Administrator Support, Motivation, and Commitment among Secondary School Teachers in Sabah, Malaysia

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Abstract
This study aimed to identify the administrator support, motivation, and teachers' commitment among government-aided daily secondary school teachers in the state of Sabah, Malaysia. This non-experimental study employed a survey method by integrating several probability sampling techniques to obtain the sample. Data were collected using an adapted questionnaire administered to 379 teachers. The data were analyzed using SPSS Statistics 21.0. Descriptive and inferential statistics, such as frequencies, percentages, means, standard deviations, and independent t-tests were utilized to answer the research questions. Descriptive analysis indicated that administrative support, motivation, and teachers' commitment were at high levels. The findings also revealed no significant difference in mean scores for administrative support based on gender. Similarly, motivation showed the same results as administrative support. However, teachers' commitment showed a significant difference in mean scores based on gender. The implications and recommendations for further research are also discussed.
Keywords: Administrative Support, Motivation, Teachers' Commitment

Introduction
Education plays an important role in economic growth and national development. Developing world-class human capital is a prerequisite for bringing Malaysia to the global economic competition of the 21st century. Therefore, teachers are important assets towards achieving educational goals. Great expectations are placed on teachers so that they are ready to lead change in schools. Committed teachers will prioritize high productivity in their profession and always keep up with the times. They also understand technological developments, are innovative, skilled and ready to learn. The readiness and commitment of teachers is an important aspect in determining the success or failure of the implementation of the education system. Teachers' commitment to schools is a major factor in realizing educational aspirations. This is because committed teachers are considered human capital that is a pillar of a country's educational development. Teachers who have high commitment will always have a positive outlook by assuming that administrators and schools will prioritize them (Ab Aziz, 2003). School leadership that is able to create and manage positive teacher work practices will increase teacher motivation and subsequently encourage their teachers to try

something new in improving the quality of teaching and learning in the classroom (Jusoh et al., 2020). This situation will have a positive impact on increasing work commitment among teachers.

Problem Statement
The education system in Malaysia today faces challenges from various angles that require an optimal role for teachers in addressing all problems that arise. Therefore, proactive teacher involvement and commitment is very significant in this regard. Commitment is one of the factors that influence the level of teacher performance. Teachers who are highly committed to their work will carry out teaching well and will directly impact students' academic achievement and school performance (Musliza Mat Jusoh et al., 2020; Nurjanah & Abdul Said Ambotang, 2018; Mohamad et al., 2016). Teachers' commitment to teaching is a sign of their dedication to carrying out their duties (Tengku Sarina Aini et al., 2022; Latifah Salim & Mohd Khairuddin, 2020). Without high commitment, responsibility and weak self-standards will affect educational goals. Increasing the use of technology in education certainly requires very high commitment among teachers so that teaching delivery becomes more meaningful and has a high impact on student understanding. It requires teachers who are highly knowledgeable and able to face the challenges of new, sophisticated, complex and resilient technologies. The challenge for teachers in this regard is not only to be successful users of technology but also to be able to trigger technology in line with Student Aspirations and Shift 7 in the Malaysian Education Plan 2013-2025, as well as supporting 21st Century Learning practices (Zulkifli et al., 2020). Therefore, the demands on the use of technology in teaching have affected the commitment of teachers, especially for those who are less prepared for these changes. This is because they have to deal with the vibrancy of digital technology that is rapidly developing around the world. Apart from that, teachers' personal problems also affect the level of teacher commitment in schools. In an increasingly complicated economic situation, many teachers are facing financial problems which in turn affect family relationships which ultimately affect their commitment in school.

Administrative support is the view of employees that forms a general idea of the support provided by the employer (Aube et al., 2007). In this study, administrative support refers to the support provided by the principal, senior assistant teacher and also senior subject teacher. The success of an organization depends on the effectiveness of leadership style. Armstrong (2012) stated leadership as the process of inspiring followers to do their jobs well. Administrative support is a prerequisite for increasing the level of teacher commitment in schools. Without solid support from administrators, it is certain that the level of teacher commitment is at a low level. Continuous moral and material support from administrators helps motivate teachers who will foster a positive work culture which will ultimately influence teacher commitment in improving the quality of teaching and learning. Without solid and continuous support from the administration, teachers will be pressured to manage all matters related to the school and students (Hong et al., 2017).

