

**EMPLOYEE COMMITMENT:
THE MOTIVATIONAL ROLE OF SENIOR MANAGEMENT
THEORY OF ACTION**

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Abstract

Employee Commitment: The Motivational Role of Senior Management Theory-of-Action.

The aim of this study is to explore the association between senior management theory-of-action and employee commitment.

Field research uses quantitative and qualitative method and concentrates on one medium sized UK based organisation for data collection and experimentation. However, the study examines two further organisations to assist validity and specificity of findings.

The written work is in six parts. Following an introductory chapter, chapter two contains a literature survey covering organisational purpose and senior management theory-of-action. Chapter three examines literature as to employee commitment, and personal and organisational values. The fourth chapter describes method. Field work in chapter five provides results arising from quantitative and qualitative research. The concluding chapter considers the extent to which findings should be generalised, and offers conclusions and reflection.

The study points to the following conclusions:

1. Field research supports the notion that compared with more conventional motivation factors, senior management employee related action is strongly associated with employee commitment. This finding was found to be especially prominent at lower hierarchical levels within the organisation.
2. The adoption of what is termed conventional 'Model-One' theory-of-action adversely affects employee commitment.
3. It is suggested that senior management theory-of-action can inhibit or facilitate the maintenance and growth of employee commitment.

The work provides credence as to the importance and strength of association between senior management theory-of-action and employee commitment, and offers a method by which the association can be tested.

CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

Employee Commitment:
The Motivational Role of Senior Management
Theory-of-Action

The Motivational Role of Senior Management Theory-of-Action

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Employee Commitment: The Motivational Role of Senior Management Theory-of-Action

1.0 Introduction

This thesis explores and examines the association and affect of senior management theory-of-action on employee motivation and commitment. Chapter one introduces the subject area.

Gaining the commitment of the entire workforce is arguably more significant today than in the past. Organisations seek improved performance and sustained competitive advantage as a response to increased market and other external pressures. Worman (1996) offers that “... employers will need to gain the willing contribution of a diverse workforce in order to target new markets and distinguish their products and services from the competition.” However, employees feel insecure, lack confidence and are less loyal to the organisation (Wallace, 1997).

Change urges senior management to make internal adjustments that inherently pressure people to respond. The response management require is for employees to dedicate their physical and mental energies for the benefit of the organisation. However, senior management values and prioritised actions contained within their theory-of-action may influence employee motivation and commitment to the organisation. How this might occur, and the extent of its influence, seems worthy of research effort.

1.1 Scope of the Study

This study is primarily focussed on the association between senior management theory-of-action as perceived by employees and employee motivation and commitment to their organisation. The emphasis of the work is on psychological processes or forces which affect work motivation. Particular emphasis is given to employee perceptions of cognitive environmental cues stemming from senior management actions and values. The work concentrates on identifying factors associated with the internal environment of the workplace rather than situational factors associated with the organisations external environment.

1.2 Organisation of the Study

The work has been organized in six chapters.

The first chapter commences with an introduction to the study area.

Chapter two contains a literature review relating to theory-of-action, the senior management role, and the purpose of organisations. It also considers the part economic-rationalism may play in providing senior management with an accepted although perhaps outdated basis for their theory-of-action.

The third chapter introduces the subject of employee commitment. Working definitions are explored. Previous research findings are introduced and discussed.

Chapter four concerns itself with clarifying the focal theory and describing method. Following an epistemological discussion about possible interpretive frameworks, it makes a case for the approach that would be most beneficial in testing the objectives of the study. It includes research design and ecological and ethical considerations. The section provides reasons for using both quantitative and qualitative methods for data collection. The chapter also describes the planning, design and implementation of an analytical survey.

Chapter five describes field research. The chapter reviews, analyses and provides interpretation as to results arising from quantitative and qualitative field study.

Chapter six discusses the extent to which findings can be generalised. It uses two parallel studies to compare and contrast findings. The chapter closes by assembling study conclusions. It provides reflections and recommendations for senior management and for further research.

1.3 Literature

A survey of literature revealed many related and interrelated areas of interest. Study areas included aspects of applied, business, social and developmental psychology, organisational behaviour and business administration. All were found to add value to investigation and analysis. However, the key area of investigation

focusses on occupational psychology. Special attention is given to theoretical and conceptual material that helped inform and challenge the initial notion that senior management theory-of-action may stimulate or subdue employee commitment.

Readers may note the use of conventional theory. While, the writer uses comparatively up-to-date material to inform discussion, it was found that conventional ideas offered a meaningful foundation for explanation and analysis.

1.4 Why this Subject area was Chosen

The writer's interest in this subject area has been generated over fifteen years while holding various senior manager positions within private and public sector organisations. In the late 1980's the writer was involved in a major exercise to form a 'winning culture' from the merger of two quite disparate organisations with polarised styles of management. He was directly involved in two major surveys encompassing some twenty-five thousand employees representing all levels within the merged company. The aim was to explore employee attitudes to the company. The unpublished survey work was completed in 1990 and is not included in this thesis. Nevertheless, the key issue arising from the surveys was that many employees reported a lack of commitment to the new organisation. Moreover, many employees reported that top management were mostly to blame for the lack of commitment.

During discussions with Directors attending the Institute of Directors Diploma in Directorship (IoD 1993 -1998), the consistent and overall consensus was that employee commitment is becoming crucial in obtaining competitive advantage. However, many directors confirmed the writer's experience that one of the most frustrating elements of their job relates to their thwarted efforts to gain an increase in employee commitment. Attenders of the Salford programme suggested to the writer that University research would do well to offer insight about how their role as senior managers is involved with employee commitment.

For the researcher, the desideratum involved two separate but equally important aspects. First, if research could help the development and integration of relationships within the organisation, then the social and psychological

organisational dimension could be improved. Second, from a business administration viewpoint, organisations need to optimise employee commitment to secure competitive advantage. If research can continue to identify and clarify key reasons for poor employee commitment, then appropriate interventions can be designed.

1.5 Theoretical framework

This study considers three overriding questions. First, when compared with more conventional work motivation factors, is senior management employee related action strongly associated with employee commitment? Second, if employee related action by senior management is strongly associated with employee commitment, can the actions most likely responsible for adversely affecting employee commitment be identified? Finally, if senior management adopt what might be termed a conventional theory-of-action, is a consequence an adverse effect on employee commitment?

The following research hypotheses were designed to control and guide the study:

1. Can conceptual and theoretical material assist clarity as to the purpose of organisations, and can it help to identify key elements of what could be identified and termed conventional senior management theory-of-action?
2. Can literature and research be combined to identify key drivers and measures related to employee commitment?
3. Can a workable methodology be applied to test constructs viewed as key to the association between senior management theory-of-action and employee commitment?

The following objectives were established during the study in preparation for field research:

1. To conduct experimentation as to senior management theory-of-action and employee commitment.

2. To cross validate experimental methodology with phenomenological inquiry to assist validation of findings, and provide for a deeper understanding.
3. To examine field research findings as to the extent results may be generalised.
4. To identify implications for future research and validation.

1.6 Conclusion

From the onset of research, it was acknowledged that exploration as to the association between senior management theory-of-action and employee commitment would be a difficult task. This chapter has attempted to provide an introduction to the study. Consideration of the scope, depth, structure, theoretical framework and reason why the researcher is attracted to this area of study has hopefully helped the reader.

The following chapter explores and explains characteristics of theory-of-action while using the senior management role as the focal point for discussion.

1.9 References:

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CHAPTER 2

Theory-of-Action: Literature Review

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Theory-of-Action: Literature Review

2.0 Introduction

This chapter explores the notion of theory-of-action. Key to the chapter is the identification of characteristics and possible consequences of theory-of-action as used by senior management. Analysis of literature provides focus for field work. Particular acknowledgement is given to case work and writings of Argyris (1964, 1976, 1982, 1993) and Argyris and Schon (1974, 1978).

2.1 Theory-of-Action

Argyris and Schon (1974; 1978) suggest that a person's theory-of-action is that which determines all deliberate human behaviour. The theories we accept as valid are those which primarily determine the way we act. A fundamental idea is that human beings have theories-of-action in their heads as to how to behave.

Argyris and Schon (1974a) suggest "...theories-of-action are theories-of-control. They are testable if one can specify the situation, the desired result, and the action through which the result is to be achieved." In this chapter, consideration of 'the situation' is provided by reflecting on literature as to the nature and structure of organisation. The 'desired result' is inherently connected to management norms, priorities, assumptions and decision. 'Action' through which the result can be achieved relates to the characteristics of theory-of-action and is central to the study.

It is common to refer to theory-in-use when commenting on behaviour. Theory-in-use is defined as the 'theory-of-action constructed from observation of actual behaviour' (Argyris and Schon, 1974; Argyris, 1997). Theories-of-use are said to maintain a person's "field of constancy" (Argyris and Schon, 1974b). They specify the governing variables and their critical relationship to one another. Simply, theory-of-use specifies the variables used by a person that they are interested in and to which they give priority. They determine action.

The term theory-of-action will be used when the writer is referring to senior management norms and priorities, strategies, assumptions, and beliefs and values that relate to the climate and covert culture of the organisation. The term theory-

in-use will be used when the writer is referring to actual observed behaviour.

Argyris and Schon (1974c) also state an organisation is a theory-of-action. It is a “cognitive enterprise undertaken by individual members.” Theory-of-action is embedded in decisions that members take on behalf of the organisation, and “...decisions are governed by collective rules for decision.” An organisation’s corporate theory-of-action is the theory-of-action which has been adopted by senior management. It contains the determinates by which senior management manage their organisation.

2.2 The Senior Management Role

This study does not make a distinction between the role of senior management, the senior management team, or company directors. Arguing that the roles of direction and management have different legal foundations is possible. Nevertheless, in most organisations senior level management are the directors of the organisation. This was confirmed with senior manager / directors attending the Institute of Directors programme at Salford (1993-1998).

There is no precise definition of a director, although extensive reference is made to the role within the Companies Act, and Articles of Association. Nevertheless, literature often refers to senior management or the senior management team as ‘top management or company directors.’ Stoner (1978) adds that top management is responsible for the overall management of the organisation. The term ‘corporate governance’ reflects the primary role of the ‘Board’ or senior management team (Coulson-Thomas, 1992). Directors are commonly identified by reference to particular organisational functions, which fundamentally involve attending meetings of the Board of Directors and taking part in properly minuted decision making processes.

The function of a senior management team is summarised as follows:

- * to define the company’s purpose;
- * to agree the strategies and plans for achieving that purpose;
- * to establish the company’s policies.

Importantly, the role involves certain standards (Institute of Directors: Standards of the Board, 1995): -

1. The Board is expected to be focussed on the commercial needs of the business, while acting responsibly towards its employees, business partners and society as a whole.
2. The Board is also responsible for specific tasks, including: -
 - (A) Policy formulation - based on long term views and externally orientated thinking.
 - (B) Strategic thinking - based on long-term internally orientated thinking.
 - (C) Supervision of management - based on short-term, internally orientated thinking.
 - (D) Accountability - based on short-term, externally orientated thinking.

Cadbury (1990) added that in all, “the function of the senior management team is to be the driving force of the company.” Reflection suggests that the driven message from a decade of process improvement is ‘Get the processes right, and the company will manage itself.’ However, Hout and Carter (1995) offer that “In fact, process focussed companies need more top-down management, not less” adding, “senior management must become more activist and interventionist.” Senior management have the authority to go to the heart of any problem. Consequently, they are able to provide superior solutions for the organisation, “solutions which are inspirational as well as computational” (Thompson, 1967).

Senior management operate at many levels. Stating that every senior manager reports to a more senior figure seems fair. In this study the identification and location of senior management are more to do with the substance of their theory-of-action as perceived by employees than it is to do with the title 'senior manager.' Nonetheless, the term 'senior management' will be used to describe those within the organisation who establish and hold influence over strategic and policy decisions. Policy and strategic decisions are seen as involving the efficient and effective utilisation of the organisations resources, including employees, money and physical resources. The work also adopts the premise that organisational

change is best instigated from above. It is also argued that values which may not have been recognised, acknowledged, or supported by senior management are unlikely to enter the psyche of the organisation.

Hendry (1998) criticises senior management he states that “when chief executives talk about the importance of people, they are often referring to their top team.” Pickard (1998a) questions senior management intentions stating “do they [top management] really believe that all the people make a difference or just some of them?” Garratt (1996) called his recent book ‘The fish rots from the head: Crisis in our Boardroom.’ Critical of the training and competence among those who direct organisations - public and private, Garratt identifies key issues. First, there has been an assumption that the title ‘director’ immediately makes managers omniscient. “They suddenly know everything about the complex integration of their organisation, they are immediately aware of all political problems, and they need no reliable internal sources of information.”(Garratt, 1996). However, there is little, if any, training and development for directors. The Institute of Directors report (1990) ‘Development of the Board’ showed that 92.4 per cent of UK directors had no training and development for the job. Amazingly, most respondents admitted that they did not know what the job entailed.

2.3 The Senior Management - Employee Relationship

The senior management - employee relationship is likely to be one that has built up over many years. The roots of the relationship may be historic, and involve different players. The relationship may not be of a personal and interactive nature. Communication and understanding of the relationship will be based on perceptions of the two parties. Importantly, two entities must have a relationship before communication becomes valid.

Drucker (1973) comments that the role of senior management must move towards the identification of overall strategy, and thereafter, they must provide support coupled with reward systems. Evans (1996) comments that managers need to create an environment in which people enjoy their work by offering them guidance, feedback and reward. Lock and Farrow (1988) state that the senior manager of the future will be a spokesperson and representative of the business. They add that

“...senior management will talk and think less about 'subordinate' employees and more about 'colleagues' and 'teams', never underestimating the contribution of others.” Marchington (1996) asserts that a significant element in the relationship between senior management and employees is the perception that employees receive about management appreciation of the contributions of its workforce. However, Guest (1991) warns that the pursuit of commitment by senior management is really a means of gaining compliance - employees are expected to be committed to what the organisation wants them to do.

2.4 Conventional Theory-of-action

It seems feasible that senior management adopting similar roles will also adopt a theory-of-action which has similar characteristics. While not wishing to over simplify or over generalise, one might term this notion as the adoption of a conventional or “global theory-of-action” (Argyris and Schon, 1974). However, is such terminology appropriate, and if so, what characteristics might be shared? In the sections that follow, consideration is given to the nature of organisations to help clarify organisational history and purpose. Characteristics of what might be termed conventional theory-of-action are then explored by reference to management decisions, stakeholder interests, rational-economics and senior management values.

2.4.1 The Nature of Organisation

Literature offers several and often competing ideas to explain how organisations function:

1. Early writers on management believed in the need for control and predictability. Notably Fayol (1916), Taylor (1911), and Urwick (1947).
2. The bureaucratic school emphasises logic and technical rationality. The term 'bureaucracy' originated by Weber (1930, 1947, 1964) describes the conceptual approach of this school as a label for a formal organisation in which impersonality and rationality are both supported and developed.
3. The contingency school emphasises the influence of the environment and

the differences in organisations in terms of design and function. Supporters include Burns and Stalker (1961), Woodward (1958, 1965), Lawrence and Lorsch (1967) and Perrow (1970).

4. The human relations school urge interest in the significance of group behaviour. Supporters include Roethlisberger and Dickson (1939), Mayo (1949), Brown (1964), and Silverman, (1970).
5. The behavioural scientists apply their ideas of how people behave in organisations rather than the way organisations are designed and functioned. Supporters of this approach include McGregor (1960, 1966), Likert (1961), Herzberg (1957), and Blake and Mouton (1985).
6. Members of the systems school see the organisation as a socio-technical system (Miller and Rice, 1967). This approach is basically concerned with inter-relationships and interdependence (Katz and Khan, 1966). It involves the need to assess boundaries, systems, the dynamics of interaction, and environmental influences on structures and processes.
7. Finally, there are post-modernists who include those who analyse the new flexible and responsive organisation operating in a chaotic world where rationality, logic, and scientific management are both unreal and inappropriate due to the speed of change, competition and environmental chaos.

Much of managerial literature on organisational design and policy is concerned with fitting the proper organisational structure to varying environmental and task characteristics (Galbraith, 1977; Chandler, 1962). Theoretical models underlie construction, and therefore allow more systematic discussion of their relative uses and limitations (Burns, 1967).

The produce of organisational theory has been developed at the interface of capitalist theory and capitalist practice (Clegg, 1977). The emphasis was order, formality and control. Goldman and Van Houten (1980) suggest that the most

strategically important managerial need is the design and implementation of the most effective form of control over the labour process in the capitalist mode. From these overriding principles, the need for stability, a formal structure, coordination, and clear lines of authority were derived. Firth (1964), states that an organisation infers “....a systematic ordering of positions and duties which define a chain of command.” March and Simon (1958) refer to explicit and stable roles that make for a high degree of predictability and coordination in organisational behaviour.

Formal organisations have been established for the explicit purpose of achieving certain goals. They possess clear lines of authority by which communication occurs within a formal status structure (Silverman, 1970). However, some post-Weberian studies have shown that many organisations have no clear hierarchy of authority (Burns and Stalker, 1961). “Officials can have very diffuse functions” (Gouldner, 1954), and act “...in a far from impersonal manner” (Crozier, 1964). Although selecting certain organisations with no formal lines of authority seems possible, for example a consultancy, nevertheless such an organisation may be the exception rather than the rule.

Roles in bureaucratic organisations can be seen as specific, effectively neutral and collectivity orientated (Weber, 1964). Weber went on to suggest that this role pattern was the most efficient mode. This ideal type however has come under most criticism from psychologists because of its alleged failure to take account of 'human needs', and its simplistic view that motivation is implicit within the approach. It seems the 'informal' aspect of organisation which is normally associated with an organisation's workforce should not be ignored.

Many organisations in the UK have clearly and purposely altered the formal nature of their organisation. While maintaining absolute authority at the top of the organisation they have reduced the levels of the hierarchy of authority. It would appear that the prime reason for doing this is economic. Nevertheless, other reasons may be offered. For example, the need to devolve responsibility to be more responsive to market and customer needs, and to provide a degree of flexibility as to product or service. More recent research (Kettley, 1995) found that middle and

line management favour employee involvement schemes and devolving responsibility, nevertheless, they prefer those that do not directly challenge their authority.

2.4.2 Scientific Management

Scientific management was an attempt to uncover key aspects of work and organisation that would inevitably produce efficiency. The concept is generally associated with Taylor (1911). Several others contributed to the development of scientific management principles, including Fayol (1949) and Gilbreth (1908).

Taylor suggested that management could not demand efficiencies as they had no idea about how much they could expect if the job were done efficiently. To achieve what he described as 'externalizing knowledge', scientific research methods would be required. Jobs he suggests need to be broken down into component parts, and this would make it easier to study the job - scientifically. Consequently, industrial age companies created distinctions between groups of employees. The intellectual elite and engineers were separated from employees who produced the products and delivered the services. However, technological improvement has meant that the percentage of people who do traditional work functions has reduced. Moreover, a mass of information comes from all directions. Consequently, even individuals still involved in direct production and service delivery are asked for their suggestions on how to improve quality, reduce costs, and decrease cycle times. Activities which could quite easily be interpreted as associated with the function of management.

Perhaps because of classic and scientific approach, management tend to put total reliance upon the workers need for an adequate amount of pay. Pay for conformance to standards associated with efficient performance. However, Murlis (1996) categorically states that "pay is usually way down the list of what is most important to people." Scientific management works well enough when management attention is drawn to physical responses of employees, less well when the organisation is paying for the contents of the employee's mind.

Organisational change now encompasses the move towards autonomous groups with greater managerial responsibilities, devolved budgetary control and high technology machines requiring highly trained individuals. Kaplan and Norton (1997) add that, "machines are designed to run automatically, the people's job is to think, to problem-solve." The requirement for an increase in employee knowledge, skill and application suggests that Taylorist principles may not be sufficient for organisations who are increasingly reliant on employee commitment.

Organisational structures have been reshaped so that more workers are closely involved in day-to-day decisions. Employees at all levels hold responsibility for control. Empowerment is now seen as crucial if the organisation is to be flexible and responsive to market needs.

The term empowerment is used to describe the process of devolving responsibility to its lowest possible level within the organisation. Litchfield (1996) reports that empowerment programmes can lead to major reductions in cost. The approach is also seen as motivational in the sense that incumbents who possess it are inherently satisfying their need for self-esteem. However, Morton (1998) is critical of the process. He states that "the born again senior manager tells the workforce that they are empowered. What is left of middle management is bypassed and self-managed teams are created. This leaves top management to concentrate on pacifying shareholders. Unfortunately, either the corporate engine will not start or it is badly tuned; in any event, it still cannot compete." Quality suffers and top management criticise the empowered workforce, only to find that "empowerment means no controls, no system, no ownership, no instruction and no improvement."

Morton comments that "it is no wonder that employees try to keep their heads down when such initiatives are introduced." Morgan (1994) states that employees get disillusioned because the rhetoric is contradicted by processes that continue to reinforce the status quo. Wooldridge (1995) confirms this view, he states "As we put our organisations through processes of downsizing and de-layering, the simultaneous exhortations for teamwork, empowerment, partnership and shared vision seem hypocritical." Arie de Geus {in Pickard, 1998} comments that

downsizing is anathema to him because it disturbs the sense of identity that is vital to the organisational community.

There appears to be a widening gap between newly espoused rhetoric and senior management theory-in-use based on classical principles. Argyris and Schon (1974, 1978), Argyris, (1994) and Schon (1996) refer to 'Model-One' and 'Model-Two' theory-in-use. They argue that despite continued research all over the world, 'Model-One' seems to have no variance.

Model -One Theory-in-Use: Governing Values Held by Users

1. Be in unilateral control of situations.
2. Strive to win.
3. Suppress negative feelings in self and others.
4. Be as rational as possible.

Conventional 'Model-One' values suggest senior management theory-of-action is likely to contain a propensity for classical principles based on a rational and scientific foundation. Moreover, their theory-in-use will display goal-orientated and competitive behaviour. Conversely, 'Model-Two' asserts the need to utilise valid information and work toward the establishment of an environment where learning is facilitated. Operationalisation of 'Model-Two' governing variables is discussed in the final chapter.

The following section uses decision making to explore how senior management theory-of-action might be communicated to employees. Properties of decision making are also examined in relation to 'Model-One' characteristics.

2.4.3 Management Decisions

Simon (1960) suggests that management is synonymous to decision making. Moreover, employee perception of management may be synonymous with the decisions management take and the repercussions and implications decisions have on employees. However, the physical separation of senior management from many employees begs the question "how is senior management theory-of-action

communicated to employees?’ It was considered that the decision making process may act like a conduit communicating dominant aspects of senior management theory-of-action.

Most publications on decision making usually include and suggest the following sequence of events:

1. The problem is clearly identified and defined
2. Data is collected
3. The data is analysed and alternatives are evaluated
4. A decision is made based on analysis and evaluation
5. The decision is implemented

This common approach suggests applying logic can successfully accomplish decision making based on a rigid and well-defined series of activity. Charles Lindblom (1959) points out that the first way by which the administrator might try to make a policy decision is to aspire to a rational-deductive ideal. Such an approach follows “the ideal of science; a complete deductive system transferred to the field of 'values' and application.” Such views are complementary to the ‘Model-One’ governing value of rationality. However, the idea attracts important questions. For example:

1. Can problems be easily identified and defined?
2. What data should be collected, and should behavioural data as well as technical data enter the senior management decision making process?

Decision making is often considered to consist of problem solving, or planning, or organizing, and is sometimes extended to include all aspects of thinking and acting. However, Hitt et al (1996) suggest that many decision makers either ‘overlook or do not fully complete the first step in the decision making process’, i.e. determine objectives. They argue that the objective is likely to focus on ‘solving the problem’; therefore only converse thought may take place or, at best, diverse thinking may be limited. Kluckhohn (1951) warns of a tendency to evaluate

and make choices rather than analyse as a basic human characteristic.

The conventional model of decision making suggests that effective problem definition should specify the standard according to which a situation is considered a problem. Above which is satisfactory. Consequently, the first step in decision making is the manager's perception that a situation or organisational process is in a state of disequilibrium. Disequilibrium can be described as an aspect of the company that is 'not what it ought to be' or does not conform to what decision makers would like to see as to desired outcomes. Before recognition of a state of disequilibrium, senior management decision makers may be unaware that a problem exists, or reluctant to admit a problem exists.

Because someone is involved, we can suggest that all problems to some degree are human problems no matter whether the problem can be labelled 'technical', 'economic', or 'human' in nature. However, the more a situation can be defined as 'technical' - the greater the possibility that, over time, one situation may be similar to another. In consequence past knowledge and experience can more easily be used, and change more easily managed. It should not be surprising therefore that many managers favour this approach. However, the hard decision making approach has critics. Notably, Checkland (1988) has done much to overcome technical and positivistic thinking by arguing against the extremes of technical rationality and in his view reductionist science to human situations:

'Human affairs call for a problem and process orientation, rather than a technique orientated approach'

Source: Checkland (1988, p 27)

Simon (1960) suggests that decisions most often fall within two polarised categories. He differentiates decisions from those that are repetitive, routine, and possibly reactionary issues requiring programmed decisions in a habitual manner, to non-programmed decisions which are those situations that are not cut-and-dried, require new strategies, and rely on the intellectual capacities of the organisations decision makers. Soft systems method aims to integrate all aspects of the

environment inside and outside the problem boundary. In this way, the approach widens and encompasses aspects that may have been poorly considered if the hard systems approach had been adopted. Checkland's problem solving process seems suitable for messy, people related, non-programmed decision making. Unfortunately, his soft systems approach is often viewed by senior management (IoD, 1993-1999) as somewhat cumbersome, over elaborate, time consuming and costly.

Nonetheless, senior management are typically involved in non-programmable decision making activities. They create policy and make decision that relate to the achievement of corporate strategy. Lindblom (1959, 1968) terms the decision process as the strategy of disjointed incrementalism. The decision process proceeds by successive limited comparisons. Lindblom's view is that decision is most often incremental, restricted, means oriented, reconstructive, serial, remedial and fragmented. This practice limits information, restricts choices, and shortens horizons. The problem will worsen as competitive pressure creates continuous environmental and contextual turbulence surrounding organisations. Instability, unpredictability and constant change are descriptions commonly used by Directors (IoD, Salford, 1993-1999) while attempting to characterise work pressure, their organisation, and market. Senior management may not have sufficient time for 'intricate reckoning' associated with complexity surrounding non-programmed decisions.

Pettigrew (1977, 1985) accounts for incrementalism as the result of social and political processes in organisation. Research studies show the extent to which strategic decisions are characterized by high degrees of bargaining, solicitation and activity (Mintzberg et al, 1976; Lyles, 1981; Fahey, 1981). Such activity emphasises the masculine features within the decision making process and would be supportive of Argyris and Schons 'Model-One' theory-in-use behavioural characteristics. For example, the need to compete and achieve in an atmosphere of high energy. Such a climate may not be conducive to widening the decision making process to include consideration of organisational behavioural issues.

Literature on organisational decision making stress choice making as a key management function (Bross, 1953; Feldman and Kanter, 1965; George, 1964).

'to make a decision means to make a judgement regarding what one ought to do in a certain situation after having deliberated on some alternative courses of action'

Source: Ofstad (1961, p.15)

Senior management need to exercise choice in complicated situations involving conflicting goals and values, many minds, and high expenditure in terms of money and time. Selection among alternatives is a key concept of decision making. Prioritising stakeholders is also a function of senior management choice.

2.4.4 Stakeholder Interests

When a manager decides, he or she will have reflected on personal experience to provide a frame of reference vis-a'-vis the situation. As Gordon Allport explains “the way a man [person] defines his situation constitutes for him its reality” (Allport, 1955). It seems likely those parties viewed by senior management as influential stakeholders will form a key part of a manager's understanding of the realities of their situation. Such a context will strongly influence the decisions senior managers make, and the formulation and maintenance of their overall theory-of-action.

Stakeholder analysis can be revealing about which stakeholder yields the most power and influence. Arkin (1997) comments that stakeholder analysis is not a new idea. He quotes Tony Blair as saying “stake holding is one of the oldest strategies for creating value. Many of Britain’s most successful businesses have a strong commitment to maximising stakeholder loyalty.” Most organisations have shareholder/owners or Government control, customers or clients, suppliers and employees. Obviously, in the private sector, shareholders are important because they supply the company with capital. They expect a good return for their investment. Customers are also important because they supply the company with income. Suppliers and employees may be viewed as less important because they can be viewed as taking funds out of the company. This is a simplistic viewpoint, but

nonetheless, commonly recognised (IoD, 1993-1999).

Despite the importance of owners investment, Pugh et al (1983) assert that “decisions should not be taken without an intricate reckoning of the interests involved and the demands of all who are interested.” Clearly, a stakeholder group of all interested parties would extend much further than the select group itemised earlier. Pugh’s democratic notion may not be very practical in many organisation's today. Nevertheless, according to Dennis and Dennis (1991) senior management must take a strategic overview on behalf of the whole organisation. They have overall responsibility for consideration and integration of all stakeholder needs.

Perrow (1990) introduces the idea that distinguishes two kinds of decision making goals. First, official goals are the general purposes of the organisation. Unofficial goals in contrast, are tied more to individual interest group goals, and may be irrelevant to official goals. Official goals and values of the organisation are contained within the organisation (Shrank and Abelson, 1977; Wilkins, 1983). Scripts exist within the organisation that contain those aspects the organisation promotes as important. They may not be in written form but can be witnessed in rituals and ceremonies which assist in maintaining previously held paradigms (Meyer and Rowan, 1977; Trice and Beyer, 1984). Wilkins calls them organisational stories that do nothing short of controlling the organisation. They are what the organisation gives credence to as part of the decision process, many of which senior employees create.

There is also an acceptable language within an organisation which may limit factors beyond the present paradigm from consideration (Meyer, 1982). Jurisdiction of acceptable language resides at the top of the organisation. All act to legitimise and preserve core beliefs and values as well as acceptable assumptions held within the organisation by the custodians of the organisation - senior management. To state the obvious, if senior management do not make decisions that secure the interests of the most powerful stakeholders in the organisation, then they risk losing their position. For senior management, it would appear that self-interest can be obtained by conforming to expectations. This will be achieved

by allowing parameters and paradigms to become set within the decision making process that subdue issues not related to a given specification, measurement, or satisfaction of key stakeholder groups.

Thompson (1967) asserts that organisations act rationally to increase their evaluations or ratings by others on whom they are dependent. It follows that senior management will 'act rationally' on behalf of the owners. Kets de Vries (1996) asks the question "Is management in reality a rational task performed by rational people according to sensible organisational objectives?" Answering his own question, he categorically states "We all know better, yet the myth of rationality persists in spite of all evidence to the contrary."

