

# LEADERSHIP BEHAVIOR AND ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT: AN EMPIRICAL STUDY OF EDUCATIONAL PROFESSIONALS

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## ABSTRACT

One of the important factors influencing perceptions of the existence of organizational commitment is leadership behaviors. It is argued that leadership behaviors are developed to humanize and renormalize the workplace. In various studies, leadership behaviors were evaluated as antecedents of organizational commitment. In this sense, the purpose of this study is to investigate the relationship between leadership behaviors and organizational commitment (OC). This study is based on the behavioral approach of the leadership. Data were obtained from 150 individuals. Results indicated that over all leadership behavior and organizational commitment of educational professionals have a strong positive correlation. A significant effect of leadership behavior on organizational commitment was also found through regression analysis. Moreover, it was found that Initiation Structure pattern of leadership behavior is negatively related with Affiliation commitment while positively with Exchange commitment; however this has no relationship with Identification commitment. While Consideration pattern of the leadership behavior is strongly correlated with Identification commitment a dimension of OC, further it was concluded that this has not any relationship with Affiliation and Exchange commitment dimensions of OC.

**Key words:** organizational commitment (OC), leadership behavior, principals, teachers, initiation structure.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Leadership is a significant managerial factor in any organization. There is no topic which has received more attention in the management literature or in the speeches of organizational leaders than the concept of leadership and its relationship to productivity and satisfaction or organizational commitment (Gamage & Pang, 2003).

The term, leader, in this study refers to someone who initiates change in the group, processes and efforts to fulfill overall organizational objectives. Leadership, therefore, refers to the initiation of change in the system or the procedure for accomplishing the organizational objectives. In addition to maintain the desirable essentials in the established procedure for achieving the organizational objectives, school principal, department head, dean or a vice chancellor must be an active leader.

Dynamic leaders are needed as head of the institutions today more than ever before, for this, an era of change in our education system has been started for the last decade. The National Education Policy (NEP) 1998-2010, was a result of the realization of the importance of education as a great instrument of change. Change in existing behavior of the workforce in educational institutions is strongly associated with the effective leadership, if provided; the objectives of education are to be achieved, as observed by (Garland & O'Reilly, 1976), most theorists agree that employees are more committed when leaders behave and act. The researcher, therefore, studied the dimensions of the behavior of educational leaders that impact on their employees' commitment towards their institutions.

## 2. REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE

Halpin (1959) hold the view that the observed behavior is a result of the interaction between the personal traits of the leader and the features of the situation in which he function. The study being reported is based on the behavioral approach. The Dimensions of Leadership: The various studies which have been conducted by various types of organizations like educational, military, business, and others, suggest that the things leaders do that is, the behavior they display, fall into two categories called dimensions. Though universally accepted labels for these categories of leadership behavior are yet to appear, the terms "initiating structure" and "consideration" are used by a large number of scholars (Bass, 1998).

Halpin (1966) defines these two dimensions as follows:

**Initiating structure** refers to the leader's behavior in delineating the relationship between himself and the members of his group, and in endeavoring to establish well defined patterns of organization, channels of communication and methods of procedure. **Consideration** refers to behavior indicative of friendship, mutual trust, respect and warmth in the relationship between the leader and the members of his group. Thus, the initiating structure dimension is system-oriented or task-oriented, while the consideration dimension is person-oriented.

According to Ohio State University Leadership Behavior Description Questionnaire LBDQ studies (Halpin, 1966), four major findings emerged that;

"Initiation structure and consideration are fundamental dimensions of leadership behavior. Effective leadership behavior tends most often to be associated with frequent behavior on both dimensions. Superiors and

subordinates tend to evaluate the contributions of the leaders behavior dimensions positively in assessing effectiveness. Superiors tend to emphasize initiating structure while subordinates are more concerned with consideration. Only slight relationship exists between how leaders say they should behave and how subordinates describe that they do behave.”

According to Mehrotra (2005),

“A Principal during his duties comes into contact with various categories of persons connected with the school life like, the teachers the ancillary staff of the school, the department of education personnel, and the member of the management committee, the students and the parents. During his interaction with them his behavior is experienced and perceived by all of these groups. Teachers particularly perceive how does the Principal inspire, direct and guide them, how does he organize the teaching process and how far he is able to carry out these activities. They also have a belief as to how should the Principal behave the ideal behavior expected of him. The Principal himself also has a perception of his leadership behavior both real and ideal, which can also be measured and compared with the perception of his behavior by other groups”.

### 3. ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT

Organizational commitment has an important place in the study of organizational behavior. This is in part due to the vast number of works that have found relationships between organizational commitment and attitudes and behaviors in the workplace (Koch and Steers, 1978; Angle and Perry, 1981).