The motivation process begins when a person begins to have a desire or need. This desired desire creates a situation where a person will change and become a force of attraction or driving force that forms a motive or goal. Organizational leadership certainly has a strong impact on teacher performance, motivation, job satisfaction and teacher commitment. According to Bhargavi & Yassen (2016), leaders help and motivate teachers in schools by using

effective leadership styles so that teachers can compete for the success of the school. Issues and problems of administrator support, and motivation are important since the literature reveals that the influence of administrators and motivation is very significant in determining the level of commitment of a teacher (Omar et al., 2017). According to Ford et al. (2019), the failure of strong support from administrators and motivation is identified as the cause of commitment problems among teachers. In addition, teachers are often found to be uncommitted in terms of implementing innovations in education (Mat Som et al., 2011).

The role of administrative support and teacher motivation in shaping teacher commitment has been widely studied in various educational contexts (Bhargavi & Yaseen, 2016; Wang & Gagné, 2013). However, limited research has specifically focused on these factors within the unique context of government-aided daily secondary schools in Sabah, Malaysia. Prior studies have explored teacher commitment at a general level (Mohd Yusoff & Saidin, 2017; Ilahi et al., 2017) but have not sufficiently examined the intersection between administrator support, motivation, and teacher commitment in this specific setting. Furthermore, while previous research has acknowledged that school leadership influences teacher performance and retention (Hong & Ismail, 2017; Omar, 2017), there is still a lack of empirical evidence detailing the extent to which administrator support directly affects teachers' motivation and commitment in Malaysian secondary schools, particularly in Sabah. This study aims to fill this gap by providing empirical data on how these factors interact and contribute to teacher retention and overall school performance.

Purpose and Objectives of the Study
This study aims to identify the administrator support, motivation, and the commitment of secondary school teachers in the state of Sabah. The objectives of this study are to:
a) Measure the level of administrator support, motivation and commitment.
b) Identify differences in administrator support, motivation and commitment based on gender.

Research Hypothesis
Based on the study objectives that have been set, several null hypotheses have been constructed as follows:
Ho1 There is no significant difference in administrator support based on gender.
Ho2 There is no significant difference in motivation based on gender.
Ho3 There is no significant difference in commitment based on gender.

Methodology
This study is a non-experimental study that uses a sample survey method, which aims to collect information from a portion of the population related to the study variables. A quantitative approach was used to obtain data with an emphasis on reliability and validity. This research, which involves descriptive and inferential statistical analysis, also examines the comparison of teachers' perceptions from the demographic aspect, namely gender, for the variables of administrator support, motivation and commitment.

In this study, the population is teachers of full government-aided regular daily secondary schools in the state of Sabah. There are 113 full government-aided regular daily secondary schools with a total of 7,999 teachers currently serving. The researcher set the

recommendation of Krejcie & Morgan (1970) as a general guide in determining the minimum sample size for this study. Based on research and taking into account the basic statistical principles that must be followed to carry out data analysis, the researcher set the sample size for this study to be 379 people. In this study, several probability sampling methods were used such as stratified sampling method, first and second stage cluster sampling, and finally simple random sampling to ensure the adequacy and representation of the population. Based on the combination of several sampling methods, finally the targeted sample size in this study was determined considering the location of the state of Sabah which is vast and has diverse characteristics.