Three American Psychologists, Douglas McGregor (1960), Renis Likert (1961) and Chris Argyris (1964) have followed Maslow's (1954) theory of hierarchical needs and sought to bring the insights of psychology and organisational behaviour to the attention of those engaged in making decision in organisations. McGregor and Argyris criticise the unidirectional 'commonsense assumptions' which they suggest so often govern managerial behaviour. Richard Finn, Director of Strategic HR Consultancy at Crane Davies comments, "...even managerial commonsense tends to be anything but common. Senior management best practice in relation to the management of people in organisations is simply not happening" (Finn, 1998). As the application of employee knowledge becomes more important, a means of countering what he terms "the power paradox" must be found. Reed provides a possible clue to alleviating difficulties:

'The function of management is to maintain equilibrium so that individual needs and organisational demands neatly coincide'

Source: Michael Reed (1985, p.23)

Littlefield (1996) comments on the Halifax's move towards the adoption of the 'Balanced Scorecard' assessment process (Kaplan and Norton, 1996). He offers, "The organisation should, of course, be aware of financial performance and internal controls, but in future these should be balanced with the needs of

customers and staff.” A key reason for adopting a balanced criterion of individual and organisational issues within the decision making process is simply that validation of the decision and the decision process rests on whether the decision can be successfully implemented. In particular, Vroom (1964, 1966, 1974) comments that the acceptance or commitment by subordinates to execute the decision effectively will be a key factor as to the effectiveness of decisions. It is unfortunate that the word subordinate demerits the importance of employees as stakeholders of the organisation.

The Vroom-Yetton Model (1973) is said to use a set of rules that can protect the acceptance and quality of the decision while ensuring all key interested stakeholders are considered. It suggests that decisions have certain qualities or characteristics which must be considered. They list: -

- * The importance of the quality of the decision.
- * How much information the decision maker has about the problem.
- * The degree to which the decision problem is structured or unstructured.
- * The likelihood that subordinates will accept the decision.
- * The extent to which subordinates accept the goals of the organisation and the goals to be reached by the solution.
- * The importance of subordinate acceptance of the decision to carry it out effectively.
- * The amount of conflict that can arise among subordinates after the decision is taken.

The model has received broad general support from several research efforts (Vroom and Jago, 1978, 1988; Field, 1982; Field and House, 1990), each observer stressing the clear association between employee acceptance of decisions and successful outcomes. Research evidence has shown that simply following the Vroom and Yetton model's recommendations can increase the effectiveness of a decision process (Field, 1982). The recommendations provide rules that help understanding of just what a quality decision could look like. It requests managers to consider the implementation of each decision and its consequence on subordinates. In these

circumstances, a preferred definition of quality would be that it includes subordinate acceptance. Decisions are clearly the outcome of senior management theory-in-action, outcomes that reflect governing values, the effects of which all stakeholders feel.

2.4.5 Senior Management Values

A value is a general orientation of beliefs (Kassarjian and Sheffet, 1982). They are normative standards that influence our choice among alternative courses of action. They represent enduring beliefs that a specific type of conduct or end state is preferred (Jacob et al, 1962). Values act as guidance systems whenever we are faced with making a decision. Consequently, this work accepts that values inform every stage of the senior management decision making process. Moreover, value systems as a collective of cohesive values are maintained within a person or held by a group of people as part of their theory-of-action. Importantly, values-in-use may be unconsciously adhered to. Values may have remained unchallenged for such a lengthy period that they have become automatic.

Argyris and Schon state that 'policy statements often reflect a theory-of-action which is closer to espoused theory rather than the organisation's actual theory-in-use'. An individual's espoused theory is that which 'the individual would, upon request, communicate to others' (Argyris and Schon, 1978). Consequently, espoused theory may not say all about senior management priority values. Sparrow and Pettigrew (1988) point to the need to look in more depth at what senior management are doing in terms of shaping the behaviour of people. Unfortunately, Argyris and Schon assert few people even think about their theories-in-use. Paradoxically, their theories-in-use may prevent them from doing so (Argyris and Schon, 1974d). Acceptance and use of concepts such as Vroom - Yetton model may therefore be problematic.

Guest (1991) comments that analysis must go beyond espoused values of the organisation to what really happens. Importantly, Paine (1994) suggests that company leaders must be personally committed, credible, and willing to take action on the values they espouse. However, Kakabadse (1995) suggests that until

recently it would have been unusual for chief executives to be making value statements about people. Clearly, if employees see senior management promoting very distinctive value statements, but behaving in different ways, then employees will cease to trust senior people. Handy (1995) states that “If it is true that organisations do not trust their people, then there is a piquant irony in the fact that they expect people to trust them absolutely.”

2.4.6 Unitary Assumptions

Many scholars writing in organisational behaviour literature assume, at least partially, that individual organisational members are able and willing to cooperate with others to achieve shared goals based on collective values (Bennis, 1966; McGregor, 1957; Ouchi, 1980).

'Scientific management.....has for its very foundation the first conviction that the true interests of employer and employee are one and the same'

Source: Taylor (1911, p.10)

Taylor's statement clearly displays a unitary view of organisations. However, unitarian goals will be difficult to achieve if we accept that for many purposes organisations are more usefully thought of as pluralistic entities - that is, they characteristically contain a rich variety of groupings with distinctive attitudes, interests and concerns. Weber's 'typology of domination' is based on the various strategies which 'rulers' implement through the promulgation of certain beliefs and their partial and provisional acceptance by followers (Reed, 1985). The implementation of dominant values is not new. It would also seem that conflict is expected between dominant values and social needs. From this perspective 'followers' may be urged or perhaps coerced to subordinate their own values in preference for the ruler's.

Moreover, rational choice literature is based on the assumption that human behaviour is self-interested so that achieving cooperation towards collective objectives is inherently problematic (Olson, 1965). The presence of intergroup or interdepartmental conflict reflects the fact that an organisation is composed of

multiple collectives with distinct goals to which individuals can become committed (Lawrence and Lorsch, 1967; Walton and Dutton, 1969). Given this complexity, what guidelines are senior management likely to cling to?

2.4.7 The Rational-Economic Model

Argyris and Schon (1978a) argue that “all deliberate action has a cognitive basis, that it reflects norms and models of the world which have claims to general validity.” They add, “its most general properties are properties that all theories share, and the most general criteria that apply to it - such as generality, centrality, and simplicity.” (Argyris and Schon, 1974e). Theory-of-action may have general qualities. A single form may be shared among many. Crucially, it may possess a simple construction but will express a fair degree of face validity.

Argyris and Schon (1978) suggest a global and instrumental theory-of-action for achieving corporate objectives. For example, norms for corporate performance, norms for margin of profit, and return for investment. Such a foci is supportive of the scientific and rational approach discussed earlier. It would include strategies for achieving norms such as technical and logistical concerns. Operation of this theory-of-action would also incorporate “patterns of communication, rewards and punishing individual performance, the construction of career ladders, recruitment and socialisation of norms.” (Argyris and Schon, 1978b). However, at the core may lie conventional thinking. One important factor affecting senior management theory-of-action was thought to be the influence of rational-economic thinking. Biddle and Evenden (1990) suggest the use of this popular notion should relate to a framework and guide to analysis rather than as a “straitjacket stereotype.” Unravelling the notion, it can be argued that when classical theory, capitalist economics, and the idea of unitary goals are combined, the result is a rational-economic approach to management. It is described in the following section. The approach complements Argyris (1994) and Schon’s (1996) ‘Model-One’ theory-in-use, and can be seen to represent the dominant ideology adopted by many senior managers as part of their theory-of-action.

The rational-economic view sees people as "...mainly motivated by economic incentives so that individuals will always act in a calculating way to maximise economic gain for themselves." (Biddle and Evenden, 1990). Rational-economics is related to the economic or econological model. It is at the extreme end of a rational - social continuum of decision making behaviour (Luthans, 1992). The notion is also linked with what is called T-type management. It is management bias stemming from "...interest, indeed success, in the technical aspects of their function." Biddle and Evenden (1990) add "...when people are promoted to senior management "they find it difficult to take off their technical blinkers and this creates problems."

From an organisational viewpoint, rational-economic management can be seen as a unitary goal oriented belief system that is scientific in its approach. Logical with a technical focus it attempts to discover objective 'best means' solutions towards perceived agreed ends.

'Rational-economic management techniques have been incredibly influential in the way private and public sector managers approach their responsibilities. Colleagues reinforce this behaviour due to the approaches perceived logic. Furthermore, it suggests those performance maximisation measures, for example, return on investment (ROI) and its derivatives, are perceived as highly quantitative, radical and reduce uncertainty; therefore they, and its philosophy, are wholly desirable. Emotion, perhaps best illustrated by organisational human resource related aspects, if in conflict with rational-economic thinking, are basically irrational and therefore must be subdued.' Cooper, D. J. (1993).

The notion uses, where feasible, computational methods based on hard data. It suggests that priorities are understood and consequences are known and that official goals are agreed. It offers conventional wisdom based on Taylorist (1911) and Gilbreth (1908) ideals. The performance maximisation measure of return-on-investment (ROI) and its derivatives are perceived as highly quantitative, radical and reduce uncertainty. Therefore, the techniques associated with the rational-economic management approach, and its overriding philosophy are likely to be

perceived by management as wholly desirable. Manifestations of rational-economic management practice suggest that the philosophy is pervasive and becomes a dominant paradigm. It is therefore reasonable to declare this management approach as a conventional theory-of-action.

Like financial resources one can perceive people as an opportunity. Their knowledge, skills and potential application are a key source of revenue. In many ways thinking of employees as a cost is not rational. However, it would seem that the absolute importance of economic concerns may override social and moral obligations and judgements. Given this backdrop, management may implicitly treat employees as a problem resource. After all employees are costly to maintain, and because they are human, complex and unpredictable, management cannot easily use experience to help their man-management. Consequently, employees can too easily be seen as a problem rather than an opportunity. Such a view may become part of senior management thinking.

Kets de Vries (1996) comments that “our society and most of our business life is organised around airtight logic, numbers, and explanations that make sense.” He adds “senior management are sensitive to numbers and figures but treat people as anonymous entities.” If true in practice, employees will obviously sense and object to such an approach. Moreover, Glautier and Underdown (1994) state that if management use only conventional measurements of revenues, expenses, profit, cost variances and output, it is possible that short-run economic gains may be achieved at the expense of long-run goals.

Table 2.1 below shows the results of two surveys conducted by Pike and Ooi (1988) involving more than two hundred organisations. All sizes of organisation are represented in the survey. Directors were asked, inter alia, to identify and indicate on a five-point scale the importance of key organisational objectives. A figure of '5' infers that the objective is very important. A ranking of '1' would infer an unimportant objective.

Table 2.1 The importance of financial objectives (1980-1986)

<u>Objective</u>	Key organisational objectives	
	<u>1980</u>	<u>1986</u>
<i>Short term objectives</i>		
Profitability	4.28	4.61
Earnings (i.e. Profit targets)	4.01	4.41
<i>Longer term objectives</i>		
Growth in sales	3.18	2.97
Growth in earnings per share	2.83	4.38
Growth in shareholder wealth	3.07	4.06

Source: Pike and Ooi (1988)

The results of the Pike and Ooi studies illustrate the corporative importance of a number of profit related objectives. Furthermore, all ratings apart from 'sales growth' have increased in importance over time. Shorter term financial objectives were more important to respondents than long term objectives. In these circumstances, longer term benefit may be jeopardised in favour of short term profit.

Stakeholders not perceived as explicitly and directly contributing to the profit motive may have problems in gaining senior management interest and recognition. In these circumstances, it might be more appropriate to typify a conventional theory-of-action as economic-rational and not rational-economic.

Failure to appreciate attributes other than financial imperatives may adversely affect morale, loyalty, trust, motivation and commitment. Arie de Geus quoted by Pickard (1998b) states that management should be "...concerned with ensuring long-term survival than with making a quick buck, after all, a person's number-one priority is survival." He adds "We do not live to make a profit, in contrast, we make profit in order to live." The recent success of his book 'The Living Company' asserts that profits are a symptom of success and not an end in themselves.

Armstrong (1996b) confirms that the overriding goal of most organisations is to maximise profitability. Reichheld (1997) states that the current approach to management might simply be called the profit theory. He suggests that a new theory should see the fundamental mission of business not as profit, but as value creation - a means rather than an end, a result as opposed to a purpose. Reichheld differentiates between virtuous and destructive profit. Virtuous profit can be seen as the result of an organisations ability to build and develop the assets of the company. It is the result of creating value. Destructive profit does not come from value creation and value sharing; it comes from exploiting assets, from selling off a businesses true balance sheet.

Economic priorities in the private sector relate to the objective of maximising chosen corporate economic objectives and managing by means of a strong preference for financial performance indicators. From a public sector viewpoint, poor budgetary control may lead to a greater burden on public expenditure, a possible increase in the nations borrowing requirement, and interest payable by government. Consequently, Public Services have been ushered to concentrate on conventional private sector approaches. For example, tight control of expenditure. It now seems reasonable to state that "the genericist argument that all organisations function with similar economic and financial goals can still be supported." (Cooper, 1993). To test this assertion, the writer conducted a survey with Directors attending the Institute of Directors Diploma programmes at Salford University between 1991 and 1996. Directors were simply requested to clarify the key objectives used by them in their organisation (n=102). Organisations ranged in size, industry and sector, although most represented the private sector. More than 80 per cent identified the key objective of the company as the need to maximise profit. More than 30 per cent added the need for growth or stability to maximise profitability. Less than 10 per cent suggested that the needs of other stakeholders seemed crucial to their organisation. Only two organisations suggested that they were in business to enjoy themselves and to make work an enjoyable experience for other employees. Both organisations had turnovers of less than five million and less than fifty employees. Referring to the importance of customers and employees as the true assets of an organisation,

Reichheld (1997) comments that owners of smaller businesses deal face to face with true assets and are deeply and constantly involved in improving the flow of value to and from their customers and employees. Supportive of small business theory-of-action, Reichheld comments that small business owners do not use accounting statements to run their businesses, they use them only to calculate their taxes or deal with bankers.

During the writer's survey, it was common for those Director's who identified the need for the maximisation of profit to question the judgement of organisations (mostly small business owners) who suggested the need to satisfy other stakeholders. One Director humorously commented that "Director's need on the one side to ensure a happy, contented and a well-paid workforce, and on the other side - make enormous profits", adding with a wry smile "I bet you can't figure out which one really predominates my thinking!"

It is likely that one reason an individual is chosen to be a manager relates to his or her ability to internalise and be successful in relation to using rational-economic ideals, including behaviour that may emphasise the overall importance of company profit. Ellen Van Velsor and Jean Brittain Lesley (1994) of the Centre for Creative Leadership, Greensboro, North Carolina conducted a study of fifteen 'Fortune 500' manufacturing and service companies in the United States, and twenty four-large companies in Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Spain and the UK. A total of sixty-two executives were asked to talk about managers they knew who had risen to the top of the organisations and been successful. The authors noted that "people who are successful in their early careers seem proficient in task-based profit related leadership but are presented with a challenge when job demands begin to require a balance with a more employee based relationship-orientated style of leadership." Nevertheless, Wheeler and Sillanpaa (1997) repeat the notion that the development of loyal, inclusive stakeholder relationships will become one of the most important determinants of commercial viability.

While analysis supports the view that short term financial indicators are likely to form a key part of senior management theory-of-action, employees may not have

internalised the managerial profit motive. For example, Wheeler (1997) conducted a detailed survey of 2,200 Body Shop employees as part of a wider social audit. The survey found that while most employees endorsed the Group's values, they had reservations about the everyday realities of working for the company. Fewer than half employees agreed that the company's commitment to being a caring company was apparent to them on a day-to-day basis (Arkin, 1997).

Perhaps unsurprisingly, discussion suggests that economic/financial imperatives are likely to be a key influence on senior management theory-of-action. However, profits and budgets alone seem an unreliable measure of organisational performance. The maximisation of owner wealth is probably a more credible organisational purpose. It is only the maximisation of wealth that takes account of both return and risk simultaneously. Wealth maximisation also balances short and long term benefits in a way that profit-maximising goals cannot (McLaney, 1994). Moreover, owners or influential bodies who control the financing of an organisation are not likely to be impressed with management who do not maximise wealth from all resources, including human. Adshead (1996) comments that potential owner investors should ask two key questions of senior management. First, is the board fit for the purpose; is it competent, focussed and acting together? Secondly, has the company really engaged and motivated its people successfully? He asserts that inquiry relating to the latter question is pursued less often. However, both questions relate to the maximisation of wealth.

The need to understand social behaviour in organisations and maximising wealth should not be viewed as in conflict. For example, Guest (1998) supports Huselid's (1998) view that traditional sources of competitive advantage, such as access to capital or economies of scale, are becoming less important and that people instead increasingly provide the key. In a survey involving thirty-one chief executives, Price and Dauphinais (1998) assert that the get-rich quick routes to profitability have been exhausted, people have taken precedence. Market influences, now more than ever, present organisations with the prospect of gaining competitive advantage from all resources. Ignoring this fact may put the organisation's survival in serious jeopardy. Gratton (2000) asserts that until

organisations face up to the gap between rhetoric as to the importance of people and organisational priorities, and “...organisations care as much about peoples feelings as about finance [profit], they are doomed to create organisations that break the soul and spirit of its members.”

Handy (1989) advocates the development of a ‘culture of consent’. The task for management can therefore be seen as working towards ensuring that people behave in a way that both complements the corporate direction of the company and adds value to the organisation. Appeals to cast off the heritage of Taylorism and authoritarian management are not new. What has given them fresh bite has been the message that the control and compliance model, though highly relevant for a postwar era dominated by a mass production system, is inappropriate for the modern world (Sabel, 1982). Nonetheless, “the culture and prevailing management style however, is still authoritarian” (Armstrong, 1996a).

Challenges to senior management theory-of-action seem limited. Argyris and Schon (1978) being a clear exception. Nonetheless, senior management have attempted to transform their organisations to compete successfully in the future by turning to a variety of improvement initiatives:

- * Total quality management
- * Just in time production and distribution systems (JIT, MRP, MRPII)
- * Building customer-focussed organisations
- * Employee empowerment
- * Process improvement and re-engineering

Each of these improvement programmes have had demonstrable success stories, champions, gurus, and consultants. In contrast, many have yielded disappointing results. New change programmes follow in rapid succession and become ‘flavours of the month.’ The programmes have often been fragmented. Morgan(1994), states that when senior management waves the flag saying “We’re restructuring” or “We’re going to revolutionize quality and service,” it is those who fear the consequences that take the most interest. Andrews (1995) comments that mistrust

can potentially ruin the implementation of any programme. It has been argued that mistrust occurs because the implementation of such initiatives has generally focussed upon functional, operational and political inferences rather than improvement of the worker-organisation relationship. Studies (Hutchinson, Kinnie and Purcell, 1996) suggest that one main reason senior management are readier to adopt improvement programmes, is because it has always been difficult to establish a clear link between good practice people management and improved business performance. However, "...research is starting to establish links between increased employee job satisfaction and improved organisational profitability" (Sheffield University 1998). Huselid's (1998) work finds that firms with significantly above-average scores on an index of high-performance (or high-commitment) work practices provided an extra market value per employee of between £10,000 and £40,000. On this basis investment in people pays off handsomely.

2.5 Organisational Climate

Senior management theory-of-action is likely to affect organisation climate. Organisational climate is less encompassing than organisational culture and seems more to do with people's perception of their environment. French et al (1985) comment that organisational climate is a "relatively persistent set of perceptions held by organisation members concerning the characteristics of culture." It is the atmosphere felt by members of the organisation. Climate relates to the strength of feelings held by employees and is connected to the need for care and goodwill. Mullins (1996) comments that "the organisational climate is characterised by the nature of the people-organisation relationship and the superior-subordinate relationship." Tagiuri and Litwin (1968) define climate as:

'...a relatively enduring quality of the internal environment of an organisation that (a) is experienced by its members, (b) influences their behaviour, and (c) can be described in terms of the values of a particular set of characteristics (or attributes) of the organisation.'

More recently, the attributes of organisational climate have been used as a

benchmark for assessing the health of the organisation. A topic which the writer feels will grow in importance. Mullins (1996) features of a healthy organisational climate include:

1. The integration of organisational goals and personal goals.
2. Democratic functioning of the organisation with full opportunities for participation.
3. Justice in treatment with equitable personnel and employee relations policies and practices.
4. Mutual trust, consideration and support among different levels of the organisation.
5. Managerial behaviour and styles of leadership appropriate to the particular work situation.
6. Acceptance of psychological contract between the individual and the organisation.
7. Recognition of people's needs and expectations at work, and individual differences and attributes.
8. Equitable systems of rewards based on positive recognition.
9. A sense of identity with, and loyalty to, the organisation and a feeling of being a valued and important member.

A commonsense reaction to the above immediately suggests that many organisations may have some difficulty substantiating the prominent existence of such features within their company's internal environment.

The organisational climate is contained within the covert culture of the organisation. The culture of the organisation is at the heart of the needs and expectations of the people that work within the organisation. Hence, organisational culture should be managed to avoid dysfunction, low morale and poor performance from dissatisfied personnel. Senior management may openly declare the norms and aims of the organisation, perhaps best referred to as the corporate or overt organisational culture. However, such a practice is unlikely to

encapsulate the real beliefs, values and norms that drive patterns of behaviour. Georgiades and Macdonell (1998) comment that covert cultural issues are a little like the nine-tenths of the iceberg that remains under water. Consequently, this area is often viewed by senior management as one over which they have no control. Unfortunately, it may be the very essence of competitive advantage.

2.6 A Need for Change?

Much organisational analysis concentrates on external sources of change. Katz and Kahn (1966, 1978) argue that such factors are always the most crucial. However, Reed (1985a) writes “Organisational theory has gradually acquired the intellectual trappings of social science but retains a parasitic dependence upon the managerial requirements on monopoly capitalism which has determined the character of its central problematic.” Reed also offers:

'The most substantial threat (to the organisation) is the recurring intellectual failure on the part of management to appreciate the sophisticated control mechanisms necessary to create and sustain a viable modus vivendi between formal management systems and workshop behaviour...(management) must not be limited to economic variables'

Source: Michael Reed (1985b, p. 23)

Post-modernist notions suggest that rationality, logic, and scientific management are unreal and inappropriate due to the speed of change, competition, and environmental chaos (Mintzberg, 1983; Drucker, 1988; Pascale, 1990; Handy, 1989). McHale (1993) categorically states that there is strong case for putting ethics first and managerial economics second. Connock and Johns (1995) state that ethical values should embrace an organisation's vision, its core values and its operational code of conduct, and in particular the way it treats its employees. However, Johns (1995) states that “Business ethics is good business, but some organisations adopting ethical concerns are jumping on a fashionable bandwagon rather than acting from real conviction.” The same phenomenon has been witnessed by O'Brien (1995). Results from her studies of six major UK companies revealed that only 13 per cent of employees felt valued by their company; only 9 per cent of employees believed that top management had a sincere interest in employees, and

only 8 per cent of employees considered management could be counted on to give employees a fair deal.

Evenden and Anderson (1992) confirm that the development relationship between manager and staff is a shared relationship. Curnow (1995) states that the re-engineered world of work cries out for a re-engineering of the psychological contract between corporations and their senior talent. Bower (1996) describing the psychological contract for the 21st century comments that “there seems little doubt that there is now a call for greater balance between what employees contribute to the organisation and what they get out of it.” Armstrong (1996c) describes several principles relating to a mutual commitment firm. Included is the need for top management to value commitment, that there is an effective voice for human resources in strategy making and governance, and there is a climate of cooperation and trust. Levering’s (1990) quid pro quo ‘partnership’ model supports the argument that employee commitment to the organisation should be balanced by employer commitment to the employee. Eisenberger et al, in two studies (1986 and 1990) comment that individual employees within organisations form common beliefs as to the extent to which their contributions are valued by the organisation, and add “Individuals support organisations when they perceive that the organisation is actively supporting them.”

Often managers are referred to by their subordinates as a 'good' or 'bad' manager. The terms 'good' and 'bad' are not accurate. What good management entails, depends on the starting point of one's own perspective. Nonetheless, employee perceptions about senior management may be formed and sustained by the consequences and implications of senior management theory-of-action.

2.7 Conclusions

Literature review in this chapter set out to explore the notion of theory-of-action. Key to the chapter was the identification of characteristics and possible consequences of theory-of-action as used by senior management. Various perspectives on organisations were used to help analysis. Characteristics of theory-of-action such as norms, values, assumptions and priorities have been incorporated

in debate about organisational purpose, senior management decisions, stakeholder analysis, unitary assumptions and the rational-economic model. The rational-economic management process follows classic and bureaucratic organisational theory and offers conventional management wisdom in accordance with scientific management ideals. Concentration on economic/financial concerns moves emphasis to what has been termed 'economic-rationality'. Analysis suggests that this notion provides an inviting ideology which senior management justify and endorse. The idea is complementary to Argyris and Schons (1974, 1978) 'Model-One' theory-of-use.

Management, in particular senior management, is all about making decisions in response to identified environmental problems or opportunities. What seems absolutely fundamental to decision making is the decision process itself - the act of thinking. There is an implicit if not explicit human dimension in every decision situation, and this is not dependent on whether the subject or problem for consideration is labelled technical, economic, social or human. Acknowledgement of this notion immediately begs the question that if humans are an integral part of every problem, senior management should integrate the human element into the thinking process involved in making decisions? Vroom and Yetton (1973) emphasise the importance of improving our understanding of the social context of organisations, and in particular, gaining acceptance of the workforce so that the quality of the decision process is maintained.

Field research interested in clarifying senior management theory-of-action would need to design methods capable of observing and monitoring the norms, priorities, assumptions, and values senior management adopt as part of their decision making process. Characteristics of what has been termed conventional theory-of-use would include rational, unemotional and competitive behaviour which tends to emphasise economic 'instrumental' and task related imperatives. In addition to direct observation, employee perception would help clarify the impact on employees as to senior management theory-of-action.

The following chapter considers the second key element of the study, that of employee work motivation and commitment.

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CHAPTER 3

Employee Commitment: Literature Review

Employee Commitment: Literature Review

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Employee Commitment: Literature Review

3.0 Introduction

Commitment is a central theme of the submission. Literature contained within this chapter explores different definitions and explanations of commitment. The chapter relies heavily on previous research findings while exploring the association between employee commitment and senior management theory-of-action. The central aim of reviewing literature was to first identify what is meant by 'commitment' in order to establish a workable instrument appropriate for field research. Second, to analyse previous research studies to form a foundation of known associations between employee commitment and various organisational factors. Finally, to attempt to pinpoint organisational aspects most commonly associated with the function and role of senior management.

3.1 Defining Commitment

Research shows that people use a variety of categories to type others (Abelson, 1976; Bern and Allen, 1974). One type of category that has emerged is that of the "committed" person (Norman, 1963). Cantor and Mischel (1979) found commitment to be an attribute on which individuals evaluate others and that commitment was distinct from other personal characteristics, such as extraversion.

Commitment could be described as the Holy Grail of organisational behaviour and business psychology. The key objective of all management being to develop a positive corporate culture as manifested in values, norms and management style which combine to promote commitment (Peters and Waterman, 1982; Tichy, 1983; Armstrong, 1991a). Denton (1987) states that obtaining employee commitment is key to quality and productivity improvements. Moreover, the central plank of Human Resource Management is the development of employee commitment to the organisation (Guest, 1987). The rationale behind this is that committed employees 'will be more satisfied, more productive and more adaptable' (Guest, 1987; Walton, 1991).

For Walton, commitment is an essential precursor to high performance. It represents the latest stage in the evolution of managerial practice, a successor to the

'control' characteristic of Taylorist management during the early and mid-twentieth century. Committed employees can be viewed as in contrast to those who are seen as simply conforming and compliant (Ogbonna and Wilkinson, 1988, 1990). Walton (1991) suggests that the rate of transition from control to commitment strategies continues to accelerate, "fuelled not only by economic necessity but also by individual leadership in management and labour, philosophical choices, organisational competence in managing change, and the need for cumulative learning from change itself." The emerging views in this area are that to create a successful workplace, an organisation must concentrate its energies on both economic and social performance, and invest in promoting commitment (Daley, 1988; Brooke and Price, 1989). Drennan (1989a) suggests that most managers believe that with real commitment from staff the performance of their business could improve dramatically. He adds, "employee commitment does make a real difference."

In the past decade or so, a great deal of attention and research effort has been invested in identifying the various causes and implications of organisational commitment (Angle and Perry, 1981; Cohen, 1991; DeCotiis and Summers, 1987; Glisson and Durrick, 1988; Morris and Steers, 1980). A number of commentators raise questions about the concept of commitment. These relate to three main problem areas: (1) its unitary frame of reference (Cyert and March, 1963; Mangham, 1979; Mintzberg, 1983), (2) commitment as an inhibitor of flexibility (Legge, 1989; Coopey and Hartley, 1991), and (3) whether high commitment does in practice result in improved organisational performance (Walton, 1985; Guest, 1991). Some researchers and observers (Mullins, 1996; Armstrong, 1996; Drennan, 1989b; Martin and Nichols, 1987) provide steps and broad guidelines as to how management can improve employee commitment. All add to our understanding, however, evidence suggests that commitment is a complex phenomenon that operates in different directions and at different levels.

The multifaceted nature of commitment is problematic for a researcher wishing to gain insight as to the affect of senior management theory-of-action on employee commitment. Identifying the form of commitment which senior management wish to encourage will be difficult, but may prove to be an essential pre-requisite.

Definitions of commitment differ. For example, as an attitude, organisational commitment is most often defined as a strong desire to remain a member of a particular organisation, in other words loyalty to the company. According to this definition commitment refers to an individual's psychological bond to the organisation, as an effective attachment and identification (Coopey and Hartley, 1991). Hall, Scheider, and Nygren dealt more with the issues that lead to shared values. They define commitment as “the process by which the goals of the organisation and those of the individual become increasingly integrated or congruent.” (1970). McEwan et al (1988) define commitment as “readiness to pursue objectives through the individual job in cooperation with others.” Salancik (1977) states that “Commitment is a state of being in which an individual becomes bound by his actions to beliefs that sustain his activities and his involvement.” However, the most widely used definition of organisational commitment in current research is that of Porter, Steers, Mowday, and Boulian (1974), who developed the Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ). They defined organisational commitment as the strength of an individual's identification with and involvement in a particular organisation, characterising it by three psychological factors: desire to remain in an organisation, willingness to exert considerable effort on its behalf, and belief in and acceptance of its goals and values. Such categorisation fits well with what has become known as affective commitment. In support of Porter et al, O'Reilly and Chatman (1989) define employee commitment as “a psychological attachment felt by the employee for the organisation.” The Porter instrument and definition has been so widely used by researchers that Reichers (1985) asserts that the Porter approach “is the approach to commitment.” The following definition assists in capturing the essence of the Porter et al dimensions:

'a willingness to exert high levels of effort on behalf of the organisation and a definite belief in, and acceptance of the values and goals of the organisation'

Source: Martin and Nicholls (1987); Coopey and Hartley (1991)

It can be seen that commitment can be viewed and defined in terms of attitude or behaviour. Therefore, it is not surprising that two widely known views of commitment relevant to work organisations have emerged: behavioural or continuance commitment and attitudinal or affective commitment (Reichers, 1985;

Allen et al, 1990; Mathieu and Zajac, 1990; Randall, 1990).

3.1.1 Behavioural Commitment

In attempting to understand the process through which employees attach themselves to an organisation, research has concentrated on behavioural commitment (Kischenbaum and Weisberg, 1990; Klenke-Hamel and Mathieu, 1990; Martin, 1979; Martin and Hunt, 1980; Mottaz, 1989; Thompson and Terpening, 1983). It is defined as the degree of an employee's intention to stay in an organisation (Halaby, 1986; Halaby and Weakliem, 1989; Martin, 1979; Price and Mueller, 1981).

