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**INFLUENCE OF LEADERSHIP
ASPECTS ON ORGANIZATIONAL
COMMITMENT**

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Tässä nykyaikaisen liiketoiminnan maailma täynnä kehitysten teknologian nykyään, inhimillisen tekijän kanssa sen loputon mahdollisuuksia innovaation pidetään arvokas yrityksen / organisaation. Organisaatioon sitoutuminen, tai toisin sanoen, työntekijä sitoutuminen on yksi merkittävimmistä näkökohdista, joka herätti useat tutkijat johtuen sen ohjaava vaikutus organisaation päivittäiseen toimintaan tai aikoina, koko kehitysprosessiin.

Tämä työ pyrkii tarjoamaan lyhyen yhteenvedon teorioita on konsepti, jossa on enemmän painoarvoa johtamisen näkökohtiin ja niiden vaikutukset organisaatioon sitoutuminen, verrattuna käytännön puolella tosielämän yritykset, yritykset ja organisaatiot syvähaastatteluja ja verkossa laadullinen vastaukset 15 osallistujaa.

Vertaileva lähestymistapa tehtiin seuraavat tutkimuskysymykset ja tavoitteet. Tuotamat tulokset vastaavat viittä kysymyksiä seurasi. Ensinnäkin, organisaatioon sitoutuminen määritellään pakolliset velvollisuudet, tahtoa ottaa ylimääräistä vaivaa ja psykologinen side työntekijän on organisaatiolle. Toiseksi käsite on tärkeä, koska sen vahva korrelaatio työsuoritus, vaihtuvuus ja aikomuksensa poistua. Kolmanneksi on viisi yhteistä vaikuttavia tekijöitä muotoinen henkilöstön sitoutuminen, nimittäin: työolot, palkka / edut, edistäminen näköpiirissä, ottelun arvoista, ja suhde johtajien ja työtovereiden. Neljänneksi ihanteellinen johtaja odotetaan ilmaista tiettyjä ominaisuuksia, kuten mahdollisuuden huomaavainen, kunnioittava, luotettava, innostava ja kannustava. Lopuksi, mitä käytäntöjä, jotka parantavat organisaatioon sitoutuminen, on suositeltavaa, että konkreettisia kannustimia, kuten taloudellinen tuki täydennys- kurssien tai säännöllistä palkintoja annetaan, työkierto käytetään, ja avoimen keskustelun keskinäistä päätöksentekoprosessia on järjestetty työntekijöille asioista läheisesti liittyvät huolenaiheensa oikeudenmukaisesti.

ABSTRACT

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In this modern business world full of advancements in technology nowadays, the human factor with its endless potential of innovation is regarded as a valuable asset for a company/organization. Organizational commitment, or in other words, employee commitment is one of the significant aspects that attracted the attention of several researchers due to its determining effect on an organization's daily operation or at times, the whole developmental process.

This thesis aims to provide a brief summary of contemporary theories on the concept with a further emphasis on the leadership aspects and their impacts on organizational commitment, in comparison with the practical side at real-life corporations, companies and organizations through in-depth interviews and online qualitative responses from 15 participants.

The comparative approach was done following the research questions and objectives. The results produced correspond to five issues as followed. First, organizational commitment is defined as the obligatory responsibilities, the will to take extra effort and the psychological bond an employee has to an organization. Second, the concept is important due to its strong correlation with job performance, turnover rate and intention to leave. Third, there are five common factors affecting the form of employee commitment, namely: working conditions, salary/benefits, promotion prospect, match of values, and relationship with leaders and colleagues. Fourth, the ideal leader is expected to express certain qualities such as being considerate, respectful, reliable, inspiring and supportive. Finally, regarding the practices that enhance organizational commitment, it is recommended that tangible incentives such as financial support for further professional training courses or periodic rewards are given, job rotation is employed, and open discussion with mutual decision making process is arranged for employees on matters closely relating to their concerns in a fair manner.

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1 INTRODUCTION

This thesis aims to study the theoretical impact of the organizational commitment concept in greater detail and examine the leadership aspects which contribute to employee commitment, as well as possible specific practices from the organizations' leaders came out to promote commitment in an empirical study. The theories and practical findings will be compared and reported to provide an understanding of how commitment can be created and supported from both subordinate and leader perspectives. The aim of the study is to list the potential leadership aspects (e.g. styles, conducts and attitudes) that affect organizational commitment and its relationship with other important concepts, followed by the common practices to promote this phenomenon to further the positive organizations' operational outcomes.

1.1 Background of the Study

Numerous studies regarding the concept of organizational commitment have been conducted in the past few decades. Allen and Meyer provided a description of the concept which contains a model of the three components of organisational commitment in the year 1990 (affective, continuance, and normative commitment) (as cited in Robinson, Perryman and Hayday 2004). Even though this model was created early, it has since then remained the reliability and been referred to in several other studies (see Lok and Crawford 1999; Elizur and Koslowsky 2001; Robinson et al. 2004; Nwibere 2014; Colquitt, Lepine and Wesson 2015).

1.2 Research Objectives and Questions

The paper presents a research problem which is to identify the behaviors and practices exerted by leaders that might create a considerable impact on organizational commitment universally from the subordinate's point of view as well as that of the leader's. It was expected that a common approach would be difficult to reflect the magnitude of all factors that influence organizational commitment within specific industries (Major, Morganson and Bolen 2012). However, a compact guideline is

crucial in order to help business operatives have a clearer big picture of how to enhance the daily business performances, provided the considerable influence from employee commitment follows certain leadership behaviors. Several questions are posed to analyze this issue:

- What is organizational commitment and how could it have an effect on the way a business operates?
- How important is it to promote this concept further?
- What are the perceived antecedents and practices, especially regarding several leadership aspects that have been implemented previously to enhance employee commitment?
- Is there any difference in the understanding of organizational commitment and the emphasis on the influence of leadership between the leaders' and subordinate' perspectives?
- Is there a gap between the knowledge collected in previous researches and those which are implemented in practice today?

Clear research objectives are defined as followed in order to tackle the research problem efficiently:

- Objective 1: To acquire a collective understanding of the theories previously formed in the field, including a solid definition of the concept organizational commitment and perceived leadership behaviors having an impact on that.
- Objective 2: To carry out the empirical study based on reliable and valid research tools and theories to identify the leadership aspects (e.g. behavior and practices) that exert an impact on organizational commitment in both subordinate and leader perspectives in practice today.
- Objective 3: To analyze and report the results and compare them to the compiled theories to find supporting findings and/or reality gap and construct a general guideline on the promotion of the organizational commitment concept for a more successful business operation.

1.3 Structure of the Study

This thesis study comprises four main parts: the introduction to the thesis topic with its problems and objectives, the theoretical framework constructed based on a literature review of modern knowledge regarding organizational commitment, the research method employed for the study, the empirical study to examine the practical side and real-case examples of the concept with discussions in relation with the theories collected and suggestions for future studies.

1.4 Limitations of the Study

Due to the aim to construct a general guideline for the organizational commitment concept practice, the study might show limits in industry-specific cases. The scope of organizations will possibly be neglected as well since this factor adds more complicated layers in a general construction. Furthermore, the follow-up questions during the qualitative interviews created by the interviewer might prime prejudices and directions, thus influencing the responses of the interviewees and neglecting some industry-specific insights regarding the topic.

1.5 Research Methodology

The research approach chosen for this study is a mixed method. The purpose is to identify the aspects in the leadership concept that are dominant in creating organizational commitment and which practices are employed in promoting the concept. A survey containing both quantitative and qualitative queries will be both utilized in face-to-face interviews and distributed online to respondents. Responses possibly retrieved from a number of employees in certain organizations might adequately serve to gain further in-depth detail for a clear picture of this perspective. Furthermore, the research is done with the purpose of collecting information from both the leaders' point of view and the subordinates'. Face-to-face interviews are favorable due to their advantage of creating a comfortable environment which induces in-

depth responses from interviewees. However, in case of difficulties regarding geographical distance, a survey version might be sent to them after communicating through e-mail or social network beforehand for research approval. It would be desirable to acquire information from companies from several different industries to identify the denominator of dominant practices influencing organizational commitment, thus contribute to the general guideline for the enhancement of the concept.

Subsequently, valid data and information collected will be analyzed and compared with related theories previously reviewed to record any supporting or mismatching finding.

2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In this theoretical framework, the researcher aims to conduct a thorough literature review to synthesize the key findings about organizational commitment concept. The framework consists of four parts: the definition of organizational commitment, its significance and relations with other important concepts, the factors creating organizational commitment, and the leadership aspects with their impacts on organizational commitment.

2.1 Organizational Commitment Conceptualization

In this part, how the concept organization commitment was defined by several previous researchers and what kind of relations it has with other significant concepts in organizational behavior theory are illustrated to draw an image of the notion.

2.1.1 Defining Organizational Commitment

The definition of commitment in general, according to Thomas (2002, 29-30), is a bond with a purpose: an individual promises to commit to a desired goal or intention and thus hold himself accountable for delivering that purpose. This is because, in a world with plenty of uncertainties, we need to continuously follow our progress and be responsible in dealing with upcoming obstacles, spending a significant amount of will power, to effectively achieve the aim we have chosen (Thomas 2002, 29-30).

There is a need for a thorough conceptualization process for organizational commitment as professionals so far have not reached a general agreement on its definition (Mowday, Steers and Porter 1979; Meyer and Allen 1991). However, Table 1 synthesized by Lim (2014) comprising of several definitions of several researchers can assist in providing a big picture of the variety in understanding this concept:

Table 1. Organizational commitment defined by previous researchers

Author	Definition of the term commitment
--------	-----------------------------------

Becker (1960)	Engage in a consistent line of activity
Porter et al. (1974)	Identification and involvement
Steers (1977)	Degree of identification and involvement in current employing organization, a psychological bond.
Mowday et al. (1979)	Identification and involvement: beliefs and accepts the organization's goals and values, willing to put enough energy to help the organizational succeed, and wants to maintain organizational membership.
Scholl (1981)	Adherence to organizational norms or values, e.g. remain loyal even when expectancy conditions are not met.
Meyer and Allen (1984)	Emotional, behavioural and obligatory attachment.
Reichers (1985)	Identify with organization's goal and willing to work toward them or getting involved with the organization.
Blau and Boal (1987)	Identification with organization goals to retain membership
Allen and Meyer (1991)	Affective commitment is based on feelings of loyalty.
O'Reilly and Chatman (1991)	A psychological bond.
Busch et al. (1998)	Identifies with organization goals and values, and feel attached to the organization.
Meyer and Herscovitch (2001)	Binding force.
Jones (2006)	Psychological relationship due to value proposition of the employment situation.
Cohen (2007)	Force binding individual to an action.
Zeffane and AL Zarooni (2008)	Extent to which an individual is willing to remain in the organization.

Abu Elanain (2010)	Degree of loyalty to the organization.
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The dichotomy of attitude and behaviour in the commitment concept was addressed by previous researchers since they observed that an individual can surpass the standard expectations when put into a locked situation with the organization (behavioural) and/or develop a congruence between his own mind set and the organization's goals and values (attitudinal) (Mowday, Porter and Steers 1982). However, the two schools of thoughts have a close and complementary relationship (Mowday et al. 1982; Meyer and Allen 1991) and thus the expansion of the concept later on regarded as a psychological state in a three-component model developed by Meyer and Allen (1991) provided a conceptualization with an assistance to reduce confusion for further research. Given the variety of definitions, there are three distinctive themes which were reflected in researchers' perspectives and approaches when employees *want*, *need*, or *ought to* commit (Meyer and Allen 1991):

- Affection – the desire to commit:
 - Kanter's cohesion commitment concept when an individual attach emotion to the group (Mowday et al. 1982; Reyes 1990),
 - Kagan's observation when an individual want to master the work environment and obtain affection with nurturance from it (Reyes 1990),
 - Meyer & Smith's, Buchanan's, Hall, Schneider, & Nygren's reflection when an individual identifies with goals and values of employers (Meyer and Allen 1991; Meyer and Allen 1997).
 - Value/goal congruence commitment as employees find an alignment between organization goals and their own (Furnham and Taylor 2011).
- Cost – the need to commit:
 - Becker's side bet theory as an employee accumulates the costs invested in the relationship with the organization and decides to retain employment (Reyes 1990; Meyer and Allen 1991; Meyer and Allen 1997; Lim 2014).

- Hrebiniak and Alutto's exchange perspective, Kanter's continuance commitment and Etzioni's calculative involvement as an employee evaluates the reward/benefits from the organization with the relationship maintenance contribution to make the commitment decision (Reyes 1990; Meyer and Allen 1991; Meyer and Allen 1997).
- Investment commitment as employees make judgements based on cost-benefit trade-offs to come to decision of staying within the organization and social commitment as employees' social identity, support and network are mainly based within the workplace (Furnham and Taylor 2011).
- Obligation – the bind to commit:
 - Kanter's proposal of control commitment as an employee feels influenced by the norms and values of the organization and obliged to follow these on a regular basis (Reyes 1990).
 - Etzioni's moral involvement as the highest form of employee commitment and Wiener's description of normative power as the individual exhibits his positive identity, orientation and internalization to the organization's values, goals, norms and authority structure (Reyes 1990; Meyer and Allen 1997).
 - Marsh and Mannari's lifetime commitment as an employee decides to stay within the organization as a morally right choice to make without criticizing or considering how much has been gained from the relationship with the organization (Meyer and Allen 1991; Meyer and Allen 1997).

