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# **ACADEMIC JOURNAL UiTM JOHOR**

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## **Relationship between Perceived Organizational Support and Organizational Commitment among Teachers in Private Primary Schools**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*In this knowledge era, education is the most crucial aspect in our lives. In fact, the government as a policy maker imparts a huge sum of money to give the best education to develop nation. Therefore, the needs for getting and retaining the knowledge sources, teachers have become an issue. Schools management plays a vital role to ensure the country does not dry out from the lack of teachers. The purpose of this study was to examine whether there is a significant relationship between perceived organizational support (POS) and three types of organizational commitment (OC) namely affective commitment (AFFOC), continuance commitment (CONTOC) and normative commitment (NORMOC) among private primary school teachers in the Klang Valley. The questionnaires were distributed to chosen private primary schools in the Klang Valley. Data from 103 teachers were analyzed using Pearson's Correlation in Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS). All variables are proven reliable after going through reliability tests. The findings suggest that there was a positive relationship between POS and all three OC. This indicates that OC among teachers in private primary school is very much dependent on the level of the POS that they received.*

**Keywords:** *organizational support, affective commitment, continuance commitment, normative commitment, primary schools*

### **INTRODUCTION**

OC in recent years has become an important concept in organizational research and in understanding employees' behavior in the workplace. It reflects the extent to

which employees identify with an organization and are committed to its goals (Gill & Ali Yusob, 1996). It is essential for organizations to understand the types of commitment that their employees have towards their company, thus they could find a better way to reduce their intention to leave. This is because OC has very much influence on one's intention to leave as proven by Porter, Steers, Monday and Boulian (1974). There was a lot of research done pertaining to POS and OC yet not much being explored with the combination of two.

In addition, the researchers would like to examine whether the same relationship can be found in Malaysia. This is because various private education systems are applied in different countries. For example, in America, private schools are only for the wealthy. However, many of these schools recognize their social responsibility and provide generous scholarships to promising students from poor families. In contrast, although the tuition fees in Malaysia are free, there are considerable added burdens. Such as, cost of books, uniforms, non-tuition fees, and transportation (M. Bakri Musa, 2009). In upholding the ideal of the National Philosophy of Education (NPE) and the implementation of the holistic education, the Malaysian educational system had clearly identified that the concepts of integration and holism are first and foremost based on the concept of belief and devotion to God. Hence, with this in focus, the concepts of the human soul, human potential based on the intellectual, spiritual, emotional and physical components must first and foremost to be clearly based on the principles of the NPE. As opposed from the western notion of spirituality which focuses on the elements of feelings, an animating energy or process, romantic or universal love and the innermost feeling encompassing loss, grief, joy and pain (Miller, 2000), spirituality in the Malaysian holistic educational context first and foremost rests upon the belief of God the Almighty and the revelation as the greatest source of truth. In realizing the NPE, teachers are partially mediating the relationship of government and schools. Thus, it is important to investigate whether support received by the teachers will motivate them be more committed to the schools (Habsah Ismail & Aminuddin Hassan, 2009).

#### *Purpose of the Study*

This objective of the study is to examine whether there is a significant relationship between POS and OC among private primary school teachers in Klang Valley.

#### *Hypotheses*

There are three hypotheses to be found out:

Hypothesis 1: POS is positively related with AFFOC

Hypothesis 2: POS is negatively related with CONTOC

Hypothesis 3: POS is positively related with NORMOC

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### *Perceived Organizational Support (POS)*

Eisenberger, Fasolo, and David-LaMastro (1990) described POS as “a general perception concerning the extent to which the organization values employees’ general contributions and cares for their well-being. High levels of POS are thought to endanger feelings of trust, long-term obligations, and organizational identification among employees (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). On the contrary, employees with low levels of POS believe that the organization disregards their best interest, would take advantage of them and would replace them if possible. According to Erdogan, Karimer and Liden (2004), POS serve two purposes. Firstly, POS may help facilitate communication and cooperation among organizational members. Secondly, POS may compensate for the low levels of organizational identification that may occur when employees’ values do not match those of the organization because POS makes employees feel valued (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002; Shore & Terrick, 1991).

### *Affective Commitment (AFFOC)*

Affective commitment can be defined as the employees’ emotional attachment to identification with, and involvement in the organization (Allen & Meyer, 1990). According to McShane and Von Glinow (2000), research has found that employees with high levels of affective commitment are less likely to quit their jobs and be absent from work. Employees with high affective commitment also tend to have higher work motivation and organizational citizenship (Bolon, 1997; Meyer, Paunonen, Gellatly, Goffin & Jackson, 1989). On the other hand, employees with low affective commitment will choose to leave the organization.