Behavioural commitment is the passive result of prior decisions and actions that constrain the individual to stay. It relates to the individual's calculation of the costs of leaving rather than the rewards of staying. Becker (1960), Keisler (1971), Keisler and Sakumura (1966), and Salancik (1977, 1982) see commitment from this viewpoint and suggest that commitment is the process of binding the individual to behavioural acts.

3.1.2 Continuance Commitment

There is a strong similarity between 'behavioural commitment' as discussed by Becker (1960), Keisler (1971) and Salancik (1977, 1982) and continuance commitment as described by Allen and Meyer (1990). Continuance commitment involves the need to remain in the organisation because of accumulated 'side-bets' and generally the lack of alternative employment opportunities (Becker, 1960). For example, Hrebiniak and Alutto (1972) define commitment as "a result of individual-organisational transactions and alterations in side-bets or investments over time." Basically, side-bets refer to anything of importance that an employee has invested, such as time, effort or money that would be lost or devalued at a cost to an employee, if he or she left the organisation (Meyer and Allen, 1984). This approach suggests that commitment is the outcome of inducements and contribution between an organisation and an employee (Morris and Sherman, 1981). Commitment increases as more side-bets are accumulated and if they are contingent upon continued employment in the firm (Becker, 1960; Ritzer and Trice, 1969; Hrebiniak and Alutto, 1973; Meyer and Allen, 1984; Mottaz, 1989). The accrual of side-bets

over time should make leaving more costly and hence increase continuance commitment (Mathieu and Zajac, 1990; Meyer and Allen, 1984).

Age and tenure and, to a lesser extent, education, have been viewed as contributing to the development of continuous commitment (Angle and Lawson, 1993; Cohen and Lowenberg, 1990; Meyer and Allen, 1984). For example, older workers with high tenure may feel tied to the organisation while employees with low education levels are less likely to possess transferable skills and knowledge (Allen and Meyer, 1990). Some research (Farrell and Rusbult, 1981; Rusbult and Farrell, 1983) has found that investments such as job and organisational tenure and non-portable training increased employee commitment over time. However, findings from studies of self-rated continuance commitment suggest few conclusions regarding this link (Hackett et al, 1994; Meyer et al, 1989a; Shore and Barksdale, 1991). Meta-analysis conducted by Cohen and Lowenberg (1990) covering fifty previous studies, indicated that the side-bet factor theory was not valid because most side-bet variables did not explain why organisational commitment occurred.

Continuous commitment as perceived by the individual, may relate to his or her view of the commitment and energy they have provided in the past. For example, an individual may decide that they should reap the benefits of past commitment. It says less about the commitment an individual may decide to provide in the future. McGee and Ford (1987) explain that continuance commitment is concerned with sunk costs. Sunk cost is a phrase borrowed from the world of accountancy and means unrecoverable costs used prior to consideration of decisions relating to future investments. The use of financial terminology suggests that similarly to shareholders, employees can choose to invest or withdraw their investment. Not simply in the sense that they can choose to withdraw their labour, but in the sense they may choose to withdraw or not apply a willingness to exert substantial effort.

Iles et al (1990) suggest that the association between the employee and the values of the organisation may be seen in compliance terms. Employees are only committed to their organisation because they perceive few existing alternatives. An obvious example is employment during high-unemployment and economic recessionary periods. Fewer jobs external to the employing organisation should result in greater

commitment to the employing firm because a lack of opportunities increases the perceived costs of discontinuing membership (Rusbult, 1980; Farrell and Rusbult, 1981; Meyer and Allen, 1991). Iles et al (1990) state that compliance commitment can take two possible forms: 'instrumental-calculative', or 'alienative'. The former, as the name implies, involves an instrumental exchange of involvement in return for rewards. They see commitment as a function of an individual's evaluation of the costs and benefits of maintaining membership (Iles et al, 1990). Alienative commitment is a condition where:

'Individuals perceive themselves unable to change or control their organisational experiences and also perceive a lack of alternatives. A negative attachment then exists, combining weak intentions to meet organisational demands with intentions to maintain organisational membership'.

Source: Iles, Mabey and Robertson (1990, p.150)

In response to signs of alienative commitment, the organisation adopts a predominant form of compliance patterns to achieve its goals (Reed, 1985).

From a senior management perspective, behavioural or continuance commitment might not be overly desirable. This form leverages employees to stay with the organisation. However, senior management wish for more from employees than compliance behaviour set to conform in a way which aids their continuous employment but which may add little to the performance of the organisation. Moreover, it says little as to the development of commitment in the future.

3.1.3 Normative and Affective Commitment

Meyer et al (1989b) state that when conducting research it is important to distinguish between commitment based on desire and commitment based on need. While continuance commitment is based on need, affective and normative commitment is built on desire.

Normative commitment is interpreted as the feeling that one ought to remain with the organisation because of personal norms and values. It provides a sense of moral duty or obligation and is associated with internalization of the organisation's norms

and values, and acceptance of its goals and mission (Iles, Forster and Tinline, 1996). Affective commitment provides a deeper sense of emotional attachment. It involves the notion of wanting to remain in the organisation because through experience one develops a positive attitude towards the organisation. This commitment is triggered when an employee can relate to and agree with the norms of the organisation when they compare their personal norms and value system. Mowday et al (1982) characterise affective commitment as having strong ties to, and psychological identification with an organisation.

Guest (1992) argues that McGee and Ford's (1987) findings point to affective commitment being linked to effort while continuance commitment to low labour turnover. However, Mowday et al (1992) suggest both are linked in that each reinforces the other. According to Meyer and Allen (1991) both affective and continuance commitment represent psychological states that have implications for the organisation. Side-bets urge an employee to continue with the organisation, and affective commitment closely relates to the possession of a positive attitude towards the organisation. The two aspects of commitment are possibly inseparable if employees are to show a strong willingness for the good of the company. Support for this view is offered by McGee and Ford (1987) and Meyer et al (1990). They state that research findings raise the possibility that although they are distinct concepts, continuance and affective commitment might be related, suggesting a process by which one view of commitment influences the other. Nevertheless, an equal number of studies support the distinctiveness of affective and continuance commitment (Angle and Lawson, 1993; Hackett, Bycio and Hausdorf, 1994; McGee and Ford, 1987; Shore and Barksdale, 1995).

Directors attending the Salford programme were introduced to the many definitions and approaches to employee commitment. They responded by suggesting: -

- * *'it was not always advisable to retain all of the same employees'*
- * *'it is extra effort that we require, not simply the continuance of what has been done before'*
- * *'compliance is only useful at certain times. When it becomes less useful is when*

we want employees to think for themselves or to benefit from creative ideas', adding that '.....creative ideas are becoming more important'

** if anything 'we need to adopt a strategy that goes all out to destroy organisational behavioural commitment as defined above and encourage individual affective commitment'*

** '..remuneration packages should motivate employees to put in extra commitment. We don't want them simply to make the employee stay with the company'.*

Source: Unpublished PhD Research Notes: Directors attending the Institute of Directors (IoD) Diploma programme in Directorship. The University of Salford (1993 - 1998)

Directors comments indicate their wish for affective rather than continuous commitment. Pay is still dominant as a means of obtaining employee commitment.

3.2 Pluralism and Commitment

A pluralist view of commitment recognises the multifaceted nature of the concept (Iles, Mabey and Robertson, 1990). Coopey and Hartley (1991) support this view and suggest that free standing, context-free assumptions of single-commitment models may not be sufficient. According to Reichers (1985):

'Commitment is a process of identification with the goals of an organisation's multiple constituencies. These constituencies may include top management, customers, unions, and/or the public at large'.

Source: Reichers (1985. p.468)

The pluralist approach moves to a broad stance where from a general construct of commitment concerned with organisational goals and values, they first ask the question "Whose goals and values serve as the foci for multiple commitments?"

The pluralist assumption also suggests that the more constituencies the individual employee identifies with and is committed to, the potentially more fragmented becomes the possibility of global commitment for the values of the organisation as expressed by senior management. This assumption asserts that commitment is a

finite resource. For example, if an employee identifies with customers, unions and senior management that their available commitment level will somehow be more limited than an employee who only associates with top management values. This notion is difficult to believe.

The multifaceted approach offered by pluralist's seems credible and compliments earlier text about the non-unitary nature of organisation. Nevertheless, it carries far too many assumptions about commitment, especially that levels may be finite.

3.3 Levels of Commitment

Randall (1987) distinguishes three levels of commitment. Most descriptions relate to previously stated definitions of commitment. Nevertheless, by using levels we can see that employee commitment can occupy different stages of development:

- | |
|---|
| High level |
| 1. A strong belief in the organisation's goals and values |
| Medium level |
| 2. A willingness to exert considerable effort on the behalf of the organisation |
| Low level |
| 3. A strong desire to continue as an organisation member |

Figure 3.1 Levels of Employee Commitment

Such categorisation may be useful when negotiating with senior management as to the desired level of commitment that they require and is appropriate to the organisation. It may also serve as a scale by which employees can gauge their self perceptions of their commitment.

It seems that even at low levels of commitment there can be positive consequences for the individual and the organisation. Randall suggests that low levels can be functional for the organisation if higher turnover and absenteeism associated with uncommitted individuals reduce the disruption which they might cause while at work. Low commitment levels are often associated with high labour turnover, high absenteeism, poor performance, and even sabotage. However, such an argument

might help to confirm the view that senior management would wish employees to possess high levels of affective commitment as opposed to similar levels of continuous commitment.

Rather than levels of commitment, Martin and Nicholls (1987) suggest that affective commitment encapsulates “the giving of all of yourself while at work.” This entails such things as using time constructively, attention to detail, making that extra effort, accepting change, co-operation with others, self-development, respecting trust, pride in ones own abilities, continuously seeking improvement, and giving loyal support. The reality of organisational life may be different. For instance, a poll conducted by Birkbeck College (1996) commissioned by the Institute of Personnel and Development, found that the typical employee feels more loyalty to their colleagues than their line manager - and much less to their senior management and the organisation.

The Guardian survey revealed that eighty-three per cent of employees from ten organisations said that they were ‘very’ or ‘moderately’ committed to their employers. However, a similar percentage thought that management attitudes toward staff had changed for the worse. McCall (1996) interprets these results by suggesting that when people say they are committed they are perceiving commitment as being asked by management to do more work and working longer hours. She adds “when you probe beneath simple multiple choice questioning, a lot of what they are saying suggests that they do not trust their employers.”

3.4 Antecedents and Consequences

Clearly, the antecedent the researcher is interested in is that of the affect of senior management theory-of-action. The possible consequence is variance as to employee commitment. However, Guest (1992) states that unless research studies provide longitudinal analysis, we can equally interpret results as effects or as causes of commitment. Even then evidence is suspect. As most studies consider correlation and are cross sectional, it is often difficult to establish whether the commitment identified is a cause or effect. For example, do senior management actions help create and sustain commitment or does high commitment to the organisation encourage employees to think well of senior management? Perhaps the solution to

this dilemma is to accept that establishing association between correlates is at least a step in the right direction.

Literature review provided research which focussed on a number of antecedents and consequences. Namely, job satisfaction, employee involvement, communication, job satisfaction, labour turnover, absence and stress. For purposes of comprehensiveness, the following eight sections provide an overview of findings. First, the important link between commitment and job performance is considered.

3.4.1 Job Performance and Commitment

Senior management interest in improving and extending employee commitment centres around the assumption that greater commitment leads to improved work and organisational performance. Drennan (1989a) states that most managers believe that with real commitment from staff, the performance of their businesses could improve dramatically. "Employee commitment" he says, "does make a real difference." Walton (1985b) suggests that at the heart of management philosophy is the belief that employee commitment will lead to enhanced performance. He adds "the evidence shows this belief to be well founded."

Some researchers have found a positive relationship between organisational commitment and company performance (DeCotis and Summers, 1987; Randall, 1990), others have found no relationship (Angle and Perry, 1981). Mathieu and Zajac (1990) found that meta-analysis indicated weak relationships (average $r = .05$) between organisational commitment and output measures of performance such as a change in operating profit and sales targets. They concluded that "commitment has relatively little direct influence on performance in most instances" (1990). However, indirect associations may exist, for example, some research suggests that commitment to specific, difficult goals leads to high performance (Hollenbeck and Klein, 1987; Locke et al, 1981). Becker et al (1996) state that although the evidence is sketchy "commitment based on the internalization of goals and values is likely to predict performance." O'Reilly, Chatman, and Caldwell (1991) concur by suggesting that a measure of person-organisational fit based on shared values was significantly related to commitment. Others have argued (Salancik and Pfeffer, 1978) and demonstrated (Krackhardt and Porter, 1985) that commitment may be

influenced by the statements or actions of relevant others.

Strong commitment to work should result in conscientious application to the job by means of a high level of effort, but research has not proven this. As Guest (1992) points out, "it may not be sensible in any case to expect a strong and direct link between commitment and performance." While commitment may result in greater effort, according to expectancy theory, a range of intervening and potentially disruptive variables mediates the link between effort and performance. Perhaps we should not expect absolute proof and simply work towards providing research which assists understanding.

3.4.2 Organisational Structure and Commitment

Organisational size has long been known to be negatively associated with organisational commitment. As organisations get larger, the ability to be involved and visible decline. Consequently, feelings of commitment also decline (James and Jones, 1994). It is also possible that decentralised and less formalised work settings increase work commitment (Payne and Pugh, 1976; Williams and Anderson, 1991). However, contrasting this argument are the findings by Michaels et al (1988) who found that greater organisational formalisation was associated with higher employee commitment. They found no evidence of a negative reaction from employees to a formalised work environment. In fact, stemming from the results of their study is the view that the more structured a situation, the more committed employees tend to be.

3.4.3 Job Satisfaction and Commitment

Job satisfaction and organisational commitment have been found to be positively correlated across a number of studies (Locke and Latham, 1990; Bateman and Strasser, 1984; Bluedorn, 1982; Mowday et al, 1982). Porter et al (1974) argued that satisfaction, being highly correlated with work environment and specific outcomes, develops more rapidly as opposed to organisational commitment, a more global construct. Martin and Bennett (1996) state that together studies suggest that job satisfaction is a cause of organisational commitment (e.g. Hrebiniak and Alutto, 1973; Buchanan, 1974; Reichers, 1985). While Williams and Hazer (1986) proposed that the relationship between commitment and satisfaction is reciprocal. Curry et

al (1986) did not find a causal effect in either direction. Although the majority of studies show a strong relationship between satisfaction and commitment, causality is not clear (Guest, 1992). For example, the findings of Bateman and Strasser (1984), Price and Mueller (1981), and Vandenberg and Lance (1992) support a reversed causal ordering, in which commitment is causally antecedent to satisfaction. The model is explained by means of a cognitive dissonance approach (Festinger, 1957), in which “a cognitive outlook such as commitment is rationalised by subsequent attitudes of job satisfaction.” (Bateman and Strasser, 1984). That is, individuals make sense of their situation by developing a level of satisfaction consistent with their level of commitment.

A study by Sheffield University (1998) and reported by the BBC, stated that a survey of forty organisations involving eight thousand employees found that improved profitability followed an increase in job satisfaction (and not the other way round). The survey indicated that when techniques such as job enhancement, enrichment, employee involvement etc were employed, increased job satisfaction occurred. Moreover, the organisations showed that an increase in profitability occurred one year after the introduction of the techniques.

Regardless of the orientation of causality, a strong association between job satisfaction and employee commitment seems assured.

3.4.4 Employee Involvement and Commitment

Guest (1992) distinguishes five main forms of involvement:

- (1) Improving provision of information to employees, for example briefing groups.
- (2) Improving information from employees, for example from suggestion schemes and quality circles.
- (3) Changing the work systems through the development of autonomous working groups.
- (4) Changing incentives, for example, through employee share ownership schemes and performance related pay.
- (5) Changing employee relationships, through more participative leadership and greater informality.

No relationship has been found between use of employee involvement initiatives and company and plant performance, “this is possibly to do with the number of confounding variables” (Edwards, 1987; Marginson et al., 1988, also cited in Guest, 1992). However, there is support for the negative effect of centralisation on commitment (Bluedorn, 1979; Miller and Labovitz, 1973; Price and Mueller, 1981). Employees actively engaged in decision making throughout an organisation have higher job satisfaction, which increases continuous commitment. However, Guest (1992) urges that “conclusions must be tentative.” Further, there are issues of inadequate introduction and implementation of employee involvement schemes. Kelly and Kelly (1991) point to four reasons: -

- * employee lack choice about participating in such initiatives
- * employee lack of trust in management
- * there is unequal status and outcomes
- * there is a lack of institutional support.

Marchington et al (1994) found that employee attitudes to employee involvement initiatives are dependent, among others, upon experiences they have of employee involvement and work in general; managements approach to employee relations, and the recent and projected corporate performance of the organisation. They conclude that employee involvement initiatives are as much affected by the prevailing culture and environment as they are sources of cultural change. In a large-scale investigation of the influence of participative cultures on commitment, Miller (1988) found that the effect of participation on organisation participants was strongly moderated by the overall culture of the organisation. Guest is critical of attempts to change culture, he suggests:

'Often techniques are introduced in a piecemeal way, more as the 'flavour of the month' than as part of a coherent strategy.' Source: Guest (1992, p.128)

Nevertheless, Marchington's research verifies that employee experiences and perceptions about management are core issues that require attention. Possibly before (or instead of) additional employee involvement 'flavour of the month' initiatives.

Marchington (1993) shares Walton's (1991) view that commitment is strongly related to trust. Senior management is chosen for particular attention. Trust is synonymous with commitment. Offering commitment indicates that the person is both willing and able to do what he or she has pledged. When one party views the other party as unwilling or unable to honour their commitments, then they do not trust the intentions and actions of the other side. They are in a state of lack of trust. When there is suspicion based upon previous interactions between employees and their senior management then 'one-off' employee involvement initiatives are unlikely to be greeted with total commitment. Of course, the trust-commitment association will affect initiatives other than those relating to employee involvement. Indeed, the association is likely to affect the core relationship between employer and employee.

3.4.5 Labour Turnover and Commitment

Commitment is an important predictor of intention to quit, which is invariably the best predictor of actual labour turnover. By definition, highly committed employees wish to remain with their employing organisations (Mowday et al, 1982). However, quantitative summaries of findings (Mathieu and Zajac, 1990; Randall, 1990), have demonstrated that the relationship between organisational commitment and turnover have produced few large correlations. The strongest correlations relate to two meta-analyses of Steel and Ovalle (1984), and Carsten and Spector (1987) who found behavioural commitment to have a strong negative relationship with turnover (-.50, -.47 and -.57, respectively).

One explanation for lower than expected correlations is that other variables probably moderate the relationship (Mathieu and Zajac, 1990). For instance, Wiener and Vardi (1980) found that type of occupation had some effect on the commitment-turnover relationship. Werbel and Gould (1984) revealed an inverse relationship between organisational commitment and turnover of nurses employed more than one year, but Cohen (1991) indicates that this relationship was stronger for employees in their early career stages.

Generally, longitudinal research studies show that the link between commitment and labour turnover may be indirect. For example, employees often quote the lack

of opportunity of improved remuneration as a reason for leaving the organisation. However, personal evidence arising from conducting many 'exit interviews' has uncovered scathing comments about the way employees have been managed. Many suggested that poor management and not necessarily the potential for increasing take home pay is the main reason for 'looking elsewhere'.

3.4.6 Absence and Commitment

Mobley (1982) suggests that organisational commitment has been found to be inversely related to employee punctuality and turnover. However, other research evidence suggests that the link between organisational commitment and absence is weak (Guest, 1992). This is surprising given that high commitment to the organisation should conceivably result in high attendance levels. However, items more closely related to continuance rather than affective commitment may have been used in the measurement. Steers and Rhodes (1978) have suggested that attendance is a function of motivation to attend and ability to attend. While commitment may affect motivation or vice versa, it may have little effect on ability to attend. Pluralists would argue that competing commitment, for example, to family, may negatively affect ability to attend. Possible gender differences were considered during field work. Field work is described in chapter five.

3.4.7 Stress and Commitment

High commitment may be related to high stress levels. A 1996 survey by the Guardian newspaper of more than eleven thousand readers found that 97 per cent of respondents had experienced stress at work, compared with 77 per cent surveyed in 1988 (Arkin, 1996). Research by Demos (1995), an independent 'think-tank', found the following indicators of stress in UK companies:

- * 44% of the workforce reported coming home exhausted
- * Time off for stress related illnesses has increased by 500% since the 1950's
- * One in three British men work a six to seven day week.
- * 86% of women workers say they never have enough time to get things done.

Evidence exists from the work of Cary Cooper at UMIST (Cox and Cooper, 1985) suggests stress is a major cost to the organisation. The association between stress

and what we may best refer to as a state of 'distress' may be linked to commitment in many ways. A cause of stress may be associated to an employee being over-committed to his/her organisation (Institute of Personnel and Development, 1995). For this type of employee, the organisation will be dominant in their life. Executives, in particular, are often seen as religiously committed and therefore tend to overwork. Working life which is unsatisfied and which affects one's self-esteem, basic needs or values could be instrumental in producing feelings of distress. Commitment may be more likely when people perceive their environment as one which is capable of arousing their interest and is pleasurable. In contrast, 'distress' is likely when one is aroused and displeased. Many jobs in organisations do not provide a high level of arousal, and some may provide too much.

3.4.8 Communication and Commitment

Communication is often cited by senior managers as the one important aspect of organisational life that they may never get totally right. However, viewing communication as a universal panacea for organisational ills seems foolish. This may lead to unwarranted expectations in its introduction and qualified failure in its implementation (Thompson, 1983; Hyman, 1982).

Elements of the communication process are said to be associated with employee affective and/or continuous commitment. For example, the concept of instrumental communication refers to job related information such as feedback and role clarity (Porter and Steers, 1973). Vance and Colella (1990) proposed that feedback was a direct determinant of commitment. Additionally, there is general agreement that instrumental communication has a negative impact on turnover (Bluedorn, 1982; Cotton and Tuttle, 1986; Williams and Hazer, 1986). There is also evidence supporting the positive impact of instrumental communication on job satisfaction (Bluedorn, 1982; Martin, 1979; Price and Mueller, 1981; Thompson and Terpening, 1983). That is, employees who are provided task-related information by their management display greater job satisfaction and commitment than those who do not. A study of forty eight US corporations by Nystrom (1990) found a strong positive relationship between vertical communication and commitment at all levels of management.

In an endeavour to improve commitment, organisations implement programmes designed to improve communication. However, research suggests that employee response to communication schemes of an educational nature is that of suspicion, especially when communication has been generally neglected in the past. For example, Marchington et al (1994) note that none of the more educative communicative schemes which utilised team briefings and employee publications increased commitment or encouraged employees to work harder. Resistance to improved communication may also evolve from management themselves, it centres around several issues: lack of senior management support; organisational politics; fear of losing control; complaints that communication often resembles little more than a confusing collection of random information, and the amount of time and effort that such programmes require (Drennan, 1989b).

Walton and McKersie (1965) suggest that communication is not simply a rational educative approach related to job tasks. They broaden the definition referring to communication as 'attitudinal restructuring'. Communication in this instance is the process by which an idea is transferred from a source to a receiver with the intention of changing his or her behaviour. However, the Confederation for British Industry 1976 report on communication improvement schemes conclude that it was unable to find any conclusive evidence that committed behaviour at work had actually changed or that teamwork functions of individuals had improved. In contrast, the second workplace 'Industrial Relations Survey' (1981) found that the industrial climate, both with trade unions and the workforce as a whole, was more favourably assessed when management gave a lot of information to employees. The second survey also reported a high correlation between those employees regarding themselves as well informed and those reporting a high degree of job satisfaction.

Findings of certain survey's suggest that communication involving senior management can bring about major improvements which can be generally measured in behavioural terms. Infante and Gorden (1993) found that employees who communicate with their superior senior management for pleasure report high satisfaction with those superiors. Thus confirming their earlier conclusion (Infante and Gorden, 1991) that good communication climates lead to satisfaction and

greater employee commitment. The importance of communication is not simply related to that which is informative/task focussed. For instance, Anderson and Matthew (1995) comment that employees in their study said that they “communicated with their management to fulfill needs associated with (a) a satisfactory relationship (inclusion) and (b) closeness (affection).”

A major survey conducted by the Institute of Directors in 1991 involving one hundred and fifteen medium and large companies in Britain categorically state the following improvements arising from management giving extra attention for the need to communicate:

Activity	Percentage
Improved morale/commitment	80
Fewer industrial disputes	68
Increased productivity	65
Better customer relations	47
Reduced employee turnover	46
Less time lost through absenteeism	41
Difficult to evaluate	8
No improvements	3

n=115

Figure 3.2 Improvements Attributed to Communication Initiatives

Source: Institute of Directors (1991)

The Institute of Directors recorded outcomes are impressive, however, behavioural improvements are not necessarily a reaction to improved communication. They may occur because management provide, through a willingness to communicate with employees, an indication that the organisation values employees. Marsh and Hussey (1979) suggest that it is the expressive nature of the communication rather than the factual content *per se* that employees value. Even the less than enthusiastic CBI (1976) report commented that after an initial period of employee scepticism, they found that communication schemes were more likely to be accepted as the company 'taking the trouble' to improve communication. Such a reaction

seems reminiscent of the Hawthorne lighting studies (Mayo, 1949).

The significance of that which is communicated can only be totally gained from understanding the substance of what is said. Simply, the words and the semantics. Meaning will be interpreted from the context 'the excess of meaning beyond the particular operational referent' (Cooper, 1986). Therefore, what senior management say will be interpreted by others 'within the context of what they say' and will reference what they do, their 'theory-in-use'. Employee perceptions will be partially guided by what is not said but perceived by other senses. The disjunction between the sayer or doer and the said results in language (verbal or nonverbal), will have the power to generate meanings irrespective of the wishes of the author. "Text generates meanings with terrible liberality" (Sturrock, 1986), the context is as much a part of the communication itself. Hence the importance of cohesion between senior management communicated espoused theory and actual theory-in-use.

- If the context is not synchronised with the words then the communication will be misinterpreted.
- If the words do not match the actions of the words then the communication may be misinterpreted.
- If the words do not relate to another's view of what the context should be, then the communication may not be effective.

While not denying the importance of communicating factual task related information, what appears to be of equal importance is the process of communicating. Importantly, the process may contain indirect messages that employees sense and interpret. The outcome of employee perceptions may affect the amount of commitment they are willing to dedicate towards the goals of the organisation.

3.5 Cultural Change Strategies and Commitment

Managers often turn to theory to manage change. For example, Lewin's (1951) change model and Chin and Benne's (1976) change strategies. Importantly, change strategies aim to improve employee commitment. Various methods have been used,

including:

<u>Activity</u>	<u>Type</u>
Briefing groups	Normative re-educative/Empirical rational
Change champions as role models	Normative re-educative
Change agents	Empirical rational/normative re-educative
Quality circles	Empirical rational/normative re-educative
Training and development	Normative re-educative
Redundancy and replacement	Power coercive
Restructuring	Power coercive/empirical rational
Appraisal/performance review	Power coercive/empirical rational/normative educative
New reward systems	Empirical rational

Figure 3.3 Change Strategies and Typology

Over the last two decades in the UK, companies have attempted to persuade employees to be committed to the value of quality and customer service, mainly by the use of re-educative methods. For example, ICL's education programme in the early 1980's (Sparrow and Pettigrew, 1988a, 1988b), British Rails 'Customer-care' and TQM programmes and Lucas TQM programmes (Storey 1992a), and 'Team Building' Grampian Health Authority (Fullerton and Price, 1991). Research by Storey (1992b) sampled fifteen organisations, found that most were engaged in intensive and direct communication with employees as part of wide ranging cultural, structural and personnel strategies. Johns (1995) suggests "organisations adopt ready-made 'solutions' for fear of being left behind. This 'me-tooism' leads inevitably to disillusionment, rejection and eventual death." Armstrong (1996) criticises such programmes as "largely ineffective if they are applied as top-down impositions on a compliant workforce and softened up by videos of the Chairman stating that our people are our greatest asset."

Ray (1986), suggests that senior management see change strategies as an addition to other forms of control which organisations have tried to implement in a direct attempt to enhance employee commitment in order to improve productivity and financial performance. Normally, the programme aim is to achieve employee commitment to those values senior management consider will improve organisational performance. Pettigrew and Whipp (1991) note that unfortunately

when senior management support conventional organisational values and goals, the action tends to encourage employees to believe that in stakeholder terms they are not a major priority. Legge (1995) states, "change becomes problematic if the very instrumentality of the new espoused values act to negate moral dimensions." Employee internalization of the values espoused through change strategies is only likely to result in increased commitment if employees perceive that management are not manipulating and/or bribing them to conform.

Based on case studies of fourteen British companies, including Jaguar, Royal Bank of Scotland, British Steel, Pilkingtons, Rothmans, Schweppes, Ralieg and Burton, Martin and Nicholls (1987) offer three areas which elicit employee commitment:

- * First, employees need a sense of belonging to the organisation. They need to share in the organisations successes, they need to feel involved and kept informed about what the organisation is doing.
- * Second, they need to feel a sense of excitement. This can be achieved by having pride in what they do and their company. It may also be obtained by feeling they are trusted by the organisation and accountable for results which affect the organisations performance.
- * Third, Martin and Nicholls state that a sense of belonging and excitement can be frustrated if employees do not have respect for, and confidence in, management leadership.

Drennan (1989a) provides five definite steps which management must take to improve employee commitment:

1. Employees need to be clear about the direction in which the organisation is going.
2. It is vital that management demonstrate full commitment to carrying out its own goals.
3. Management must spend time and effort on training and retraining for all employees, including those doing the lowliest of jobs.

4. Managers and supervisors must clearly, visibly and constantly communicate information at every level on progress and actual performance against the organisations stated targets.
5. Employees should be given a financial interest in the success of the company.

Martin and Nicholl's and Drennan 'key pillars' and 'definite steps' are cohesive with many of the past and current initiatives initiated by organisations. Nonetheless, they predominantly reflect task related processes and economic imperatives as opposed to behavioural aspects involving social relationships and personal motivational needs and values. What would happen if senior management incorporated consideration for employee attitudes?

Templeton College (1997) interviewed Board level executives from 23 leading multinational companies across several industry sectors. They found that 80 per cent of the more successful companies involved the use of broad 'transformational [balanced] scorecards.' A key aspect of the study, was that organisations should monitor 'soft' areas such as employee behaviour and attitudes. Commenting on the Templeton study, Bird (1997) asserts that transformational leaders need to combine transformational customs with transformational style and process. Reflection suggests that senior management need to build transformational process within their theory-of-action. Better still, design the process in such a way that encourages organisational learning. O'Reilly (1991) provides an incentive to senior management and those interested in conducting field research by suggesting that:

'We need to understand what commitment is and how it is developed. By understanding the underlying psychology of commitment, we can then think about how to design systems to develop such an attachment among employees.'

Walton (1985a) states that "...managers have to choose between a strategy based on imposing control and a strategy based on eliciting commitment." He argues, a commitment strategy is consistent with the continuous recognition of employees as a key stakeholder in an organisation, and it leads to higher levels of performance.

3.6 People Management Style and Commitment

It is no coincidence that three-quarters of IBM's annual training programme for managers concentrates on people management (Bassett, 1986). Furthermore, research commissioned by the National Economic Development Office, citing companies such as ICI Paints, British Airways and H.J. Heinz Co., illustrates how they have seen the development of a more 'open' style of management as an integral part of introducing and promoting employee commitment.