Considering these three major themes, Meyer and Herscovitch (2001) developed a general model for the concept, with various implications for further research, development and management guidelines as shown in Figure 1:

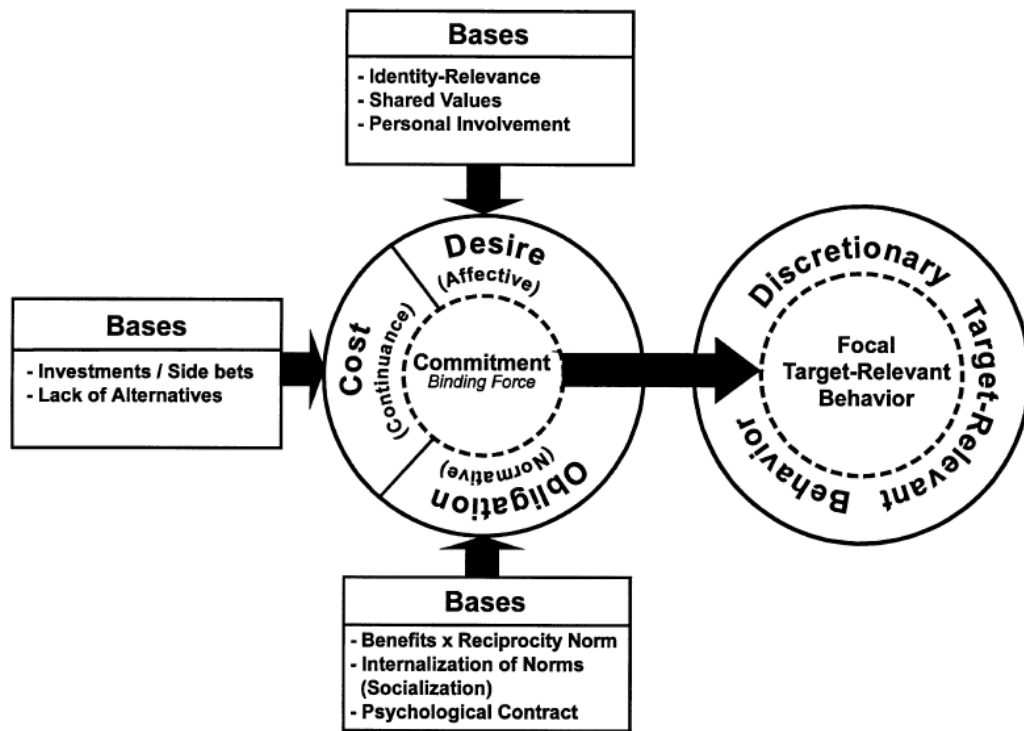


Figure 1. A General Model of Workplace Commitment

In order to further examine what contributes to commitment, desirable outcomes, and how to foster this phenomenon within employees, this model with the commitment forms suggested by Meyer and Allen (1991) – affective commitment, continuance commitment and normative commitment – will be used as a conceptualization basis for the thesis. These three forms, according to Martin (2008), have certain interrelations: normative commitment is influenced by affective commitment and these two altogether determine continuance commitment.

2.1.2 Organizational Commitment in Relation to Other Concepts

The relationships between organizational commitment and other distinguished concepts within the field should be considered as well in order to acquire a better understanding of its impacts on organizations' day-to-day operations.

Job involvement and *job satisfaction* have an effect of contributing to employee commitment and this correlation between these concepts as different individual variables has been supported by several previous studies: not only in the Western context but also further reassured in the developing part of the world today (Nwibere 2014). Commitment is not to be used interchangeably with satisfaction, involvement and attachment, because unlike being focused on motivation from the job and attitudes towards or experience obtained from the occupation, it has a broader approach of organization values endorsement, goals acceptance and loyalty expressed by employees (Furnham and Taylor 2011).

Emotional intelligence is found to have a positive relationship with employee commitment and the increased practice of obligatory skill trainings are recommended to nourish this factor (Rangriz and Mehrabi 2010). In another finding by Khandelwal, *socio-cultural* and *organisational values* are emphasized and close consideration being practiced with an alignment of these features is suggested (2009).

Although occasionally being used interchangeably, organizational commitment is not necessarily alike to, but rather as a base for the *engagement* concept since the latter one reflects a further involvement of the two-way nature between the highly attentive employees with the organization's values (Kantola 2016, 92-93). However, the positive outcomes subsequent to the development from commitment to engagement are the ultimate goals for managers and leaders to aim for (such as employees' better satisfaction, better performance (Lee and Mowday 1987) and extra effort beyond initial requirements to make a change when a situation calls for) (Kantola 2016).

In previous works of several researchers, a negative correlation has been found between organizational commitment and these individual variables: *withdrawal intention, actual turnover, and absenteeism* (Tuorinsuo-Byman 2004; Cohen 2008). Tuorinsuo-Byman (2004) also has a remark of employees with strong affective or continuance commitment, compared to those with weak commitment, have a higher likelihood to stay in the organization.

2.2 Significance of the Organizational Commitment Concept

Understanding the definition of the concept, organizations might question its necessity in their business along with possible related factors and practices. The organizational concept, with its nature being easily regarded to loyalty as a desirable trait of employees, appeals to both managers and academics for further understanding, as well as contributes to our curiosity in comprehending people's identity and purposeful linkage with external environment (Mowday et al. 1982). The importance of the concept organizational commitment is emphasized in several studies (see Shore and Martin 1989; Lok and Crawford 1999; Elizur and Koslowsky 2001; Erickson and Roloff 2007), as committed employees have the willing to put the interests of the organization in priority and demonstrate innovation and responsibility to pursue these interest (Fogarty 1996). Kantola (2016) also reports findings that indicate higher productivity, followed by better satisfaction, positive behaviour and motivation along with actual lower turnover of employees possessing more desire and intention to stay in the organization (Steers 1977).

There are several reasons for the need to promote commitment within an organization. In the current business world, firms increasingly embrace the lean approach, with fewer employees to take responsibility for the future success (Kantola 2016, 91). Therefore, it is not sufficient to care only about the productivity and talent of employees as the length of their stay in the firm should be taken into consideration as well to acquire additional benefits (Colquitt et al. 2015, 64). In their book, Boxall and Purcell reported from their perceived knowledge that managers in a firm with significant investments on technology tends to spend a relatively adequate amount to improve employees' skills, with which followed, commitment (2011, 83). Shore and Martin (1989) further support this by presenting a close relation between the concept and employees' performance level in the long term, as well as a high correlation of commitment with employee's intention to stay, or in other words, a significant signal to predict whether an employee wants to leave the organization (Lee and Mowday 1987).

In addition, the bond of mutual feeling between employees and the organization created by organisational commitment will result in positive attitudes and a consistency of supportive behaviours (Nwibere 2014). As an important intangible asset for a firm, greater commitment perceived in employees can create stronger engagement and accumulate valuable experiences, forming a competitive advantage especially within the service business by having better ability to attract and retain essential customers (Boxall and Purcell 2011, 224; Kantola 2016, 91). Even though an encouragement of rational, logical approach in performance is certainly worthy to consider, Katzenbach (2000) argues that commitment is superior due to its potential to drive employees beyond the boundaries of initial standards, responsibilities and expectations.

Describing a scenario where employees are not committed, Kantola (2016) proposed severe issues resulting from them possibly be frequently absent or show up late for work. The worst form of what these behaviours might lead to is unwanted turnover, putting the firm through financial problems and strenuous tasks to deal with such as extra costs for recruiting replacing employees, budgets for training and potentially a loss of knowledge leading to worsened customer relationship (Kantola 2016).

In order to understand how the concept could produce visible outcomes, organizations need to identify dominant factors that help create commitment, and not without viable practices, to promote this concept deeply established within employees' perception.

2.3 Antecedents of Organizational Commitment

Steers' well-known model in Figure 2 below demonstrating the antecedents and outcomes of organizational commitment (1977) has been referred to in several subsequent studies, imposing a high validity and relevancy to further research in the concept (see Reyes 1990; Tuorinsuo-Byman 2004; Smith and Hitt 2009; Lim 2014; Kantola 2016):

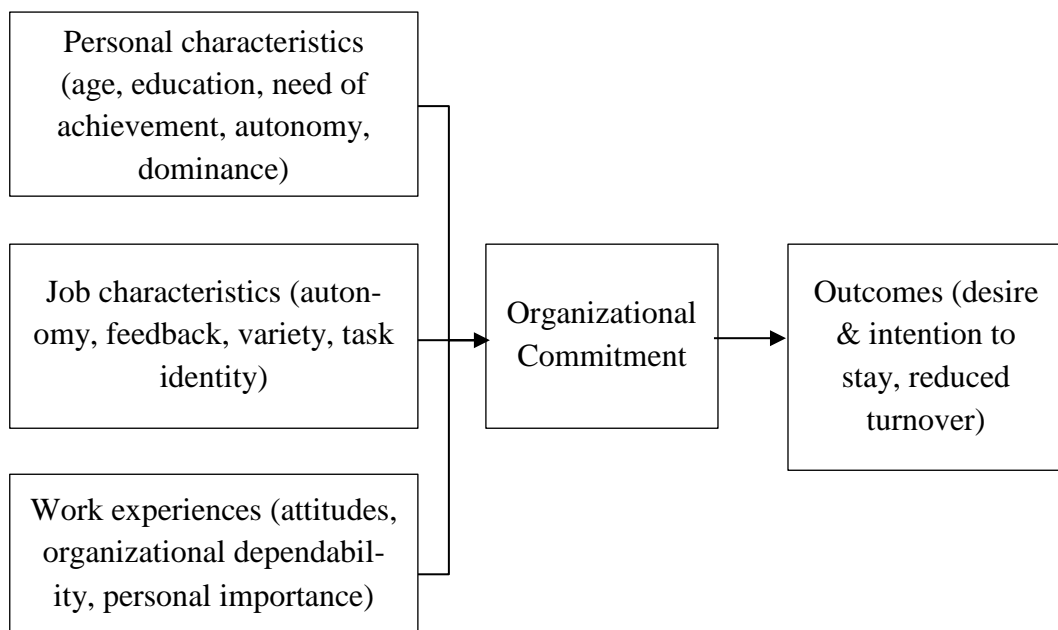


Figure 2. Antecedents and Outcomes of Organizational Commitment

Supporting Steers' model, it is reported in several studies that *demographic factors* such as gender and age have certain influence employees' intention to commit (Reed, Kratchman and Strawser 1994; Fogarty 1996; Elizur and Koslowsky 2001; Erickson and Roloff 2007). In addition, numerous factors identified in a study by Walker Information in 1999, which were organization reputation, pronounced justice, and concern given to employees, together enhanced Steers' findings (Bernardi and Guptill 2008). However, Bernardi and Guptill (2008) reported that the finding in which women might possibly have a stronger ethical consciousness than men do was limitedly relevant in North America context. Another study conducted in Hong

Kong indicated that gender discrimination and injustice have a negative correlation with employee commitment (Foley, Hang-Yue and Wong 2005). Thus, further researches with geographically extended samples might examine whether these findings could be applied universally. To settle an overview on the gender issue, Metcalfe and Dick (2002) summarized several studies reporting a dissension in whether gender and commitment are consistently interrelated or either one gender shows stronger likelihood than the other. The empirical study in this thesis is therefore expected to find relevant evidence for the issue.

Katzenbach (2000) presented a successful case of Home Depot – the North America's leading home improvement retailer – with the major driver as emotional commitment expressed by the employees through their strong feelings towards their individual roles in the organization; as well as a spread of positive energy within the emotionally committed employees of KFC, leading them towards strong recovery and further development from the stagnant situation before 1994 on till later, through focusing on building a “restaurant-operating culture” with recognition of employee performance, frontline leadership and healthy employee competition.

2.4 Leadership Aspects and Organizational Commitment

The leadership aspects in this study are understood firstly as the qualities, attitudes, and behaviours which leaders express and, secondly, the practices utilized by the leaders. These aspects have noticeable effect on the creation and maintenance of organizational commitment as will be elaborated below.

2.4.1 Notable leadership qualities with impact on employee commitment

Taking into consideration the multiple categories of preliminary conditions of organizational commitment provided above in Figure 2 from Steers (1977), several specific sources/practices contributed to construct the concept are examined regarding aspects of leadership, especially in terms of job characteristics and work experiences. Erickson and Roloff suggest that certain supporting practices from the organizations' supervisors can help employee construct the concept and thus further

decrease the negative effects of voluntary turnover (1999). Organizational culture, subculture and the employed *leadership style* could create an impact on the concept of organizational commitment (Lok and Crawford 1999; Mosadeghrad and Ferdosi 2013). For instance, in a recent study conducted in North Africa, *participative leadership style* (i.e. a cooperation between leaders and employees in the decision-making process) could enhance commitment in male employees by encouraging them to align their values and goals with those of the organization, as well as female employees by inspiring them to exert extra energy at work (Bell and Mjoli 2014).