Questionnaires are the main measuring instruments in this study. The use of questionnaires is suitable for obtaining data, especially quantitative studies that require large and comprehensive sample sizes (Chua, 2006). The measurement scale used in this study is a five-point Likert scale. The research tool used to measure the dependent variable of this study is the TCM Employee Commitment Survey (Meyer & Allen, 2004). The instrument has been adapted and translated 'back-to-back'. TCM has long been used by many researchers as a tool to measure commitment variables (Othman & Busari, 2023; Sukuna & Vellasamy,2023). The administrator support is measured from the Leader Behaviour Description Questionaire (LBDQ), and the motivational variable is based on the Questionaire Measure of Individual Difference in Achieving Tendency (QMAT). Several previous researchers such as Johar (2015) and Othman & Busari (2023) have used this measuring tool. The LBDQ questionnaire developed by Hemphil & Coons (1957) is an adaptation of Mohamad Said Awang & Zulhamri (2012) and was specially designed to measure the level of administrator support and motivation among teachers. Meanwhile, the QMAT questionnaire was adapted to measure the level of teacher motivation. This instrument has been proven to have high validity and reliability to measure the level of support provided by administrators to teachers (Muammar, 2022; Farah & Zahari, 2024). The LBDQ and QMAT questionnaires each contain 16 items. The Cronbach's alpha values for both instruments are .919 and .894.

Findings
Descriptive Analysis
The analysis of the three study variables based on gender revealed a high overall mean score. Among these variables, administrator support had the lowest mean score (M = 3.847, SD = 0.479). In contrast, motivation recorded the highest mean score (M = 4.112, SD = 0.356), followed by teacher commitment (M = 4.068, SD = 0.531). Overall, the mean scores for both genders were at a high level, as presented in Table 1.

Table 1
Mean Scores of Each Variables by Gender

Gender		Administrator support	Motivation	Commitment
Male	*M*	3.867	4.135	4.150
	SD	0.497	0.383	0.517
	N	133	133	133
Female	*M*	3.826	4.088	3.985
	SD	0.462	0.328	0.544
	N	246	246	246
Total	*M*	3.847	4.112	4.068
	SD	0.479	0.356	0.531
	N	379	379	379

The results of the ranking analysis for administrator support, motivation, and teacher commitment are presented in Table 2. The analysis indicates that all three variables are practiced at a high level, with administrator support at 73.9%, motivation at 91.4%, and teacher commitment at 73.8%. Only a small number of teachers reported a moderate level for these variables. However, administrator support was found to be at a low level for 0.5% of respondents. These findings suggest that teachers in the study location receive strong administrator support and demonstrate high motivation. Similarly, teacher commitment is consistently high across affective commitment, continuance commitment, and normative commitment

Table 2
Level of Administrator Support, Motivation, and Teacher Commitment

Variables	Level			
	Low N (%)	Moderate N (%)	High N (%)	Total
Administrator support	2 (0.5%)	97 (25.6%)	280 (73.9%)	379
Motivation		33 (8.6%)	346 (91.4%)	379
Commitment		99 (26.0%)	280 (73.9%)	379

Inferential Analysis
a) Ho1: There is no significant difference in administrator support based on gender.
The results of the t-test analysis to compare the mean scores of administrator support based on gender are shown in Table 3. Based on the statistical values obtained, the difference in the administrator support variable based on gender was found to be insignificant (t=.802, p>0.05). Therefore, null hypothesis 1 (Ho1) failed to be rejected.

Table 3
T-Test Analysis of Administrator Support Based on Gender

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variance					
		F Value	P value	t value	df	p	Diff
Administrator Support	Equality of variance is assumed	.082	.775	.802	377	.423	.041
	Equality of variance is not assumed			.785	254.336	.433	.041

b) *Ho2: There is no significant difference in motivation based on gender.*
The results of the t-test analysis to compare the mean scores of motivation based on gender are shown in Table 4. Based on the statistical values obtained, the difference in motivation based on gender was found to be insignificant (t=1.237, p>0.05). This result indicates that the null hypothesis 2 (Ho2) failed to be rejected.

Table 4
T-Test Analysis of Motivation Based on Gender

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variance					
		F Value	P value	t value	df	p	Diff
Motivation	Equality of variance is assumed	1.157	2.283	1.237	377	.217	.046
	Equality of variance is not assumed			1.181	237.343	.239	.046

c) *Ho3: There is no significant difference in commitment based on gender.*
The results of the t-test analysis to compare the mean scores of commitments based on gender are shown in Table 5. Based on the statistical values obtained, the difference in commitment based on gender was found to be significant (t=2.865, p<0.05). Therefore, the null hypothesis 3 (Ho3) was rejected.

