment of whole staff need to be upgraded if an enterprise is to prosper in an increasingly difficult business environment.

The enhancement of corporate loyalty could be one of the many solutions to organizational survival in both public and private sectors. Establishing a corporate culture that gives employees a stake in the success of the organization might be a viable avenue in attempts to develop and maintain greater employee loyalty and attachment. In all this, there will of course always be a problem of choice and development of appropriate management structures and styles that might provide the required landmarks in developing suitable corporate cultures. As a reflection of the dominant management style, corporate culture tends to provide informal ground rules and prescribes values and goals (Zeffane, 1995).

The encouragement of employee involvement (through specific programs) helps achieve employees' desires for empowerment and employers' demands for a commitment to organizational goals. These programs are much more easily applicable, and hence more likely to occur, in participative cultures. The answer to the question of employee commitment, enthusiasm, morale, loyalty and attachment may

consist not only in providing motivators, but also to remove demotivators such as styles of management not suited to their context and to contemporary employees' aspirations. There is strong evidence to suggest that successful managers tend to be 'good students' of human commitment and loyalty (Pierce & Furo, 1990)

Managers of contemporary organizations in both public and private sectors need to determine how their organization inspires employee commitment through its dominant management style(s). Contemporary managers no longer need to bribe, cajole or humor people into being more committed and more loyal to the organization. Rather, they must try to craft management strategies around principles emphasizing "flexibility and adaptation" so that work might be seen intrinsically more rewarding (Zeffane, 1995).

Commitment makes up one of the three culture components (the other two are competence and consistency). What the organization has to do is to instill commitment to a common philosophy and purpose, recognizing that employee commitment to a corporate philosophy must coincide with both individuals and collective interest (Oli Mohamed, 1991)

One of the most contended views is that positive organizational commitment, including feelings of affiliation, attachment and citizenship behavior, tends to improve organizational efficiency and distinctiveness by contributing to resource transformations, innovativeness, and adaptability (Williams & Anderson, 1991). As such, organizational commitment has important implications for both individual and organizational outcomes and is central to organizational life. In general, the

antecedents of commitment have been grouped into two categories: personal characteristics and situational attributes. However, previous research has not reached any substantial agreement on the precedence of the above characteristics. While some researchers have found (and argued) the prevalence of personal characteristics (Brooks & Seers, 1991), others have tended to emphasize situational effects (Grau et al, 1991)

Organizational Commitment and Employee Turnover

Organizational commitment has been shown in research studies to be a "significant predictor of turnover". Jenkins (1993) states that organizational commitment is a more stable construct than job satisfaction in predicting turnover. In his research, he hypothesizes that a personality variable called self-monitoring acts as a moderating variable in explaining the difference in variance in turnover intentions.

A primary reason for the interest in researching organizational commitment is perhaps higher levels of commitment do increase job performance and do decrease absenteeism and turnover. Most of the research on organizational commitment addresses the methods used to measure commitment, types of commitment and commitment as a predictor of employee turnover.

2.3 Factors Affecting Employee Commitment
2.3.1 Management Styles

Management style can significantly influence the degree of workers' commitment to organizational values and goals. In general, it has widely been shown