It is worth mentioning the renowned leadership styles in numerous organizational behaviour literature, which are *transformational leadership* (i.e. a management style with a cost-benefit basis, where employees are rewarded according to their performance and leaders have certain requirements), *transactional leadership* (i.e. leaders encourages employees to share a vision with them and thus employees are willing to deliver extra effort beyond expected), and *passive-avoidant leadership* (i.e. leaders who do not act or be responsible for preventive plans unless any issue arises) (Clinebell, Škudienė, Trijonyte and Reardon 2013). Clinebell et al. (2013) study indicates that the two former form of leadership have positive influence on employee commitment, with transformational one encouraging the level of affective and normative commitment while transactional one furthering continuance commitment. The last style has been reported to produce inconsistent results in which commitment is either not correlated or negatively influenced (Clinebell et al. 2013).

In the ten case studies with successful change in organizational culture of big companies (Xerox, General Electric, Nissan, British Airways, etc.) conducted by Kotter and Heskett (1992), effective leaders could convince people within the firms to commit to the organization and its direction, vision and strategy regardless of several barriers. Similarly, it is mentioned that in several empirical findings, leaders with charisma can envision a future scenario for followers to encourage their productive capacity, satisfaction as well as commitment to the firms' objectives since

these followers were attached to the to an extent that they exclude any information that does not contribute to leaders' visions (Judge, Piccolo and Kosalka 2009).

However, the impact of leader influence on employee employment seems to need further emphasis and in-depth research. In his book, Katzenbach (2000) claims that several companies have not been able to acknowledge the potential of emotional commitment within employees, thus spending little effort in constructing such a committed workforce with peak performance. Furthermore, they might have failed to choose another appropriate approach rather than a sole management of consequences (i.e. setting clear goals, creating clear measures, keeping individuals accountable for particular results) to nurture this phenomenon which is a synergy of leaders and employees cohesion (Katzenbach 2000):

- Leaders' reinforcement and alignment of employee efforts to performance
- Leaders' effort in express and spread positive energy within the organization
- Leaders' level of strategic decision-making in creating the balance between employee fulfilment and organization performance

Folkman (2016) reports in his findings that the effectiveness of leadership perceived in direct managers is the most influential factor in the satisfaction and commitment of employees. Figure 2 below adapted from his paper with data collected from 30,551 leaders across multiple industries indicates that best leaders can make a considerable difference in their employee commitment and satisfaction compared to less effective ones (Folkman 2016):

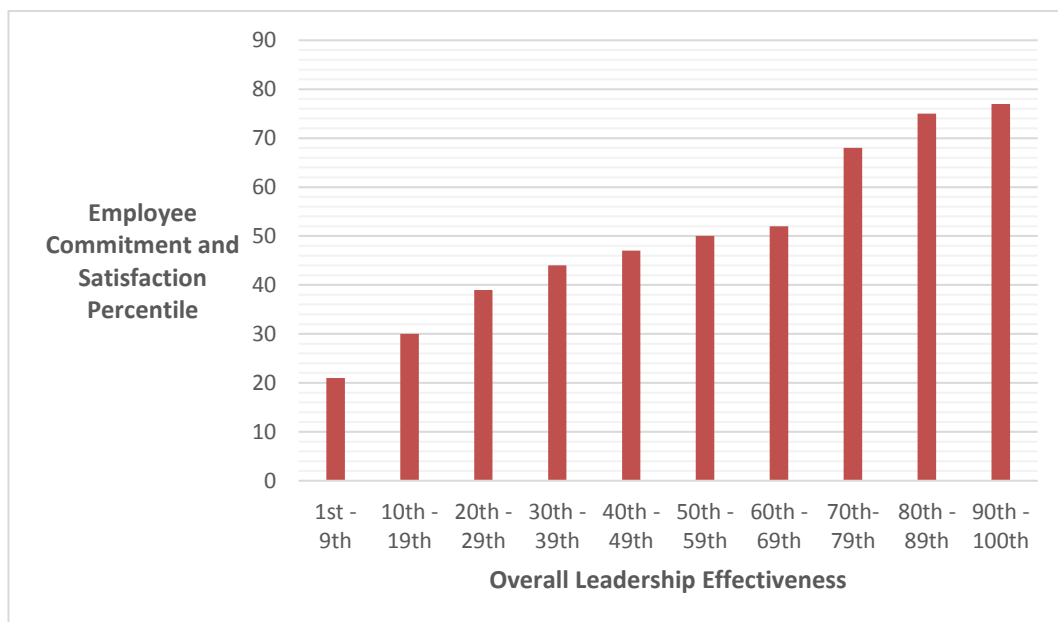


Figure 3. Leadership Effectiveness and Employee Commitment and Satisfaction.

One of the essential antecedents of the commitment concept that is relatively intuitive in popular belief, also with several empirical confirmations provided, is the *leadership behaviour* of a manager in an organization (Suutari 1993; Mosadeghrad and Ferdosi 2013). Five chosen aspects of leadership behaviour by Suutari that correlates positively with employee commitment, reflecting the antecedents of employee commitment listed by Steers (1977) consists of:

- *Recognition* – how much of a leader’s recognition provided to employees with positive performance,
- *Informing* – how well a leader provide subordinates with information and plans influencing their work,
- *Consideration* – how well a leader portray supportive manner towards employees,
- *Decision participation* – how much of a leader’s willing to incorporate employees’ involvement in the decision-making process, and;
- *Role clarification* – how well a leader provide subordinates with a clear profession expectation. (Suutari 1993)

In their study, Bambacas and Patrickson (2008) mentioned that effective leaders should nurture trust and openness within employees by being truthful, honest, and consistently reliable in dealing with problems.

In his report, Folkman (2016) constructed a list of more specific behaviours, which have been supported by evidence, that have more considerable influence. The following table is a summary of the particular practices observed in effective leaders with highly committed and satisfied employees:

Table 2. 9 Vital Leadership Behaviours with Strong Impact on Employee Commitment and Satisfaction.

Leadership behaviours	Influential practices
1. Inspiration and motivation	Express enthusiasm and exert energy to inspire and motivate employees towards improved performance and better achievement at tougher challenges.
2. Result orientation	Demonstrate a focus on the goals at top priority with uncompromising high standards and continual reminder of expected excellence in performing the tasks.
3. Strategic perspective	Provide the employees with a solid direction and sense of purpose towards which their effort in rolling the wheel of success is spent on.
4. Collaboration	Create a synergy between individuals and teams with high transparency and cooperation, which also contribute to a more positive working environment.
5. Action with integrity	Be a role model for the employees by setting own examples, demonstrating high consistency and integrity between the words spoken and the actions performed.

6. Trust	Express knowledge and expertise in decision-making process with confidence, honesty, consistency, and awareness of employees' concern to build trust.
7. Development support	Show positive attitude towards employees who achieve a progress in development, support and enhance the learning atmosphere with genuine interest in helping employees gain lessons from mistakes.
8. Relationship construction	Possess a concern for employees' concerns and actively show an acknowledgement of the individuals' values to nurture strong relationships.
9. Courage	Deal with conflicts directly by issuing the problems with an open and sincere manner, involving others in the resolution of these matters.

2.4.2 Suggestions for leaders in building employee commitment

Attracting talented employees is a challenging task, however, retaining them is even more demanding since organization's values and image can appeal to people but they might leave later on due to inappropriate leadership performed by the bosses (Furnham and Taylor 2011) and there is no single simple answer to solve the issue. Thus, leaders in organizations might seek for appropriate guidelines with stable theoretical basement and appropriate empirical evidences.

Deriving from their model (see Figure 1), Meyer and Herscovitch (2001) made particular management recommendations for leaders in organizations to build employee commitment:

- Assessing the required behaviours of commitment to achieve certain outcomes, to decide whether a focus in commitment in general to the organization and/or in specific goals (e.g. when employees should be concerned the most with prioritized goals of the organization) is optimal.

- Supporting employees to acquire the meaning and conduct of the desired course of actions that correlates with the appropriate commitment target values (e.g. help employees see particular objectives and projects of the organization as desirable for their own personal developments as well).
- Focusing in nurturing affective commitment as it is desirable for the organization to have employees with the same goals, values in their minds and therefore acts according to the organization's best interests.
- Considering the likelihood of a chosen strategy to be perceived or appropriate to create certain outcome:
 - Emphasis on fear of failure in employees might lead to continuance commitment;
 - Support practices resulting in employees with indebted feelings might result in normative commitment, and;
 - Higher involvement of employees in decision-making process might foster affective commitment.

In another study conducted in Spain, the empirical research results also support a suggestion for leaders to cultivate employee commitment: Having tasks and structured designed in an inspiring way to create a sense of accomplishment, an urge for employees to demonstrate their talents and a recognition of personal values (Martin 2008).

Furthermore, it is important to take into account whether a mismatch of perspectives between academic individuals, experienced employers and employees might exist. In her article, Kellaway (2016) presented such a case when a simple strategy suggested by the dean of Columbia's School of Professional Studies to keep employees stay in the firm, which involves motivation through learning, investment in human resources and strong marketing of the firms' benefits, was proved to be not enough for several employees from large firms such as Unilever, Sainsbury's, Lloyds, Goldman participating in a group discussion with Kellaway (2016). She presented

various problems that the employers acting as immediate leaders of the mentioned employees had:

- Fail to provide recognition and appreciation to the work done by employees
- Fail to provide a sense of purpose to the work assigned to employees
- Show a constant lack of confidence in the quality of the work performed by employees
- Overemphasize the prospective description of the roles and the jobs
- Show contradictions in the firms' philosophy and real actions performed to serve customers (trying to sell extra services of high cost which are not particularly helpful to customers against stating to serve customers' best interests)

These issues have led to devastating results: employees were left being bored, discouraged and frustrated, with not only no effort in enhancing relationships within the firms, but also active search for new job opportunities and actual walkout from the firms (Kellaway 2016).

As the expertise of senior HR managers suggested in a study conducted by Bambacas and Patrickson (2008), leaders should, as they usually fail to, focus on delivering clear messages to subordinates, listen actively and lead collaboratively, in order to generating trust in employees and enhance their commitment. These HR experts mentioned key points to remember: a business issue/messaged requires clear explanation, great credibility, high transparency, employee-relatable language and respect to individual differences. In other words, leaders need to practice more effective interpersonal communication skills. (Bambacas and Patrickson 2008)

2.5 Essential Theoretical Recap

This session of the thesis aims to provide a brief summary of the primary relevant theories to the researcher's takeaway handbook. A recap of the essential knowledge gathered throughout the literature review process will be able to provide an entire

perspective of the current situation and support in constructing appropriate questionnaires to be used in the empirical study.

There has been a discord among various researchers in an absolute way of defining organizational commitment (Kara 2012; Yahaya and Ebrahim 2016) as this concept attracted several researchers due to its considerable significant correlation with other essential issue in organization behaviour such as employees' turnover rate, job satisfaction, absenteeism and performance (Mowday et al. 1982; Meyer and Herscovitch 2001; Abrahamsson 2002; Jena 2015; Yahaya and Ebrahim 2016). However, the researches have revolved around the question of to which extent that employees affiliate and associate with the organization (Brief and Aldag 1980). In addition, the category of commitment forms offered by Allen and Meyer (1991) in three main themes has been a compass for several subsequent researches:

- Affective commitment: the employees *want* to stay due to an emotional connection with the organization
- Normative commitment: the employees *ought to* stay due to a moral duty they have constructed with the organization.
- Continuance commitment: the employees *need to* stay due to cost-benefit basis they have achieved during the working time with the organization, in addition to a lack of employment alternatives. (Yahaya and Ebrahim 2016)

There are several factors that contribute to the formation of employee commitment such as individual characteristics and orientation, work conditions and practices (Khan, Khan, Khan, Nawaz and Yar 2013), as well as job characteristics (Steers 1977). In order to survive in such nowadays competitive environment, employee commitment as a way to effectively utilised the human capital will enable firms to develop sustainably, with in-time response towards subtle as well as sudden changes in technology, customer demands, and other diversified advancements (Abrahamsson 2002; Jena 2015).

Keeping these antecedents in consideration, the researcher aims to examine related aspects expressed in leadership behaviour and actions that contribute to employee commitment in an organization. Regarding the affective commitment category, it is reported that a stronger development of this phenomenon can be observed where leaders incorporate employees in the decision-making process (Tuorinsuo-Byman 2004) and when leaders provide employees with certain resources and opportunities (e.g. high-quality feedback, individually engaging and coherent messages, active interaction, flexibility, satisfaction, and clear goals) (Bambacas and Patrickson 2008; Martin 2008). Along with affective commitment, normative commitment in employees can also be enhanced through communicated messages which exert a sense of supportive and positive experiences (Bambacas and Patrickson 2008).