### *Continuance Commitment (CONTOC)*

Along with the affective commitment, employees also have various levels of continuance commitment (Meyer & Allen, 1997). According to Joolideh & Yeshodhara (2009), this is related to one’s experience and what one has given to an organization. There is thus difficulty in “giving it up” and the unknown “opportunity cost” of leaving the organization or having few or no alternatives. Continuance commitment occurs when employees believe it is in their own personal interest to remain with the organization. This form of commitment is a calculative bond with the organization, rather than an emotional attachment. Continuance commitment represents the cost to the employee associated with leaving the organization (e.g. loss of pension or other benefits) (Becker, 1960; Farrel & Rusbult, 1981; Meyer & Allen, 1984; Scholl, 1981).

### *Normative Commitment (NORMOC)*

Gill and Ali Yusob (1996) believe that a normative commitment as a less common but equally viable commitment that should be given the same focus in a study of organizational commitment. Normative commitment is based upon feelings of moral obligation and/or person-organization fit. For instance, if an organization is loyal to the employee or has supported his/her educational efforts, the employee may report higher degrees of normative commitment.

*The Relationship Between POS And OC*

Polly (2002) in her research discovers that POS had direct positive relationship on AFFOC ( $r = .80, p < .05$ ). This was also supported by Eisenberger et al (1990) where they indicate that individuals who felt valued and supported by their organizations, were in this case, more emotionally attached to the organization and to the profession as well.

In the same study done by a group of authors, a negative correlation was noted between POS and CONTOC ( $r = -.146, p < .05$ ). Their study of both elementary and secondary schools teachers implied that individuals with strong levels of POS were less likely to feel that they “had to” remain with the organization or with the teaching profession due to the lack of attractive alternatives or because of the disruptions in their lives that leaving would involve. Rhoades and Eisenberger (2002) also share the same findings in their study.

Finally, Eisenberger et al. (1990) indicate a positive correlation between POS and normative commitment  $r = .362, p = -.000$ , suggesting that individuals who feel supported by their organization also feel morally obligated to remain with that organization and with the teaching profession. However, Rhoades and Eisenberger (2002) found the contrast result.

*Theoretical framework*

Based on the review of the literature and arguments presented above, a theoretical framework of the relationship between POS and OC is developed and is presented in Figure 1.

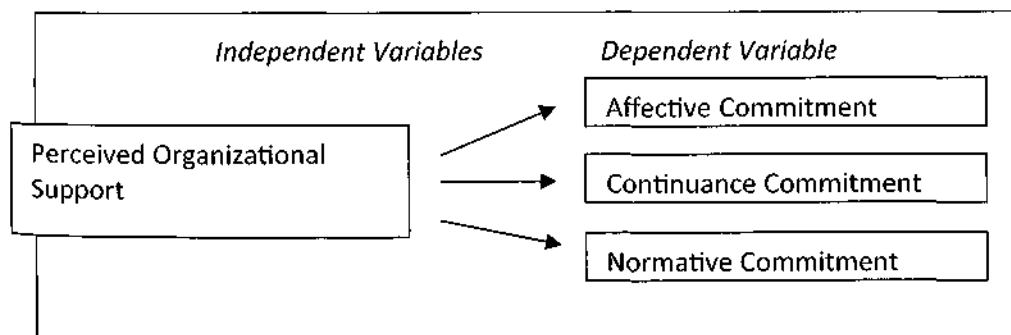


Fig 1: Theoretical framework of the relationship between independent and dependent variables.

## CONTENT

### *Sample*

This study focuses on teachers from primary private schools in Klang Valley as a population of interest. The selection of sample is based on the convenience sampling method. A total of 195 questionnaires were distributed to all teachers in the selected 5 primary private schools. However, only 60% was returned, usable and completed that gives a total number of 103 samples. Among all, we found a total of 86.4% are female teachers while 13.6% are males. Malay are the highest working this area with 49 persons, followed by 32 (Chinese), 19 (Indian) and 3 (others). Most of them have a diploma and earn monthly salary of RM1001-2000.

### *Measurement*

#### Perceived Organizational Support (POS)

To measure the extent to which employees perceived that they valued their contribution and cared about their well-being, an adapted questionnaire that consists of 16 questions from the Survey of Perceived Organizational Support by Eisenberger et al (1986) was used. Each item alternative is assigned a weighting ranging from 1 to 5 (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree) for favorable items. In case of unfavorable items the scoring is reversed, that is from 1 = strongly agree to 5 = strongly disagree. Reversed items are numbers 2, 3, 5, 6, 9, 12, and 13. The reliability for the scale is 0.918.

#### Organizational Commitment (OC)

Employee Organizational Commitment was assessed using the 24-items developed by Meyer & Allen (1997) with 8 items for each type. The scale anchors ranged from 1 to 5 (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree). The reliability for the sum of the 40-items overall organization commitment was 0.946.