Providing confirmation for much of what has been said about the managerial role in developing commitment, Lundy and Cowling (1990) offer insights into what they perceive to be the characteristics needed in those who manage within the organisation.

- * Commitment is gained through effective leadership which provides guiding values and delegates authority.
- * Commitment comes when people feel involved and valued.
- * Commitment is fostered by two-way communication so everyone knows what is happening and how it will effect them.
- * Commitment is created and reinforced by trust and openness.

3.7 Motivation

It is not the writer's intention to regurgitate conventional and modern motivation theory. Nor to argue the merits and differences between content and process theories. Nonetheless, motivation represents the forces that act on or within a person and can be viewed as "that which causes the person to behave in a specific goal-orientated manner" (Hellriegel et al, 1997). Moreover, motivation affects the similarities and differences that exist in organisation members behaviours. Therefore, consideration of the interface between work motivation, senior management action, and employee commitment is important.

What motivates people is itself a complex subject. Perceived climatic factors may inherently affect employee motivation and commitment. Nevertheless, the importance of well motivated employees is a growing concern. Motivation refers to a psychological process that gives behaviour some direction (Damachi, Shell and

Souder, 1983).

Psychologists often disagree about specific processes to which the term motivation refers. Moreover, often literature seems to draw back from being overly positive, or negative, about the similarities and contrasts between motivation and commitment. Armstrong (1996) comments that “Commitment is a wider concept than motivation and tends to be more stable over a period and less responsive to transitory aspects of an employee’s job.” For example, it is possible that an employee could be highly committed to the organisation while being dissatisfied with the job he or she performs. We can surmise therefore, that motivation and commitment have different time scales. However, this does not discount the notion that satisfied personal motivations within the workplace may substantially contribute to an individual’s overall commitment. Agarwal (1997) makes a strong link between motivation and commitment by suggesting that “most observers consider motivation to be concerned with an individual’s expenditure of effort and energy and a sense of work commitment.” Moreover, Wallace (1997) asserts that the most important determinants for both continuance and affective commitment, is work motivation. He argues that management should therefore seek interventions that assist in motivating employees.

It is not just management that act rationally within their theory-of-action or focus on economic returns. Tolman et al (1946) suggests that individuals do not merely react in behaviourist terms to contingencies within their environment. All employees have the ability to anticipate, evaluate and choose a course of action that will satisfy some needs and values. Employees attempt to control their environment so that their work motivation needs and values receive the best chance that they will be satisfied. The individual can be conceived of as a rational goal seeking entity which processes information and makes decisions in his or her own self-interest (Vroom, 1964; Porter and Lawler, 1968; Campbell and Pritchard, 1976). They maximise their own subjective expected utility (Edwards, 1954). For instance, job applicants are expected to choose their most highly rated organisation for employment (Vroom, 1966; Wanous, 1972; Mitchell and Knudsen, 1973; Lawler et al, 1975). Consequently, in terms of motivations, expectancy, and performance, we expect individual behaviour to relate to outcomes which are perceived by the

individual as the most desirable and probable (Vroom, 1964; Graen, 1969; Campbell and Pritchard, 1976). The most common model of rationality at the individual level has been that of economic or instrumental values. Thus, a probable conflict of interest is established between the interests of the organisation for profits and the individual employee's wish to maximise their pay. Should senior management then accept that their theory-of-action and employee commitment are inherently out of cinque?

Researchers have found support for a relationship between commitment and rewards (Angle, 1983; Angle and Perry, 1981). However, incentives are still focussed on employee pay. All forms of commitment assume instrumental or calculative motivations based upon remuneration. The key distinction being that with affective commitment rewards would go further than instrumental managerial strategies, and would include motivational factors such as achievement, recognition, praise, self-esteem etc. While accepting that money is an incentive to all who have to come to work for a living, reliance on monetary reward is only likely to offset symptoms of organisational ill-health. Blinder (1990) comments that "...it appears that changing the way workers are treated may boost productivity more than changing the way they are paid." Fletcher and Williams (1992) note the complex issues that are connected with motivation of people at work and acknowledge that there is little consistency of viewpoint on the motivating power of money. Their UK study also found that there was a lack of thought and imagination tackling the issue of rewards and recognition. Intrinsic and extrinsic non-financial motivations must be considered (Brief and Aldag, 1980; O'Reilly and Caldwell, 1980). Management need to spend time on behalf of staff to discover why they need to be motivated, what motivates them, and how to motivate them.

It is intriguing for a study which is exploring senior management theory-of-action and employee commitment to compare research appertaining to perceptions of management and workers as to the priority of what motivates workers.

Table 3.1 Motivation: Worker and Manager Perspectives (Couger and Zawacki)

Workers view of workers motivation	Managers view of worker motivation
1. Interesting work	1. Good salary
2. Recognition	2. Security
3. In the know	3. Personal Development
4. Security	4. Working conditions
5. Good salary	5. Interesting work
6. Personal Development	6. Empowerment (discretion)
7. Working conditions	7. Loyalty
8. Loyalty	8. Recognition
9. Social support	9. Social support
10. Empowerment (Discretion)	10. In the know

Couger and Zawacki (1980) utilise common motivational factors to ascertain possible difference in worker/manager perspective. Clearly, their study suggests managers consider safety and instrumental security needs as key to worker motivation. Workers however appear to favour needs more commonly associated with a combination of security, emotional, social, and esteem needs, perhaps best described as a need for self-actualisation (Maslow, 1943). In particular, the motivational factor 'recognition' is conspicuously weighted differently. For example:

Table 3.2 Motivation: Worker and Manager Perspectives (Kovach).

Workers view of workers motivation	Managers view of worker motivation
1. Recognition (1)	1. Good salary (6)
2. Good salary (6)	8. Recognition (1)

Findings by Couger and Zawacki (1980) and Kovach (1987) might indicate managers seek satisfaction from factors different to other employees. For management, pay and security, probably linked to a sense of achievement are crucially important. Other employees see interesting work which could lead to a sense of achievement and recognition as most important. However, more specifically, tables 3.1 and 3.2

provide evidence of a disconnect between manager perception and workers actual work need preferences. Accepting that workers were telling the truth as to the intensity of what motivates them, difference lies with managers interpretation of what motivates workers. Clearly, manager interpretations of worker motivation, at least in the Western World, is probably built on industrial/employee relations whereby trade union/company disputes focussed on, or were settled by, pay bargaining. Constant attention to instrumental issues might have become the norm, and consequently managers concentrate on such issues. The disconnect could explain why senior management might adopt and maintain a 'Model-One' theory-of-action. A consequence being that the importance of emotional and social worker needs might be overlooked. A further consequence might lead to the sub-optimisation of potential employee commitment, organisational performance, and long term competitive advantage.

Goddard (1987) quotes evidence arising from cultural change recognition programmes within Western Electric, Western Airlines, and many of the Fortune 500 companies in the USA. He reports that praise and recognition have been shown to have beneficial effects on productivity. Perhaps recognition of employees assists employees to identify and share organisational values. Sathe (1983) writes:

'People feel a sense of commitment to an organisation's objectives when they identify with those objectives and experience some emotional attachment to them. The shared beliefs and values that compose culture help generate such identification and attachment.'

Source: Sathe (1983, p.6)

The popular excellence literature (Peters and Waterman, 1982; Waterman, 1987; Morgan, 1988; Kanter, 1989) suggests that strong cultures and the possession of particular values contribute to exceptional performance. The notion of 'mutuality' emphasises identity and attachment between company and employee. Newman and Goswell (1995), chief executives of Mercury, support this notion and suggest that "commitment will only take place if it is mutual. If the individual feels genuinely valued by the business, then they will take an immense pride in what they do." However, Quinn et al (1982) raise the issue of the possible conflict between the need for a committed culture of mutuality and the instrumental search for profitability.

It seems clear that each motivational factor is in some direct or indirect way under the control of senior management. Moreover, the factors are strongly influenced by the theory-of-action senior management adopt. Ogilvie (1986) reports that there is a positive relationship between good human resource management (HRM) practices and commitment to the organisation. People policy, procedures and practices link well with senior management responsibilities. Moreover, HRM policy is also associated with employee recognition, pay, personal development etc, it can be viewed as the people management product of senior management theory-of-action.

De Bono (1973) in his book 'Children Solve Problems' suggests that many years of formal education often affect our ability to think. Conscious of the need to think laterally and imaginatively about the thesis topic, the writer asked his young son what it was that his parents do that makes him try so hard at school. His reply was simply that he tries hard because we show we care about him and what he does. Is this analogy an illustration of 'moral glue'? We could hypothesise that if senior management are considerate of the workforce within their theory-of-action, it seems likely that employees will have confidence in senior management and become more committed to the organisation. My son's commitment seems inherently associated with a motivational need for being valued. This is a basic need and perhaps supercedes all the motivational factors listed in tables 3.1 and 3.2.

A key conclusion emanating from the Hawthorne Lighting experiment (Mayo, 1949) was that employee motivation had increased by making the workers feel noticed or perhaps even special. One important aspect of the experiment which has to date been generally acknowledged but poorly researched relates to senior management involvement. It was senior management who had taken the trouble to explain the experiment to the employee's involved in the study. Their theory-of-action would have communicated to employees that they were important, involved, recognised, and considered.

Evans (1996) comments that "if the individual needs of employees are satisfied then corporate needs of an organisation will be equally satisfied", he adds "...its as simple and as complicated as that."

3.8 Employee and Organisational Values

Chapter two introduced the issue of organisational values and attempted to clarify senior management values. The following short section considers employee values and commitment.

Value can be defined as the worth, desirability, or utility of a thing, or the qualities on which these depend. Our values act as guidance systems, and form a key element of an individual's theory-of-action. Values relate to what an individual would normally render important. Value from this standpoint is not simply useful and has estimable worth but is something that an individual puts a high value on obtaining.

Several authors consider work values as important variables in explaining organisational commitment (Kidron, 1978; Putti et al, 1989). Moreover, according to Werkmeister (1967), commitment is a manifestation of the individual's own self, and reflects value standards that are basic to the individual's existence as a person. Kidron (1978) found a moderate relationship between work values and employee commitment.

Pennings (1970) defines work values as constellations of attitudes and opinions with which individual's evaluate their jobs and work environments. Herzberg et al (1956) considered work values as representing motivational aspects, i.e. motivators and hygiene factors. Other authors see work values as representing protestant work ethics (Furnham, 1984).

Some authors suggest a distinction between values and attitudes (Rokeach, 1973), while Levy and Guttman (1976) consider values as a subset of attitudes with an emphasis on the concept of importance. Attitudes give people a basis for expressing their values. For example, a manager who believes strongly in the work ethic will tend to voice attitudes towards specific individuals or work practices as a means of reflecting value. Attitudes help to supply standards and frames of reference that allow people to organize and explain the world around them. No matter how accurate a person's view of reality is, attitudes towards people, events, and objects help the individual make sense out of what is going on. Importantly, attitudes are

formed by means of reference to individual value systems, and they help employees adjust to their environment.

3.8.1 Values in Equilibrium

Chapter two focussed on the conventional importance of managerial economics. However, in value terms, organisations mean different things to different people who use them and work in them. For example, organisations may symbolise money or profit; order and stability; security and protection; as a means of obtaining status, prestige, self-esteem and self confidence, or power, authority and control; meaning, relevance and purpose. Nonetheless, owners urge employees adopting the role of a manager to be agents and stewards of the organisation. A senior manager will be ushered to estimate the worth of certain organisational aspects. In so doing he or she is likely to behave in a way which reflects organisations goals and values. In this circumstance, personal values and organisational values may co-exist or be in conflict. If conflicting values exist, norms may provide management with informal guidelines on how to behave. Norms are unwritten rules of behaviour. They influence what we do, say, believe and even wear.

It may be worth remembering that organisations do not have goals. Only people have goals. Senior managers decide objectives and attempt to get others to agree with them by calling them 'organisational goals', but they are still the goals of people who determined them in the first place. It seems that many human problems of organisation might be explained as conflict between individual human values and needs, and the constraints imposed on individuals in the interests of the organisations collective purpose.

Ouchi (1981), Pascale and Athos (1981) confirm that the best way to motivate people is to get their full commitment to the values of the organisation. In addition to urging employees to accept the values of the organisation, it is also possible that shared values and meanings may have a positive integrative effect (Janis, 1972; Shrivastava, 1985; Coopey and Hartley, 1991). Armstrong (1991) confirms this general principle but adds "...the importance of shared values will become increasingly recognized. The emphasis will be on gaining commitment by using the hearts and minds approach to managing people."

Kelly's (1955a) view of 'being' is that people act as scientists. People attempt to discover the reality of their environment and the truth of each situation by formulating theories, hypotheses and values. From this standpoint, employees committed behaviour to the organisation, or senior management belief in what has been termed conventional theory-of-action, result from individual assessment of their environment. Clearly, organisational groupings may share similar beliefs and attitudes. Kelly's 'principle of commonality' confirms this notion. He suggests that constructs are often shared. There may be a natural and social overlap in construct systems "to the extent that one person employs a construction of experience which is similar to that employed by another, his/her processes [and the work values that might arise...the writers interpretation] are psychologically similar to those of another person" (Kelly, 1955b). Commonality and sociality are promoted by direct pressures on us to see the world in the same way as others. This process can become ingrained into the culture of organisations. Moreover, the process may lead to organisations splitting into groups who share the same position on shared values of organisational life. Commonly, different value systems may separate employees at different levels within the organisation.

Analysis suggests that theory-in-use is a likely product of values and attitudes held by the individual. Moreover, the intensity of an employee's commitment may relate to the degree of cohesion between the individual employee's adopted theory-of-action in relation to an influential other's theory-of-action. One can suspect that if an individual perceives that influential 'others' consider their needs and values then it is likely that their theory-of-action will respond favourably. This notion would suggest that congruent values-in-action are likely to result in committed behaviour. Conversely, values-in-action in disequilibrium may result in less committed behaviour - or simple compliance.

3.9 Conclusion

Literature review and research findings in this chapter assisted and widened debate while providing an opportunity for analysis as to similarities and contrasts. Absolute proof about the linkages between commitment and possible antecedents and consequences was not sought. Nonetheless, certain conclusions are possible:

- (A) Attitudinal or affective commitment, similar to normative commitment, has been found to be one of the most important determinants of commitment (Cotton and Tuttle, 1986; Mottaz, 1989; Mowday et al, 1982; Price and Mueller, 1986). While it is difficult to separate dimensions related to continuance and affective forms of commitment, clearly, senior management desire committed responses more closely related to affective commitment. Moreover, affective commitment in a democratic society is a much more acceptable notion than resigned behavioural compliance.
- (B) Analysis of literature appertaining to antecedents and consequences of employee commitment provided a foundation for field work.
- (C) Employee satisfaction is likely to be key to understanding what employees perceive affects their commitment to their organisation.
- (D) Senior management are involved in all aspects associated with employee satisfaction. Satisfaction, in terms of work motivations and the basic need for acknowledgement may link senior management theory-of-action to employee commitment.
- (E) Senior management and employee work motivations may hold different positions of importance.
- (F) Communication may be crucial to instilling confidence and reciprocal commitment from employees (Reeves, 1980; Edwards, 1987). The most significant communications relating to employee perceptions will be those that receive constant reinforcement over time. Communicative signals of an intentionally educative nature such as cultural change strategies will influence perceptions. However, more intentionally covert signals may have an impact on employee perceptions and commitment to the company. For example, what senior managers demonstrate as important to the organisation by means of their theory-of-action.

Senior managers are interested in sustaining and improving affective commitment

because its focus is on future work effort and not simple employee compliance associated with side-bets and a lack of employment alternatives. Literature strongly supports the view that employee affective commitment is associated with employee satisfaction, and work satisfaction is linked to work motivational factors. Analysis of employee satisfaction and motivational factors in relation to employee commitment would provide a foundation for analysis.

According to Argyris and Schon (1974, 1978), a person's theory-of-action determines all deliberate behaviour. An organisation's corporate theory-of-action contains the determinates by which senior management manage their organisation. More specifically, observation of theory-of-action, best termed theory-in-use, might specify the variables used that senior management are interested in and to which they give priority. Importantly, the result or outcome which senior management desire is inherently connected to organisational norms, priorities, assumptions, beliefs, and values. Moreover, theory-of-action is embedded in decision members take on behalf of the organisation, and decisions are governed by collective rules for decision. Additionally, the decision making process appears key to the communication of senior management theory-of-action to employees. Analysis of such organisational aspects would therefore clarify senior management theory-in-action and employee reaction to same.

The association between employee commitment and senior management theory-of-action can therefore be explored by analysing factors related to work satisfaction which might affect overall employee commitment and which are linked to the actions of senior management. Comparing the intensity or impact of each factor may assist understanding as to the importance and relevance of senior management theory-of-action on employee commitment.

3.10 Literature: Key Issues

The general purpose of literature review is to help ensure that no important aspects are ignored that had in the past been found to have had an impact on the identified problem/questions.

Analysis of literature in chapters two and three support the view that compared

with more conventional motivational factors, senior management employee related action is likely to be associated with employee commitment. Moreover, the adoption of what has been termed conventional 'Model-One' theory-of-action by senior management may adversely affect employee commitment.

Key issues emerged from the literature review:

- A) Employees values, needs and interpretations of their company are likely to be affected by the aspects that senior management utilise as part of their theory-of-action.
- B) Priorities and values used within senior management theory-of-action can be noted within the decisions senior management take that have impact on employees.
- C) Literature suggests that in general terms senior management may concentrate on quantitative profit related and technical organisational aspects and give less credence to qualitative people/process issues. Such considerations seem key to what can be termed conventional senior management theory-of-action.
- D) Important aspects are likely to be associated with the interconnection between senior management theory-of-action and employee commitment. Involved in the process are, senior management attitudes and leadership style, the organisational climate, and employee motivation.

Literature has been found to be helpful in analysing, comparing, and structuring the probable key association of the study. Directionality in addition to association has been considered. However, previous research findings and continued debate, especially that which is related to commitment and several probable antecedents and consequences urge caution. Nonetheless, the notion that senior management theory-of-action has the propensity to restrain or promote employee commitment seems to hold a fair degree of face validity.

The following chapter describes method to test-out the theoretical framework.

3.11 References:

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CHAPTER 4

Methodology

Methodology

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Methodology

4.0 Introduction

This chapter describes method to test the association between senior manager theory-of-action and employee commitment to the company, and whether the adoption by senior management of what has been termed conventional theory-of-action adversely affects employee commitment.

4.1 Why Field Research is Important

There are two general justifications for field research. First, that it may assist in bringing about much needed organisational change, and second, research will benefit society, or science. Ideally, research can encompass both justifications. A statement by Zimbardo (1985) captures the writer's approach:

" My feeling is that if you really believe in your research and your discipline then you have to go beyond being a researcher and a theorist; you actually have to go out to the people in question because they don't read our journals."

4.1.1 Conceptualisation

'Research is a systematic and organized effort to investigate a specific problem that needs a solution.'

Source: Sekaran (1992a p.3)

Experience intuitively suggested that the broad problem of gaining optimum employee commitment seemed partially due to senior managements lack of consideration for the workforce. It was predicted that consideration by senior management would be extrinsically communicated by means of the aspects or values senior management take into account during decision. Moreover, decision is likely to be guided by what Argyris and Schon (1974) describe as a persons theory-of-action. Figure 4.1 illustrates the hypothesised 'leads-to' association.

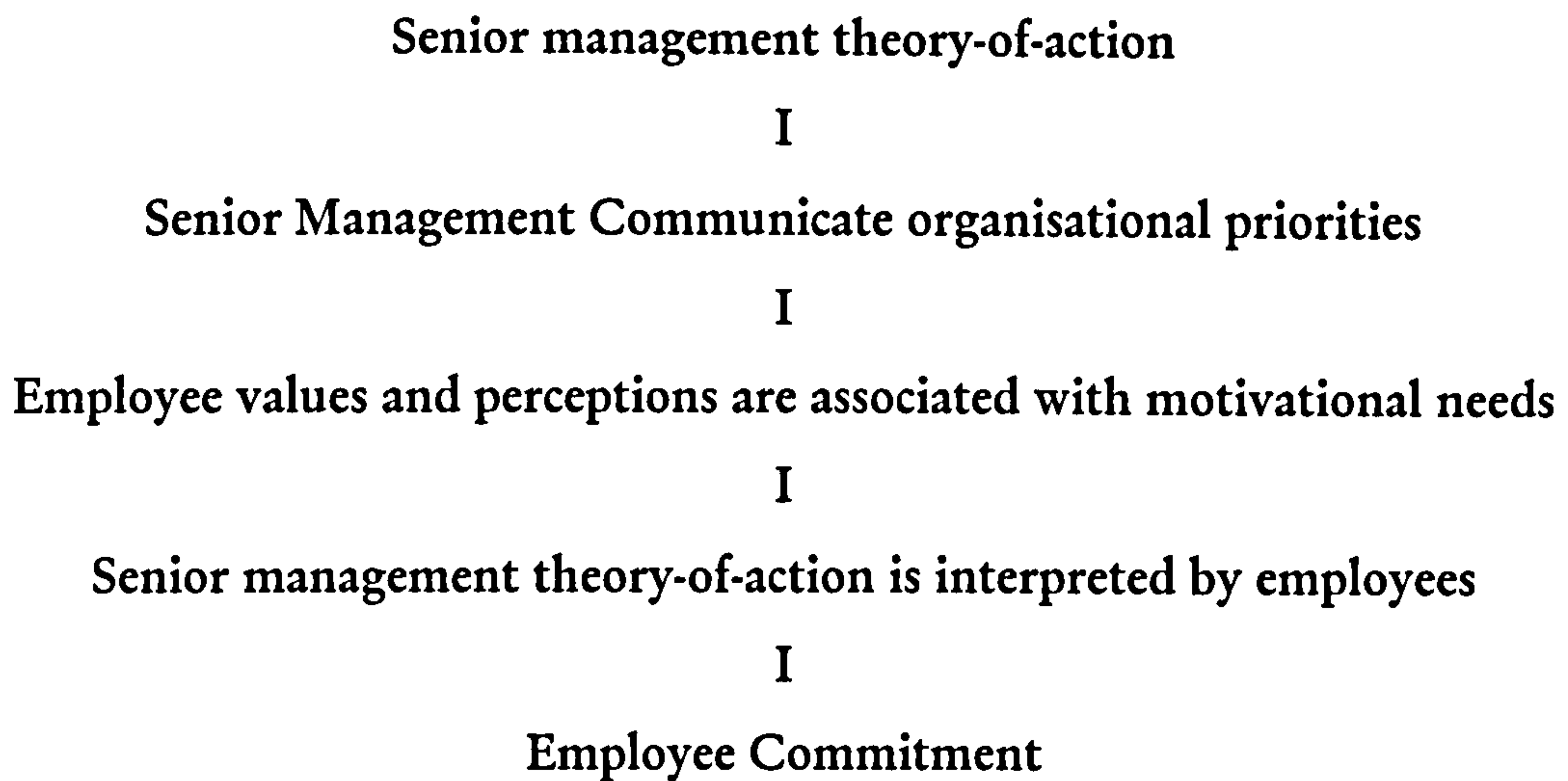


Figure 4.1 Hypothetical Association Between Senior Management Theory-of-action and Employee Commitment

4.2 The Complexity of People

Mullins (1993a) defines organisational behaviour as concerned with 'understanding, predicting and controlling behaviour'. Luthans (1995) replaces 'controlling' with 'management' of organisational behaviour. However, some observers argue that the human element in any organisation is just too complex and unpredictable to control and manage. "The absence of absolutes in the so-called science of human behaviour gives rise to a profound respect for people's complexity." (Hardingham, 1998). Such a view would have implications for a manager about the style, values and theory-of-action he or she adopts. It would also have implications for the researcher wishing to gain a better understanding of social behaviour in organisations.

Behavioural psychology is a discipline with hardly any absolutes. However, in contrast to accepting that people are unpredictable, it seems sensible to consider that human behaviour can be 'generally' predicted (Eysenck, 1953; Tolman et al, 1946; Peters and Austin, 1985; Storey, 1992).

4.2.1 Research Design Choices

Initially, design choice between laboratory studies and naturalistic field studies seemed clear-cut. For example, if a researcher wants to make causal statements

about the link between two factors then control seems essential. A positivistic approach would also allow for research findings to be re-tested. They can also provide a degree of objectivity.

'Positivism properties should be measured through objective methods, rather than being inferred subjectively through sensation, reflection or intuition.'

Source: Easterby-Smith et al (1991b, p.22)

However, research that aims to provide practical recommendations may need to attempt to get at the reasoning that goes on in people's heads, which produces their behaviour. However, Hyman (1955) comments "There is not a research model that can display, nor research designs that can reveal and predict, the workings of behavioural processes" (Hyman, 1955).

4.2.2 Employee Behaviour and Experimental Method

Some researchers (Gray, 1981; Watson, 1930) favour treating the study of people and their behaviour as a science. It could be suggested that the difference between one science and another turn on the nature of the observations made. Chemists make observations on molecules, Physicists on atoms, and Psychologists make observations principally on behaviour. The basic assumption is that people behaviour can be manipulated and predicted in the same way as physical objects. The natural science paradigm makes two claims: that behaviour can be determined, and that, given enough resources, discovering all the causes of behaviour is possible. Thoughts and emotions that affect employee motivation and commitment may be difficult to predict but according to the natural science paradigm, they are in principle predictable.

4.2.3 Types of Scientific Method

There are two scientific approaches. First, the findings of pure research perhaps culminating in a broad theory can be subjected to laboratory testing. Second, we can conceive of research being guided by, and operating within, a framework of scientific method. Adoption of the latter method involves clear descriptions of problems, the formation of alternative hypothesis, and the testing of hypotheses.

However, employee commitment is a part of human behaviour, and behaviour is multifaceted and multi-causal.

In multi-causal models, the several causal factors may be independent or be interrelated. When trying to disentangle problems of causality many associations or correlations can be found, but of themselves these correlations are not proof of causality. To establish causality with any degree of certainty is difficult; to establish association is often easier but leaves one to speculate about causality. However, striving for evidence of causality is not always appropriate. First, research time is a finite resource. Second, sufficient proof is unlikely to be gained. Third, there are some areas of research that should not wait until proof emerges. In such cases, practical interim solutions may be appropriate given that strong associations are supported. Association patterns can give a strong hint about causality though the cause remains unknown in absolute terms. The chosen research methodology reflects this view.

4.2.4 Qualitative Research

If people can make individual choices, then it can be argued that human behaviour becomes essentially unpredictable, the antithesis of the experimental paradigm. Consequently, rather than using a scientific paradigm alone in an attempt to explain the cause of employee commitment, the researcher may also describe and attempt to understand the accounts people give of their own experiences and their reasons for acting as they do.

Wundt (1879) suggested that psychology is the science of consciousness. During Wundt's research, people who acted as observers of life were requested to introspect about sensations and feelings, and to report these as accurately as they could. Thus, making the contents of the mind known to the researcher. A concern for an individual's personal conscious experience characterises humanistic approaches to understanding personality. This theory can be described as phenomenological and existential. For example, the approach emphasises the individual's subjective view of their reality and focuses on the 'here and now'. From this perspective, the important issue is understanding the person's point of view in a dynamic 'everyday'

manner. Roger's (1951) person centred approach depicts this. The researcher is interested in an individual's private world. The researcher might simply wish to 'listen' to the significance employees attach to their experiences.

Perceptions are founded from an extremely complex 'stream of consciousness' which has been formed within a social context (Rogers, 1951). A humanistic psychologist will attempt to tap this inner source of data. Kelly's (1955) Personal Construct Theory (PCT) is concerned with how an individual comes to construe their world. PCT is often associated with repertory grid technique (Woodall and Winstanley, 1998). Repertory grid is an instrument for identifying and illustrating the structure of an individual's repertoire of constructs. Importantly, the technique is built on the assumption that personal constructs determine the way we behave or view one another's behaviour. It therefore seemed to be a natural progression to use PCT in an attempt to examine what cues in the employees working environment are helping or hindering high commitment to the organisation.

Easterby Smith et al (1991c) suggest that understanding of philosophical issues is very useful to a researcher for the following reasons:

- . It can help to clarify research designs.
- . It can help the researcher to recognise which design will work and which will not.
- . It can help the researcher identify or create that which may be outside his/her past experience.

Importantly, they also state that:

Failure to think through philosophical issues...while not necessarily fatal, can seriously affect the quality of management research'

Source: Easterby-Smith et al (1991a, p.21)

Qualitative enquiry has major strengths and weaknesses:

Strengths

1. It uses researchers multiple sensations and holistic appreciation of 'what is going on'. The use of quantitative design could lead to the exclusion of important variables, or concentrate on too few variables. Generally, findings could be right enough to be dangerously wrong.
2. Answers emerge through people talking about their individual perceptions of their experience.
3. Qualitative inquiry encompasses the human approach. Given the researcher's ability to establish a trusting relationship the narrative may embody and reflect 'real' employee perceptions.
4. The use of depth interviews allows observation as to body language and other nonverbal messages. Nonverbal signals may contradict or confirm written responses.
5. Questionnaires elicit quantitative data. However, subjects may inadvertently misinterpret variables. A check on interpretation seems vital.
6. Open questioning may precipitate stories. Just as a picture can tell a story, a story can help in uncovering the true 'meaning' of employee perceptions.
7. The approach allows the identification of recurrent patterns and commonalities. An idiographic approach is generally accepted as the approach to adopt during qualitative inquiry. Nevertheless, certain human aspects are often shared among certain workgroups. Recurrent patterns may suggest differing organisational and/or subgroup perspectives.

Weaknesses

1. There is potential for researcher bias. This can occur through the use of: leading questions, loaded questions, oversimplified interpretation of responses etc. Despite all good intention one may never be entirely free from bias.
2. Qualitative inquiry relies heavily on anecdotal evidence.
3. The method is not easily comparable across settings. This is both a strength and a weakness. It is a strength in that it allows for rich information. It is a weakness in that the similarity and comparison of idiographic data across different organisations are both impractical and perhaps counter productive.
4. The researcher can generate too much data. This can lead to difficulties in analysis.
5. Qualitative research methods are open to the main disadvantage of subjectivity.

Understanding individuals in this way can be very satisfying to the researcher. However, researchers who wish to include subjective experience as legitimate data are often content to achieve understanding alone. Other researchers believe that such investigation is of limited value other than a starting point for research.

What may emerge from existential inquiry, are singular individual perceptions which differ in terms of focus, cause and effect. Idiographic in nature, such findings add value to study but they often prevent generalised conclusions. However, it is also possible for research to unveil more similarities than differences arising from peoples accounts. Similarities may lead one to surmise that generalisable conclusions could be asserted.

4.2.5 Level of Analysis

There is a number of possible levels of analysis. However, researchers who study

behaviour will continue to debate the most appropriate level of analysis to adopt. The most naturally scientific area of psychology is that of biology. Biological descriptions of behaviour infer that all behaviour can be explained in terms of heredity and physiological functions. For example, that the level of commitment showed by any one employee is a product of their biological form, their genes and the way their body functions. For some, biology provides most if not all the answers to the fundamental question of behaviour. Whilst not detracting from the likelihood that biological factors may influence individual employees who may be more or less predisposed to a certain level of commitment, we must not preclude social interactions from the possible associations related to employee commitment. Indeed, it is the social interaction between senior management action and employee commitment which is the focus of this work.