A model of leadership qualities that influence organizational commitment can be constructed as followed to form a framework for the empirical study:



Figure 4. Leadership Qualities Influencing Organizational Commitment

The qualities in Figure 4 can be explained further and specific suggestions for developing and acquiring them can be summarized as below:

- **Communication:** leaders who perform effective information exchange with employees are expected to:
 - Possess a concise, goal-oriented delivery of expectation and objectives to employees
 - Actively listen to employees' concern and inform them with relevant information to inspire and motivate them
- **Integrity:** leaders who are honest, truthful, open and transparent
 - Be reliable, responsible and consistent to act as a role model for employees
 - Emphasise transparency in interaction among employees and leaders
- **Acknowledgement:** leaders who provide employees with recognition
 - Demonstrate clearly the realization of employees' performance and effort
 - Actively provide constructive feedback to encourage employees' further development
 - Involve employees in decision-making process with respect to their individual interests

3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In this part, the methods employed in the thesis are introduced, with the consideration of the validity and reliability in the collection of information and data. The limitations regarding the methods and the sample aimed at for the study are also mentioned.

3.1 Research Methods

The aim of this study is to collect primary data for analysis through a combination of quantitative and qualitative research method. As a high-quality research is one with systematic structure, which comprises a specific goal and an organized plan for attaining that goal (Goddard and Melville 2004, 1), this study is constructed

with an effort to follow these standards. The objectives, as mentioned in an earlier section of the study, are to find out the most essential leadership aspects which might cast a significant influence on employee commitment. Thus, quantitative research is partly utilized in the study to find out the common qualities that most people agree upon (Newman and Benz 1998, 2). In addition, quantitative research is also an effort to confirm whether or not what suggested by previous theories were affirmative (Newman and Benz 1998, 3). In this study, an online questionnaire consisting of both quantitative and qualitative queries is designed and then utilized in face-to-face interviews with eight people as well as distributed online to six respondents. The quantitative section is meant to serve the main purpose of finding the most common, distinctive and significant qualities exerted by leaders which affect employee commitment from both the leader's and the subordinate's point of view across a wide range of industry. Qualitative question preparation is developed due to the capability of qualitative queries to provide further illustrations of the leadership concepts being examined in the study, indicating possibly multiple interpretations in different contexts and the extent to which they are important with theoretical constructs and practical applications (Tracy 2013). The analysis of qualitative responses also provides an advantage which is the ability to understand better the existing complexity in social phenomena through a step-by-step process of summarizing, interpreting and reorganizing data and information withdrawn from social situations, which synthesizes openness and a theory-based guidance procedure (Kohlbacher 2005). The study's ambition is to reflect elaborative details regarding the leadership influence on commitment from both subordinate's and leader's point of view. Face-to-face interviews are desirable, provided the favourable conditions, due to the fact that the interviewer can facilitate in clarifying certain issues and create a natural atmosphere to stimulate a better conversation with insights into the topic (Roller and Lavrakas 2015, 58). However, the online version of the questionnaire had to be distributed through emails and other networking channels due to distance or timing difficulties. This form has its own benefits as the respondents are

able to choose a suitable time to answer questions at their own pace with possibly more thoughtful retrospection (Roller and Lavrakas 2015, 59).

3.2 Data Collection, Validity and Reliability

The primary data for this study is collected from the results of an online distributed survey and face-to-face interviews. An online survey is advantageous when a study, which is also the case of this thesis, attempts to efficiently reach a large sample size distributed across geographical areas with a low budget and time constraint (Sue and Ritter 2007, 7).

It is crucial to keep in mind the validity aspect while constructing a survey. Validity is achieved when individual questions of a survey are linked with the concepts that the study aims to measure and together reflect a multidimensional view (Sue and Ritter 2007, 39). Thus, for this study, the researcher aims to design a questionnaire with much respect and high relevancy to what is suggested from the theoretical framework and other scientific materials specializing in research methodology in order to create the most possible concise and relevant questions. Several significant points to take into consideration are: avoid making respondents tend to answer in a socially desirable way, limiting the questions that are subject to a memory or estimation error, and determining whether possible biases might be introduced when the respondents do not have a clear opinion about the topic (Sue and Ritter 2007, 42).

The study must suffice the reliability quality as well in the sense that the research process is consistent, relatively stable and repeatable for other researchers to learn from and explore or develop more in further studies (Brink, Walt and Rensburg 2006). In order to fulfil this requirement, the researcher has refer to several previous research on related topics to acquire a decent study with the best effort possible to deliver results meeting certain standards.

3.3 Research Limitations

Although through the rigorous literature review have several important factors influencing organizational commitment been mentioned, the scope of the issue is relatively vast. Thus, the study cannot cover every antecedent that has an impact on the commitment of the employees, but rather naming the most common influential factors, trying to explore further on leadership aspects, listing popular implemented practices to encourage commitment and thus seeking to provide a guideline for leaders of organizations with relevant suggestions on how to possibly retain their precious workers with devoted spirits.

Despite the fact that sample size of the respondents for the study is limited, the results are able to reflect a pattern regarding commitment issues throughout a variety of industries and business categories, thus provide considerable insights into the topic and adequate materials for reflection in accordance with the existing theories to develop a proper approach to management and leadership issues.

4 EMPIRICAL STUDY

The empirical part of thesis contains the report of the results collected from 9 face-to-face interviews and 6 online questionnaire responses. The information is divided into leader perspective and subordinate perspective to show a direct comparison. After that, the conclusion with key points regarding how theories and practical findings have in common or differ and insightful reflection are presented.

4.1 Results & Analysis

Based on the theories found in the previous section of the study, an empirical research has been conducted to examine whether the knowledge acquired has reflected the situation in practice and to which certain extent. The questionnaire used in the interviews and online surveys consists of both quantitative and qualitative queries. In this section, the results obtained from interviews and online responses will be reported and analysed further. The analysis will be structured in a way that

answers the research questions and reach the research objectives raised in the first part of the study. At the end of the study, cogitations regarding future recommendations and fields of improvement will be made.

4.1.1 Background Information of the Research Participants

Of 15 responses collected, nine were extracted from face-to-face to interviews and the rest was recorded from online distributed surveys. Due to a tight schedule, a greater sample was not conveniently possible to reach. However, the aim was to collect information and data from participants with diverse backgrounds in terms of age, employment duration, and industries. Table 3 below is a summary of the participants' background information:

Table 3. Background Information of the Research Participants

Respondents	Age	Leader	Employment duration	Industries
A	46	Yes	~14 years	Telecommunication, Laws, Education
B	24	No	~2 years	Restaurant, Construction, Immigration
C	27	No	~3.5 years	Product Lifecycle Management Software
D	26	No	~7.5 years	Restaurant, Hotel
E	27	Yes	~6.5 years	Restaurant, Tourism, Post Office, Food Production
F	27	No	~7 years	Insurance, Restaurant

G	31	Yes	~9.5 years	Telecommunication, Media, Airlines
H	23	No	~2 years	Technology
I	26	Yes	~2 years	Engineering & Electronics
J	23	No	~1 year	NGO
K	23	No	~1 year	Education
L	23	Yes	~1.5 years	Professional Services – Accounting & Audit
M	28	Yes	~5 years	Tourism, Games, Digital Art Production, Social Network, Food Distribution
N	24	Yes	~3 years	Marine and Energy Manufacturing and Service
O	23	No	~1.5 years	Embassy Information Center, Heavy Industries & Infrastructure

In order to achieve one of the objectives stated in the first part of the study, which is constructing a comparison between leaders' and subordinates' perspectives, it was possible to acquire a relatively balance proportion of the people in leader and subordinate roles for the study as shown in Figure 5:

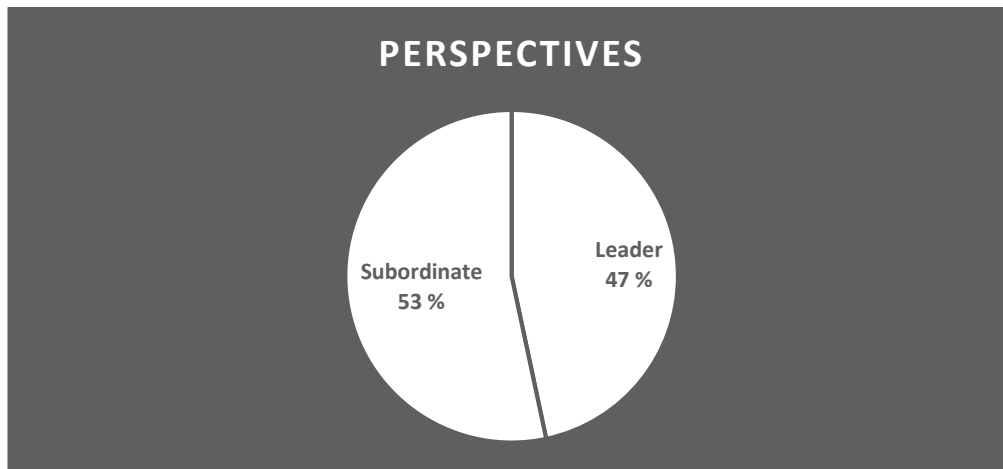


Figure 5. Perspectives of Research Participants

4.1.2 Organizational Commitment Definition and Creation

When asked to provide a definition of the concept, the participating respondents gave diverse points of view. Two respondents in the leader position exclusively mentioned this as a challenging problem worth discussing:

“Something that is challenging concerning employee commitment is how you measure employee commitment because different people can express the commitment by different ways.” – Participant A

“That truly depends, [...] All of that [...] defined a committed employee, because commitment takes many different forms.” – Participant M.

Nevertheless, it was possible to identify groups of similar opinions on what organizational commitment – or in other words – employee commitment means to them.

a. Leader perspective

Four out of seven respondents who were responsible as a leader at a workplace mentioned the obligations of an employee to the organization’s requirements stated in the contract or rules:

“Organizational or employee commitment, [...] first, it is your responsibility of the work you are doing [...]” – Participant E.

“That is when employees confirm that they understand the company requirements and follow exactly what they are supposed to do” – Participant G.

“I think they are voluntary or involuntary bonds between the company and the employees. [...] Involuntary bonds are for example contract requirements, or conditions that make it compulsory for them to follow and stay such as uniform, working time, etc.” – Participant I.

“[...], but I believe it's all boiled down to obligatory responsibilities that's been written in the employment contract [...], (that) they never break any regulation during their employment period.” – Participant M.

An intriguing point found in the empirical study that was not expected from the theoretical framework was how two individuals as a leader mentioned the responsibility of the organization when they were inquired for a definition of their own for the term “organizational commitment”, or in other words, “employee commitment”:

“There are two aspects in it: [...] the second one is the responsibility of the organization to provide good working environment conditions e.g. adequate salary, room for interactions between colleagues, safe and comfortable environment.” – Participant E.

“It is when employer has the ability to create such working environment that engages and encourages employees [...]” – Participant N.

Moving up to another level from solely meeting the obligations, a committed employee is defined in three out of seven leaders' opinion as someone who readily goes an extra mile:

“For one, the commitment can be that you work really hard.” – Participant A.

“First, someone who accepted challenging task that requires their sacrifice of personal time and extra effort. Second, someone who can keep their words and brings surprise result to the table” – Participant M.

“Employee commitment is not delaying in completing the tasks of every job you are assigned.” – Participant L.

In participant L's case, she also specified a particular status in the firm to be the definition of a typical committed employee:

“Committed employee is who wants to achieve high-performer award in yearly assessment.”

Another behaviour that counts as employee commitment to these leaders expressed in the interviews is an employee’s active will to contribute to a psychological bond to the organization and a resistance to leave:

“I think that it has something to do with values, that your own values are in line with the organization's values and that provided you the opportunity to feel committed for that business and organization. You feel in your heart that you are doing something important and you feel that you are working on the right branch and the right organization. There cannot be a discrepancy between your own thinking and the company values, for example you dislike nuclear power so you cannot be committed to work for a nuclear company. [...] For the second one, the commitment can be that you don't look for any other position in other organizations.” – Participant A

“The voluntary bonds are like when employees are attached to the company, consider the company a second home and really want to devote for it.” – Participant I.

“[...] and that employees are willing to actively participate, contribute and be loyal to the organization.” – Participant N

“Employee commitment is less likely to leave the firm after the peak season.” – Participant L.

According to participant L, the pressure at her firm which provides audit service is extremely high in the peak season and due to that, several people chose to leave the firm after such periods.

In participant G’s perception, a committed employee will also express a proper attitude and respect at the workplace. In addition, participant A mentioned a more specific adequate manner, which is the ability of an individual to cooperate with the management, colleagues and subordinates.

b. Subordinate perspective

Supporting the aspect of obligatory responsibilities reflected in more than half of the leaders’ viewpoint, two subordinates mentioned this point:

“Committed employees carry out the tasks exactly as assigned, and follow good ethics.” – Participant D.