### *Data Collection method*

The researcher used a primary data collection method by distributing structured questionnaires to the selected private primary schools. The name and address of the private primary schools in Klang Valley were obtained from the website of Ministry of Education of Malaysia. Then, a call was made to the selected schools to get principal's permission in gathering data. Questionnaires were sent on the agreed date and were taken back a week after that. Of the 195 set of questionnaires distributed only 60% returned, usable and completed.

Results

*Hypothesis 1: POS is positively related with AFFOC*

Table 1: Correlation between POS and Affective OC

		Correlations	
		TotPOS	Totaffoc
TotPOS	Pearson Correlation	1	.685 **
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
	N	103	103
Totaffoc	Pearson Correlation	.685 **	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
	N	103	103

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 1 shows the correlation analysis of POS and Affective commitment. There was a significant positive relationship between Perceived Organizational Support (POS) and Affective Organizational Commitment (AFFOC) ( $r = .685, p < .05$ ). Thus, higher affective organizational commitment is associated with higher perceived organizational support. It indicates that the teachers felt emotionally attached with the schools as higher organizational support was received by them.

*Hypothesis 2: POS is negatively related with CONTOC*

Table 2: Correlation between POS and Continuance OC



## Correlations

		TotPOS	Totcontoc
TotPOS	Pearson Correlation	1	.386 **
	Sig. (2 tailed)	.	.000
	N	103	103
Totcontoc	Pearson Correlation	.386 **	1
	Sig. (2 tailed)	.000	.
	N	103	103

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2 tailed)

Table 2 shows that there was a significant positive relationship between Perceived Organizational Support (POS) and Continuance Organizational Commitment (CONTOC). However, the relationship is quite weak ( $r = .386$ ,  $p < .05$ ). This might explain why most of earlier research found the negative relationship between the two. Our findings indicated that higher organizational support leads to more calculative bonding towards the schools. Employees feel committed to the schools because they perceived that the cost of leaving the school is high. This could be caused by the intense rivalry in current job market that forces teachers to stay with the schools for the purpose of maintain a living. This is very true by looking at the second quarter of 2009 where the unemployment rate in Malaysia was as high as 3.6% ([www.statistic.gov.my](http://www.statistic.gov.my)).

*Hypothesis 3: POS is positively related with NORMOC*

Table 3: Correlation for POS and Normative OC

## Correlations

		TotPOS	Totnormoc
TotPOS	Pearson Correlation	1	.474 **
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
	N	103	103
Totnormoc	Pearson Correlation	.474 **	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
	N	103	103

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 3 shows that perceived organizational support (POS) has a moderate significant relationship with normative commitment (NORMOC) ( $r = .474, p < .01$ ). It indicated that the higher organizational support perceived by the teachers, the higher moral obligation teachers had for the schools.

*Reliability Test*

The interim consistency reliability or the Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient of the three independents and single dependent variables were obtained. According to Sekaran (2000), in general reliabilities, less than .60 are considered poor, those in the .70 range are acceptable, and those above .80 are good. The Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient for the sum of the 40-items overall organizational commitment was .946 whereas .908, .803 and .793 were for affective, continuance and normative commitment respectively. This proved that all the questionnaires used for this study were very reliable.

## DISCUSSION

Of all the three types of OC tested, only findings for affective and normative commitment align with earlier research where both show a positive relationship with POS. Teachers' in private primary schools will be more committed if they received more support from schools. Directly it will increase their sense of belongingness to the school and voluntarily protect the schools. Having more support from the school lead to a higher moral obligation of teachers. They will feel responsible in maintaining the school image. On the contrary, continuance commitment which was found to have negative relationship on POS in earlier literature, gives an unexpected finding. Largely, continuance commitment is precondition by economic situation. At this point of time, teachers in private primary schools are committed to the schools

because they perceived that the cost of leaving the school is high especially in the unstable economic situation. However, it may change according to the economic fluctuation. Having all similarities and differences found, there are many other factors that contribute to this situation such as the location of schools, the background of the teachers and many more.

The findings suggest that schools that wish to increase their teacher's commitment, as well as their motivation should convince teachers that they value and appreciate them. This is to instill faith and confidence towards the schools. They should also find some ways to increase the emotional attachment of the teachers towards schools as this can help to reduce their intention to leave. Higher turnover rate means higher cost incurred to train new teachers. Policy makers have to instill loyalty belief and values in every 'going to be' educators especially the new generation to ensure the continuous supply of teachers in our country. Although, these teachers work in private schools, their contribution to nations cannot be denied thus government should perceived them as the country assets and give the same treatment as given to government schools' teachers.

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