Another equally influential version of the scientific deterministic model takes almost the opposite tack. This approach suggests that external events are responsible for all learned behaviour. Here a nurture approach is preferred. This would prompt the researcher to accept that events in the organisational environment - that is, observable inputs (stimuli - causes) and observable outputs (responses - effects) are the only admissible scientific data. It is quite conceivable to suppose that an employee's conscious awareness allows them to interpret what is happening to them. Consequently, if cognitive processes influence behaviour, we must apply research method that helps understand peoples cognition.

The idea of mental representations is ubiquitous in psychology. It is generally accepted that people cannot function intelligently without a mental life in the form of cognitional representations of the physical and social world that surrounds them. Without an internalised model stored in memory, we cannot benefit from experience or formulate expectations about what is likely to happen next. Much of what we think of as mental life is concerned, not just with the privacy of our own thoughts, but with representations of other people and ourselves in relation to others. Organisations socialise employees through overt and covert organisational culture, internalised models therefore include what is done to us and what we do to others. What we attend to and remember will be used by us as a

representation upon which our behaviour is determined. Behaviour in organisations may therefore be rooted in the culture of the organisation and the perceived expectations we have about the way we should behave and the way others should behave towards us. From this point of view the researcher's function should involve method which assists subjects to recall their perceptions of past experience.

It seems probable that the culture of the organisation may prevent or enhance employee commitment. In most organisations the *corporate* culture is a key influence. The researcher defines this as 'that which is demonstrably asserted by senior influential people by means of their theory-of-action.'

Psychologists may wish to analyse perceptions from the level of the individual, social psychologists may wish to study at the level of the interactions between people and groups. It seems important when examining the association between senior management theory-of-action and employee commitment that field research should concentrate on factors used by management when formulating their decisions. Research would also need to explore the perceptions of employees values, and motivational needs and goals which management decision may affect. Nevertheless, a tension exists between explanations at the individual level, for example values, motivation etc., and at a social level, for example the interaction and communication between differing organisational social groups, for instance senior management and shop-floor workers. Fortunately, consideration of methods used by developmental psychologists assisted cohesion.

Developmental psychologists simultaneously attempt to focus on individual perceptions and to describe the way in which this development operates in the framework of society. Field research method must therefore focus upon the framework of organisational society, i.e. employee motivations and the decisions made by organisational leaders as a backdrop to understanding individual employee perception of the organisation.

4.2.6 Observational Method

Watson considered that a science of psychology should be based exclusively on

public data (Cohen, 1979). Data derived from direct observations made by one or more observers. Thus, observable behaviour is verifiable by means of comparison with other observers interpretations of the same behaviour.

With regard to senior management theory-of-action, the most appropriate method of data collection might be participant observation. Here the researcher could observe the behaviour of senior managers in their normal meeting place. Nevertheless, listening to managers discussion and interpreting what organisational aspects they are taking into account during their decisions seems unscientific.

However, in defence of participant observation, Marsh while studying how football fans behave comments that the 'story should speak for itself.....it is both intelligible and meaningful to anyone prepared to give it the attention it deserves' (Marsh, 1978). Perhaps studying behaviour in the Boardroom is no less meaningful than studying behaviour on the terraces.

4.2.7 Using Questionnaires

Attitude surveys use many data collection methods (Oppenheim, 1992). However, questionnaires may offer the best method of obtaining relatively objective data.

- * They provide self-assessment thereby allowing individuals to assess the way they believe they behave in certain circumstances.
- * Rating scales allow respondents the opportunity to make discriminations in relation to the items considered.
- A clear distinction can be made between different people's responses to the same item.

4.3 Ecological Considerations

The above considerations suggest that there are several different methods for studying people perceptions and values. Berkowitz (1989) states that it is not of prime importance for research to mirror life outside the laboratory. Others will just as strongly argue that, without the natural 'contamination' of normal human social life which includes working in organisations, the phenomenon being studied

loses all meaning.

If the setting for experiment is contrived and artificial, then the chance of people behaving the same way in a laboratory setting as they do within the organisation can be questioned. Method should not be removed from natural occurrences which arise whilst working within a company environment.

4.3.1 Contamination

Silverman and Schulman (1970) suggest that doing experimental work with humans is like doing chemistry with dirty test tubes. In experiments with humans, the contaminants are the needs, motives, values and expectations of the people participating in the research wherever it is conducted. Such contaminants are the very focus of this thesis. However, individuals participating in research do not take part like blank slates ready to do tasks without questioning them. For example, if employees are requested to fill in a questionnaire about their commitment to the organisation, they may perceive it as in their interests to answer in a particular way. In support of this claim, Orne (1962) has argued that people taking part in research act in very much the same way as anyone placed in a novel situation. People characteristically search for meaning and order in their environments. When they are in a new situation they are especially looking for clues about what is going on, how they are supposed to behave, and perhaps what is the consequence of behaving and answering in a certain way. We therefore cannot rely on people being totally truthful in any experimental situation (Ring et al, 1970). Moreover, Rosenberg (1969) states that when people take part in research, “subjects are concerned to appear in the best possible light and be judged favourably.” However, if subjects see the applied method as meaningful while feeling fully involved, the research process can be said to have experimental realism.

Ultimately, all the researcher can do is establish a good relationship with subjects, actively listen and make careful notes, and attempt to draw out as complete an account as possible giving weight to all the reasons a person might offer for their behaviour

4.4 Field Research: A Combined Approach

The purpose of the study is to gain knowledge about the study area. It could therefore be described as basic or fundamental. However, field research in the next chapter might correctly be labelled applied research or applied learning. Whyte (1991) comments that applied research is not only scientifically legitimate, but is also at the core of scientific progress.

The nature of the study depends on the stages of advancement of knowledge in the research area (Sekaran, 1992d). While accepting that rigour should be applied to whatever method is used, design decisions are likely to become more rigorous as knowledge about the subject area increases. Many ideas included under the broad heading of organisational behaviour and occupational psychology are in practical terms in their infancy (Gray, 1981). This submission is no exception.

The theoretical framework adopted in this study is at two levels. First, compared with more conventional motivational factors, it is argued that senior management employee related action is strongly associated with employee commitment. Second, the study asserts that the adoption of what is termed conventional 'Model-One' theory-of-action (Argyris and Schon, 1974) by senior management adversely affects employee commitment.

Research question (1) asks, 'Are employee related actions by senior management strongly associated with employee commitment?' The null hypothesis would apply if when compared with more conventional motivational factors, employee related action by senior management has no significant affect on employee commitment. A follow-on question (1a) asks, 'if employee related action by senior management is strongly associated with employee commitment, can the actions most likely responsible for adversely affecting employee commitment be identified?' How might these questions be addressed?

Research highlighted within literature can be seen as either exploratory in nature, or descriptive, and/or conducted to test hypotheses. While some studies offer essential support, nevertheless, the association between senior management theory-

of-action and employee commitment requires further exploration. Peoples perceptions will be studied. Thus, research is classed as descriptive, inasmuch as the study wishes to gain a good understanding of the variables related to the study area.

Methodology generally falls into either a positivistic or phenomenological approach. However, researchers use designs that incorporate 'both sides of the picture' (Easterby-Smith et al, 1991d). Quantitative method would allow the researcher to order the varying perspectives and experiences of employees by using 'several predetermined response categories to which numbers would be assigned' (Patton, 1990a). The approach would provide an analytical foundation and has the advantage of helping to ensure that inquiry is appropriately focussed. The overall view that emerged was that the study should continuously attempt to conform to the hallmarks of scientific research but should not be restrained by it. In favour of adopting a qualitative method were, the advantage of exploring experiences, uncovering deeply held perceptions, opinions, feelings and knowledge. The society for the employee is the organisation. Studying employees own reasons for their behaviour enables researchers to explore the relations and the associations between what employees do in their organisation and the influence of their organisational social context. People's view of their organisational world still remains part of a more humanistic and phenomenological 'meaning and agency' internal approach.

Using both quantitative and qualitative data collection method would help compare and contrast interacting variables involved within the social interface between senior management and other employees. Qualitative enquiry and the use of Personal Construct Theory would help clarify key constructs used by people to describe their commitment and the social interaction that enhances or subdues same. Key constructs could be assembled. Statistical inferences could then be made inasmuch as they could be seen as generally accurate. The application of statistical analysis would serve as a means to interpret the world of employees. However, numbers may only capture part of the truth. The researcher would need to challenge the results and the interpretation they may point to. Field research would need to return to qualitative enquiry. Constructs and results of analytic survey could be validated by qualitative means.

Research question 2 asks, 'is employee commitment adversely affected by senior management adoption of conventional economic-rational theory-of-action?' The null hypothesis reads 'The adoption of conventional theory-of-action by senior management has no significant affect on employee commitment.'

Chapter two examined theory-of-action as used by Argyris and Schon (1974, 1978), and discussed the senior management role. Theory-of-action is "embedded in decisions that makers take on behalf of the organisation" (Argyris and Schon, 1974a). Theory-of-action specifies which variables a person or group of decision makers might be interested in. "Decisions will be governed by collective rules for decision, the norms, values, strategies and assumptions embedded in company practice and policy" (Argyris and Schon, 1974a). Together they constitute a theory-of-action implicit in company management, "An organisation is a theory-of-action, a cognitive enterprise undertaken by individual members." (Argyris and Schon, 1978a). Clearly, monitoring and recording the type and characteristics of senior management decision taken as agents of the enterprise would be vital data. However, as suggested in the previous chapter, while monitoring provides a vehicle for data collection, it does not clarify what aspects, dialogue or processes the researcher should monitor.

However, chapter two described characteristics of economic-rationalism. It also gave details from literature relating to what Argyris and Schon (1974 & 1978) entitled their 'Model-One' theory-of action. Figure 4.2 provides a summary. The enterprise and its decision makers will wish to:

1. Win not lose.
2. Be non-emotional and make rational decisions.
3. Make decision based on an achievement orientation.

Figure 4.2 Summary of 'Model-One' Theory-of-action (Argyris and Schon, 1974, 1978)

'Model-One' characteristics provide guidance. Importantly, they provide general

behavioural/personality characteristics of people operating from a 'Model-One' theory-of-action. Argyris and Schon (1978b) also comment on a key building block that might lead to the use of 'Model-One' theory-of-action. They termed it instrumental and global theory-of-action. Within it are norms for corporate performance, profit, return on investment etc. Artifacts of 'Global Theory-of-Action' were also described and discussed under the heading of economic-rationalism in chapter two. Argyris and Schon's criticism of 'Model-One' theory-of-action fit well as for probable adverse affects of applying a too stringent economic-rational management approach.

Unfortunate for the researcher, a corporation's global theory-of-action may not be explicit. Formal corporate documents often reflect what senior management espouse rather than their theory-of-action. Nonetheless, case studies illustrating possible conflict between espouse theory and theory-of-action are supplied by Argyris and Schon in their book 'Organisational Learning: A Theory of Action Perspective, 1978). Importantly, their case study work shows that the characteristics of theory-of-use, and possible conflict between espoused theory and theory-of-action can be monitored and observed. Therefore, as for clarifying the priorities senior management use as part of their theory-of-use, data collection would need to distinguish between management concentration on performance and profit related indicators, and consideration for process and people related aspects. Examining the Company Mission/Vision statements would then provide information as to senior management espoused theory. Analysis would clarify whether senior managements espouse theory and their theory-in-use were coherent or contained conflicts.

Consequently, method to clarify senior management theory-of-action and help address question 2 would incorporate a three-way approach that could be verified by cross referencing findings from each approach. First, self-assessed personality profiles might be used to identify personal characteristics of senior managers operating in a senior management role. Of particular interest would be self-assessment of traits associated with a 'Model-One' theory-of-action, such as emotional-logic, achievement orientation, competitiveness, decisiveness etc. Second,

observation of decision making forums which have ecological validity would provide data about what priorities senior management promote during their decision making process. Third, the recipients of senior management theory-of-action could be asked for their comments and perceptions as to what their management and organisation see as important. The Company mission statement could also be used to explore possible difference between espoused and actual senior management theory-in-use.

In summary, to assist researcher confidence and test the validity of findings, neither a stand-alone descriptive nor analytical design would suffice. Both designs have their merit. To assist cohesion the scientific-practitioner model was adopted.

The scientific-practitioner model can be summarised as producing a method which can be described through four features. These features have been adapted from Shapiro's (1985) work on the scientific application of clinical psychology:

- (A) Continuous and critical assimilation of the relevant general and critical literature in order to build a model in an iterative manner which can exercise research data.
- (B) A holistic awareness of the total context of organisational influences on individual and group dysfunctions.
- (C) A critical scientific eclecticism in the selection of explanations for the object of study.
- (D) Critical attention to the effects of the researcher's own conscious and subconscious wishes and emotional needs.

In relation to this study the model had key advantages:

1. The assumptions arising from field research could be utilised iteratively as findings emerged.

2. The model allows for continuous assessment of both idiographic (individual) and nomothetic (general and collective) data and the evaluation of assessment.
3. The researcher could take a broad view of the context of the organisation as seen by the players and their perception of employee commitment.
4. The researcher is forced to re-examine assumptions repeatedly, including the researcher's own preconceptions, needs, prejudices and moral attitudes. This was seen as a vital element to subdue the writer's preference for a particular outcome.

4.5 Research Design: Planning

Working within a scientific-practitioner framework, field research was centred around a diagnostic plan. The overriding questions requiring research were:

1. What explanations do employees provide to explain their level of commitment to the organisation?
2. Does employee commitment stem in part from individual motivation?
3. Can the various motivational factors of employees be explored to discover the extent each motivational factor has upon commitment?
4. Given reasonable confidence in the results, is it feasible to consider which motivational factors relate to senior management theory-of-action?
5. Do findings suggest senior management are using conventional theory-of-action?
6. Is employee commitment adversely affected by senior management use of conventional theory-of-action?

The following steps were identified:

1. Establish by means of applying Personal Construct Theory reasons why employees feel more or less committed to their organisation.
2. Choose an analytical item base for measuring organisational commitment.
3. Construct item banks for independent variables.
4. Establish priority aspects contained within senior management theory-of-action.
5. Test employee organisational commitment to see if correlations exist as to independent variables.
6. Test to find the degree of effect of each identified factor upon employee commitment.
7. Analyse data to ascertain which factors relate to senior management theory-of-action.
8. In addition to quantitative analysis, use a phenomenological approach to help verify correlations and add richness to data.

The extent of this research plan was daunting and time consuming but was regarded as essential to provide a reasonable degree of confidence as to probable associations.

4.5.1 Research Design - Timing

The following diagram was adapted from Sekaran's building blocks of science in hypothetico-deductive research (Sekaran, 1992b). It illustrates how the research developed in relation to depth interviews. The diagram is shown in linear form although the process contained iterative qualities.

Prior to depth interviews:

<u>Process</u>	<u>Timing</u>
Experiential observation of a problem	Pre-study
Preliminary data gathering	Pre-study
Identification of the problem area	Year 1
Identification of researcher's own subjective values	Year 1
Overall definition of the problem	Year's 1 & 2
Literature and discussion to develop a theoretical framework	Year's 1 & 2

During depth interviews:

Development of respondent constructs	Year 2
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Following depth interviews:

Generation of hypotheses	Year 2
Research design	Year 2
Data collection (including observation & personality profiling)	Year's 2 & 3
Analysis, deduction and interpretation of data	Year's 2, 3 & 4
Writing Up	Year's 4 & 5

Figure 4.3 The Building Blocks and Timing of Hypothetico-deductive Research as Related to Depth Interviews

The following sections provide specific detail as to the researchers approach to testing.

4.5.2 Interviews

The Concise Oxford English Dictionary (1991) defines interviewing as:

'Meetings of persons face to face, especially for purposes of consultation'.

Patton (1990b) suggests that in qualitative interviewing there is an assumption that the perspective of others is meaningful, knowable and able to be made explicit, and thus the purposes of an interview are (Patton, 1990c):

1. To find out what is in and on someone else's mind.
2. To find out things we cannot directly observe, or when directly observing behaviour our confidence in the findings may not be sufficient.

The questions asked in interviews were drawn from different categories. Patton (1990d) suggests that there are six categories of questions to draw from during interviews:

- A) Experience / behaviour. Descriptions of actions.
- B) Opinion / values. An understanding of the cognitive and interpretive processes of employees.
- C) Feeling. To understand emotional responses.
- D) Knowledge. The factual information about a subject, i.e. 'how much training have you received in the last year'.
- E) Sensory. Questions which focus upon the senses of employees, i.e. 'when you walk through the door between the shop-floor and the administrative block, what do you see'.
- F) Background / Demographic. To identify the characteristics of the person being interviewed, i.e. Bio-data.

Areas of interest during the interviewing process would relate to:

1. Past behaviour in terms of commitment and related to a changed context.
2. Individual intentions and predictions as to commitment given the present state.

3. Individual predictions about committed behaviour given that the present state changes.
4. Individual perceptions as to the root cause of poor commitment levels.
5. Validation or invalidation of quantitative data.

As for sample size, Patton (1990) points out:

'...there are no rules for sample size in qualitative inquiry, sample size depends on what you want to know, the purpose of the inquiry, what's at stake, what will be useful, what will have credibility and what can be done with available time and resources.....in depth information from a small number of people can be very valuable, especially if the cases are information-rich.'

Source: Michael Quinn Patton (1990e, p.184)

To help clarification and validate earlier findings, confidence would be increased if the sample resembled the total population. In consequence the sample should relate to the population weighting of employees as to level, sex and age.

Three types of interviews were used during field research: unstructured or exploratory, semi-structured, and structured. Each form of interview had a different purpose.

4.5.2.1 Depth Interviews

No amount of sophisticated scale-building or statistical analysis can rescue a research project if they are built upon poor pilot work. What was important, was to obtain information of certain kinds relating to the study theme. Exploratory depth interviews achieved this. The general purpose was to develop ideas and hypothesis that had emerged from literature search in a way that allowed measurement. The job of the researcher at this stage was not data collection but ideas or construct collection. Kelly's Personal Construct Theory (1955) provided initial structure.

Following a series of initial interviews with key personnel representing the Company, forty interviewees forming a cross section of the company were chosen who were willing to take part in preliminary 'depth' interviews.

The style of the interviewer was to assist a free and continuous monologue by the respondent on the topic of research. The approach was non-directive, nonjudgmental, acceptant, polite and professional. The objective was to explore, probe, pick up hesitations, seek clarification etc., which allowed the respondent verbally to unveil his or her feelings as to their perception about their own commitment to work and their organisation and the reasons for same.

Post interview discussions with respondents suggested that they had enjoyed the activity. Many commented that the conversation had been interesting and had been conducted in a professional manner. Interestingly, some respondents strongly stated that unfortunately such experiences are uncommon within the work environment.

4.5.2.2 Standardised Interviews

The researcher also conducted a series of standardised or structured interviews. The purpose was to ask structured questions that related to earlier depth interviews. A predetermined list of questions had been formed which would be posed to the respondents. The same respondents who had been willing to take part in earlier depth interviews agreed to take part in the standardised interviews. Thus, this stage of field study also provided data which could be used to cross reference with earlier responses, especially relating to senior management theory-of-action, the culture/climate of the organisation, commitment levels, communication and the importance of personal development.

Despite the obvious advantages of using this form of data collection, the possibility of interviewer bias was a cause for concern. The data needed to remain uncontaminated by the 'interviewer effect'. For instance, standardised interviews contain two kinds of errors, random and systematic. Random error, for example, carelessness and misunderstandings were countered by the use of pre-structured

item questions. Much more damaging could be systematic errors or bias since these would result in an over or under estimate of the true value, exaggerating or belittling the outcome. Worries about interview bias were countered by means of conforming to rigid standardisation. Pre-prepared questions were read out to the respondent whom the researcher requested to rate their response in the same manner as that used during the analytic survey. This approach had the advantage that the respondent reacted quickly to the researcher providing data which could easily be converted into numerical form, it also meant that the researcher could minimise contamination from other external sources.

4.5.3 Analytic Survey - Planning, Design and Implementation

Literature in chapter three highlighted the multidimensional nature of organisational commitment. This view is widely supported (Angle and Perry, 1981; Dunham et al, 1994; Hackett et al, 1994; McGee and Ford, 1987). Nonetheless, this study is more concerned with the affective element of organisational commitment. Affective commitment was seen to be most closely related to organisational needs expressed by senior management. It was also viewed as having a strong influence on continuous commitment. Affective commitment was defined as a strong desire to remain a member of a particular organisation; a willingness to exert high levels of effort on the behalf of an organisation; a definite belief in, and acceptance of, the values and goals of the organisation (Mowday, Porter and Steers, 1982). Such a definition captures an ongoing process through which organisational participants express their concern for the organisation and its continued success and well being (Northcraft and Neale, 1990). Similar definitions include:

'Organisational commitment is encapsulated by giving all of yourself while at work'

Source: Martin and Nicholls (1987)

'Commitment is the psychological bond to an organisation.... loyalty, and a belief in the values of the organisation'

Source: Mullins (1993b)

A search for a suitable recognised instrument that contained items associated with

these definitions resulted in the choice of the (full) 15-item Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ) originated by Mowday, Steers and Porter 'The Measure of Organisational Commitment' (1979). The OCQ was introduced in chapter three and is the most well established method of ascertaining the extent of employee commitment to the organisation. Moreover, this instrument has demonstrated good psychometric properties (Angle and Perry, 1981; Bateman and Strasser, 1984; DeCotiis and Summers, 1987; Luthans et al, 1987; Glisson and Durick, 1988; Beauvais et al, 1991; Cohen, 1991; Mathieu and Farr, 1991). The scale is reported in appendix 'A'. The OCQ is thought to measure the affective component of organisational commitment (Aven et al, 1993; Dunham et al, 1994; Brooke et al, 1988). It therefore complemented the emphasis of the study. The instrument also measures normative commitment considerations, in the sense that subjects attitudes are sought in relation to employees own norms and values. Consequently, the measure was appropriate given that the level of analysis was the employees perceptions of the property. During pilot work it had been highly unidirectional and internally consistent. Answers to validated items were based upon a seven-point Likert scale by which subjects responses range from strongly disagreeing (1) with an item statement to strongly agreeing (7).

4.5.4 Independent/Experimental Variables

According to Sekaran (1992c) a variable is anything that can take on differing or varying values. It was important that variables were correctly assessed so that the researcher may develop hypotheses in a way that allows the problem area to be investigated.

This design issue was initially approached by means of scrutinising literature searches to consider variables relating to commitment and motivation. However, using variables that simply conformed to key aspects uncovered during literature review could be dangerous if the researcher had inadvertently missed what could be a crucial element. Therefore, other methods were considered. Discussion with Directors (IoD 1993-1998) confirmed that employee work motivations are likely to be strongly associated with their level of commitment. Aspects similar to those discussed during literature searches and especially the factors identified by Herzberg

were assumed to be associated with employee commitment.

In an attempt to ensure that the data obtained from employees was closely related to their perception of variables associated with their commitment, it was important to the study that employees own constructs be used as independent variables. It was equally important that the definitions of each independent variable were those which subjects understood, rather than definitions imposed by the researcher.

Independent variables were obtained by means of confidential 'open' depth interviews with employees representing a cross section of the organisation. Kelly's construct approach enabled the researcher to itemise constructs that individual employees suggested were related to organisational aspects which were associated with their commitment to their organisation. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the same personal constructs offered by individuals as to what organisational factors affect their commitment were shared by the majority interviewed. Moreover, personal constructs provided by individuals and aspects considered during literature review were also similar. Herzberg motivation and hygiene factors were commonly identified. The researcher also noted variables more closely associated with senior management theory-of-action. The full list is provided in chapter five.

4.5.5 Utility

The aspect of utility analysis, when combined with Kelly's personal construct theory, appeared to offer an objective approach towards establishing appropriate independent variables which for the employee are a function related to their commitment. A utility is simply the condition of being useful or profitable. Utility of anything is the value of it. In the USA utility analysis has spread to practically every human resource activity. During field research, the term 'utility' was used in the sense that individuals see certain constructs as 'useful' or 'valuable' in relation to their perceptions of their commitment to the organisation. They are functional variables in that they contribute to employee perception of their commitment to the organisation.

During questionnaire construction each utility consisted of an item bank of

statements related to a particular variable. For example, the utility 'work itself' contained fourteen items and included questions such as 'in my job I get a strong feeling of accomplishment' or 'a major satisfaction in my life comes from my job/role in the organisation'.

Literature suggested that the intervening variable that links motivational forces with employee commitment was employee satisfaction in relation to employee needs. Likewise, a person's preference for achievement or affiliation can be seen as moderating variables which mitigate or enhance the relationship between the dependant and independent variables and which influence the intensity of satisfaction from work. One could suggest that the relationship between independent variables and the intervening variable is moderated by personal needs and drives. Equally one could assert that employee satisfaction of motivational factors only produces commitment if an employee has a high need to satisfy his or her desired achievement level, or personal need for an appropriate level of affiliation. Such variables are likely to moderate the strength of an individual's motivations, satisfaction within the work environment, and his or her perceived level of commitment to the organisation. Conceptually, the relationship of variables can be shown:

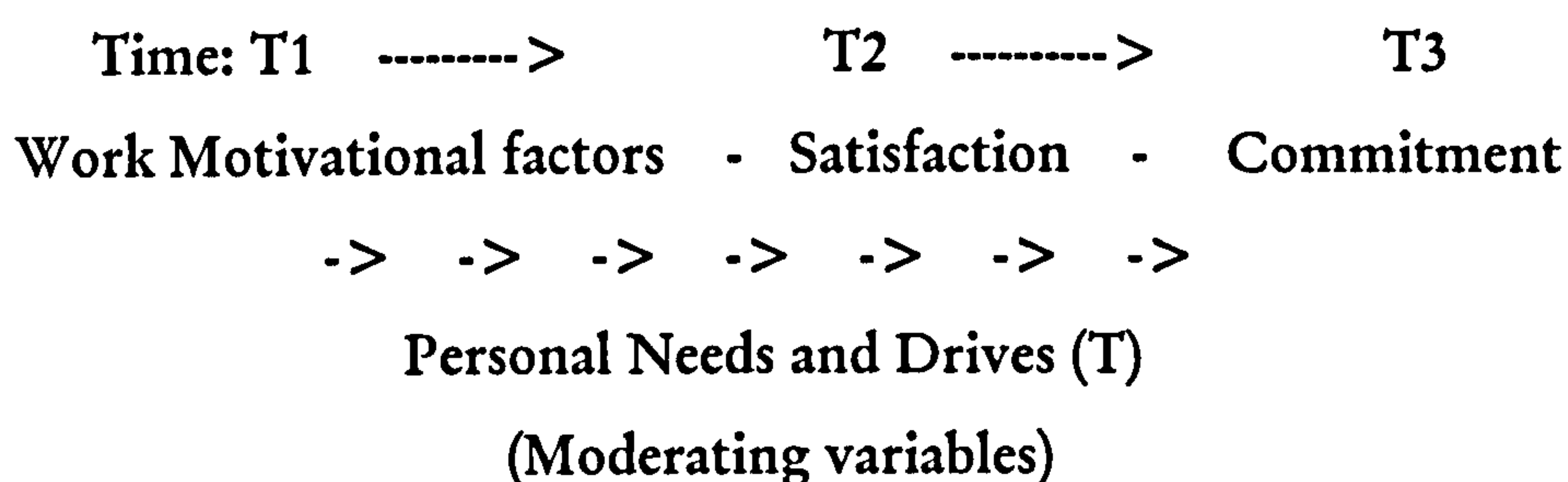


Figure 4.4 Diagram of the Relationships among Independent, Intervening and Dependant Variables

Although a time dimension (T) has been added to the above illustrations, the nature and direction could not be determined. A study interested in association rather than causal relationship has little need of a time dimension. Nonetheless, the direction indicated has a degree of face validity.

4.5.6 Sampling

The field of sampling often requires compromises between theoretical sampling requirement and practical limitations. Commonsense suggests that a larger probability sample will give a better estimate of population parameters than a smaller one. The study area could theoretically encompass every working individual in the World. It was considered that half a dozen organisations could be used taking a cross sectional sample from each company. This would have been reasonable if the study were to be limited to analytic survey methods. However, gaining a richness from the research would have been problematic. Furthermore, the researcher was looking for organisations who were willing to allow themselves to be subjected to rigorous review, the intent of the writer being to leave as few stones unturned as possible. Despite the researcher's contact with many Director's of local firms, the response was expectantly negative. Nevertheless, it was considered that the samples accuracy was more important than its size.

It was decided to survey all employees of one company. Thus, a representative sample was almost guaranteed given non-responses could be limited. It also meant that a reasonable sample of different level roles within one company could be analysed thus providing a cross sectional approach. Importantly, sampling error, at least in terms of the Company, could be minimised. This tactic was also meaningful in the sense that all responses would have one thing in common. They would represent one entity.

One drawback arising from the use of a single organisation is the degree that findings can be generalised. However, before additional organisations are approached, what seemed to be urgently required was a methodology that was a fair approach to the problem area. Specificity of findings is examined in detail in chapter six.

4.5.7 Distribution and Non-response Procedure

A collection of certain factors seen by writer's (Sudman and Bradburn, 1983; Hoinville and Jowell, 1978; Converse and Presser, 1988) as those that have been found to increase response ratios were incorporated.

They included:

- Advanced warning of the study.
- Sponsorship and publicity. This took the form of verbal and written acknowledgements illustrating both union and management support.
- Anonymity.
- Incentive. A small incentive was provided in that the researcher would donate fifty pence to charity for each questionnaire received.
- Appearance. Generally the design of the questionnaire was based upon the need to look professional, not to contain any silly errors, to provide an easy-to-use layout and easy to read typefaces.
- Reminders.

In reality the return could only be described as excellent, all categories of employee responding well to the invitation.

Only three employees out of two hundred and ten were unwilling to take part in the analytic study. Although they duly affected the sample, it was not considered ethical to look further into the matter. Hence, a small degree of confounding bias may have entered the survey.

4.6 Measuring Goodness

The notion of measurement is easy to understand, at least in terms of research relating to natural science. Unfortunately, as research moves towards behavioural and social science topics measurement is more difficult to determine. The main focus was that the units of measure needed to be ranked. Ranking being a fundamental requirement to studies wishing to gain an understanding about relationships of one variable as compared with another. For example, an individual's perceived commitment level compared with his or her perceived need for recognition. Although several utility item banks could be seen to have normal population distribution characteristics, ordinal and not time/period scales were used.

4.6.1 Reliability and Validity

Although field research would not rely solely on analytical survey, it was strongly considered that given the nature of the study, adequate reliability and validity should be shown. If a test is reliable, someone else conducting the test should be able to observe the same thing. Reliability includes both the characteristics of the instrument and the conditions under which it is administered (Schuman and Presser, 1981; Belson 1981). Error components being the impurity that can produce inconsistencies and unreliability and which need to be reduced.

The properties and reasons for selecting the Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (Mowday et al, 1979) as the dependent variable were mentioned in section 4.5.3 above. According to Meyer et al (1990) the Organizational Commitment Questionnaire as a dependent variable is the most widely used measure of commitment. Reaching a similar conclusion, Mathieu and Zajac (1990) reported an average internal consistency reliability ([Alpha]) of .88. Several other studies report internal consistency reliability above ([Alpha]) of .80 (e.g. Angle and Perry, 1981; Brett et al, 1995; Tsui, Egan and O'Reilly, 1992).