“Committed employees show responsibilities for the job.” – Participant F

The majority of the eight subordinates instead emphasized more on the extra effort one is will to put into the work:

“When an employee commits to an organization, they will think more than that they are just doing their job to finish it, but rather thinking that the job needs to be done today and they will stay a bit overtime to do it or they might do something that is not even their job at the moment but needs to be done for the good of organization.” – Participant B.

“(When employee) devote minds into the job and not just simply working for the money.” – Participant D.

“Employees [...] work hard and always find things to do at work, deliver extra service for the customers that was not in the default responsibilities. If the employees do not feel enthusiastic about the job they will just simply do what is assigned. However, when they feel they want to make the business better so they try to satisfy the customers because the company's customers are their customers.” – Participant F.

“Employee's willing to exert more energy in doing the job than required.” – Participant O.

“When employees [...] readily do assigned tasks within the deadline and teamwork with other colleagues to solve problems more effectively.” – Participant C.

Only participant C supported the two leaders' remarks about an adequate and cooperative attitude at the workplace with people around and, in addition to that, he mentioned the fact that commitment showed when employees see the tasks assigned as challenges for self-improvement.

Finally, the subordinates also consider the psychological attachment they have with the organization:

“It is when you are involved in your job, like you have your personal interest in the job that make you want to stay there and build it like your own business. It is not the company's work but it's your own work.” – Participant H.

”The willingness to stay with the organization through good times and bad.” – Participant K.

“The desire to be with your current organization for a long time and spend effort to make it better”- Participant J

“(It is) the alignment of self-values with the organization.” – Participant O.

4.1.3 Organizational Commitment’s Importance

The following questions were composed to collect more specific and detailed descriptions from the respondents to examine how important this concept is:

- 1) How important is organizational (employee) commitment to a(n) company/organization in a scale from 1 (not at all) to 7 (extremely important)?
- 2) How exactly does organizational (employee) commitment influence a(n) company/organization?
- 3) Which is the stage in which organizational (employee) commitment concept should be emphasized more by a(n) company/organization?

a. Leader perspective

When given a Likert scale, the leaders did not state a general rate for the importance level, but instead elaborated on situational dependences. Two leaders mentioned that the level of hierarchy is a crucial condition:

“It depends on maybe the work level we are discussing. If we discuss upper management and leaders then it would be 7 [...]. Then when you go downwards the organizational ladders, maybe middle management 6 or 5-6, and maybe some blue collar workers it is not that important, only 3-5. But the higher you climb in the organizational hierarchy, the more important the commitment is.” – Participant A.

“It depends on the situation as well since some people might exert a great need for employment, or when the features of the job do not ask for all for difficult or specific requirement of qualifications and thus commitment is hardly important in those cases. On the other hand, commitment is important to positions that are higher in the hierarchy. [...] Some big companies with available lower level positions do not focus on commitment for those cases as they sign short-

term contracts with students, thus having high turnover rate for those positions.” – Participant E.

The majority of the leaders mentioned work productivity as an aspect on which organizational commitment has a strong influence, both positively and negatively:

“Extremely important because it affects the productivity of the work [...]” – Participant E.

“It is very important because in the long run if the company can maintain or improve employee commitment, work productivity will be much better. If there is a constant change in the labor force, there will be delays which make it difficult to follow and manage. [...]” – Participant I.

“When employees are committed to an organization, they enhance knowledge transfer and organizational learning ability that help develop work flow and efficiency.” – Participant N.

“Uncommitted employees might not be able to fulfil the tasks assigned [...]” – Participant G.

“Also sometimes, they (uncommitted employees) miss the deadline, affecting the work of the teams.” – Participant L.

“When employees are committed to an organization, they enhance knowledge transfer and organizational learning ability that help develop work flow and efficiency.” – Participant N.

“High commitment will bring [...] better productivity” – Participant M.

Not only better rate, but also higher quality of job performance is perceived to be enhanced through employee commitment, according to these leaders:

“I have seen several cases where somebody is committed and has a very good performance, great effort for the organization.” – Participant A.

“The performance quality of employees will be stable. In occasions where problems arise, it will be easier to identify the sources of those issues and generate effective solutions for those. Uncommitted employees [...] will be irresponsible for abnormalities possibly happening during the job. [...] If employees are committed, the company will develop in a sustainable way as employees focus on the work they are doing, contributing to the expansion and enhancement of the business” – Participant G.

“The quality of work of uncommitted staff is not high.” – Participant L.

The next emphasis of potential commitment impact has on organizations is the loyalty, or in other words, the likelihood of employees to leave or stay in the company:

“During the time in the telecommunication company, I recall one lady there who is more interested in preparing her fingernails than taking care of her duties there and it became a tricky situation because maybe after 1 or 2 months when I'd been working there, she announced me that she wanted to leave the company and apply for another position somewhere else.” – Participant A.

“[...], the core power of the company will be weakened and several threats or risks might happen e.g. brain drain. Several employees in my company holding significant positions decided to leave for the competitor company as the support and benefits offered by the competitor company were very good. There was even a scandal reported widely on the media that a lot of pilots in my company withdrew from their positions. The work is similar but the position offered in the competitor company is higher in the management ladder with better conditions.” – Participant G.

“If [...] they feel they want to stick with the company for a long time, there will be good things for the company such as [...] not having the intention to leave the job for another.” – Participant I.

“Also sometimes, [...] they (uncommitted employees) do not care about the work, and work with spirit to leave anytime.” – Participant L.

“Let's say industrial espionage, is a viable threat that can be prevented completely if every employees are committed to their obligations and company.” – Participant M.

Furthermore, the negative impacts due to a lack of commitment in employees can be tremendous. The cost issue was mainly emphasized:

“A win-win situation is desirable and the organization needs to keep in mind this concept as they need to put lots of resources in training a qualified newcomer.” – Participant E.

“ [...] lack of resources, especially experienced staffs when staffs decide to leave firm [...] due to the high cost of training from fresh staff to experienced staff, and the requirement of experienced staff to lead team” – Participant L.

“And if commitment is high, HR won't face any problem in recruiting and training new employees due to low turnover rate. In other words, high commitment will bring less expense [...]” – Participant M.

Aside from the cost-cutting problem, the respondents mentioned the effect organizational commitment can create to the reputation and image of an organization as well as the working atmosphere:

“In some cases, the image of the company (especially in the service provider field) can be ruined by careless mistakes made by uncommitted employees who lost control of the situation and created negative impact in customers' minds.” – Respondent G.

“If they [...] feel they want to stick with the company for a long time, there will be good things for the company such as better reputation for the company, better relationship with others, [...], better working attitude, [...]” – Respondent I.

“[...] if the leaders and managers don't show commitment of their own, nobody else will be committed there.” – Participant A.

An interesting point mentioned by participant A was that being overly committed could be negative as it was one of the common reasons leading to work stress. According to his knowledge, trying too hard may backfire and an individual needs to take care of him/herself and put responsibilities in the right perspectives.

The respondents also have different viewpoints when it comes to deciding which stage the concept should be focused on.

Respondent A with approximately 14 years of working experience claims that the recruitment stage matters the most with specific reasons:

“Always the most important phase or stage is the recruitment. We recruit people whom we believe that can be committed with our business and company. If the people have changed job very often, it is quite a bad sign concerning the commitment. But at the same time, it is also good that the person has different records from different branches but if they have 3-4 employments from 1-2 years, there is definitely going to be a problem with the commitment with the organization.”

However, respondent A also mentioned that this can vary across cultures as he often observed the case in some countries such as Japan where employees might spend their whole career working for a single firm.

Respondent E has a different opinion in which he stated that the concept might be emphasized when a newcomer has passed the training period, having proven his ability and compatibility with the company, and thus has signed the contract to become official employees. Three other respondents also agree on the same view that commitment needs to be brought to immediate attention right at the start of the employment:

“This concept should be emphasized right from the start of the job. Because at this point, everything should be clarified to avoid unnecessary risks later on.” – Respondent G.

“[...] when the employee enters the company. Because the high cost of training from fresh staff to experienced staff, and the requirement of experienced staff to lead team.” – Respondent L.

“Employee commitment started in day 1 for every organization.” – Respondent M.

However, respondent I thinks that the training period is when the concept should be introduced. According to her, commitment is desirable for any company but perhaps only employees at upper management levels have heard of the concept. People at lower hierarchy level in the firm need to be educated on how and why commitment is beneficial for not only the company but also themselves as well.

b. Subordinate perspective

Sharing the same view with the leaders in the study, the respondents in subordinate positions also acknowledge the effect that organizational commitment has productivity and performance quality:

“If the commitment does not exist, the work efficiency will not be as company owner's expectations.” – Participant D.

“When an employee is committed to his or her job, they will put all the effort that they can to excel the performance. On the other hand, if they don't, the work is just so-so. I don't think that a company can hardly ever achieve anything extraordinary with that so-so quality.” – Participant H.

“It is very important especially in the restaurant service field because if the employees do not feel committed they do not care about the details of the work like they should do and just finish the most basic tasks required without doing extra work to benefit the company and the customers further.” – Respondent F.

Participant K and O also mentioned the amount of effort the employees put into work and productivity in support to this point.

Participant C described a specific situation in his company to illustrate how commitment affects the workflow:

“When an employee works on a project and leaves as it has not been completed yet, the project will be delayed and the company will receive bad feedback from customers or in worse cases, customers can cancel the whole project if the person who leaves is responsible for a critical role in the team. Furthermore, even when an employee leaves after a project has been done, another person who comes to replace and continues working on another project that has connections with the previous one needs to refer back to relevant information and it is often difficult to follow up efficiently in that case.”

As can be seen above, the image, reputation of the company and working atmosphere can also be influenced, which goes in accordance with what the leaders claimed:

“Several errors will happen that affect the service and image of the company in the customers' minds. There will be a need to recover those damages and regardless of the probability to succeed in doing that, the company's activities are influenced directly.” – Respondent D.

“It also affects the mental health of the current employees since they would not want to make friends and get to know well about the newcomers who will most likely leave after a while.” – Respondent F.

“It helps create an organizational culture, which will affect present and future employees.” – Respondent K.

“[...] lower turnover rate leading to [...] better reputation and image of the company built by employees' passionate reference to others.” – Respondent O.

Five subordinates C, H, J, K, and O mentioned the third important point to be turnover rate, which concurs with the leader perspective. They also list some negative consequences that low turnover rate might lead to due to a lack of commitment:

“When hiring a student, it takes a lot of time at the beginning to train him or her to be qualified enough for the job. If he or she leaves after the training, the resources and time spent would be wasteful and affect the company negatively [...]. A company that has high turnover rate is not highly appreciated in customers' minds because they do not like to work with new people all the time, they would like to work with people with whom they are used to work and whom they can trust more.” – Respondent C.

“It is inefficient and tiring to have new people coming all the time to start training them basic things for the job again.” – Respondent F.

“I don't think any company likes a high turnover rate of employees because that would take a lot of cost.” – Respondent H.

“If employ commitment is high, it will mean lower employee turnover rate. The company will be able to spend less time, money and effort in hiring, training and team building.” – Respondent J.

“[...] lower turnover rate leading to fewer costs needed in recruiting and training new ones” – Respondent O.

Of the eight subordinates in the study, only two agreed with a view by almost half of the leaders given above that the concept commitment should be encouraged at the start of the employment period.

Two respondents, C and D, emphasized that this concept should always be mentioned and encouraged, not just at a specific phase or stage. However, respondent D also stated that the company needed to take into consideration different changes in conditions and construct particular requirements for employees to follow and commit better.

Respondent K has a different point of view, in which he gives reasons for why the concept should be focused after 2-3 months the employees have been in the organization:

“At that time, their impression of the organization is still relatively fresh, but they are more informed of the culture, the environment and workload of the organization to properly form their opinion on the company they work at. This is when the employee is the most sensitive to influence on their outlook of their organization, so it's the best time to emphasize "employee commitment" to them.”

Respondent J and respondent O have opposite viewpoints as respondent J thinks the start-up or early stage of a company is more appropriate to enhancing commitment because of their vulnerability at those times, while respondent O prioritized the mature stage in the company development process, when the activities became organized and stable with a significant portion of employees having signed permanent contracts. For respondent O, at this point it will be more catastrophic for the company to lose experienced employees and it will cost more additional resources to recruit and train qualified employees for replacement.