Organizational commitment has been studied in the public, private, and non-profit sector, and more recently internationally. Early research focused on defining the concept and current research continues to examine organizational commitment through two popular approaches, commitment-related attitudes and commitment-related behaviors. A variety of antecedents and outcomes have been identified in the past thirty years (Mowday et al, 1979; Hall, 1977).

### 4. DEFINITION OF ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT

Multiple definitions of organizational commitment are found in the literature. Porter et al. (1974), discuss three major components of organizational commitment as being “a strong belief in and acceptance of the organization’s goals, a willingness to exert considerable effort on behalf of the organization, and a definite desire to maintain organizational membership”. Sheldon (1971) defines commitments as being a positive evaluation of the organization and the organizational goals.

Meyer and Allen (1991) and Dunham et al (1994) identified three types of commitment; affective commitment, continuance commitment, and normative commitment. Normative commitment is a relatively new aspect of organizational commitment having been defined by (Bolon, 1997). Affective commitment is defined as the emotional attachment, identification, and involvement that an employee has with its organization and goals (Mowday et al, 1997, Meyer & Allen, 1993). Porter et al (1974) further characterize affective commitment by three factors like, belief in and acceptance of the organization’s goals and values, a willingness to focus effort on helping the organization achieve its goal’s, and a desire to maintain organizational membership. Meyer and Allen (1997) continue to say that employees retain membership out of choice and this is their commitment to the organization.

Continuance commitment is the willingness to remain in an organization because of the investment that the employee has with “nontransferable” investments. Nontransferable investments include things such as retirement, relationships with other employees, or things that are special to the organization (Reichers, 1985). Meyer and Allen (1997) further explain that employees who share continuance commitment with their employer often make it very difficult for an employee to leave the organization.

Normative commitment (Bolon, 1997) is the commitment that a person believes that they have to the organization or their feeling of obligation to their workplace. (Weiner, 1982), discusses normative commitment as being a “generalized value of loyalty and duty”.

Normative commitment can be explained by other commitments such as marriage, family, religion, etc. therefore when it comes to one’s commitment to their place of employment they often feel like they have a moral obligation to the organization (Wiener, 1982).

Meyer et al (1993) continue to say that generally the research shows that those employee’s with a strong affective commitment will remain with an organization because they want to, those with a strong continuance commitment remain because they have to, and those with a normative commitment remain because they feel that they have to.

Meyer & Allen (1997) define a committed employee as being one “stays with an organization, attends work regularly, puts in a full day and more, protects corporate assets, and believes in the organizational goals”. This employee positively contributes to the organization because of its commitment to the organization

The literature shows that there are two significant variables that are studied in terms of commitment-related attitudes and commitment-related behaviors, the variables being antecedents and outcomes. All three types of commitment have been studied in both the public, private, and nonprofit sector, though there is much more research completed on employees in the private and public sector. Keeping in view the all above consequences and commendations of the researchers regarding the undergoing study, researcher holds the interest to probe in to the matter for the variables of the study in educational institutions in Pakistan context.

## 5. PROBLEM STATEMENT

The study is aimed at to find out the effect of leadership behavior of the public sector secondary school principals on the organizational commitment of the school teachers towards their respective schools. The researcher is of the view that the overall educational system suffers this notion. Moreover the motive of the undergone study is also to explore the relationship between different dimensions of the leadership behavior and of organizational commitment like initiation structure and consideration with identification, affiliation and exchange commitment.

## 6. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. Is there any relationship between organizational commitment and leadership behavior?
2. Is there any relationship between identification commitment and consideration?
3. Is there any relationship between affiliation commitment and initiation structure?
4. Is there any relationship between exchange commitment and initiation structure?
5. Is there any effect of leadership behavior on organizational commitment?

## 7. METHODOLOGY

Under consideration study was a causal-comparative, and a survey was conducted over 150 subjects. Two questionnaires were served to know about the behavior of secondary school leaders and their respective followers / teachers organizational commitment in the Punjab public sector education department, Lahore, Pakistan. Teachers who had spent more than two years in their schools were only included because it was felt that teachers having less time period at the same school might not have known the principals enough to rate the his leadership behavior properly.

## 8. INSTRUMENT

To measure the leadership behavior, Leadership Behavior Description Questionnaire (LBDQ) was used. This questionnaire was designed by the Personal Research Foundation at Ohio State University in the 1940s. It was developed by Hemphill (1949), and was later on adopted by Halpin and Winner (1952). The tool yields two scores on two dimensions of leadership behavior, the initiating structure and consideration. A combination of these two dimensions indicates the leadership behavior pattern. The tool facilitates to define leadership behavior dimensions operationally. The tool reveals to what extent the manager or any educational administrator such as a principal is structure oriented and to what extent he is consideration oriented. Leadership Behavior Description Questionnaire is composed of short descriptive statements of ways in which leaders may behave. The members of the group indicate the frequency with which the leader of the group engages in each form of behavior by checking on 5-point likert scale. The Leader Behavior Descriptive Questionnaire has been found reliable as value for Cronbach's alpha was found 0.80.