Independent variables were chosen because they were often used as a construct by employees during initial interviews to describe what motivates them or reasons for their commitment. During pilot studies respondents perceived each scale as having face validity. Face validity being a component of content validity. For example a question relating to an employee's satisfaction with 'the pay he or she receives for the work he or she does' was seen as a valid item as for motivation related to pay. Moreover, each scale of items was presented to various interested parties, for example, Company management and representatives of the Quality Council, and Director's attending the IoD programme at the University of Salford (1993-1998), students, friends and colleagues. Observers were asked whether the items used in each scale was a representative sample. Items that were not considered as reliable as others were 'weeded out' before field research.

Each independent variable item bank was designed and constructed to predict a respondents satisfaction as to a specific construct. The only exception to this rule

was the 'achievement' factor which utilised the achievement/task leadership questionnaire (Pfeiffer and Jones,1992). This was used because during interviews several subjects suggested that they simply followed others instructions and direction. However, they suggested that if they were a supervisor they would have very definite ideas as to how they could achieve. In these circumstances, the Pfeiffer and Jones questionnaire was an obvious instrument to use. Evenden and Anderson (1992) report that 85 per cent of respondents believe it to be accurate.

Cronbach and Meehl (1955) first used the term construct validity in relation to psychological tests suggesting that a construct is "some postulated attribute of people, assumed to be reflected in test performance." Thus, organisational characteristics such as leadership behaviours, for example 'consideration', or individual behaviour such as 'commitment' can appropriately be thought of as constructs. Nunnally (1967) warns that we must not regard a construct as being real, but keep in mind that the construct is nothing more or less than our (or someone else's) mental definition of a variable. Moreover, Schwab (1980) asserts that the modification of constructs which is characteristic of science during construct validation is not as applicable in applied social settings. Nonetheless, construct validity represents the correlation coefficient between the construct and the measure (Northrop. 1959; Nagle, 1953). Departures from coefficients of 1.00 are due to contamination or deficiency. Contamination being a variance in the measure not present in the construct, and deficiency being a variance in the construct not captured by the measure (Schwab, 1980). A degree of contamination was expected, Sekaran states:

'Objects that can be physically measured by some calibrated instruments pose no measurement problems..... when we get into the realm of people's feelings, attitudes, and perceptions, however, measurement becomes difficult.'

Source: Sekaran (1992e, p.118)

Principle component analysis was used to verify construct validity. As for sample size, Kass and Tinsley (1979) recommend having between five and ten subjects per variable. Field (2000) states that the general rule of thumb is that in order for

factor analysis to be useful, the researcher should have ten times as many respondents as variables. The sample size provided a minimum of eleven responders per variable.

The researchers approach to establishing a fair degree of construct validity was that each independent variable should, under test conditions, provide similar correlation coefficients, sampling adequacy, and sphericity as those recorded for the Organisational Commitment Questionnaire (Mowday et al, 1979). A good comparison would provide a degree of confidence as to the validity of each variables construction. With regard to data screening, each utility should have variables which correlate fairly well but not too well with other variables within the same utility. Table 4.1 provides detail. All questions in each utility correlated well with all others and no correlation coefficients were particularly large.

Table 4.1 Principle Component Analysis

<i>Factor</i>	<i>Range of Correlation Coefficients</i>	<i>Sampling Adequacy</i>
OCQ (Mowday et al)	-514 to 684	.889
Achievement (Pfeiffer&Jones)	-291 to 492	.660
Advancement	-329 to 453	.587
Company HR Policies	-449 to 615	.808
Empowerment	-146 to 651	.781
Recognition	-415 to 574	.874
Responsibility	-215 to 466	.500
Supervisory Support	-310 to 403	.508
Work Itself	-477 to 560	.765

The Keiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy was used. Table 4.1 above lists the values of each variable. A factor close to 1.0 would indicate that patterns of correlations are relatively compact and so factor analysis should provide distinct and reliable factors. According to Keiser (1970) values greater than 0.5 are acceptable. Values between 0.5 and 0.7 are viewed as good. Values between 0.7 and 0.8 are very good, and values between 0.8 and 0.9, according to Hutcheson and

Sofroniou (1999) are superb.

The Bartlett's measure of sphericity (relationships between variances) was also conducted. If the population correlation matrix resembles an identity matrix then it would mean that every variable within the construct correlates very badly with all other variables (i.e. all correlation coefficients close to zero). Therefore, in an identity matrix all variables would be perfectly independent from one another. Given that the researcher wished for a cluster of variables per construct that together measure parts of the same construct, some relationship between variables is required. The Bartlett's measure tests to ensure the correlation matrix for each construct is not an identity matrix. Therefore, the test needs to be significant. For each utility listed in Table 4.1, for these data, Bartlett's test was highly significant (Field, 2000), ($p < 0.001$).

Three further constructs formed part of the survey. Factor extraction revealed that these constructs, namely 'satisfaction with pay in relation to the work done', 'satisfaction with working conditions' and 'satisfaction as to how co-workers get along with each other' each contained one item statement with a very high eigenvalue. Moreover, these single construct question/statements seemed to have a good deal of face validity during pre-survey testing and field work.

Test-retest reliability results of the dependent and independent constructs are provided in chapter five. This method meant that the same test was administered under different conditions, for example, the respondents would have already completed the questionnaire on at least one further occasion. To counter this effect a period of three weeks was allowed to elapse between the test and retest.

Statistical manipulation alone will not produce a valid attitude scale. The ingredients must be right. The most advanced scaling techniques and error reducing procedures do not produce a good attitude questionnaire. The importance of the original depth interviews in ensuring that the statements were valid for field research cannot be overstated. It is considered that both reliability and validity can only increase as more research work is conducted. Especially, if the same research

design is used, and as research is completed within different organisations and sectors.

4.6.2 Concurrent Validity

In relation to the Organization Commitment Questionnaire, a team of company observers were requested to rate several respondents in terms of their perception of the respondent's level of commitment. In broad terms each observer rated each randomly chosen respondent based on whether he or she behaved in a way that showed a high, medium or low level of commitment to the Company. Each observer was asked not to discuss their rating with anyone. It was also made clear that the ratings were only to test the validity of the dependent variable. The ratings were collected and were found to correlate well with respondents own self-ratings.

4.6.3 Predictive Validity

Consideration was given to the necessity of establishing predictive validity of each variable. It would have meant that certain respondents would be monitored over time to see whether actual work behaviour related to their self-assessment of their own attitude in terms of motivational factors and commitment. A suitable criterion would be job performance in relation to motivation and commitment levels. While this notion might have been operationalised for shop-floor workers, difficulties arose in determining 'performance' of management levels. At the time of field research, the idea was shelved. Of interest however, is that individuals selected by the senior management team as people of potential, generally scored high as to their commitment to the organisation and on most other work motivational scales. One could suggest that such a finding provides a degree of forecasted predictive validity.

4.6.4 Observational Studies: Reliability

Observational studies as to senior management theory-of-action were carried out over a two-year period. The researcher's role was of a nonparticipant observer. A structured method was employed. A full description of the studies and results are given in chapter five.

Importantly, interrater reliability techniques were employed. This was operationalised by means of using a trained personnel specialist 'senior manager' who was consistently in attendance during the researcher's observational ratings. His role was to monitor the observed behaviour and use his considerations as a check against any possible subjectivity by the researcher.

4.7 Conclusion

To test the overall hypothesis that senior management theory-of-action is associated with employee commitment, both quantitative and qualitative data collection method are appropriate. While analytic method assists focus and consideration of nomothetic inferences, qualitative concerns provide a rich source of data relating to individual meaning. Depth interviews were used to clarify individual personal constructs.

Questionnaire would be used to collect quantitative data. The aim being to gain an objective understanding as to the associations between individual motivational forces and employee commitment to the organisation. Structured interviews were found useful. Observation was incorporated when the nature and context of subjects within the natural work environment was viewed as highly important. The natural activity of talking to people was used during later phenomenological inquiry.

The following chapter provides field research results and discussion.

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CHAPTER 5

FIELD RESEARCH

Results and Discussion

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Field Research: Results and Discussion

5.0 Introduction

The previous chapter acknowledged the need for a two-level approach to test out the proposition that senior management theory-of-action is strongly associated with employee commitment. First, field study would need to consider whether employee related actions by senior management were strongly associated with employee commitment. Senior management action most likely responsible for adversely affecting commitment may be revealed. Secondly, whether employee commitment might be adversely affected by senior management adoption of what has been termed conventional economic-rational theory-of-action.

This chapter describes substantive research with an applied orientation. It includes a series of field research studies involving self-assessed questionnaire, behavioural observation, and qualitative enquiry. Sections 5.1 to section 5.7 describe results and findings arising from quantitative analysis. Section 5.8 provides results of qualitative enquiry.

Field research was conducted over a lengthy period at the UK premises of Kawneer Europe. The Company is a subsidiary of an American owned conglomerate. Worldwide the organisation has more than fifteen thousand employees and assets of \$4.5 billion. Two hundred employees work in the UK subsidiary.

During field research, the Company allowed itself to be subjected to method likely to highlight aspects which were unflattering to the organisation, and in particular the senior management team. The writer wishes openly to acknowledge the trust and cooperation of the organisation's personnel. In the eyes of the researcher, the senior management team were exceptional for the following reasons:

1. They displayed total dedication to their business.
2. They were of one mind in their mission for continuous improvement in all

aspects of organisational operations. Evidence in support of this claim was that they were the only organisation out of several approached to accept and welcome a long and arduous process of scrutiny.

3. The senior management team proved to be objective, self-critical and constructive as the findings of the work were revealed.

Post field research, both employer and representatives of the workforce stated that the research process had essentially opened a relatively unknown road of individual and organisational self-development.

Chapter six investigates the generalisation of findings provided in this chapter. It also provides two secondary field studies conducted within a large engineering multinational organisation and a medium sized national 'brown goods' organisation.

5.1 Field Research: Question One

'Are employee related actions by senior management strongly associated with employee commitment?'

The previous chapter suggested method to test-out this question in the field. The first step was to identify employee related motivational factors most likely to be associated with employee commitment. Only then could the researcher begin to identify factors that most closely relate to the actions of senior management.

5.1.1 Experimental Hypothesis

The design and development of utility item banks as independent variables, and the reason for choosing the Organizational Commitment Questionnaire as dependent variable were discussed in the previous chapter. Research hypotheses predict the relationship between two events. It is predicted that each employee response to every motivational utility will have a positive correlation with their response to the Organizational Commitment Questionnaire - OCQ (Mowday et al, 1979, 1982). Individuals who perceive themselves as highly committed to the organisation will

indicate satisfaction as to some or all of the various work motivation factors. The null hypothesis is that no correlation exists between employee response to motivational utilities and the commitment utility (OCQ). Differences between scores are due to chance fluctuations in people's perceptions and/or due to the confounding effect of unknown variables - random variability.

5.1.2 Method - Design

Following method described in the previous chapter, the initial process of categorising motivational variables was achieved by means of Kelly's (1955) personal construct approach. Independent variables are shown in Table 5.1. It is of interest that the constructs broadly follow the categorisations offered by Herzberg (1966) and Herzberg et al (1957). It will be noted however, that Table 5.1 also includes variables more closely associated with senior management and senior management employee related actions.

5.1.3 Respondents

One hundred and ninety-six subjects were able to complete the item banks, one hundred and fifty-six male and forty females. The age range was between seventeen and sixty-five years old. All departments and hierarchical levels were included.

All subjects were native English speakers and had been schooled in England. Regardless, the researcher was on hand if any employee found difficulty interpreting any item/statement.

5.1.4 Materials

Appendix 'C' represents version one of the questionnaire. It includes the Organizational Commitment Questionnaire items, see appendix 'A' (Mowday, R.T., Steers, R.M., and Porter, L.W. (1979). The questionnaire also contains item banks relating to independent work motivation variables, see section 4.5 and Table 5.1. Appendix 'B' lists item statements under each independent variable heading. Two re-arranged versions of the questionnaire were used to counterbalance any order effects. Items relating to each utility were mixed. This was done to prevent subjects from carrying on a particular trend of thought, for example, perceiving

that a certain item was crucial and then following on with similar ratings. Furthermore, by mixing the items it was believed that there was a greater chance that subjects would have to think more thoroughly about their responses.

5.1.5 Procedure

One version of the questionnaire was made available. A standard form of instructions was used for administering the task to each student. Subjects were given the opportunity to ask questions before beginning the task. Subjects were then left alone to complete the item banks. The task was to read each item and respond on a Likert scale of 1 - 7. Subject response represented their perceived level of agreement or level of disagreement with each item.

The researcher gave no time limit. However, subjects were urged to work at a professional pace and were informed that immediate responses may be their most accurate perception of any item.

As for test re-test reliability, following an elapse time of three weeks, thirty subjects representing a cross section of levels and departments within the organisation received a second re-arranged questionnaire containing all the original utility bank items. Ninety-six item statements correlated above internal consistency reliability ([Alpha]) of .7. This figure is just below results obtained in other studies (Angle and Perry, 1981; Brett et al, 1995; Tsui, Egan and O'Reilly, 1992). Two items fell below the chosen internal consistency reliability ([Alpha]) of .7. Six out of the thirty subjects involved in the retest were asked about the difference in scores of the items which resulted in lower correlations. Generally, they had interpreted the items differently. To maintain rigour the researcher decided that both items be excluded before analysis. It was considered that the remaining items were both valid and reliable and that the substance of the utility variables had not been materially effected. Reported descriptive and inferential statistics exclude the two items.

5.1.6 Data analysis and Results

The Mowday, Steers and Porter et al (1979) Organizational Commitment Questionnaire has normal distribution attributes, graphically illustrated in Appendix 'D'. Nonetheless, as data might not contain units of equal distance, all variables were treated as ordinal rather than interval data.

Spearman rank-order correlation coefficients were used because:

1. The data contained too many categories for simple cross-tabulation.
2. Ordinal scales were used.
3. The Spearman Rho is appropriate for attitudinal surveys (Argyrous, 2000; Field, 2000).
4. Non-parametric rank ordering allows for possible violation of the distribution assumption of parametric tests.

Table 5.1 Rank-order correlation coefficients of motivation utilities as associated with employee commitment.

Independent variables (highest correlations)	R _s	Kendall's
Employee satisfaction with Company HR policy	.79	.61
Employee need for coherent company and employee values	.75	.60
Employee satisfaction from work-itself	.68	.50
Employee need for confidence in senior management	.66	.53
Employee need for recognition	.64	.47
Employee need for consideration by senior management	.64	.50
Employee need for advancement	.56	.43
Employee need for empowerment	.55	.40
Employee satisfaction with working conditions	.53	.39

(Table 5.1 Continued)

Independent variables (lowest correlations)	R _s	Kendall's
Employee satisfaction with immediate manager support	.50	.37
Employee satisfaction with pay	.50	.38
Employee need for contact with senior management	.49	.39
Senior management interest in getting the job done	.39	.30
Employee need for responsibility	.35	.25
Senior management understanding of employee needs	.34	.25
Employee satisfaction with peer relationships	.29	.21
Employee need for achievement	.20	.14

(n=196)

NB

*Kendall's Tau (Non-Parametric) rank correlation is also shown due to some independent variables having a large number of tied ranks.

*The Spearman rank-correlation coefficients held significance values of $p < 0.01$. Appendix 'E' provides a complete list of correlations and cross correlations.

5.1.7 Discussion and Analysis

Commitment as measured by the OCQ shows a strong correlation relationship with motivation variables. Data indicate significance of $p < .01$. This suggests that the probability (p) of a result occurring by chance is less than 1 per cent. Significance levels suggests that we may say with confidence that there is a relationship between an individual's view of what motivates him or her and the satisfaction they receive from same, and their perception of how committed they are to their organisation.

Table 5.1 correlations indicate significant association between constructs such as Herzberg's (1966) motivation factor work itself, recognition etc., and hygiene factors such as pay, with scores on the OCQ. However, the same Table also suggests that employee satisfaction with Company human resource policy and employee need for coherent company and employee values hold the strongest correlation with employee commitment. Clearly, both these factors are more

commonly seen as the province and responsibility of senior management. Within these factors, senior management oversee and make plans that directly affect each employee of the company. Research question one asked the question “Are employee related actions by senior management strongly associated with employee commitment?” Findings support a positive response. For example, employees who indicate strong dissatisfaction with company human resource policy also indicate weak levels of commitment to the organisation. Similarly, employees who consider the company holds and supports values incoherent with their own values also indicate a lower level of commitment to their organisation. For this study, the null hypothesis which states that when compared with conventional motivation factors, employee related action by senior management has no significant affect on employee commitment can be rejected.

There is a natural desire to jump to conclusions about the relevance and validity of the initial results. Findings appear to support the notion that employee satisfaction as to a given motivational utility can aid or restrain employee commitment to their organisation. However, correlation coefficients say nothing about which variable causes the other to change. Moreover, it is plausible that both motivation and commitment are the result of another factor, for example, low morale.

Mayo in his book enticingly entitled, ‘The Human Problems of an Industrial Civilization’ (1933) comments that “...the country that first solves the problem of maintaining worker morale, will infallibly outstrip the others in the race for stability, security and development.” Perhaps the morale of the workforce was leading subjects to answer in a negative way. Indeed, the mental attitude of many key groups appeared to display a distinct lack of confidence or hope. This is indicated by correlations in Table 5.1 and comparatively poor commitment levels in certain areas of the organisation. While accepting that morale may be an issue for the Company, several questions and factors that could have been answered in a negative way, were answered positively. Moreover, while low morale may be antecedent or consequential of employee commitment, this does not nullify the association between employee commitment and the role of senior management.

Nonetheless, there is a need to be careful and conservative about results. Despite the findings being intuitively appealing, there is yet no statistical reason for the association. This is particularly important with respect to directionality. For example, previous research findings discussed in chapter three considered probable cause and effect of several antecedents to employee commitment. Importantly, several researchers have questioned directionality (Curry et al, 1986; Bateman and Strasser, 1984; Price and Mueller, 1981, Vandenberg and Lance, 1992). Consequently, most of this study has limited exploration to exploring association only. Nonetheless, a commonsense view would suggest that if employees do not feel recognised, empowered, satisfied with work and working conditions etc., it is likely that they will be less committed to their organisation. Such a claim would be supported by Guest, 1992; Hrebiniak and Alutto, 1973; Buchanan, 1974 and Reichers, 1985. Although only evidence of association between various employee satisfaction constructs and employee commitment was sought, nonetheless, it was intriguing to use field data to discover which researcher group perspective might be supported. The following tests and findings provide a measure of speculative confidence as to direction.

One sample 'Z' tests were conducted. The Wilcoxon signed-rank test was used to compare sets of scores originating from the same subjects (dependent design). Hypotheses predicted significant difference would occur as to each independent variable and subjects perception of their commitment to their organisation. Subjects rank-order scores as to their perception of the satisfaction they obtain from each independent measure of employee satisfaction would effect their rank-order scores as to organisational commitment. The researcher's one-tailed theoretical stance was that dissatisfaction of constructs would lead to lower employee commitment levels. The null hypothesis would suggest that employee scores as to satisfaction they obtain from the various independent factors would have no effect as to employee commitment. Table 5.2 provides details of each test and 'Z' score. Paired variables are listed in order of highest to lowest 'Z' scores.

Table 5.2 Directionality

<i>Paired Variables</i>	<i>Z Score</i>
OCQ scores and satisfaction with Company HR Policies	-12.142
OCQ scores and satisfaction as to Coherence between Self and Org values	-12.141
OCQ scores and satisfaction as to Confidence in Senior Management	-12.141
OCQ scores and satisfaction as to Contact with Senior Management	-12.141
OCQ scores and satisfaction as to Senior Management Consideration	-12.141
OCQ scores and satisfaction as to Senior Management Understanding	-12.141
OCQ scores and satisfaction as to Senior management interest in the job	-12.141
OCQ scores and satisfaction with Working Conditions	-12.141
OCQ scores and satisfaction as to Immediate Supervisor Support	-12.141
OCQ scores and satisfaction with Pay	-12.141
OCQ scores and satisfaction as to the need for Advancement	-12.141
OCQ scores and satisfaction as to the need for Responsibility	-12.141
OCQ scores and satisfaction as to the need for Achievement	-12.139
OCQ scores and satisfaction as to Interpersonal Relationships	-12.110
OCQ scores and satisfaction with Work Itself	-12.077
OCQ scores and satisfaction as to Recognition by Senior Management	-11.329
OCQ scores and satisfaction as to the need for Empowerment	-4.901

The Wilcoxon test rank-orders pairs of scores. 'Z' scores simply indicate a score from a distribution that has a mean of zero and standard deviation of 1. If pairing does not result in either a positive or negative 'Z' value then for this sample a need to satisfy a particular need would have no effect on employee commitment or vice versa. Values close to zero would be supportive of the null hypothesis. Interpretation of 'Z' scores and one-tailed values suggests significant difference. At an alpha level of 0.01, a minimum but significant one-tailed 'Z' score would be -2.33 (Argyrous, 2000). The test for significant difference therefore found that a one-tailed test for each study was ($p < .01$). This suggests that the probability (p) of a result occurring by chance is less than 1 per cent. The null hypothesis can be rejected. Results indicate that in this sample, employee commitment to their organisation is adversely affected by dissatisfaction of various constructs.

Directionality of findings support the notion that work satisfaction effects commitment (Guest, 1992, Hrebiniak and Alutto, 1973, Buchanan, 1974, and Reichers, 1985). For each pairing of variables, the significance was in the expected direction. Moreover, when rank-order scores as to the Organisational Commitment Questionnaire are compared with variables most closely related to the role and actions of senior management, comparatively high 'Z' scores result. Combining, results of both correlation and rank-ordering of data suggests that dissatisfaction of work needs effects employee commitment, and aspects related to the senior management role and provision of Company human resource policy appear to be significantly influential.

Table 5.1 clearly indicates significant correlation between various constructs and employee commitment to their company. Table 5.2 provides evidence of its direction. Strong correlations however, were not limited to the association between the various independent motivation variables and employee commitment. Table 5.3 illustrates several strong correlations found between independent variables. A complete table of cross correlations can be found in appendix 'E'.

Table 5.3 Inter-independent variable rank-order correlation coefficients

Other strong inter-independent rank-order correlations	R _s	Kendall's
Employee need for confidence in senior management and employee satisfaction with Company HR policy	.79	.65
Employee need for recognition and senior management consideration of employee needs	.73	.59
Employee need for consideration by senior management and employee satisfaction with Company HR policy	.73	.59
Employee need for recognition and employee satisfaction with Company HR policy	.72	.55

Employee satisfaction from work-itself and employee need for empowerment	.72	.54
Employee need for consideration by senior management and employee need for contact with senior management	.72	.44
Employee need for recognition and employee need for contact with senior management	.71	.57
Employee need for coherent company and employee values and employee satisfaction with Company HR policy	.71	.56
Employee need for confidence in senior management and employee need for consideration by senior management	.69	.60
Employee need for recognition and Satisfaction with immediate supervisory technical support	.69	.53
Employee need for recognition and employee need for confidence in senior management	.68	.53
Senior management understanding of employee needs and employee satisfaction with Company HR policy	.61	.48
Employee need for recognition and employee satisfaction with working conditions	.59	.45
Employee need for contact with senior management and employee need for confidence in senior management	.59	.50
Employee need for recognition and employee satisfaction from work-itself	.58	.42

Correlations in figure 5.3 suggest a strong association between employee need for confidence, recognition, and consideration by senior management and the decisions senior management take as to the employee related substance of human resource policy. Importantly, the intensity of correlations favour those associated with senior management and the affect senior management have on employee commitment. In essence, these factors are the substance of senior management theory-of-action.

Stepwise regression analysis was utilised to ascertain the extent to which these factors affected levels of employee commitment. The results are recorded in table 5.4.

Table 5.4 Multiple regression (stepwise): Commitment (OCQ) as the dependent variable.

Employee satisfaction with Company HR policy explains 64% of the variability in employee commitment.

Adding, employee satisfaction from work-itself explains 71% of the variability in employee commitment.

Adding, employee need for shared company and employee values explains 75% of the variability in employee commitment.

Adding, employee satisfaction with pay explains 76% of the variability in employee commitment.

Adding, employee need for advancement explains 77% of the variability in employee commitment.

Adding, employee need for senior management to show understanding of employee needs explains 78% of the variability in employee commitment.

Table 5.4 shows the senior management role of setting and deciding human resource policy explains 64 per cent of the variability in employee commitment. Such evidence strongly suggests the importance of what senior management do in respect of their employees.

Further analysis of the factors highly associated with employee perceptions of human resource policy might be found by using employee satisfaction of human resource policy as the dependent variable and applying regression analysis. Table 5.5 provides the result.

Table 5.5 Multiple regression (stepwise): Employee satisfaction with company Human Resource policy as the dependent variable.

Employee need for confidence in senior management explains 64% of the variability in employee satisfaction with Company HR policy.

Adding, employee need for coherence between their values and those of the company explains 76% of the variability in employee satisfaction with Company HR policy.

Adding, employee need for senior management understanding of employee needs explains 83% of the variability in employee satisfaction with Company HR policy.

Adding, employee need for consideration by senior management explains 85% of the variability in employee satisfaction with Company HR policy.

Adding, employee need for recognition explains 86% of the variability in employee satisfaction with Company HR policy.

Findings clearly indicate the importance of what senior management say and do as well as their priorities, values and decision on behalf of their employees in relation to employee commitment. With some confidence therefore, it can be asserted that in response to the question 'are employee related actions by senior management

strongly associated with employee commitment?', in this sample, the answer is yes. As to the question 'Can the actions most likely responsible for adversely affecting employee commitment be identified? Analysis so far suggests the following:

1. That decision taken by senior management as to the forming, implementation or maintaining of policy related to the management of people can have a key affect on commitment.
2. If the company does not provide evidence to employees that company values and those of employees are coherent, then employee commitment might suffer.
3. Employees need confidence in senior management action.
4. Consideration of employees by senior management and consequent recognition may be vital to sustaining employee commitment.

All of the above aspects can be viewed as attributes or characteristics of senior management theory-of-action as perceived by employees. Such findings are also key aspects of this study which require management consideration. They suggest certain issues which senior management may wish to debate if their intention is to raise or sustain employee commitment levels. The results do not clarify the characteristics of the theory-of-action which was in-use by senior management during field work. Nonetheless, they represent the consequences associated with senior management theory-in-use as perceived by employees. Discussed in chapter two, Argyris and Schon (1974,1978) term observation of actual behaviour that displays a person or group theory-of-action as their theory-in-use.

5.2 Field Research: Question two

Field study described above is comparatively simple compared with research required to test out question two, which reads 'Is employee commitment adversely affected by senior management adoption of conventional economic-rational theory-of-action?' It is difficult first, because the researcher is using terms that are not generally known and understood within an industrial setting. Interpretation is therefore difficult. Secondly, if Argyris (1997) is correct in his assumption that senior management are unaware of their own theory-of-action then simply asking senior management for their perceptions will not do.

Field research carried out above provide the researcher with data as to employee commitment levels and motivational factors most likely to be associated with commitment levels. It also provides important information as to the role of senior management in the forming of employee commitment levels. Unfortunately, it fails to identify what theory-of-action senior management were using before and during analytical survey. The following field studies were designed to remedy that situation. They use the three data collection methods mentioned in the previous chapter. It will be noted that qualitative enquiry increases in line with a need for greater depth of understanding of the data received.

5.2.1 Theory-of-action: Directors Personality Traits

Much of the discussion arising from analysis of literature suggests senior management may be more competitive and achievement orientated than the normal working population. Moreover, according to Argyris and Schon (1974) certain behavioural characteristics form part of 'Model-One' theory-of-action. Studying senior management personality to discover whether it is likely that certain traits predominate is therefore meaningful. Use of the Occupational Personality Questionnaire (OPQ) normative instrument allowed the researcher to determine difference between Directors self assessed ratings of their personality and behaviour in comparison with an established general working population (n=2951). Comparing answers with a group of managers and professionals was also possible (n=728).

5.2.2 Subjects and Procedure

Two of the Company's Directors agreed to provide data as to their personalty traits. Due to the small sample and with a view to gain insight as to the generalisation of findings, the researcher widened the sample. However, both Company directors completed the same personality instrument, it was therefore possible to test data with both Company directors included and excluded from the sample. The subject's (n=102) represent Directors attending the Institute of Directors programme (1993-1999).

Director's self-assessed their own personality. Completion of the personality

questionnaire conformed to the rules and guidelines provided by Saville and Holdsworth Ltd (SHL). Guidelines are verified by The British Psychological Society. The SHL Concept 5.2 personality profiling instrument was used. This instrument is well respected for profiling personality. Following standard practice, raw scores were converted into standard ten scores (STENS).

Each Director was given verbal feedback during a one hour interview one day after completion of the questionnaire. The concluding part of the review process was to ask the recipient to comment on the validity of the verbal report concerning the recipients personality and behaviour. Most Directors commented on the high face validity of the questionnaire. Ninety-six per cent also stated that the personality profile and the researcher's analysis of the data were extremely accurate.

5.2.3 Results and Discussion

Results suggested that most Directors have a strong need to achieve as compared with a sample of general managerial and professional personnel (n=728). Comparison against a general population (n=2951) suggests that Directors need for achievement was even more pronounced.

Compared with other managers and professionals, 95 per cent of Directors showed above mean scores as to the trait 'achievement'. Statements contained within the questionnaire relate to the subject's ambition and whether they set their sights high. Moreover, high scores strongly suggest a task conscious and results orientated bias. On the standard ten scale Directors indicated a median of eight.

Eighty-two per cent of Directors showed above mean scores as to the trait 'competitive'. A median of nine on the standard ten scale was recorded. This trait refers to the subjects need to win. High scores indicate that the subject is likely to be a poor loser and is determined to beat others.

In contrast, 63 per cent showed below mean scores as to the personality trait 'caring' compared with normative results from other managers (n=728). The difference was even more pronounced when compared with a general population

norm table (n=2951). Statements related to this trait covered consideration for others and tolerance. However, 62 per cent indicated above the mean as to the trait 'democratic'. For example, the willingness to encourage others to contribute, consult, listen and refer to others.

Other high means and medians recorded by the survey include the following:

Trait	Mean	Median
Persuasive	7.57	8
Forward Planning	7.5	8
Controlling	7.11	7
Optimistic	6.95	7
Change Orientated	6.93	7
Active	6.85	7
Decisive	6.79	7
Data Rational	6.75	7
Innovative	6.42	7
Independent	6.08	7

Table 5.6 Occupational Personality Questionnaire (OPQ) High Means and Medians

A generalised profile can be assembled using the above data:

“Directors in the survey tend to see themselves as highly competitive achievers. They are task conscious and may not be overly considerate of those who do not display a sharing of their values. They are comfortable taking charge, directing and managing others. They see themselves as persuasive with their arguments and able to convince others. Generally change orientated and innovative with regards to work tasks, they may prefer novelty to routine. It is probable however that others may not welcome changes that they instigate. Being data rational and logical, they are good with figures and tend to weigh things up rapidly and enjoy setting targets for themselves and others. However targets are normally quantitative and performance based rather than people driven.”