4.1.4 Organizational Commitment Antecedents

In this section, the responses collected answers from respondents for the question: “Can you mention some factors that influence organizational (employee) commitment?” Most common factors reflected by the respondents from both perspectives are presented in Figure 6 and 7:

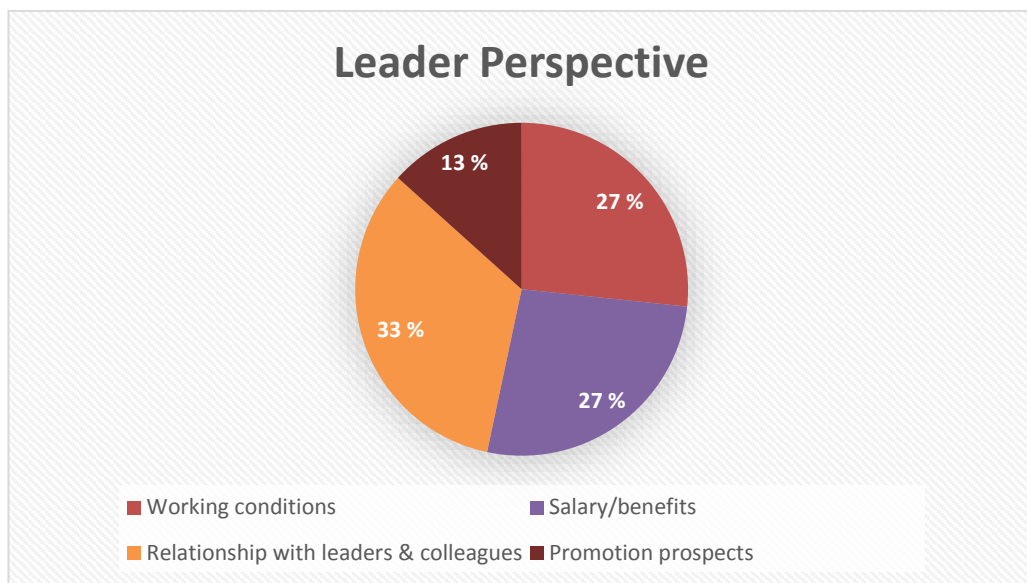


Figure 6. Leader Perspective: Factors Influencing Employee Commitment

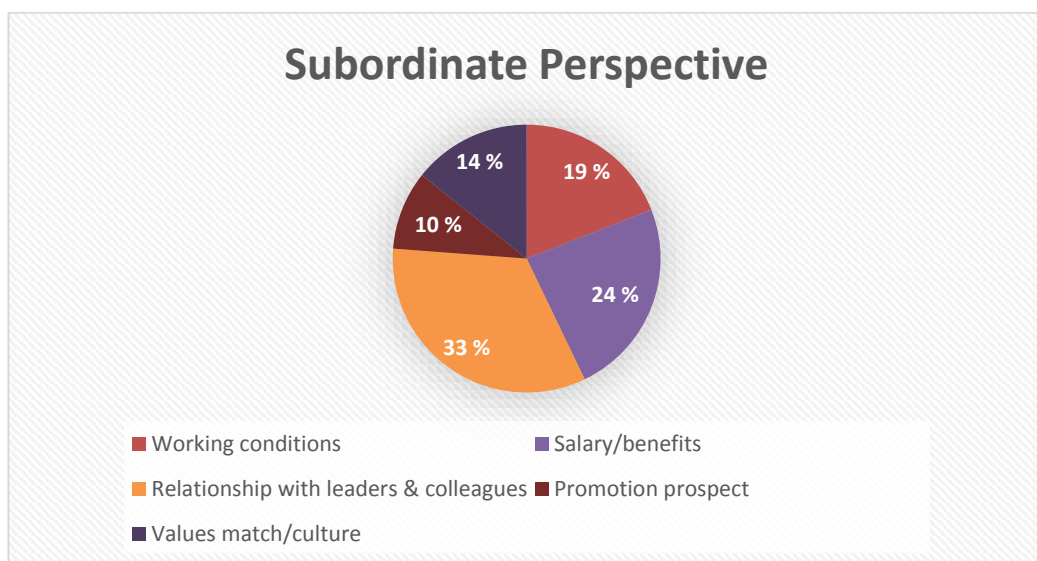


Figure 7. Subordinate Perspective: Factors Influencing Employee Commitment

a. Leader perspective

In brief, four most common factors were mentioned, namely: working conditions, salary/benefits, promotion prospect, and relationship with colleagues and leaders.

For one respondent, the working condition is elaborated as the specific duties that a person does in a job:

“One key thing is the task itself, if you have a feeling that you are in the right position and you have a good command of your responsibility, you know what you are doing, that gives great deal of commitment. [...] Number one thing is the task itself, if you really enjoy what you do, you are committed. Even though you have the nicest boss, nice colleagues, but you hate your job duties, you will not be committed for that position.” – Participant A

In addition, respondent E, enlists other advantages when working conditions are of good quality:

“A good working environment will stimulate creativity, higher productivity as the employees will feel more comfortable and willing to work for the company and do not want to leave.”

An interesting point made by a respondent is that for some cases it depends on whether an individual has multiple jobs or that the personality affecting the choice to commit or not:

“For example, freelancers who work individually and not under any specific organization or company will not develop this concept so much in their mind.” – Respondent G.

The promotion prospect is important for a specific group of individuals, according to respondent I:

“Promotion opportunities are most important to young employees as they are the ones who hop jobs the most.”

For the older group, the situation is about whether leaving the firm is costly or not:

“For older employees, social benefits and rewards are likely to make them not want to switch to another job and stick to the company. [...] My company's insurance program was also good as they provided the healthcare insurance for employees' parents. Thus aged employees like to work here to support their parents. If the employees want to leave the job, the parents might advise against the decision as the benefits given were so good.” – Respondent I.

Finally, it is worth mentioning the leadership factor that might occasionally make a difference:

“Only when big conflicts with leaders or a change of leadership happen, they might want to reconsider the situation. In the maintenance department at my company, there was this period when the leader role had been changed for three times in a year. Every time the change happened, a former group of employees applied to leave the job as they could not accept that change.” – Respondent I.

“Well you have to recognize their effort, even small gestures such as neatly organizing their desk, speak about that to other people, make them feel like you're with them all the time, make them feel acknowledged, they will only work harder for that.” – Respondent M, speaking about what he did as a leader.

b. Subordinate perspective

The situation reflected in the group of subordinates was somewhat similar to the leader perspective. Although the sample was relatively small, it is intriguing to see the similar proportion of the factors contributing to employee commitment within two groups. The first factor is the relationship between one with his/her colleagues and leaders, followed by salary/benefits, then working conditions. However, the subordinate group has mentioned an interesting point, which is the alignment of one's values with the organizational culture.

In addition, respondents D and F as subordinates agreed with respondent G above as a leader with the fact that sometimes it is about the employee's personality leading him or her to be willing to commit, especially when it is about the relationship with the leader:

“It also depends on the personality of the employees themselves. Each individual has a different reaction towards things. One can be sensitive to some attitudes and behaviors while some are not.” – Respondent D.

“The commitment mainly has to do with the employee's personalities and the leader cannot be blamed totally if the employee is lazy and unmotivated.” – Respondent F.

4.1.5 Organizational Commitment Regarding Leadership Aspects

In this section of the study, the way in which leadership aspects can exert an influence on organizational (employee) commitment is reported.

The quantitative enquiry seeks to find out which qualities the respondents want to see in their leaders to make them commit. Figure 8 shows the importance level of each leader quality is to participants.

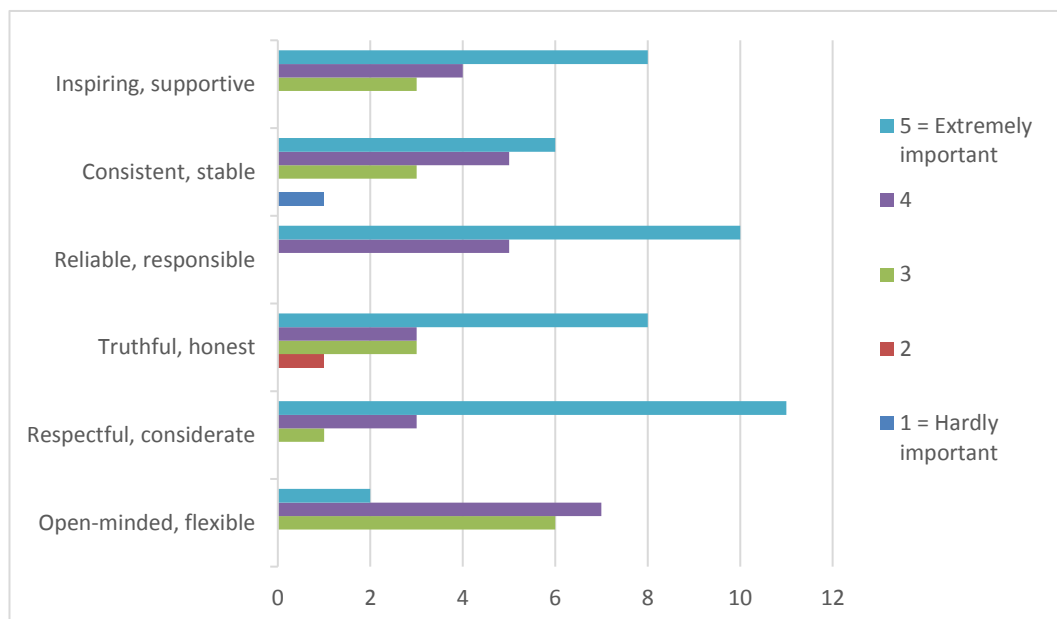


Figure 8. Leader Qualities Influencing Organizational Commitment

According to the chart, 11 respondents considered it to be extremely important for a leader to be respectful and considerate. The next quality that is appreciated by ten respondents at the same level is their leader being reliable and responsible. Third, the ideal leader in eight respondents' opinion should be inspiring and supportive.

The leader perspective will reflect how the respondents who are leaders think about the effect their leadership has on employees as well as how their own leaders affected themselves. The subordinate point of view is then reflected and together construct the answers for the research questions of the study. Information collected from 15 participants were illustrations of the reasons why leadership can affect employee commitment, what their current (and former) leaders do to influence their commitment and the most influential qualities/attitudes/behaviours of a leader they could think of on their own that can have an effect on organizational commitment.

a. Leader perspective

The majority of respondents in the leader role claim that the direct effect leaders cast on employees and daily activities is tremendous and thus they have lots of responsibilities:

“Because it's one of the main duties also of the managers and leaders to look after that each person is occupied the right position so that you can get best advantages of the strengths of each individual, [...] one key thing behind the success that you as a leader or manager you can notice that he or she is very strong at that [...]. And most likely the person will [...] also enjoy the work there. The organization will get the best out of the person.” – Respondent A.

“[...] personally I found that communication with leader is very significant as it will affect the effectiveness of the work. While working you can have a lot of questions and if you cannot communicate with the leader due to his/her being too emotional or not cooperative, you will not want to work. At some points, even under pressure of financial conditions, if you get offended by the leader you may find that such endurance for insults is not worthy.” – Respondent E.

“Of the factors that contribute to employee commitment, leadership aspect might account for around 60%. There are people who cannot follow a particular leader even though the salary and benefits are important as well.” – Respondent I.

“If an employee cannot communicate with the leader, the work cannot be done properly and effectively leading to lower quality of performance or stress and the need to leave to find better options.” – Respondent N.

From above, it can be seen that communication problems can lead to several negative consequences, for the most part resulting only from a decreased morale in employees. In respondent A's case, the example illustrated further a case when the leader is not responsible enough in daily activities leading to an increase in work pressure and demotivating atmosphere:

“My former boss in my last position did not participate really much to the daily activities. When I quit that job, many other people than myself told me that I'd been doing the workload of two leaders all those years. [...] If you work for five years and you recognize your nearest colleague is not doing what he/she supposed to do, it will definitely influence your commitment also and the workload will be very hard. The leader has to be both physically and mentally present there in his or her organization.”

Respondent I, L and N have opinions which also share the point that leaders can influence the atmosphere and thus leading to a worse or better working condition for employees:

“[...] every day the employees need to work with their leader and the experience can be very stressful or very comfortable and that affects a lot.” – Respondent I

“The leaders are the people who work closely to me, affecting my mood of work. The leaders attitude/behavior can motivate employees to work or can depress them.” – Respondent L.

“Personality of the leader creates organizational culture. If he or she can create such engaging atmosphere, it'll enhance employee commitment to the organization.” – Respondent N.

However, to have more specific examples of how a leader can actually make an employee leave the company or decrease performance as in respondent A's case, other respondents were also asked whether their leaders at the former companies expressed something that had a direct effect on them.

In respondent M's case, although the reason for leaving the job was personal, his former leader indeed created a negative influence on him:

“My last boss was a no job guy. He played game and screamed at the screen all day so I felt pretty demotivated. Well I did my job and had no desire to go beyond because I felt ignored.”

Respondent I had two leaders of upper management level in her former workplace and she claimed that the experience and atmosphere got heavily affected by them, leading to her leaving the job. One of them knew how to motivate employees in a sense, although she also admitted that when she thought about him in retrospect, she considered him to seem not genuine in his way of treating people, regardless of that being effective to some extent:

“He was very friendly and sociable and gained a lot of popularity and affection from female employees. Every time he asked the employees for something to be done, they would be happily and readily to get it done for him immediately. If the leader is cold and condescending, the employees might an excuse not to do the job right away when asked or not readily to try more to solve the issues in a short time.”