Table 5
T-Test Analysis of Commitment Based on Gender

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variance					
		F Value	P value	t value	df	p	Diff
Commitment	Equality of variance is assumed	3.927	.048	2.865	377	.004	.164
	Equality of variance is not assumed			2.908	282.506	.004	.164

Discussion
The findings indicate a small difference in mean scores between the two groups of respondents regarding teacher commitment, with male respondents having a higher mean score than female respondents. This result contradicts the findings of Messner (2017), Erdogan and Cavli (2019), and Sarwar and Ashrafi (2014), who reported that female respondents had a higher perception of commitment than male respondents. The t-test results show a significant difference, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis (Ho1). This suggests that teacher commitment significantly differs between male and female respondents in the state of Sabah. Specifically, male teachers exhibit a higher perception of teacher commitment compared to their female counterparts. These findings are inconsistent with the studies of Naderi (2012) and Palta (2019).

Similarly, the study findings reveal a small difference in mean scores between the two respondent groups regarding administrator support. Although the difference is minor, it suggests that administrator support for male teachers is slightly higher than for female teachers. However, t-test results indicate no significant difference in administrator support between male and female teachers concerning the PLC variable. This aligns with the findings of Weto (2020) and Yunus (2020), who reported no gender-based differences in school culture. Conversely, studies by Mauno, Kinnunen, and Feldt (2012), Paul (2012), and Windy (2019) present findings that contradict this study. Additionally, Mohd Yussof et al. (2017) found that teacher commitment levels in secondary schools in the Machang district were moderately high. Similarly, Illahi et al. (2017), in a study of 70 respondents in the Malang district, East Java, concluded that job satisfaction has a significant and positive influence on organizational commitment through its impact on work discipline.

Implications and Recommendations
This study concludes that the relationship between the independent and dependent variables is significant. The findings suggest that schools should foster behaviors, beliefs, and shared values that align with daily school life. Administrators support and motivation play a crucial role in ensuring teacher retention, as they provide a foundation for teachers to remain engaged and committed. A high level of administrator supports, and motivation is essential

to maintaining teachers' enthusiasm in carrying out their daily tasks, ultimately enhancing teacher commitment. This, in turn, has a broad impact—not only benefiting teachers and students but also contributing to the school's overall achievement and excellence.

Teachers with a strong commitment align their personal goals with the school's objectives. As a result, they strive to complete their responsibilities efficiently and without unnecessary delays. A high level of teacher commitment can help reduce issues such as tardiness, absenteeism, and early retirement among teachers. Moreover, committed teachers are more responsive to changes, particularly in adapting to the demands of 21st-century education (Jaggil & Muhammad Suhaimi, 2018). School administrators, including principals, senior assistants, and senior subject teachers, must provide strong support to all teachers, whether through administrative, evaluative, or emotional assistance. A supportive environment fosters a positive and stress-free workplace, enabling teachers to work effectively and with greater job satisfaction. This support enhances teacher motivation, helping them complete tasks efficiently and find effective solutions to challenges. Therefore, strong administrator support, and high motivation contribute significantly to increasing teacher commitment in schools. Based on the study's findings, several recommendations for future research are proposed. Future studies should consider incorporating mediating variables to better understand the relationship between independent and dependent variables. For instance, attitude and values could be examined as mediators in the relationship between administrator support, motivation, and teacher commitment in schools.

Conclusion

Administrators support and teacher motivation have a significant relationship with teacher commitment. Committed teachers strive to ensure both student success and overall school excellence. High teacher commitment contributes to improved student achievement, which, in turn, enhances school performance in fulfilling the mission of the Ministry of Education Malaysia—developing individual potential through quality education. Therefore, teacher commitment should be a key focus, particularly for school administrators, to help realize the Ministry's goal of producing globally competitive human capital.

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