## 9. ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT SCALE

To measure the organizational commitment of the teachers towards their organization, the Organizational Commitment Scale (OCS) was used, this scale was developed by Balfour and Wechsler (1996), uses nine items to measure three dimensions of overall organizational commitment based on affiliation or pride in the organization, commitment based on identification with the organization, and commitment based on the satisfactory exchange with the organization resulting in appreciation of the individual by the organization. It has been used to measure organizational commitment of public sector employees at 7-point likert scale (Balfour & Wechsler, 1996). OCS questionnaire has been found reliable in educational context as value for Cronbach's alpha was found 0.86.

## 10. DATA ANALYSIS

Data were analyzed by using the special package for social sciences (SPSS), Pearson correlations were applied to find out the relationship between the variables. Mean and standard deviation were also found for all variables involving in the study from descriptive statistics as represented in the table 1.

**Table 1.** Pearson correlations between Organizational Commitment and Leadership Behavior

Variables	M	S D	Id-comt	Aff-com	Exch-com	Org-com	Ini-Stru	Consi	LB-score
Id_comt	5.13	.47	1						

<b>Aff_comt</b>	5.16	.29	.33**	1					
<b>Exch_comt</b>	4.51	.43	-.22**	-.24**	1				
<b>Org_commt</b>	4.94	.22	.72**	.52**	.38**	1			
<b>Ini_Struc</b>	6.47	.19	-.04	-.34**	.45**	.11	1		
<b>Considerati on</b>	6.36	.13	.56**	-.02	.11	.46**	.14	1	
<b>LB_score</b>	6.42	.12	.27**	-.28**	.41**	.33**	.84**	.65**	1

\*\* P < 0.01, (N= 150)

From table 1, the answer to first question of the study is that there is a significant relationship between leadership behavior (**LB\_score**) and organizational commitment (**Org\_commt**), ( $r = .33$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). Also there is significant relationship between consideration and identification commitment ( $r = .56$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) as well as initiation structure (**Ini\_Struc**) and exchange commitment (**Exch\_comt**) are also significantly correlated. However affiliation commitment (**Aff\_comt**) and initiation structure (**Ini\_Struc**) are negatively related to each other.

To address the research question regarding effect of leadership behavior (**LB\_score**) on the organizational commitment (**Org\_commt**) linear regressions were applied that shows the significant effect of leadership behavior on organizational commitment ( $f = 18.94$ ,  $sig = .000$ ), as from the table 2.

**Table 2.** Linear regression between Leadership Behavior and Organizational Commitment, ANOVA, N= 150

Model	S S	Df	M S	F	Sig.
<b>Regression</b>	.83	1	.83	18.94	.000 <sup>a</sup>
<b>Residual</b>	6.55	148	.04		
<b>Total</b>	7.39	149			
<b>Total</b>	7.39	149			

a. Predictors (Constant ): LDB\_score

b. Dependent Variable : Org\_commt

Similarly answer to the question for effect of leadership behavior on organizational commitment has also been described by the linear line observed through regression analysis shown in diagram-A.

Normal P-P Plot of Regression Standardized Residual

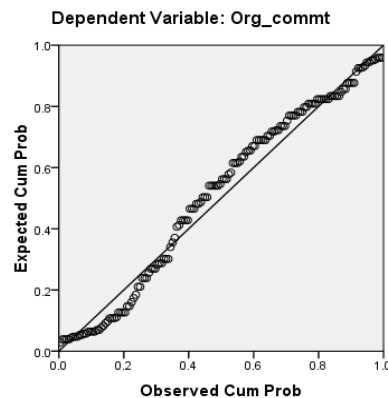


Diagram-A: graphical representation of the effect of Leadership behavior on OC

## 11. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The findings of this study have both interesting and important implications. The main focus of the study was to see the relationship of leadership behavior and organizational commitment, the results showed that leadership behavior and organizational commitment were positively correlated. Furthermore it was observed that the relationship of initiation structure dimension of leadership behavior with organizational commitment was insignificant while consideration dimension of leadership behavior was significantly related with organizational commitment. It looks surprising that this study found no significant relationships between the dimensions of identification commitment and initiation structure although identification commitment has significant relationship with consideration dimension of leadership behavior.

This results shows that consideration dimension of leadership behavior is valuable for organization. On the other hand the dimensions like initiation structure and exchange commitment are also significantly correlated. While consideration dimension of leadership behavior is insignificantly related with exchange commitment. This shows that of initiation structure dimension of leadership behavior is also valuable for organization. As Halpin (1959) holds that an acceptable leader usually scores high on both "initiating structure" and "consideration". Therefore the current study is supported by the Halpin's (1959) notion. Similarly the result of regression analysis shows that leadership behavior has a significant effect on organizational commitment.

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