The other upper-manager of respondent I who was more directly involved in daily tasks had caused more negative experiences for not only her but the whole lower-level team of employees as well. This former leader of respondent I first had done a poor job in acknowledging the subordinates' works results and even gone to the point of disregarding them:

“Another more direct leader of our group was not well accepted. She flattered and sweet-talked to her leader and belittled, bullied her subordinates. She took the efforts of the subordinates as her own to report to upper leader. In an occasion, she reported in a meeting to upper leaders that she calculated the data while the job had actually been carried out by another subordinate. That enraged the subordinates because even though the work was a part of the team-work but by saying such thing, she made the subordinates think that their efforts were not recognized.”

Second, this former leader had unjustified treatment of employees with communication problems:

“She also treated subordinates unequally. For example, with somewhat "strong" ones, she might avoid assigning tasks to them and instead giving more workload to the ones that have softer nature of personality. She also forced

people to follow exactly what she wanted to. For example, she made one employee type word by word what she wanted on a Powerpoint file. This might be okay for newcomers but not for employees who had been working there for quite a period of time. They would feel not willing to do things in such a strict way as they had their own ideas and they were not robots. [...] She liked to keep information for her own knowledge and our productivity suffered from this withheld information. In our group of procurement planner, the information flow is important and if there are some issues at this part of the chain and other parts are not aware of them, the efficiency is lowered and unnecessary troubles arise.” – Respondent I.

Respondent N also shared this viewpoint where she claimed recognition and fairness to be the first qualities she expected in an ideal leader.

Not only bringing consequences to employees, the former leader of respondent I also worsen her own situation and at an organization’s point of view, this has created an issue in job allocation:

“The employees also gave feedback about this and some people also mentioned her management problem when they applied to leave the job. The result was that she was moved to another position.” – Respondent I.

On the other hand, there are examples from the current direct leader of these leader respondents in their workplace that affect their own work spirit. Respondent A claimed that his current workplace was the best one for him up to this point, with positive experience brought about by his leader:

“My own boss at the moment is very talented. Her approach and attitude encourages us and her positive thinking is very good. That is something that increases the commitment. The leader or manager doesn't have to know everything, they can admit that they don't know. Humble attitude is very good also at a leading position because that gives space for others and it is much better to admit that you don't know and show your vulnerability than try very hard to fake that you know everything and you are very firm with your decision.”

The experience with current leader was also pleasant for respondent M:

“The leader in my company is very hard working and diligent. He even came back to work after suffering a series of stroke. So I don't think he does set any negative image that lower my commitment to the job.”

The situation was not as bright for respondent G, as she reported her reconsidering the career path at the moment:

“The current leaders disregard employees' concerns and constructive feedback or opinions for the work. These negative things will affect heavily the employees' working attitude and loyalty and might lead to employees wanting to leave and head towards the competitor company of the current employer.”

Respondent L also enlisted a lot of practices done by her leader at the workplace which are considered morale-discouraging:

- Deliver unreasonable work that does not belong to her responsibility
- Develop unreasonable approach of work without explaining properly the reason for it
- Be inconsiderate to personal circumstances such as health, family issues (e.g. funeral, etc.), and under these circumstances, still urge to chase the job
- Assign unreasonable deadline i.e. tell employees to do something at 4pm and submit at 5pm during the peak season or while the employees are busy fulfilling another duty

b. Subordinate perspective

In this section, individuals who have not been leaders in the workplace share their viewpoint on why the leadership aspect is important to commitment, how an ideal leader should be and what their current leaders (and formers if applicable) do to influence employee commitment.

The respondents have diverse opinions when it comes to the reason why leaders can affect them:

“If it is clear that our leader does not care what you are doing then you are not gonna care about what happens to the company.” – Respondent B.

Respondent C shares similar thought with the majority of the above respondent group in leader role about the vast responsibility a leader has, in addition to the fact that how communication done by a leader can change an employee's expectation:

“When employees receive bad feedback from their leaders, they expect to be fired and thus do not commit to the job. When conflicts happen, leaders have to be responsible to solve.”

Similar to respondent C, respondent K and O confirm the situation as the majority of the leader respondent group above about leaders sharing major responsibilities at daily work:

“They are directly involved with the environment, the development of the employee and the day-to-day work the employee has. If a leader/manager/boss is demanding and unreasonable, ultimately anyone would want to leave, unless the employee has some ulterior motives.” – Respondent K

“If an employee cannot communicate with the leader, the work cannot be done properly and effectively leading to lower quality of performance or stress and the need to leave to find better options.” – Respondent O.

Respondent H shares an observation with leader I above of good results achieved through the right treatment to employee:

“Leadership affects quite a lot. Because I did experience that. A good leader who cares about his or her employees, who always smiles when asking people to do thing for him/her, will have better responses from people rather than one who always looks angry or complains.”

When asked to provide some examples of their leaders affecting their commitment, this subordinate respondent group also presented interesting positive and negative cases.

Respondent C did not experience good leadership in both his former and current workplaces, which is a challenge worth paying attention to as he worked at an international environment:

“My former leader did not cooperate. My current leaders do not care much, only assign tasks and do not listen much to employees. They only need the job to be done without knowing how effectively it is done. This might partly be due to a language barrier since they prefer speaking their own mother tongue.”

Respondent C also said that the ideal leader in his perception needed to be better than employees at knowledge, experience and also networking to help employees

whenever they cannot deal with difficult issues. This was also the case for respondent D as she considered leader someone for her to look up to and get inspired.

A bad example of a leader was provided by respondent F. She claimed that she used to have the intention to stay at one work place for three years. However, her former leader and she could not share the common path due to several issues:

“He appeared to be a mean and unfair person. Most of the time he complained about how sales went down and affected the business operations in a way that made employees felt like it was their faults and responsibilities that the business was not going well and customers did not come. He also got angry at employees unreasonably and made bad, sex-related jokes. He also paid employees wrongly according to the law. He is disrespectful to the employees and seems to try to bring down employees' values. He easily gets mad at employees whenever they do something wrong and insult them, call them names. He seems to like bullying employees for their lower positions. He wants sympathy from employees without giving them one. He did not let employees go on a sick leave when employees applied for it.”

Poor communications with improper attitude portrayed by leaders were not rare, as respondent O claimed that she had to hop jobs due to such issues:

“One of my previous job lasted for only two weeks as the instructions provided by the supervisor were unclear, the demands were unreasonable for example assigning tasks to do 5 minutes before the end of the shift, and tasks got to be fixed several times due to ineffective communication. Another job was also only as long as one month since the leaders did not care about employees' concern. They were pushy and displayed different attitudes to different employees (treated us differently for example being friendlier to one and critically grumpy, impatient to me just because I was the newcomer, regardless of my effort). They also called people names, openly displayed rude attitudes and gave unpleasant comments to make me feel uncomfortable and discouraged although I was doing the job of okay quality according to my colleagues.”

Thus, respondent O shared with leader I above the opinion that fair treatment with respect to all employees equally are really significant as discrimination of any form could be very discouraging and unjustifiable. Furthermore, together with respondent C, respondent O pointed out how inefficient the workflow could turn out when communication between leaders and employees are not taken care of seriously.

On the other hand, good leadership might lead to surprising results. In respondent B's case, he is satisfied with his current environment which intrigues employees to do things at their most comfortable and effective state:

“The leaders and people at current workplace are understanding and relaxed about things. People are flexible and agree that they can go when the work is done and when there is something important that needs to be done within the day, they are willing to stay late to finish the work so as not to have trouble tomorrow.”

Respondent H provided two examples of her upper leaders. She got inspired and excited by her second-tier manager:

“My current leader is an expat working in my country. He actually learns the local culture, he cares so he knows about his subordinates, their personalities and side stories. He buys local street food for his employee, delivers it to each and every of his followers. He shows the care to each individual, not just specific persons who represent the whole team and neglecting smaller positions. I really appreciate his way of giving commands or even complaints about the job to employees. His way of saying things does not make you feel bad but want to do better. He says that he knows I can do better. Everyone praises about his attitudes and says that he is so nice. In general, people do seem satisfied under his leadership. I think his leadership is an example for me to learn in the future if I ever want to be a person manager.”

The more direct manager of respondent H was considered by both her and other colleagues in the team at the workplace as an efficient leader:

“My other leader is very direct and frank, always tells me all the things that she likes and doesn't about the way I do my job or where I am wrong and need to fix to make the job better. I do not like who goes around about the issues they want to complain about. I like her direct way of leading.”

Respondent F and J, after having left their job, found that the new leaders in their current places to be much more pleasant:

“My current restaurant manager appears to be a very friendly, nice, flexible and decisive person. He is reasonable and answers fairly to employees' requests. My manager arranged work shifts in a way that is balanced, with working days and rest days following each other to make sure they are at their best. It shows that he cares about the employees' concern.” – Respondent F.

“For my current job, my boss is very nice, understanding and fair. He lets the team members grow. I really liked him and decided to take the job because of that. Even if the benefits are not that high compared to other jobs, I want to stay.” – Respondent J.

From her experience with two leaders, respondent F considered the ideal leader to be someone who can motivate and provide proper guidance for followers, which will lead to them being able to develop themselves and contribute to the values of the company. On the other hand, when the relationship between a leader and employees is not nurtured, no bond will be created, as in respondent J’s case:

“My old boss was distant and cold. When I found a better job, I had almost no reason to stay there.”

In brief, the majority of respondents in the subordinate group expect a leader to show concern to employees in a fair way and show a cooperative attitude in communication to solve problems at work in the most efficient way possible.

4.1.6 Encouraging Organizational Commitment in Practice

Finally, it is useful to explore the practices in which a company in general and a leader in particular can do to enhance the commitment phenomenon among employees.

First, it is worth taking into consideration whether the opinions of the respondents in the study match the common theories found in the framework in three aspects: communication, integrity and acknowledgement. The quantitative question used in the study listed nine practices done by leaders including both negative and positive actions which might affect the respondents’ commitment:

- Communication:
 - Communicate clearly the company goals with employees
 - Lead by examples and be a role model
 - Assign tasks without explaining their meaning or importance

- Ask for employees' opinions and consider them in decision making process
- Integrity:
 - Avoid responsibilities when problems arise
 - Show inconsistencies between talks and actions
- Acknowledgement:
 - Recognize and appreciate employees' performance (e.g. punctuality, productivity, solution proposal, etc.)
 - Give feedback on employees' performance (e.g. comment on results, give advices, etc.)
 - Make decisions without considering the possible effects on employees' concern

The respondents were asked each to provide five most influential practices from the list. The researcher's aims are: 1) to examine whether the negative or positive ones have stronger effects on employee's intention to commit, 2) which actions have the most considerable effect and 3) the most influential ones belong to which category of the model constructed from the theoretical framework.

The results are illustrated in Figure 9 below. From the chart, it can be seen that the practice most chosen is a positive one belonging to the Acknowledgement category, which indicates that an employee will be stimulated to commit the most when their doing at work is noticed and treasured.

Ranking in the second place is a negative action in Integrity category that is chosen by 9 out of 15 respondents. This shows that employees got demotivated when their leaders do not act up to what they said.

The rest of the options have similar popularity among respondents. Two negative actions from category Acknowledgement and Integrity rank in third place, followed by two positive ones of Communication and Acknowledgement. The ones which

are of the least concern to the participated individuals in the study were the meanings of the work and the company goals communicated by their leaders.



Figure 9. Most Influential Practices of Leader on Organizational Commitment

Besides, more practical examples as well as feasible suggestions collected from qualitative enquires for both perspectives are recorded to contribute towards the answer for the question: “Which practices can be done to improve employee commitment?”

a. Leader perspective

In this section, practices and policies to promote the concept organizational commitment at the workplace of respondents in leader group are collected. These practices are a reflection of the philosophy of the organization and of what leaders are responsible to fulfil. Thus, it is intriguing to explore real-case examples of the companies/organizations as well as valuable suggestions from professionals investigated in the research.

Given several types of incentives to strengthen employee commitment delivered through policies and practices, additional benefits in terms of material or financial support seem to be the most efficient. Respondent A mentioned this as the first thing his company did:

“My company HR policy is one of the best ones, the benefits were so good that they created commitment e.g. the medical healthcare.”

In respondent G’s firm, the incentive was more about loss aversion: the employees will get punishment in the form of lowered salary or getting fired from the job if the performance is not satisfactory and get bonus rewards for high productivity recorded by bonus points given by customers’ feedback and direct supervisor.

Respondent I’s multinational company arranged several small but frequent incentives for the employees throughout the fiscal year such as: holding team-building days and sport events with competitions with other companies as well to build team spirit, giving the chance for employees to go on overseas travel, having small gifts on holidays for employees and sometimes for their families as well e.g. their children on 1/6 Children’s Day. She also mentioned how effective the periodic bonus reward assessments in the year are:

“These frequent occasions stimulate employees' mentality. The employees resist to have a day off before any big reward occasion because they want to be able to accumulate several good points.”

In addition, respondent I emphasized on the skill training course packages held by the company, in which professionals in several fields are invited to deliver an intensive class from two to three days for the employees. She claimed that the spirit of her colleagues after joining the course was absolutely excited.