General similarities were found when trait characteristics of the two Company Directors were compared and contrasted with other subjects from the sample.

A strong determination to win may be unlikely to result in consideration of those whom the subject may perceive as not assisting their high achievement levels. Moreover, employees who hold a strong need to be considered are unlikely to receive same from superiors who value achievement and behave competitively towards task related results.

Hypothesising that employees operating at different levels within the organisation hold differing motivational needs, values and general theories-of-action seems reasonable. It would also appear that our perception of the organisation may be a strong influence on our behaviour within the organisation. Importantly, only senior management have their personal objectives directly linked to organisation mission and strategy. Staff at lower levels are normally concerned with specific departmental or operational tasks, responsibilities, targets and objectives. Their nurtured behaviour will need to suit their environment. Strength in personality traits and skills relating to social interaction, group cohesion and effective social relationships may be more important.

The result of this study support the view that as for personality traits, Directors see themselves as achievers, competitive, data rational, logical and goal orientated. It is not suggested that results give support for any one personality theory. Nonetheless, the generalised profile fits well with those associated with classical management principles discussed in chapter two, and characteristics identified by Argyris and Schon (1974, 1978) as a typical 'Model-One' universal approach to management. Especially traits such as achievement, competitiveness, the need for unilateral control of circumstances, and the need to remain unemotional. We should not be surprised therefore that senior management behaviour, their personality profile and their theory-of-action are closely aligned to achieving tasks directly related to corporate performance. The following study tests whether senior management in the Company gave priority to task/profit issues as part of their theory-of-action.

5.3 Senior Management Theory-in-use: Observation of Decision Making

The aim of a series of observational experiments was to analyse verbalised comment of senior management during meetings. The researcher was attempting to learn whether senior management predominantly discussed instrumental aspects (Argyris and Schon, 1978). Importantly, in relation to senior management theory-of-action, does the analysis of verbal interaction show a people or task bias? Results could provide supportive evidence that economic-rational goals are those prioritised by senior management as a key part of their theory-in-use. This finding would be particularly relevant given previous findings suggesting employee need for coherence between company and employee values, consideration by senior management etc. Conversely, if senior management provided equal priority to instrumental/economic-rational aspects as to those that could be regarded as process or people related, then the association between senior management theory-of-action and employee commitment may not be as strong as previous results had indicated.

It was hypothesised that senior management would discuss more aspects relating to hard aspects than soft aspects relating to employees. Results support the hypothesis.

5.3.1 Introduction

The association between senior management decision making processes and employee commitment is a major feature of this research. Chapter two provided background literature relating to this area of research. Senior management decisions are associated with every aspect of the organisation and so have implications for all employees. It is likely to be the most influential vehicle by which both extrinsic and intrinsic values are developed and operationalised. Moreover, human resource policy being a product of senior level decision had been found to be strongly associated with employee commitment.

The writer joined a series of decision making forums attended by members from the senior management group. Some meetings were informal and included the Managing Director and members of the senior management team. Other meetings were formal steering group committee meetings. They invited the experimenter

to these meetings to obtain an awareness of the organisation and its members.

Meetings were chosen as the likely vehicle for data related to organisational values as contained within senior management theory-of-action. According to a survey conducted and reported by the British Broadcasting Corporation (1996), on average managers attend six meetings per week. The survey also estimated that during a manager's lifetime he or she can expect to spend some twenty years attending formal and informal meetings. It was also suggested that as managers move into senior positions they perceive that they should be attending more meetings. Meetings provide the forum to have one's say. When one offers opinion, one is also declaring the values that act as a foundation for one's own beliefs and actions. Meetings are also the place where group dynamics take effect. For example, if the culture of the organisation has traditionally supported some values rather than others, members will judge that certain declarations are inappropriate, thus substantiating and maintaining traditional cultural value systems. It is very likely that the decision making process is a prime communication channel by which the real theory-in-use and prime values of senior management are communicated.

5.3.2 General Procedure

During each of the ten meetings attended by the experimenter, a log was taken of the aspects discussed. To help categorization, each statement or question 'verbally' offered by a member of the group was analysed as either an aspect that most closely related to rational economic issues of a 'hard' and 'instrumental' nature or people/employee issues of a 'soft' and 'process' nature. Hard utterances were defined as those relating to market position, the hard aspects of productivity, technical issues, profitability or customer issues. Soft aspects were defined as relating to employees and included employee job design or responsibilities, training and development, organisational or sub-cultural issues, or aspects relating to employee conditions, motivation and commitment. Condition one represented hard aspects discussed or offered for discussion. Condition two represented soft aspects discussed or offered for discussion. The independent variables were the hard and soft verbal utterances made as part of the senior management's behaviour. The dependent variable was the count made of the number of utterances made. This

method was used on many different occasions over a period of eighteen months.

5.3.3 Specific Procedure

A tape recording was used to verify real time categorisation. Categorisation involved essentially three different types of utterance. The third category was those utterances that had implications for both hard and soft issues. Notes were also made of other occurrences which required further consideration post the recording activity.

The researcher developed a 'tick off' listing under the headings 'People bias comment' and 'task bias comment'.

People Bias Comment

People skills

Training

Motivation Factors

Culture

Willingness

Learning

Education

Soft Processes

Task Bias Comment

Costs or budget

Turnover

Productivity and Efficiency

Logistics

Technical aspect

Markets

Product design

Hard Systems

The researcher did not take part in any way in relation to the context of the meetings. The best description of the researcher's role was 'being a fly-on-the-wall'.

The following reports the process of one observational study. It is chosen as part of the text simply because the meeting contained representatives from all parts of the Company. Besides four Board Directors, including the Managing Director, eight members were team-leaders responsible for administrative and shop-floor teams. Therefore it represents a forum by which senior management could directly communicate their theory-in-use to members the workforce. The account is typical of other observations.

Members of the Council set the agenda. Any item could be put on the agenda.

Topics provided for discussion included:

- * Total Quality Structure and feedback
- * Brainstorm on Customer Complaints - reasons
- * The European Quality Audit format
- * Developmental issues
- * Passion for Perfection
- * Zero Defects

5.3.4 Result

The mean score for utterances categorised as of a hard and economic-rational nature was 4.41. The mean for utterances that the researcher categorised as soft people/employee related aspect was 1.16.

5.3.5 Discussion

The prime aspects discussed or offered for discussion during the meeting were those relating to rational-economic factors. The bias during the meeting was towards the achievement of task categorised by Argyris and Schon (1978b) as the use of 'an instrumental global theory-of-action.'

Supportive of the claim made in chapter two that rational-economics might form a key foundation of senior management theory-of-action, in all but one observational study, rational-economic issues dominated the discussion. The exception was a meeting that appeared significantly different in that the Human Resource Manager held it and concerned itself with employee attitudes. In this 'one-off' case, 70 per cent of the verbal comments could be said to be within the subject area that primarily focussed upon employee aspects. However, this manager and his team were not employed at senior management level.

Naturally, recording observational occurrences in this way provides quantitative measures but fails to provide any information concerning the qualitative nature of the event or its content. For example, although the researcher noted fewer

utterances about soft issues, this method does not state the importance of each utterance or anything to do with the quality or impact of the utterance. Nevertheless, a comment captured the writer's perception of meetings. A manager made it immediately following the meeting. He asserted, "we simply don't get to the heart of the matter - its people that make things happen around here - or not happen - as the case may be." Further conversations with two other members representing administration confirmed that the meeting was somewhat biased towards productivity and output, both added "but that's normal."

The above account is but one of ten meetings attended by the researcher. The general outcome from all observational studies was not noticeably different in terms of the weight recorded for each category.

5.3.6 The Company Mission - Employee Reflections

'A mission statement defines the purpose of the organisation, where it is going and the guiding principles it is following to get there. Source: Armstrong (1991a, p.271)

According to Argyris and Schon (1974,1978) a conflict may exist between what the enterprise and its senior members declare as their theory-of-action and their theory-in-use. They offer two types of "master designs" which they assert are held in peoples heads to tell them how to behave. The writer's believe there is a gap between the espoused design for action, which people believe they use, and the "design in use" that causes the action. These terms are synonymous with the terms theory-of-action and espoused theory introduced in chapter two. To assess whether senior management espoused theory differed from the researchers observations, the results of the series of observational studies described above were contrasted with the organisation's mission statement.

The company mission can be viewed as an important managerial statement describing the values adopted by the company. It focuses attention on purpose, it conveys top management's vision about the future, and can be used as a lever for change (Armstrong, 1991). However, as Armstrong (1991b) also reminds us

“management behaviour must be consistent with its declared mission otherwise, the statement is devalued and loses credibility.”

Often value statements are contained within mission statements. Indeed, the projection of key values is often seen as the purpose of the document. A value statement expresses basic beliefs on the behaviour which it believes to be good for the organisation and on what the organisation believes to be important (Armstrong, 1991c). A value statement defines core values in areas such as care for customers, concerns for people creating what Handy calls a 'concern culture', market/customer orientation, quality, enterprise etc.

To illustrate the interplay between mission and value statements the following is the Company 'mission statement' and value statement. It is copied verbatim to help understanding as to the discussion and interviewee comments that follow:

THE COMPANY

MISSION

The Company's mission is to continually improve in our goal to satisfy our customers' needs, and by this action, to assure the financial strength, growth and longevity of our company. Our mission is built upon the belief in the VALUE of our employees, our customers, our owners, our suppliers and the GUIDING PRINCIPLES of continual improvement in everything we do.

VALUES AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Our business exists as a team of PEOPLE. We value the effort and contribution made by each of our employees. Involvement and teamwork shall be a fundamental philosophy.

Every decision will be guided by the desire to benefit our CUSTOMERS. It is imperative that we seek out their needs and wants in order to satisfy them. Our customers are the reason that we have our mission to be in business

In order to strive for customer satisfaction, we must continuously improve the QUALITY of our people, products and services.

For our business to prevail, we must produce PROFITS as a level to attract capital that will provide for our long term growth and prosperity. This is our measure of how we are succeeding in meeting our

mission.

The results of our efforts which create business are PRODUCTS AND SERVICES. They will be the most innovative and successful in the industry.

The CONDUCT of our company and each employee will be of the highest ideals of responsible citizenship in our industry and in the world community.

We are in a changing world. We must CONTINUOUSLY IMPROVE in all aspects of our business in order to meet the challenges of tomorrow.

Planning for deliberate GROWTH will mean new opportunities for Company employees. Dedication to continuous improvement must be recognized. This will result in more satisfied customers, expanding markets, new jobs, and will ensure the company's longevity.

The Company, its CUSTOMERS and its SUPPLIERS must develop mutually beneficial and profitable relationships in order to achieve our mission. This team approach is our "PARTNERS-IN-PROFIT" philosophy.

Senior management provided the above statement to all employees. It was also posted on the walls of the Company reception area.

The Company suggests that it values the effort and contribution made by each employee. Involvement and teamwork '...shall be a fundamental philosophy.' The establishment of team-leaders and various quality committees suggests that the Company was practising what it preaches. Crucially, the key aim of the team approach is to result in a 'partners-in-profit' philosophy. Interesting although unsurprising, profit is confirmed as the overall Company philosophy.

Chapter two argued that decision making is synonymous with management. The focus of management decision is therefore important because it inherently concentrates on key values adopted by the decision maker. A key element of the mission statement is clear:

'Every decision will be guided by the desire to benefit our customers.'

Nonetheless, the mission states a belief in the value of employees, customers, owners and suppliers - the key stakeholders. A unitarian view would suggest that if the customer is satisfied then all other stakeholder's will be similarly satisfied. Employees keep hold of their jobs. Shareholders receive a good return for their investment, and suppliers prosper. However, what happens when decisions offend or, for example, do not help the maintenance of the psychological contract between employer and employee? In this situation, the general context that the organisation provides would be negatively associated with employee commitment levels.

Analysis of the Company mission statement provides some evidence of a disconnect between senior management theory-in-use as witnessed during observation of meetings, and senior management espoused theory as indicated by the Company mission statement. However, the researcher was not overly impressed or confident as to the result of the above analysis. Consequently, qualitative inquiry described later in this chapter was used to assist understanding.

The following studies were used to ascertain senior management theory-of-action as perceived by the closest recipients of senior management theory-of-action, the organisation's employees.

5.4 Research Study: Senior Management Theory-of-action and Employee Perspectives.

5.4.1 Aim of the study

The aim of this study was to ascertain employee perspectives in relation to what they feel are the actual values and goals adopted and demonstrated by senior management as part of their theory-of-action.

5.4.2 Introduction

What makes an organisation outperform its competitors is the successful use of its most vital resource - people (Sparrow and Pettigrew, 1988; Handy, 1991; Peters and Waterman, 1982; Guest, 1987; Armstrong, 1995; Pascale and Athos, 1982). Given strong support from key writers on the subject of the value of people, it is

surprising not to find too many specific examples of an organisation specifically promoting the value of employees as part of their theory-of-action. British Airways 'Putting People First' (Hopfl et al, 1992) being an obvious contradiction.

Many companies have attempted to promote organisational values by using re-educative methods (Sparrow and Pettigrew, 1988; Storey, 1992; Fullerton and Price, 1991). In a survey described briefly in chapter two (IoD 1993-1998), Director's were simply asked to provide three priority values that they expound and promote within their organisation. The importance of profitability, productivity and growth consistently emerged. During the same survey the researcher raised the issue of 'people' as a valued resource. Most, but not all Directors acknowledged a need to utilise human resources effectively, some suggested that they espouse the importance of people. Nevertheless, more than 90 per cent agreed that 'in reality it is the bottom line that is given the most consideration.' Only after debate that focussed on the importance of maximising shareholder wealth rather than bottom-line profitability did Director's acknowledge the value of human capital. This study aims to explore employee perceptions as to the values and goals expounded by senior management. Importantly, evidence that senior management theory-of-use is a conventional 'Model-One' would include high priority for the universal value of competitiveness, and overall focus on instrumental goals.

5.4.3 Subjects and Procedure

A sample of thirty-six employees was chosen at random to represent all levels within the organisation. Subjects were chosen using quota sampling to ensure that the sample conformed to various aspects of the total population of the Company. The sample was equalised as to subjects gender and level within the organisation. The administration procedure emphasised that each respondent should "consider their own perception of the values and goals that senior management emphasise and use when deciding for the organisation", i.e. values used during the implementation of senior manager theory-of-action.

A simple questionnaire was constructed which identified and listed several value-based items. Similar to the main analytic survey, subjects were requested to rate

each value-based item using a Likert scale of 1-7. The function of the questionnaire was to ascertain and weight employee perceptions as to each value and then to ascertain differences in intensity between values.

The 'value-based' items included in the questionnaire were:

Table 5.7 Values-in-action

Condition	Value
C1	The value of 'Care for the customer'
C2	The value of 'Competitiveness'
C3	The value of 'Cost Control'
C4	The value of 'Enterprise and innovation'
C5	The value of 'Equitable treatment for employees'
C6	The value of 'Excellence'
C7	The value of 'Business Growth'
C8	The value of 'Market Share'
C9	The value of 'High performance'
C10	The value of 'Developmental Opportunities for employees'
C11	The value of 'Quality'
C12	The value of 'Social Responsibility to the Community'
C13	The value of 'Profitability'
C14	The value of 'Balancing needs of the Org and Employees'

5.4.4 Results

Employees accepted the above values as relating to those expressed by senior management. The mean scores illustrate that among the values which employees perceived they strongly agreed with and which represented the organisational values expressed by senior management action are shown in Table 5.8.

Table 5.8 Table Illustrating Employee Perception of High-Priority Organisational Goal/Values

<u>Priority</u>	<u>Description of Organisational Goal/Value</u>	<u>Mean</u>
1	The value of 'Profitability'	6.472
2	The value of 'Cost Control'	6.194
3	The value of 'Care for the customer'	6.056
4	The value of 'Market Share'	6.028
5	The value of 'High performance'	5.833
6	The value of 'Competitiveness'	5.806
7	The value of 'Business Growth'	4.917
8	The value of 'Excellence'	4.722
9	The value of 'Quality'	4.694
10	The value of 'Enterprise and innovation'	4.667
		(n = 36)

Values which employees perceived their organisation considered least are shown in Table 5.9.

Table 5.9 Table Illustrating Employee Perception of least priority Organisational Goal/Values

<u>Priority</u>	<u>Description of Organisational Goal/Value</u>	<u>Mean</u>
11	The value of 'Social responsibility to the Community'	3.278
12	The value of 'Equitable treatment for employees'	3.194
13	The value of 'Developmental Opportunities for employees'	2.528
14	The value of 'Balancing Org needs and employees needs'	2.444
		(n = 36)

5.4.5 Findings

The results clearly suggest that respondents consider senior management theory-of-action prioritises economic and instrumental outcomes. Employee perceptions also suggest many values relating to employee need and the wider community are not as strongly valued as economic goals. In many ways the result provides further

evidence as to senior management adopted theory-of-action. It also complements the researchers interpretation of the Company mission statement.

5.5 Senior management Theory-of-action: The Organisational Climate

The aim of the study was to ascertain perceptions of employees in relation to the climate of their organisation and to relate findings to previous results.

It was predicted that values expressed by the senior management group would be identifiable through employees perceptions of the organisational climate. The hypothesis was that climatic aspects more closely related to employee values would be regarded by employees as less in evidence as compared with climatic aspects viewed as results orientated.

5.5.1 Introduction

An organisational climate is seen as the overall feeling employees hold about the atmosphere of the organisation and is related to the characteristics and quality of organisational culture (French et al, 1985). Studies have shown that a positive climate that encourages feelings of warmth, support and identity is related to higher levels of employee commitment (Luthans, Wahl, and Steinhaus, 1992; Litwin and Stringer, 1968; Mathieu and Zajac, 1990). Sager and Johnson (1989) indicated that perceived management climate was a significant determinant of employee commitment.

The study focusses on employee perceptions because employee motivation towards committing to their organisation is likely to be related to their perception of the organisation. Therefore, employee perception about the overall climate or feeling of the organisation is important. Categories used in the survey were guided but not constrained by those offered by Litwin and Stringer (1968).

5.5.2 Subjects and Procedure

Thirty-six employees representing a cross section of Company personnel were provided with a questionnaire listing seventeen climatic/cultural aspects. The aspects chosen were those most frequently used to assist analysis of Company

culture (Luthans, 1992). Subjects were chosen using quota sampling to ensure that the sample conformed to various aspects of the total population of the Company.

Each subject was asked if they would consider each aspect in relation to the climate of their organisation and score each using a seven-point scale. A score of one would suggest that employees strongly disagreed that the aspect was evident within the climate of their organisation. A score of seven would suggest that they strongly agreed that the aspect was manifest within the climate of their organisation.

5.5.3 Results

Table 5.10 Priority Positioning of Climate Characteristics as Perceived by Respondents

Description	Mean	Climatic position
Tasks orientated	6.167	First
Results orientated	6.056	Second
Reactive	5.861	Third
Friendly	5.806	Fourth
Action Orientated	5.056	Fifth
Hierarchical	5.000	Sixth
Stressful	4.667	Seventh
Bureaucratic	4.611	Eighth
Cooperative	4.583	Ninth
Political	4.556	Tenth
Status Conscious	4.444	Eleventh
Relaxed	4.222	Twelfth
Innovative	4.111	Thirteenth
Open	3.556	Fourteenth
Formal	3.028	Fifteenth
People orientated	2.861	Sixteenth
Pro-active	2.583	Seventeenth

It should be noted that results may inadvertently be seen as identifying a single uniform organisational culture. Such a view of culture is not too realistic. Generally, individuals share beliefs corresponding to norms, dominant values, the climate and management style at differing degrees. It is better to state that findings illustrate the prioritising of the characteristics of the climate of the organisation. Nevertheless, the results provide a picture of the dominant climate that represents the overall consensus of employee perceptions.

Table 5.10 provides some indication as to the organisations response to its external environment. For example, not overly proactive or innovative. However, most aspects focus on the internal environment, for instance, employees perceive it as fairly friendly but a little hierarchical and stressful. Of particular interest to this work are the mean scores that suggest that the climate is perceived as more task and results orientated than people orientated. For instance, earlier findings suggested employee commitment was strongly associated with a need for consideration by senior management. Halpin and Winer (1957) made a distinction between leadership styles based on 'consideration' or 'initiating structure'. Such categorisation is in line with Blake and Mouton's (1964) distinction between concern for people and concern for production.

Blake and Mouton's (1964) managerial grid suggests that the key characteristic required of 'leaders' is that they can balance task and instrumental considerations with people and process concerns. Figure 5.2 illustrates this idea in relation to this study. Concern for production is the emphasis that management gives to results and profits. Blake and Mouton's concern for production and Argyris and Schon's (1978) assertion as to characteristics of a global theory-of-action are complimentary. Concern for people is the emphasis that management give to subordinates in relation to their needs. Blake and Mouton (1964, 1978, 1981) argue that 'Concern for' shows the character and assumptions that underlie managements own basic attitude to management. The theory was designed so individual managers could be rated and rate themselves within the grid numbering system. Clearly, it also has a place as to clarifying what theory-of-action senior management use.

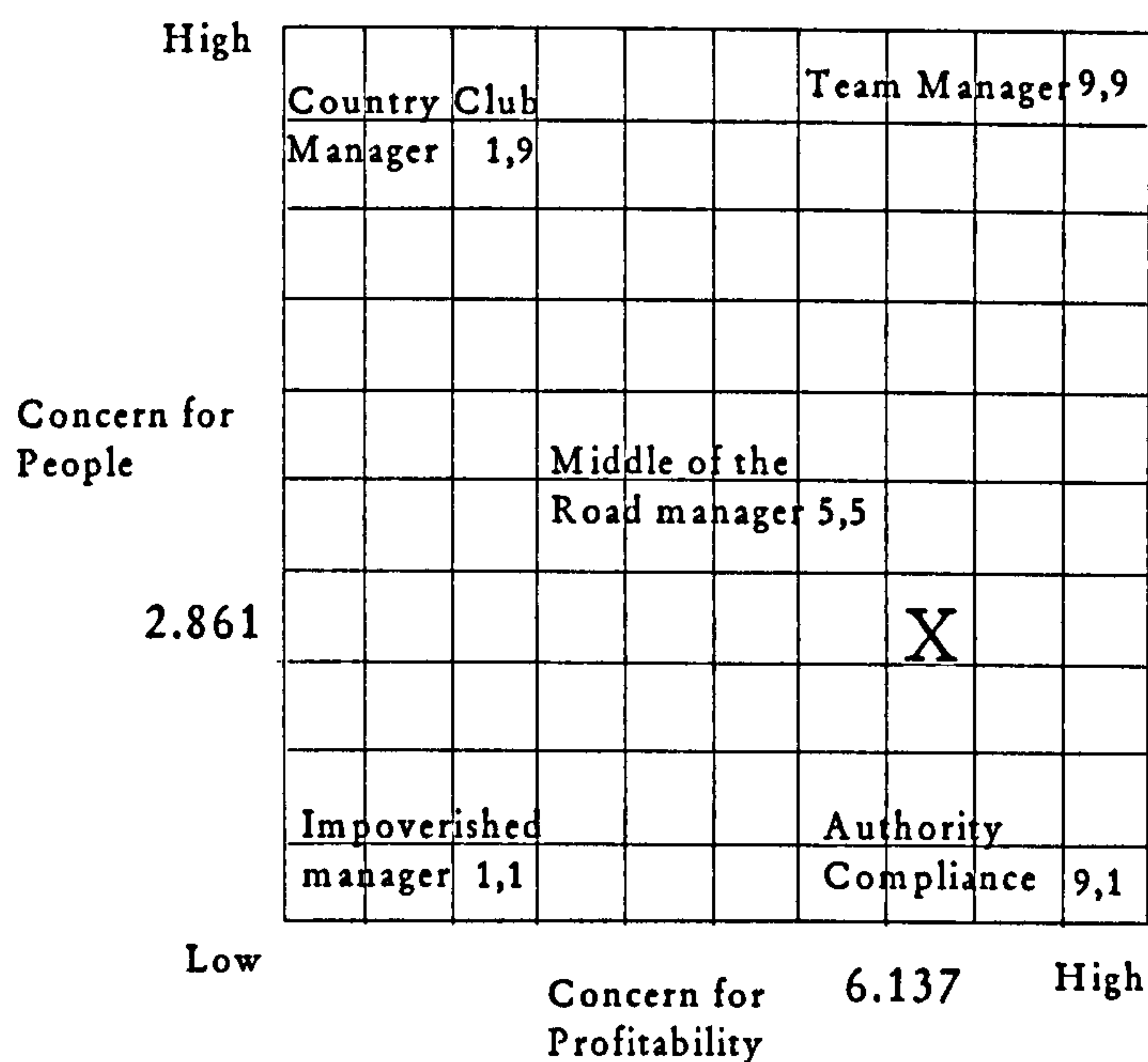


Figure 5.1 Blake and Mouton's (1978) Managerial/Leadership Grid

Figure 5.2 shows two mean scores representing employee perception of management concern for the task = 6.167 and concern for people = 2.861.

Specific employee feelings were also sought. Personal construct theory enabled constructs to be identified which employees generally shared. Nine continua were formed. Each subject's rating could then be analysed for each continuum. For example, whether the climate was more stressful than relaxed, more friendly than formal etc.

Table 5.11 Personal Constructs relating to Company Climate

Subjects considered their Company to be:

More friendly than formal

More action orientated than bureaucratic

More cooperative than status conscious

More hierarchical than innovative

More reactive than pro-active

More stressful than relaxed

More political than open and communicative

5.5.4 Findings

The analysis provided in this study support earlier findings that the organisation transmits values through the climate of the Company. Just as senior management make decisions that are more closely related to economic 'instrumental' factors as opposed to employee values and needs, the climate of the organisation is perceived as far more task and results orientated than people orientated. The similarity also suggests that besides observing their senior managers theory-in-use by means of decisions they take and the priorities they assign to employee related concerns and human resource policies, employees may intrinsically use the climate as a communication source to learn and/or confirm the priority values of the organisation.

The next piece of research examines senior management values as expressed within employees perceptions of management style.

5.6 Senior management Theory-of-action: Perceived Management Style

The previous study suggested that a balance of task and process within the Company was not in evidence. This study explores the aspect of management style. Management style describes the way managers set about achieving results through their employees. It is how managers behave as leaders and how they exercise authority. The way or style by which managers manage is based on beliefs and values. Commitment can be viewed as reflecting value standards basic to an individuals existence (Werkmeister, 1967). The link between employee commitment and senior management values was discussed in section 3.8. Moreover, a moderate relationship between employee work values and commitment has been found (Kidron, 1978). Literature and case study material related to the need for an open democratic style of management was considered in section 3.6. Employee perceptions as to management style are investigated in relation to both senior management and immediate management so that a comparison or contrast can be made.

5.6.1 Subjects and Procedure

Subjects were chosen using quota sampling to ensure that the sample conformed to

various aspects of the total population of the Company. Each subject was requested to score their senior management as to various styles of management ranging from 'autocratic directive' or 'laissez-faire', 'task centred' to 'people centred', 'distant' to 'approachable/accessible', 'hard/tough' or 'soft' style of management etc. The 'styles' were chosen because they have been used extensively as part of attitude surveys. A further study adopted the same procedure but requested subjects to score each style in relation to 'immediate' management rather than senior management.

5.6.2 Results

Table 5.12 Mean scores for 'Senior Management Style' as Perceived by Employees

	Autocratic	Task centred	People centred	Distant	Approachable	Hard	Soft
Mean	3.944	6.194	2.472	3.528	3.361	3.472	2.694
SD	2.460	1.117	1.444	2.547	2.193	1.630	1.215

n = 36

Table 5.13 Mean scores for 'Immediate Management Style' as Perceived by Employees

	Autocratic	Task centred	People centred	Distant	Approachable	Hard	Soft
Mean	2.667	6.167	3.694	2.861	4.472	4.472	2.972
SD	2.217	1.424	2.136	2.416	2.384	2.384	1.404

n = 36

5.6.3 Discussion

Employee perception as to management style can be viewed as a reflection of their theory-in-use. The impact of management style on employee attitudes dates from the Hawthorne studies (Mayo, 1949). In fact, the notion that open, participative managers engender higher levels of commitment from their employees is a

fundamental assumption of the human relations movement. Well known supporters of this assumption include Likert (1967), Locke and Latham (1990), and McGregor (1960). This study suggests that in comparison with immediate management, employees consider senior managements managing style to be very task orientated, a little distant and more likely to use 'the stick' rather than 'carrot' to motivate employees. The reader should bear in mind that two of the subjects were Board members of the Company. They were generally as critical as subjects working on the shop-floor.

The result appears to help validation of previous research studies that senior management are more task centred than people centred and demonstrate this aspect as part of their theory-of-action.

The standard deviation as to whether subjects perceived 'immediate' management as using a people centred management style was $sd=2.136$. This suggests that some subjects thought immediate management were people orientated. In contrast, the standard deviation concerning senior management and people centred management style was merely $sd=1.444$. The standard deviation as for senior management using a 'task centred' style of management was only $sd=1.117$. Immediate management style is also perceived as strongly task orientated, although subjects generally thought that immediate management were a little more person orientated than senior management. During depth interviews (section 5.7) many employees reported that the difference was that they perceive immediate management as pressured to adopt the 'task' orientation wanted by senior management. The senior management whom the researcher interviewed also stated that they too were adopting the values and goals wanted by the organisation. It seems that while employees provide mitigating circumstances for their immediate managers 'task related' style, they appear unwilling to do so for senior management. Employees may be adopting double standards. Nevertheless, employee commitment to the organisation seems affected.

5.7 Qualitative Enquiry

The use of interview in support of a phenomenological approach to field research

was discussed in the previous chapter. The researcher interviewed forty subjects on three occasions over a period of eighteen months. The duration of each interview averaged one hour and a half.

Most employees related the reasons why they were not more committed to the organisation. Sample but representative comments are divided by level of employee. Categorisation of comment helps illustrate the subtle but meaningful differences in emphasis each level of employee gives to the subject area.

Senior Management comment

"We seem to be able to change systems but not people's attitudes and beliefs."

"If I were given new and greater challenges I could be more committed."

"One of my greatest strengths is to develop people but in the role I am given there is no room to do so."

"Company commitment would grow if the workforce was more stable and we had good relations."

Middle Management comment

"TQM has led to greater employee empowerment. There are now more objective measurements."

"We are only as good as last months figures."

"Senior management simply fail to communicate - they don't understand your problems. They are too tied up with their own problems to give attention to what is required by others."

"...all are trying their best."

"Team leaders and supervisors are de-motivated. You cannot promote TQM in an

atmosphere of mistrust. Senior management team must take responsibility for this situation rather than simply apportioning blame elsewhere."

Supervisors/Team-leader comment

"...my commitment - I now give more than a 100%."

"Poor commitment is more and more to do with less recognition - we are doing more of managements work."

"Management care more for profit than people. Poor atmosphere, workforce demotivated, lack of recognition. My commitment would improve if these things were attended to."

"The Company tends to miss the people element of the equation."

"Change management style."

"Senior management need to be more approachable - acknowledge the workforce - we are a good Company."

"Senior management need to involve and show appreciation of people one level below their first line."

Administration comment

"People are not happy - this is shown in their commitment to the Company."

"Employees are simply a commodity. Management have lost sight of what people are actually doing and what they need to do what they do."

