

# THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LEADERSHIP STYLE AND ENTRY LEVEL EMPLOYEES' COMMITMENT TO ORGANIZATIONS

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## Abstract

*Leadership is an important ingredient for success of organizations. A large volume of literature suggested relationships between leadership and firms' performance. The behavioral school described that leader behaviors are comparatively static. On the contrary, the contingency school suggested that effective leaders do change their styles in accordance with circumstances. Subordinates respond differently with each leadership style, particularly in their satisfaction in leaders and organizations. Among many reactions subordinates exhibit, organizational commitment is an important topic of organizational culture. Higher commitment to an organization results in positive organizational behaviors. Previous literature related to relationship between leadership style and organizational commitment shows inconclusive results. It is very likely that each leadership style relates in a different manner to each component of organizational commitment. Specifically, the current study investigates the relationship between directive, supportive, participative and achievement-oriented leadership styles and organizational commitment components, i.e., affective, continuance and normative organizational commitment. The samples in this study were working adults in Bangkok. Respondents were intercepted on Silom Road – the main business district in Bangkok.*

*Results revealed that directive leadership style was related to overall organizational commitment. A further investigation into the organizational component revealed different associations between leadership styles and each of the organizational components. Leadership styles were related to affective organizational commitment component but not with continuance and normative commitment components. The findings supported the contingency model of leadership and uncovered the influential role of emotional dimension in Thai workplace.*

## INTRODUCTION

An organization is defined as an organized group of people with common purposes (Robbins and Coulter, 2009). When people work together, there is a need for collective guidance. Leaders exist to guide, coordinate and motivate followers towards organization's common purposes. Under proper leadership, subordinates can combine their strengths to create synergy focused towards the same direction. The ways leaders interact with subordinates influence subordinates' job and personal satisfaction. Styles that leaders use affect subordinates' psychological attachment to leaders and organizations. Different leadership styles, i.e., directive, supportive, participative and achievement-oriented (House, 1996) are likely to produce different results regard-

ing to feelings of followers. Some subordinates might feel comfortable with directive leaders while some feel restricted or suppressed.

Organizational commitment is an important concept in the study of organizational behavior. Commitment to organization has several positive results such as increasing the level of motivation and organizational citizenship behaviors (Kwon & Bank, 2004) and decreasing turnover rate (Kwon & Bank, 2004; Labatmediene, Endriulaitiene and Gustainiene, 2007). Employees commit to an organization because of various reasons. Some employees are committed to an organization because they like the organization. Some are committed because they have no choice. The organizational commitment components are classified as affective, continuance and normative commitments (Allen and Meyer, 1990).