Also straightforward in benefit-based incentives, respondent L’s professional service firm provide yearly salary increases after yearly assessment, extra pay for overtime work and reasonable leaves for employees to recover after peak season.

An experienced leader with years of employment – respondent A and a responsible group leader at a big multinational company – respondent I shared the same view on how job rotation is crucial to employee commitment:

“Something that I read quite much about and personally have strong personal belief in is the strength and advantages of job rotation. That is what all strong and successful organizations do. Because you can have different kinds of angles, thoughts, ideas and experiences when you do different kinds of tasks. It would not do any harm for the organization.” – Respondent A.

“For employees who have worked for a long time, job rotation is highly recommended as they can have more challenges and start a new beginning without being too absorbed in their old experience, not willing to listen to new opinions from other people, getting bored and envious when new, talented employees are given good rewards than former employees like them staying for a long time without any change or promotion.” – Respondent I.

In terms of what leaders directly do to encourage employees to commit, these respondents in the leader role group have either done or suggested several practices which focus on more direct interaction between leaders and employees with open chance for free discussion:

“You need to have the courage to recruit someone who is representing some different thinking than you are. If you hire only people that are very similar like you, it is easier to collaborate with them but the organization will not get the best out of the high diversity of solutions. The management board at our university has so different persons and personalities which makes us discuss much in the meetings with different kinds of approaches and questions and thus having quite good solutions rather than quick fixes. You can argue about the things and at the same time still like the person you are arguing with. If you have such an organizational culture where you can argue and still be able to have lunch together after the argument, it creates commitment and bonds between the employees.” – Respondent A.

“The leader needs to interact and get to know the employees on an individual basis to see what each of them need and give incentives accordingly.” – Respondent E.

In respondent L's firm, the communication was reinforced in three ways: (1) surveys to update what employees are thinking about the company, (2) open talk between directors and staffs when some staffs leave and (3) upward feedback to the boss.

Respondent M actively joined in the tracking progress of his team, looking into the performance determine ways to help and elevate his employees' experiences at work. He claimed that he wanted to play the role of a good friend to his subordinates so they can feel safe and trust him to work at their best.

In her turn, respondent N appreciated the fact that managers at her office will walk around exchanging conversation and considered that more of these common breaks together with fewer amount of emails to communicate among colleagues will be more beneficial for the organizational bond.

Finally, it is important that leaders should know when inequality happens in the workplace and takes actions about them, otherwise the consequences might be disastrous as respondent I witnessed in her company:

“There was an inequality in the level of benefits and salary e.g. my department got lower salary than another one at the same level, our salary level was only equal to the lower level employees in the company. There was also a huge difference among the employees within the same department and similar job descriptions. It created a sense of injustice for the employees and they learned that the leader could do something about it but refused to do so. This resulted in their decreased willing to exert more energy for the job and some switched to another job.”

b. Subordinate perspective

The majority of the respondents in the subordinate group show a strong emphasis on physical rewards or material support. For instance, respondent C and H mentioned their company's team-building activities, parties, and sport events as effective in maintaining and strengthening the company spirit and values. Similarly, for respondent J, she appreciated the company's financial support for her training courses; or for respondent F, she was thrilled at the support her workplace provided

on management skill courses and discounts for meals. In respondent H's case, she provided a more detailed picture at her big multinational corporation of how company values are attached in the training courses for the employees which created a strong sense of attachment and commitment for her:

“Integrity value is repeated and emphasized in everyday job. We are always encouraged to do the right things. If you see any dishonest or fraud activities, you are encouraged to speak out. That day-by-day emphasis helps strengthen our commitment to the company itself and its values. We have several databases for broadcasting internal news of the company's interests and we have many channels that show what happen in other IBM hubs in different parts of the world. We also have self-learning and training database on how to be an IBM-er and the Integrity value is emphasized again and again in those training courses. Thus it is recorded in our minds. A lot of my colleagues and I feel very proud of being IBM-ers.” – Respondent H.

Besides, there were a few situations regarding other specific things in which leaders directly take part to have an influence. Respondent C recalled of a time when his company started to observe a high turnover rate and lower productivity, to which he thought that the leader needs to find reasons for that problem and fix it before it affects further to a weakened commitment. He said that by eagerly firing the employees who did not meet the key performance indicators, employees developed an impression that leaders did not care about the long-term progress but only the fulfilment of short-term goals, which partly resulted from an imbalance in the workload among employees. He claimed that leaders needed to organize the workload to be divided more reasonably so that everyone had a task to do and not left feeling that they were the redundant workers.

Respondent D has an opinion which matched the practice at leader G's firm, which stems from the loss-aversion that the existence of a punishment system when an employee underperform is important so as to keep them exert enough effort in doing the work.

Respondent F shared the majority of the leader respondent group above on the significance of job rotation to deliver further challenges for develop and hinder boredom at the workplace as well as the need for an enhancement of a bonding relationship between leaders and employees.

In supporting the feedback system being implemented in particular and in the free discussion opportunity mentioned by leader A, E and L, respondent O suggested individual appraisal discussion should be held, as well as group discussion for any decision-making process which have direct impact on employees' concern, and an anonymous feedback system for employees to comfortably voice their thoughts.

4.2 Discussion and Conclusions

This section of the study aims to reflect a summary of how organizational commitment is understood, encouraged and affected by leadership impacts in theories with a further support from practical insights through collected real-case examples. In addition, the researcher's own reflection on the topic is also presented.

4.2.1 Highlights from the comparison between theories and practice

First, organizational commitment is a concept which is understood in several ways by previous researchers and this is confirmed in the empirical study as well. The theoretical framework suggested three main themes to define organizational commitment namely affective commitment – the want to stay, normative commitment – the ought to stay, and continuance commitment – the need to stay. Accordingly, the respondents participating in the study stated they understood the concept as the obligations one need to fulfil at the workplace, the willing to exert extra effort in the job, and the contribution to a psychological bond to the company organization. However, there is an interesting point which has not found in the theory that two respondents being responsible as leaders mentioned that they understood organizational or employee commitment has another aspect, which is the responsibility of

the organization/company itself to provide adequate working conditions for employees.

Second, the importance of the concept employee commitment has been emphasized in the theories for its high correlation with influential indicators such as turnover rate, job performance and intention to leave. The empirical results confirm these findings as respondents in the study report that productivity, performance quality and loyalty are influenced by commitment. On the other hand, what was not recorded in the theoretical framework but mentioned by respondents is that the importance level of this concept varies across the hierarchy level of the organization. Specifically, the higher level an employee is responsible for at the workplace, the more significant for a reinforcement of the commitment is required. They also mention the negative impacts in case of a lack of commitment which can be the waste of resources, worse reputation/image of the company. Another intriguing point that was not found in the theory but mentioned by an experienced respondent was that over commitment might create additional stress for oneself and other colleagues.

Third, the factors which influence the forming of employee commitment are listed in the theories as summarized in the recap section's model above. The practical opinions from respondents in the studies provide somewhat more specific elements like these: working conditions, salary/benefits, promotion prospects, match of values, and relationship with leaders and colleagues.

Fourth, the leadership aspects and their influences on the concept employee commitment are examined in the empirical part to reflect upon the theoretical findings. Based on the model containing influential qualities expressed by a leader namely Communication, Integrity and Acknowledgement, questions have been constructed to identify which aspect and in which attitude (positive or negative) has the most considerable effect on whether an employee chooses to leave or stay at the company/organization. Analysing the responses gathered from participants, the researcher detected that positive practices exerted by leaders in terms of Acknowl-

edgement are the most influential, followed by negative actions in terms of Integrity. In addition, the ideal leaders for the participants in the study must, correspondingly, first be respectful, considerate and then reliable, responsible and finally inspiring supportive.

Finally, from the extensive findings of practices that cast an effect on employee commitment in the theories, the researcher attempted to collect real-case examples from respondents on what their companies/organizations, also specifically the leaders there, do to retain employees and their performance quality. The following is a summary of the practices proven to be effective and highly recommended which are collected from the experienced participants with examples at their workplace in the study:

- Provide possibly small but frequent incentives in terms of material gifts or financial support for the employees such as periodic bonus rewards, holiday gifts for employees' families, sport and team building events for boosting spirit.
- Provide job rotations or promotions/switches opportunities for employees to refresh the experience and intrigue the employees better in their development progress.
- Provide more direct, open interactions between leaders and employees to encourage a more diverse, more effective solutions and decisions.
- Provide equal, fair treatments to each and every individual at similar conditions.
- Provide a reasonable punishment system for employees who underperform.

4.2.2 Reflection on the topic

Through the study, it can be concluded that the theories developed on the topic "Organization Commitment" from 1970s till today have been relatively vast with a variety of aspects to investigate further into. The researcher has concluded that the most common definitions provided by the respondents participating in the study corresponded to the main themes sketched by previous researchers. However, it

could be seen that the concept was not really understood clearly or perceived as a philosophy of an organization by respondents who did not experience several years of experience or who worked in small firms. The respondents working at big corporations have reported considerably more examples regarding leadership aspects with more of their specific effects on employee commitment. Big companies/organizations also seemed to focus more on educating and promoting this concept to permanent, higher-level employees while trying to save the costs required for these activities depending on the economical situations and development periods. On the other hand, small firms tend to focus more on cost-cutting practices and thus commitment can be given a lower rank in priority. Overall, the leader perspective is relatively well supported by the subordinate one. However, the majority of the subordinates participating in the study showed stronger preference and attention to material support and financial benefit provided by their workplace and thus put these things as the first priority regarding their commitment. Thus, it could be concluded that tangible incentives are the necessary conditions while other factors such as leadership influence, relationship with colleagues and so on are sufficient ones. In another side note, it is perceived that different companies/organizations definitely have diverse corporate culture or philosophies and thus the policies designed or ideal leader image expectations would, as a result, be necessarily unparalleled. Hence, it is essential that the organization's ideal values are clarified and communicated thoroughly to support the development of organizational commitment.

4.3 Further Recommendations and Future Research

Although the study has included a few quantitative queries, the main body was of qualitative nature. Through in-depth interviews and thoroughly composed online responses, the study has been able to provide some key points worth concerning in organizational behavior and human resources management, which have also been illustrated further with real-case examples. Due to the limited capacity of qualitative nature, the study suggests further researches to be done focusing on defining a clearer picture of the concepts figured out in this research on a larger sample

through quantitative methods. In that case, the proportional data will aid further in constructing a better generalized approach towards why and how employee commitment should be created and enhanced throughout the development process of an organization.

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APPENDIX

QUESTIONNAIRE

INFLUENCE OF LEADERSHIP ASPECTS ON EMPLOYEE COMMITMENT

1. What is your age group?
 Under 26 26 to 35 36 to 45 46 or older
2. Can you tell me more about your working experience (months/years of employment, job specialization, changes of jobs/positions) and current work situation?
3. Have you ever been in a “Leader” position at your workplace?
4. How do you (and your previous or current organization, if applicable) define “employee commitment”?
5. To what extent do you think employee commitment is an important issue for companies and organizations? On a scale from 1 (Not at all) to 7 (Extremely important).
6. In your opinion, how can "employee commitment" influence a company/organization?
7. At which stage do you think that the concept “employee commitment” should be emphasized more by organizations and companies? Why is that?
8. Can you mention some factors that can influence employee commitment?
9. To which extent do you think leaders’ attitude/behavior can affect employees’ decision to stay in the company? On a scale from 1 (Not at all) to 7 (Extremely).
10. In case you left your last job(s), were there any of the leaders’ attitudes/behaviours that influenced your decision to leave or stay? What were those and to which extent were they important to your decision?
11. At your current workplace, can you mention those of your leaders’ attitudes and behaviours that affect your commitment?

12. In general, what do you think to be the most influential attitudes, behaviours and qualities of a leader that might affect an employee's commitment?

13. For the qualities below of a leader, please choose how much important you think each of them is to your stay in the company:

<i>Leaders' behaviour</i>	<i>1 = Hardly important</i>	<i>2 = Moderately important</i>	<i>3 = Somewhat important</i>	<i>4 = Important</i>	<i>5 = Very important</i>
Open-minded, flexible	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Respectful, considerate	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Truthful, honest	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Reliable, responsible	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Consistent, stable	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Inspiring, supportive	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

14. What does your current (or previous if applicable) company/organization do to encourage employee commitment? Do you want to suggest any other policy/practice?

15. Please select maximum FIVE practice of leaders that might influence employees to stay in the company the most:

Recognize and appreciate employees' work results and efforts (e.g. employees' ability to meet deadlines, higher productivity, new solution for a problem at work, etc.)

Avoid responsibilities when problems arise

Communicate clearly the company goals with employees

- Show a difference between talks and actions (e.g. says that the company should serve customers' best interest but tells employees to try to convince customers to buy as many products as possible for larger revenue)
- Lead by examples and be a role model
- Assign tasks without explaining their meaning or importance
- Give feedback on employees' performance (e.g. comments about employees' work results, give advices, etc.)