

## Trust as a predictor of teachers' commitment towards primary school teachers in Betong Division, Sarawak

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### Abstract

Teachers' trust toward the headmaster was found to have an impact on teachers' commitment. This study is aimed to investigate the effect of teachers' trust on the headmasters toward teachers' commitment to the school. There were 310 of primary school teachers in Betong Division, Sarawak involved in the study. The analysis result of correlation and regression has found that teachers' trust on the headmasters was significantly correlated with teachers' commitment towards the school. In addition, it was found that teachers' trust was a predictor of teachers' commitment to the school.

**Keywords:** Trust, Headmaster, Commitment, Primary school, Teachers

### Introduction

Trust is a critical aspect in any organization. According to Lokman Mohd Tahir *et al.* (2007) <sup>[10]</sup>, the existence of trust element in an organization is important in enhancing the effectiveness of the organization. Without element of trust between leaders and followers it would be difficult to achieve the organizational's goal. Trust often associate with the satisfaction of the workers (Edwards & Cable, 2009; Gulati & Sytch, 2007) <sup>[3, 5]</sup>, effort and performance (Aryee, Budhwar & Chen, 2002) <sup>[1]</sup>; Colquitt, (Scott & LePine, 2007), collaboration and team work (Sargent & Waters, 2004; Simons & Peterson, 2000) <sup>[16, 18]</sup>.

In another view, Tschannen and Moran (2001) <sup>[21]</sup>, trust is the most important factor for the effectiveness of the organization. In the absence of trust the school will facing conflict and difficult to achieve the goal aimed (Tschannen-Moran, 2004). There are various evidences to show that trust give contributions to the effectiveness of the school. For example, teachers' trust towards the headmaster and the colleagues was found to have the relationship with the school effectiveness (Hoy *et al.*, 1992; Tarter *et al.*, 1995; Jefferson *et al.*, 2008; Louis *et al.*, 2010) <sup>[8, 11]</sup>. In order to maintain the teachers' trust toward the headmaster, he or she should avoid selfishness and always try to fulfill the teachers' need (Hailey *et al.*, 2012) <sup>[6]</sup>. Realizing the importance of trust in the organization, the researcher attempt to find out the effect of the element on teachers' commitment towards school among the primary school teachers in Betong Division, Sarawak.

### Literature Review

There were many reseachers who had conducted studies on relationship between trust and organizational commitment. Shueh (2014) <sup>[17]</sup>, from National University of Tainan, Taiwan carried out a study on the organizational justice influences on the teachers' commitment with trust as a mediator. It involved 458 elementary school teachers and the findings showed that the teachers' trust on the headmasters was a predictor of teachers' commitment toward the school.

Leslie (2015) <sup>[9]</sup>, conducted a study on the relationship between trust for the principal and teachers' commitment toward the school. The study involved the teachers from sixty elementary school in North Alabama. The findings showed that the trust was a predictor of teachers' commitment. Apart from that, a study which was conducted by Sheikh Mohamed *et al.* (2012) <sup>[14]</sup>, towards workers of banking industry in India also had found that all the commitment dimensions were significantly correlated with trust toward organization.

Marziyeh Alijanpour *et al.* (2013) <sup>[12]</sup>, also carried out a study on the relationship between organizational trust and staff organizational commitment. There were 101 staffs of Youth and Sport Department, Mazandaran Region, Iran involved in the study. The findings of the study found that there was a relationship between organizational trust and organizational commitment. Meanwhile, organizational trust was found significantly and positively correlated to the affective commitment. However, there was no relationship existed between organizational trust and continuance commitment among the staffs.

In Kyrgyz National Police (KNP), Erlan Bakiev (2013) <sup>[14]</sup>, carried out a study on 400 police officers. The purpose of the study was to find out the effect of interpersonal trust on organizational commitment based on the organizational performance. The results have indicated that the interpersonal trust and the organizational commitment were correlated positively. The police officers who acquired high interpersonal trust were found to be more committed on the organization and their works. Additionally, more committed officers were found to have higher level of interpersonal trust. Apart from that, interpersonal trust was also found to have a positive effect on organizational performance. This has indicated that those officers who had higher level of interpersonal trust would have better performance.

### Methodology

This study involved 310 primary school teachers from Betong Division of Sarawak. The data were collected through questionnaires. There were two types of instrument used.

Firstly, Faculty Trust Survey Instrument built by Tschannen-Moran (2003) [20], which has consisted of 13 items. The items of the instrument had been adapted based on the needs and the context of the study. Secondly, the TCM Employee Commitment Survey instrument by Meyer and Allen (2004) [13], which have contained 18 items was used to measure the teachers' commitment towards the school. All the collected data were processed by using Statistical Package for Social Sciences SPSS version 21. In order to verify the validation of the instruments, both instruments have underwent a back translation method. Pilot study was conducted to test the reliability of the instrument to be used for the study. There were thirty teachers had been selected for the purpose of the study. The result had indicated that both instruments had Alpha Cronbach values of .94 for Faculty Trust Instrument and .87 for TCM Employee Commitment Instrument.

**Results**

Table 1 shows the distribution of respondents based on gender. There were 165 male (53.2%) and 145 female (46.8%) teachers involved. Comparatively, there were more male teachers than female teachers involved in the study.

**Table 1:** Respondents based on Gender

Gender	Respondents	%
Male	165	53.2
Female	145	46.8
Total	310	100

Table 2 shows the distribution of respondents based on the educational level. There were 205 (66.1%) graduate teachers and the remaining 105 (33.9%) were non-graduate teachers. This had shown that the number of graduate teachers who

participated in this study had exceeded the number of non-graduate teachers.

**Table 2:** Respondents based on education level.

Category	Respondents	%
Graduates	205	66.1
Non graduates	105	33.9
Total	310	100

Table 3, shows the distribution of respondents based on their age category. There were 81 respondents (26.1%) aged below 30 years old, 107 respondents (34.5%) aged between 31 to 40 years old, 86 respondents (27.7%) aged between 41 to 50 years and 36 respondents (11.6%) aged between 51 and above. The group age between 31 to 40 years formed the largest age group involved in the study.

**Table 3:** Respondents based on age group.

Age Category	Respondents	%
Below 30 years	81	26.1
31 to 41 years	107	34.5
41 to 50 years	86	27.7
Above 51 years	36	11.6
Total	310	100

Table 4 shows the distribution of respondent based on their teaching experience. A total of 135 respondents (43.5%) have experience about 10 years and below, 81 respondents (26.1%) have teaching experience from 11 to 20 years, 80 respondents (25.8%) have 21 to 30 years and 14 respondents (4.5%) have teaching experience more than 30 years. This had revealed that majority of the teachers involved in this study were young teachers who possessed teaching experience approximately 10 years and below.

**Table 4:** Respondents based on teaching experience

Teaching Experience	Respondents	%
10 years and below	135	43.5
11 to 20 years	81	26.1
21 to 30 years	80	25.8
Above 30 years	14	4.5
Total	310	100

**Research Questions**

What is the trust level of the teachers on the headmasters and teachers' commitment toward the school?

To determine the level of teachers' trust and teachers' commitment the score range in table 5 was used.

**Table 5:** Range of teachers' trust and commitment level

	Score	Level
1	1.00 – 2.00	low
2	2.01 – 3.00	Moderate low
3	3.01 – 4.00	Moderate high
4	4.01 – 5.00	High

Source: Nunnally *et al.* (1994)

Table 6 below shows the analysis of the teachers' trust toward the headmasters according to its' dimension. Based on the table, the overall means score for teachers' trust is 4.3 (SD =

.46). It shows the teachers have great trust on their headmasters. The dimension of honesty has the highest mean score of 4.38 (SD = .50), and the dimension of openness and competence both have a mean score of 4.24 (SD = .52) and (SD = .54) are lower than other dimensions. In conclusion, teachers perceived their headmasters were honest, kind, reliable, open and competent. By having such characteristics, the teachers trusted and have high expectation toward the headmasters.

**Table 6:** Mean and Standard Deviation of teachers' trust

	Trust	Mean	SD
1	Benevolence	4.31	.52
2	Reliability	4.26	.56
3	Honesty	4.38	.50
4	Openness	4.24	.52
5	Competence	4.24	.54

Table 7 below shows the analysis of teachers' commitment towards the school according to their dimensional. Based on the table, the overall mean score for teachers' commitment is 3.6 (SD = .49). The dimension of normative commitment has the highest mean score of 3.65, followed by continuance commitment dimension, 3.61 (SD = .59) and the last one is affective commitment, 3.54 (SD = .53). Overall, it can be concluded that Betong primary school teachers have a moderately high level of commitment towards the school.

**Table 7:** Mean and Standard Deviation of teachers' commitment toward the school

	Commitment	Mean	SD
1	Affective	3.54	.53
2	Continuance	3.61	.59
3	Normative	3.65	.49

### Testing Hypotheses

#### Research Question

Is there a significant relationship between teachers' trust and teachers' commitment?

- H<sub>01</sub>: There is no significant relationship between teachers' trust and teachers' commitment.

Based on the analysis in Table 8 the correlation coefficient *r* for teachers' trust is .20. It shows a weak correlation. As the value of *p* = .00 is smaller than 0.05, the hypothesis is rejected. This means there was a significant relationship between teachers' trust on the headmasters and teachers' commitment toward the school.

**Table 8:** Pearson correlation between teachers' trust on the headmasters and teachers' commitment

Variable	Strength of relationship (r)	Signifikan
Trust	.20	.00

\*\* Significant at 0.01

- H<sub>02</sub>: Teachers' trust on the headmaster is not a predictor of teachers' commitment toward the school.

SPSS data analysis results in Table 9 below shows the predictor variable, teachers' trust on the headmasters (*R* = .20, *t* = 11.93, *p* < .05) significant factor towards teachers' commitment in schools. Therefore, null hypothesis was rejected and reported that the predictor variable accounted for 4.1 % (*r* = .20) change of variance in the level of the teachers' commitment towards the school [*F* (1, 296) = 12.68, *p* < .05]. Based on the findings, researchers concluded that teachers' trust on the headmaster had an effect on teachers' commitment towards the school.

**Table 9:** Regression analysis teachers trust as predictor of teachers' commitment

Model	R	R <sup>2</sup>	Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	SE	R <sup>2</sup> change	F	P
1	.203 <sup>a</sup>	.041	.038	.43448	.041	12.689	.00

\**p* = .05, \*\**p* = .01

### Discussion

The study had found that the primary school teachers of Betong Division, Sarawak have a high level of trust towards their headmasters. This findings support the research findings of Lokman Mohd Tahir *et al.*, (2007) <sup>[10]</sup>. In addition, the level

of the teachers' commitment involved in the study was found to be at the level of medium high and it is consistent with the findings of Arumugam *et al.* (2014). The results also had found that teachers' trust on the headmaster could affect the teachers' commitment towards the school. It was recommended that the headmasters should be able to obtain trust of the teachers so that he could elevate the teachers' commitment towards the school.

### Conclusion

Teachers' trust on the headmaster have been found gives impact toward teachers' commitment to the school. From this study also we could concluded that the trust of the teachers on their headmasters could be a predictor of teachers' commitment toward the school. Since there are no such studies had been conducted in the state particularly in Betong Division, the findings of the study will contribute to more-in depth understanding on the importance of trust in the organization.

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