"Recognition is only given to the yes men involved in Quality meetings, but - we all matter."

"Senior management do not care about employees."

"We need a different management style, more personal approach to employees."

Shop-floor comment

"The management do not show they care about its workforce or its employees welfare."

"I would be more committed if the Company respected us more, treated us as equals."

"The Company expects loyalty but rarely shows it to employees."

"If incentives such as pay and recognitions were improved. They give no thanks."

"I need security for my family."

"Management put cash first, commitment to its workforce is lost."

"I am looking for employment elsewhere - where I can feel more committed."

"...need more recognition from senior management - this would occur if senior management gave more consideration to what motivates us."

"...better salary and some respect by middle and upper management."

*"...if I wasn't looked down upon by sneering authoritarian management - the senior management team do not give a **** for the workforce."*

"...if management made me feel appreciated from time to time."

"The Company must show loyalty to the workforce before we would put more effort in."

"...if management took more interest in its workforce - a bit more open."

"Senior management see facts and figures - not people - them and us."

The worth of a qualitative approach is clear. In many respects comment recorded verbatim are self-explanatory. One can conclude that as for employee commitment, responses seem focussed upon the role of senior management. Generally, senior management comments suggest that they wish to improve commitment. Some offer reasons for the current level of commitment. Others suggest a powerlessness and confusion about how the situation can be improved. Often, ownership is not accepted. Explanation as to poor commitment is not internalised but levelled at the external context.

Many middle managers are matter of fact about the present managerial processes, for example TQM, Sales and measurement. Others acknowledge that there is a problem in communication and it probably relates to senior management. Importantly, middle management tend to emphasise aspects typical of someone under direct pressure to comply with conventional senior management theory-of-action. Supervisor/Team-leader's seem more focussed on the need for recognition as the way forward to improved commitment to the organisation. Comments also confirm lack of balance between hard issues such as costs, profits and people issues.

Administrative staff seem more blatant about what would make them more committed to the organisation. They point to the inappropriateness of management style. Shop-floor employees combine incentives related to recognition with those concerned with wage/bonus and working conditions. Job security seems a priority. This is not surprising given the positive relationship between job security and employee commitment (Arnold and Feldman, 1982; Ashford et al, 1989; Greenhalgh, 1980; Mobley, 1982).

5.7.1 Training and Development Issues

Eighty-five per cent of those interviewed felt that improved training and development would improve their commitment to the organisation. When asked what appropriate training and development would help their commitment, the following typical answers predominated:

"...general business awareness perhaps."

"I don't really need training to do my job - but it would show that management are considerate."

"The Company is trying to work a flanker, they have put in Japanese TQ ideas without any attention to employee requirements."

"...the little training I have had has not really helped."

"...we only need to train to an optimal level only." (Middle manager comment)

"Yes - I believe it would help my commitment but I'm not sure in terms of my job how useful training is."

"We don't develop people - I've never been developed, where are the career plans and succession planning processes - you have to stick your head up a long way before you get noticed." (middle manager comment)

Middle and senior management views about training were factual, logical and rational. Training and development for management was a process of providing the necessary knowledge and skills. The meaning of training and development as a means to encourage application and willingness was not a thought process which appeared to come automatically to the minds of many middle and senior management employees. When the researcher pursued this assumption, many managers commented that to spend money on training it is necessary to have a fair degree of substance about an adequate return for the outlay. *"We need proof before we acknowledge the psychological impact of training and development."*

Interviewees who had received more than five days training were more enthusiastic about the benefits of training. An item of the analytical questionnaire simply asked responders if they received appropriate training would it aid an improvement in their commitment to their organisation. Eighty per cent said they thought it would improve their commitment. Employees were asked during depth interviews whether they could put a measure on the overall effect of appropriate training upon

their commitment to the Company. Seventy per cent of those interviewed were willing to forecast a probable percentage improvement in their commitment to the Company. An average of 23 per cent improvement in commitment was endorsed.

Perceptions about improved commitment were not necessarily attributable to improved skills and knowledge but may relate to employee motivation. Employees perceive the psychological attributes contained within the process of being trained and developed assists them to feel that they are recognised. Thus, we could assume that the act of training and development is in part an aspect related to the psychological contract between employer and employee.

The result of investigation was that the researcher believes that despite the more obvious relationship and importance of training and development, it was not training *per se* that was at the root of negative comments about the training received. What seemed closer to the root of the issue was the belief that 'not being trained and developed' provided employees with another sign from senior management to the employee that they did not acknowledge them 'as an asset of the organisation.'

5.7.2 Employees and Senior Management Style and Values

Employees were encouraged to provide their perceptions as to immediate and senior management style and values. The following are representative sample comments:

"If you asked the Company if it is employee oriented it would say yes, but, it is simply not true."

"...senior management style.....they manage in a way that suggests - I am the boss what has it got to do with you."

"...some very good foremen [immediate managers], some not up to it."

"I am here because I want to be here, shop-floor people are there because they want to be there, well generally - we need self discipline. A lot of these people are not committed to the Company, that's just their choice - its not mine'." (middle manager)

"Employees abuse my trust - they do not show commitment to the Company." (senior manager)

"Management don't have the interests of the staff at heart - that's their key problem."

"There is dissatisfaction with upper management - no firm leadership - MD is interested in profit only, other managers not even that."

"...knowing that senior management care would assist my commitment - they want us to be committed - but they don't motivate us to do it." (administrator)

5.7.3 Characteristics of Effective Management

Questioning prompted interviewees to list characteristics of a manager they had worked for who was most likely to make them feel more motivated and thereby encourage their commitment to their job and the organisation. Characteristics / attributes offered by interviewees are listed:

- | | |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| * considerate | * efficient |
| * good man-manager | * involved |
| * democratic | * trusted |
| * listens | * approachable |
| * firm but fair | * developmental |
| * communicates | * gives feedback |
| * knowledgeable | * understanding |
| * clear goals | * committed to work |
| * committed to staff | * respected and has respect |
| * provides time for employees | * acts with integrity |

Figure 5.2 Characteristics of Effective Management.

Clearly, effective management according to employee perceptions are not associated with field research findings related to senior management actual theory-in-use. The need for recognition of employees as part of an effective management style is predominant.

5.7.4 Employees Substantiation of their Perceptions

The cross section of employees were encouraged during interview to relate their perception about whether their immediate and senior management assist or reduce their level of commitment to their organisation and to substantiate their perceptions.

Forty-four per cent stated that the way their immediate manager managed the job task positively affected their commitment. Thirty-three per cent said that the way their immediate manager handled the job task reduced their commitment. Twenty-three said it did not make any difference to their commitment to the Company. When urged to consider whether their immediate manager's ability in managing them had affected their commitment to the Company, 39 per cent stated that they were positively affected by the way their immediate manager managed them. Forty-two per cent said that it lowered their commitment to the Company, and 19 per cent said that the way their immediate management managed them made no difference to their commitment to the Company.

The researcher urged subjects to consider and respond as to whether senior management's ability to manage them as employees affected their commitment to the Company. Nineteen per cent said that the way senior management managed employees helped increase or sustain their commitment to the organisation. However, 75 per cent stated it reduced their commitment to the Company. Only 6 per cent said that the way senior management managed employees had no affect on their commitment to the Company.

Verbalised statements about the affect of immediate management included:

"...he talks to people."

"...he really has too much on his plate - too many people."

"...an arrogant, poor communicator and only interested in production figures not interested in the people that get the figures for him."

"He's got to make decisions which will be unpopular."

"He just does not have any time to spend with me."

"...my immediate manager.....well, our department works well, good teamwork. He listens to suggestions - its just senior management."

"My boss is good at organizing, gets you motivated, certainly communicates well as far as the job is concerned."

"...approachable, reasonable attitude towards you - sometimes does not respond to issues of importance."

"I've worked for a lot worse - stickler for charts- probably he doesn't have the time."

When asked to substantiate their views about senior management, comments included:

"...they go about profit and efficiency well but they don't address the fundamentals, sometimes we don't even see them."

"...attitude is them and us, don't even say hello. Only time you feel acknowledged is when they need you."

"TQM driven - but standards fall when they need them to. I don't believe they are honest..certainly no give - only take."

"They put the time in but not necessarily towards employees."

"They want something to happen - lot of good people below who are not listened to...they do not try to break down barriers, reduce fear or adopt any methods which could increase trust-they just don't care. They should show more consideration, be more open....its one way around here."

"They are the main cause of the lack of commitment shown by employees."

"...invisible in mind and body to those under them."

"...obviously busy, MD seems approachable....always in a meeting but meeting not about us."

The general trend points to the view that senior management perceived lack of consideration is responsible for much of what employees see as their lack of commitment to their Company. It is interesting to the writer that 'them' is often quoted as being responsible. It is used in connection with phrasing such as 'Them and Us' and 'Them up there.' However, immediate management are also criticised. Nevertheless, for immediate management, interviewees often offered mitigating circumstances. This was far less noticeable when senior management were the focus of interviewees comments. Comments also substantiate the notion that management are more interested in task related issues.

5.7.5 Characteristics of 'Recognition' as Perceived by Employees

The researcher asked interviewees what they thought was meant by 'recognition of an employee' and to relate their understanding of the term to their present perceptions about their organisation:

"...acknowledge ideas...better facilities."

"More concern for people - if senior management showed it I would respond - I would be totally committed."

"Money has got to be a prime motivator for factory work."

"...money yes - but I don't feel we get appreciation from senior management."

"...pay, I suppose so, but less obvious a 'thank you' in the way we are handled."

"First, pay. Second, achievement of goals and the recognition that I have achieved, Third, treat me right."

"...they think they have given you recognition by paying you - they have not - a well done is crucial - we have needs."

"Recognition is treating me as of importance."

"...pay crucial, praise is useless - its plastic and I wouldn't believe it anyway.....real consideration perhaps'. The researcher progressed to ascertain that 'real' consideration is an honest approach to acknowledging the importance of people."

It seems that recognition as perceived by employees means many things. It is not surprising that pay is high on the list. Nevertheless, employees strongly relate to their understanding of recognition as acknowledgement, awareness of 'others' existence, and their need to receive consideration. Such interpretation is more closely related to definitions of natural rather than instrumental recognition.

5.7.6 Values in Equilibrium?

Analytic survey suggested that the need for cohesion between individual and organisational values was strongly associated with employee commitment.

Employees were encouraged in interview to explore the area of how their values and the Company's values (if different) were communicated. They were also asked to what extent each employee felt involved in the process noted in the mission and value statements, and how they represented same within the Company.

Discussion evolved from the following questions:

- A. Do you feel that the Company values are well communicated by means of the Company mission and value statement?
- B. To what extent do you feel that your values and the Company's values are equally represented in the Company mission and value statements?

C. To what extent do you feel that your values and the Company's values are equally represented in practice?

Comments arising from discussion were:

"...they pay, and pay is seen as all we value."

"Typical company....mission statements have no substance in reality."

"There seems little point in being involved with the Company mission - it really doesn't concern us."

"...nice to talk about my values....its a pity no one from the Company is here to hear my answers. Money is seen as the only thing that motivates us. The mission is more about planning in the Company."

"I don't feel at all involved in the Company mission.....people do not feel part of this terminology. If they (management) say something (as in the value statement) it should happen. They don't do what they preach."

"My values are not represented in practice."

"I am involved in the mission through doing my job well. I do not believe my values are at all represented in practice, but they are supposed to be per the official statements."

Interviews confirmed that employee related goals and values were seen by employees as treated as unimportant compared with financial aspects. Often employees stated that employee related goals and values were "not a priority at all" in their organisation. One participant suggested that "Employees are only here to row the profitability boat."

The latter half of field research explored the nature of the theory-of-action of senior management which was in use during field work. Various methods were incorporated and ranged from personality instruments and direct observation to

structured and qualitative depth interviews. It can be concluded, that senior management self-assessed personality profiles suggest a strong preference to achieve. By implication, senior management most commonly achieve by means of effectively and efficiently meeting financial performance targets. Thus, the economic-rational approach to management is maintained. Observational studies confirm this view.

The results appertaining to employee perceptions of organisation climate, priorities, values and management style can be combined with self-assessed senior management personality traits and direct observation of senior management behaviour. The outcome is that, in this study, senior management display a conventional economic-rational and 'Model-One' theory-of-action. Moreover, the first half of field research provided evidence that poor employee commitment was strongly associated with senior management action. It can therefore be concluded, that in answer to the second key research question, in this study, employee commitment appears to be adversely affected by senior management adoption of a conventional theory-of-action.

5.8 Summary

Field research used a combined approach of quantitative and qualitative methods. By using personal construct theory, the researcher identified common employee work motivations. Utility item banks related to employee motivation, values and perceptions. Observation of senior management decision assisted analysis as to senior management theory-of-action and a more general research study involved assessment of Directors personality. Qualitative enquiry sought depth while testing the validity of analytic survey results and explanations.

It can be concluded that in contrast to the use of conventional senior management theory-of-use, employees require consideration of their needs. Field studies in this chapter clearly suggest that employee needs are related to many motivational aspects. Senior management theory-of-action and employee need for recognition, consideration and confidence in senior management appear to be highly influential regarding employee commitment.

Supportive evidence has been provided for the notion that compared with more

conventional work motivation factors, senior management employee related action is strongly associated with employee commitment. Moreover, certain aspects of senior management theory-of-action have been identified as strongly associated with employee commitment levels. Findings also support the view that the use of a conventional senior management theory-of-action is likely to affect employee commitment adversely. Commitment at shop-floor level seems particularly sensitive. This is an aspect considered as to specificity / generalisation of findings in the next chapter.

A catch twenty-two scenario can easily exist between senior management and employees. For example, senior management theory-of-action is strongly influenced by their need to achieve. Consideration of the global theory-of-action (Argyris and Schon, 1978) and economic-rationalism in chapter two suggest that a senior manager's achievement need is likely to be locked-in to the economic imperatives of the Company. As a consequence of senior management theory-of-action, employees, especially those distanced from senior management, believe the organisation does not fulfill their needs. Consequently, their commitment to the Company suffers. Simultaneously, senior management may believe that employee commitment is not at an optimal level and therefore they are reluctant to consider employee needs. Thus, senior management maintain their 'Model-One' theory-of-action, and employees maintain sub-optimised commitment levels. Argyris and Schon (1974,1978) would declare this finding a prime indication of single-loop learning.

Before concluding the study, the next chapter considers the vital issue of whether the above findings can or should be generalised.

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CHAPTER 6

Consolidation and Reflection

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Consolidation and Reflection

6.0 Introduction

Field research in the previous chapter supports the notion and key premise of the study. Senior management theory-of-action is associated with employee commitment. What senior management say, do, internalise and prioritise has the potential strongly to influence employee motivation and subsequent long term employee commitment to their organisation. Field research conclusions also support the notion that in this study, use by senior management of conventional 'Model-One' theory-of-action (Argyris and Schon, 1974, 1978) is likely to have adverse affects on employee commitment. However, a key question is how specific or general are the findings? This chapter explores specificity then moves toward study conclusions and reflections.

6.1 Specificity of Field Research

Clearly, field research in chapter five is related to one organisation in one industry and marketplace. Moreover, despite the Company's European standing, data collection concentrated on the organisation's UK subsidiary. Reasons for this approach were provided in chapter four and relate to the writer's wish to gain enriched data over a long period. Nonetheless, the need for additional and continuous research to assist validation is fervently acknowledged.

To test specificity of data, from the outset of research the writer wished to incorporate the collection of information helpful in addressing four key questions. First, could Kawneer UK Ltd be described as a typical organisation in relation to sector, market, structure, physical properties and operation? Second, what would be the result of comparing Kawneer employee statistics such as age and gender and their commitment levels with findings from previous studies? Third, if two other organisations were chosen randomly, how would findings compare as for the importance of the senior management role, their theory-of-action and employee commitment? Finally, would a review of literature post field research support or constrain researcher confidence as to generalising findings? These questions are explored and used for general discussion of field research in the following sections.

6.2 The Company

Is Kawneer UK typical or atypical of other organisations? Difference as for the type of industry are clear. The production process at Kawneer UK Ltd consists of the reshaping of aluminium blocks. The key product and service provided are the design, production and fitting of high-quality commercial industrial frames. Clearly, as for product, Kawneer UK Ltd is very different to most other organisations. Especially when compared with services offered by Public Services. Or is this true? This extreme example is discussed.

From a genericist perspective all organizations regardless of market or sector manage in a similar way. From a sectoral stance, Murray (1975) suggests that, what would constitute 'difference', would be that "the private sector operate from a criteria of rationalistic economic efficiency, and the public sector a criteria of consensus and compromise." Clearly, Kawneer with other private sector concerns see profit and/or cost reduction and efficiency as crucially important to both survival and growth. However, such imperatives are not the sole province of the private sector. Conversely, they are a key concern of Government.

The differentialist and contingent view suggests that there would appear to be fundamental differences in scope of the Public Service's, requiring 'special skills' i.e., relationships with clients, the need to understand public behaviour, the political context (at various levels) and be able to tolerate debate (consensus/democracy), the unbounded nature of the public services, to work within a different financial structure and to adopt wider responsibilities, including, those involving constitutional accountability and legal aspects (Cooper, 1993).

'The public domain is constituted not to replicate behaviour in the private sector but to support behaviour which is different'

Source: Stewart and Ranson, 1988

Budgeting that relates allocations to activities and the assessment of public 'needs' and not necessarily by measures of satisfactory return is arguably a meaningful difference between sectors. However, relevant public management skills are similar in nature to private sector management in that they involve dealing with

comparative complexity and ambiguity, clarifying multi-valued choices, and managing multiple and conflicting goals.

The context between sectors may differ. For example, despite Kawneer's wish to work with the community, unlike Public Sector organisations, it could not be seen as a prime objective. However, senior management, regardless of sector, can be viewed as adopting similar management principles and actions. Moreover, as Public Services increasingly adopt private sector management technique, the chance of the Kawneer results being specific and contingent to Kawneer and other private sector organisations will likely decrease. Consequently, it is also likely, that regardless of sector, employee commitment will be affected by senior management action.

Kawneer specific market strategy is confidential. However, its intent is to develop existing markets in Europe while considering market extension towards a more global presence. Moreover, its mission and vision which is recorded verbatim in the previous chapter, is not overly dissimilar to many organisations. This was confirmed during the study (IoD, 1997). The general principles of management regardless of marketplace are accepted. It was not uncommon for Directors attending the Salford University programme to comment that management is management no matter the product, industry or market.

How does Kawneer compare to other private sector organisations in terms of structure? Kawneer UK Ltd appears similar to many. For example, a formal functional structure is overlaid with several cross-functional project teams. The senior management team consist of a Managing Director (CEO) and Directors of Finance, Marketing, Production/Operations, Information Technology and Personnel manager. They also formed a quality management team consisting of senior management and representatives from all sections of the organisation. Such an operation and concentration on quality seem similar, if not typical, of the approach adopted by many organisations during the time of observation (IoD, 1993-1998).

The site, offices and manufacturing areas are modern and well designed. Work

areas and layouts appeared appropriate for both administration and production. As for physical properties, one might regard the company as very similar to many other organisations.

Examination of Kawneer as a typical organisational suggests it is different to other organisations in terms of product and location. However, similarities exist as to organisational structure, strategic intent, operation and general purpose. Additionally, initial analysis of possible sectoral difference does not disclaim the probable cross-sectoral relevance of field research findings.

6.2.1 Employee Demographics: Gender

One could reasonably expect a gender mix in most organisations. The sample of one hundred and ninety-six employees contained one-hundred and fifty-six male subjects and forty female subjects. The sample contains a gender mix and the mix is likely to be similar to other organisations incorporating heavy production equipment. Nonetheless, gender numbers in the sample are unequal. However, more important as to deciding the general nature of results, is whether previous research as to gender differences might suggest that employees at Kawneer relate to a specific rather than general population. Analysis of research findings compared to those at Kawneer may assist.

6.2.2 Gender: Comparisons with Earlier Research

Fortunately, as discussed in chapter three, the subject of employee commitment has received a fair degree of attention from academics. Consequently, comparing Kawneer demographic details with previous research was feasible. For example, if results as to commitment scores related to gender, age etc., at Kawneer were similar to results from other studies, then the sample population at Kawneer is more likely to typify other organisations.

Aven et al (1993) were able to locate twenty-seven studies to incorporate into their meta-analysis of gender and organizational affective commitment. They concluded that there were no sex differences in affective commitment.

However, others argue that gender may be an important factor due to the possible

association with certain familial obligations (Alutto et al, 1973; Gray, 1989). It might be assumed that women make fewer investments in their work-related roles, and are therefore likely to be less committed to their employing organisation or chosen career (Bruning & Snyder, 1983). Conversely, Grusky (1966) argued that women face greater barriers than men in employment, and therefore, having overcome obstacles, have stronger organisational commitment than men. GCSE and 'A' level millennium results in the UK might support Grusky's view. However, Aven et al (1993) suggest that overcoming such obstacles may influence continuance commitment but not one's affective commitment. The OCQ is more generally used to measure affective commitment. In this situation, Zeffane, 1994 only found a very modest significance of gender in favour of females being slightly more committed to their organisation.

6.2.3 Kawneer Results

Gender	n	Mean rank rating (OCQ)
Male	156	92.35
Female	40	122.47

Table 6.1 Kawneer Results: Gender

The Kruskal Wallis non-parametric test was used to ascertain whether the difference in rank mean scores was significant. It was also used because it allows for major differences in case numbers per group and allows for possible violation of the distribution assumptions of parametric tests. In view of previous research and Zeffane's (1994) findings, the test adopted a one-tailed hypothesis that significant difference will occur as for the independent variable (OCQ utility scores) and subjects gender and female subjects will score higher than male employees. A test for significance found for a one-tailed test ($p < .003$). This suggests that the probability (p) of a result occurring by chance is less than 1 per cent. The significance is in the predicted direction.

6.2.4 Discussion

This study's finding shows a variance in commitment scores for male and females.

The result was more significant than expected. Consequently, initial reaction might suggest the Kawneer findings are not representative of a general population. However, further analysis suggested that significant difference in gender commitment scores were more closely related to hierarchical position.

While accepting that females might generally be slightly more committed than males, the effect was radically diluted when data was re-analysed from the viewpoint of hierarchy.

6.3 Hierarchical Position: Previous Research

Position has been positively associated with organisational commitment (Salancik, 1977). Consequently, if the Kawneer sample is representative of other organisations, we would expect commitment scores to be higher at management and senior management levels than at shop-floor level.

Position in the firm is regarded as a relevant side-bet in that the higher the position (i.e. in supervisory or administrative positions), the more employees will have invested in the firm. Employees in higher positions gain seniority and status, making them less likely to leave (Allutto et al, 1973; Becker, 1960). Moreover, a higher position is a reward made by the employing firm and indicates that the work of the employee is being recognised, which should enhance identification with the organisation (Sheldon, 1971; Amernic and Aranya, 1983; Cohen and Gattiker, 1992).

6.3.1 Kawneer Results

Company employees (n=196) were asked to identify their position within the organisation based on five categories agreed with the Personnel Director of the Company, the categories were:

- Condition one - shop-floor employees
- Condition two - administrative staffs
- Condition three - supervisors/team-leaders
- Condition four- middle management
- Condition five - senior management.

Self categorisation was then checked and verified against the Company's personnel database.

Descriptive and differential statistics:

Table 6.2 Commitment Scores and Hierarchical Level

Condition	C1	C2	C3	C4	C5
Company level	Shop-floor	Admin	Supervisor	Mid Mgrs	Senior Mgrs
Mean rank	82.16	101.80	123.97	139.44	183.08

Kruskall-Wallis was used to test the one-tailed hypothesis that significant difference will occur as for the independent variable (OCQ utility scores) and subjects representing differing organisational levels. A test for significance found for a one-tailed test ($p < .01$). This suggests that the probability (p) of a result occurring by chance is less than 1 per cent. The significance is in the predicted direction. Senior managers score higher than middle managers on the organisational commitment utility and this relationship is repeated throughout employee levels within the Company. In this sample, shop-floor employees perceive that they are 100 per cent less committed than their senior management. Administrators and supervisors are approximately 50 per cent less committed than senior management.

6.3.2 Discussion

Hierarchical categories are similar to many organisations. Findings also suggest that the more senior an employee is (in hierarchical terms) the greater is their self-perception of their commitment to the organisation. This view would be consistent with other research investigating the affect of hierarchy on employee commitment. It therefore suggests that the Kawneer sample is representative of other organisations featured in previous research.

6.4 Age and Commitment

A further demographic used to ascertain the specificity of results was that of age.

One might expect employees of a medium sized company to typify a wide range of ages but with a distribution of ages similar to a normal distribution curve. Most employees would occupy the middle ground. Again, previous research as to age and commitment will be considered to clarify whether sample data is representative of other organisations.

6.4.1 Age and Commitment: Previous Research

Older individuals are assumed to have invested in, and are therefore more committed to, their employing organisation and chosen career (Alutto et al, 1973; Aranya and Jacobson, 1975). Most studies find that commitment increases with age (Hrebiniak and Alutto, 1972) and with job tenure (Luthans, Black and Taylor, 1987; Stevens, Beyer and Trice, 1978). However, most studies have typically been interpreted as supporting or not supporting side-bet theory continuous commitment based on the strength of the relationship between commitment and the individual's age or tenure (Meyer and Allen, 1984; Cohen and Lowenberg, 1990). Consequently, an instrument such as the OCQ which is used to measure affective commitment might not provide the same results.

6.4.2 Kawneer Results

Old and young employees were well represented in most levels within the Company. The exception was at senior management level where the sample was small and all were above twenty but below fifty years of age.

Table 6.3 Age and Employee Commitment

Age of Employee	n	Mean Rank of OCQ
20 or below	7	96.36
Between 21 and 30	51	86.93
Between 31 and 40	60	100.81
Between 41 and 50	46	99.17
Between 51 and 60	28	114.02
Over 60	4	98.75

The use of the Kruskal-Wallis test for difference was not significant.

6.4.3 Discussion

The general distribution of age seems similar to what one might expect in most organisations. It shows no bias towards a particular age group, most employees being between the ages of twenty-one to sixty. Previous research leans slightly towards the probability that older employees will have higher commitment than younger employees. However, as previously stated this finding is more to do with side-bet theory than with affective commitment levels which the OCQ measures. Low samples in certain conditions may have impaired the study.

To summarise, it can be stated that results compare reasonably well with results from previous research. There seems little need to be suspicious of the sample data used in the previous chapter. Females may be slightly more committed to their organisation than males. However, it is clear that a key associated factor with employee commitment is the position an employee holds within the organisation. This finding is particularly important because the OCQ scale concentrates on items related to affective commitment. Its use will have reduced the relevance of age differences commonly associated with continuance commitment. Explanation is central to the overall study. It follows the final two pieces of research as to the general nature of findings.

6.5 Parallel Studies

The researcher realised that validation of the overall hypothesis, results from field study, and methodological development would continue well after the submission had been completed. Nevertheless, two comparatively smaller research study's were conducted in parallel to the main field study. Their purpose was to shadow the findings of the main study and be used to compare results.

6.5.1 Shadow Study Number 1

This study used observational method over a period of four months within the national 'brown goods' supplier National Electronic Services Network Ltd.

The role of the researcher was to work with the Chief Executive and Board of Directors of the Company to provide independent research as to the way the Board was functioning within the organisation. The study involved a series of Board level

observations relating to senior management theory-of-action and their decision making processes. The aim was to monitor senior management decisions and the aspects which they normally considered as important factors relating to each decision. Results provide comparison with those of the main study in section 5.3.

6.5.1.1 Subjects, Procedure and Results

All members of the senior management team were involved in the research. Besides observation, various instruments were used relating to group processes, personality profiling, team-roles and team-building exercises. The researcher also conducted depth interviews with each member of the senior management team. Each member was requested to complete the following instruments:

* Belbin team-types inventory

* Concept 5.2 Saville and Holdsworth Occupational Personality Questionnaire

Similar to findings arising from the personality studies described in chapter five, members of the senior management team were fundamentally 'shapers.' Shapers are described by Belbin as dynamic, outgoing, challenging, and people who pressurise and maintain direction of the team towards agreed goals. Of interest was the comparatively lowly position of team-worker. The latter team type characterised by Meredith Belbin as the role that supports members, improves communications within the team and fosters team spirit.

Four of the five full time senior managers self-assessed themselves as having comparatively high achievement related traits as compared with a norm of managerial professional people $n=728$. Sten scores of seven and above were recorded for the traits: competitiveness, achieving, independent, assertiveness and controlling. The trait 'achieving' was above sten nine for all Board members. Low sten scores of four or below were recorded on three senior management profiles for empathy, modesty, caring, affiliative. The mean score for affiliative was sten five with a median of sten four.

The result of observational studies was that the Board made twice as many references to task related aspects during their decision making processes as process

related aspects. Results compare well with those recorded in the previous chapter.

6.5.1.2 Discussion

Findings support the notion that senior managers are generally high achievers. Additionally, achievement for senior management is strongly associated with the task of their position. Senior management gave far more consideration to task related aspects as compared with employee related aspects. This finding supports the view that economic-rational 'hard' instrumental goals predominate in the Boardroom. Key similarities existed between the major study and the parallel study as to senior manager theory-of-action.

6.5.2 Shadow Study Number 2

The second study was conducted within a large multinational organisation over a period of three years. The role of the researcher was to advise a small team of internal administrators. Two 'employee satisfaction' surveys involving more than 6,000 employees were conducted and are described below. Information arising from unstructured interviews is also provided.

The aim of the study from the researcher's viewpoint was to explore whether employee values and needs differed in relation to senior management goals and theory-of-action. Thus, the study could provide data in support or otherwise of findings detailed in chapter five.

6.5.2.1 Company Background

This major multinational organisation reported similar pressures to many organisations. A changing external environment required the company to respond to increased customer expectations by improving product differentiation, extending its product portfolio, improving time to market etc. Again similar to many organisations based in the UK, the company needed to become more internationally focussed because of price erosion and increased home market competition. People management changes were encompassing the need for devolved responsibility, team-building and autonomous project teams.

6.5.2.2 Procedure

Both surveys focussed upon employee satisfaction of various aspects including organisational culture, immediate and senior management style, personal motivations and communication. Respondents were located at various business locations. Although the company operates internationally, only UK divisions were surveyed. Results would assist comparison with those in sections 5.4, 5.5 and 5.6.

6.5.2.3 General Results

Similar to findings in chapter five, employees perceived that the mission of the organisation did not relate to their needs. Generally, the function of the mission was viewed as setting goals in terms of customer perceptions, and not employee perceptions. Employees also saw the mission as providing written proof that the organisation was fulfilling its purpose in relation to investors. The statement mentioned the need for human resource strategies but only to move the business in the right direction as pressured by the external market situation.

Employees perceived the organisation as hierarchical in structure. Senior management were seen as having position power to override those below. It was generally accepted that decisions of a policy nature were the province of senior management. Employees believed that there was a high degree of formality associated with decision making processes. Generally the style of telling rather than selling was supported by both surveys. Again, similar to findings in chapter five, employees said a task-orientated management style predominated the work environment. The climate of the company placed great emphasis on 'achievement of results'. Most of those surveyed, perceived that openness and trust was lacking. Cirilli (1998) comments that trust is an essential ingredient for effective work. It is the highest form of motivation.

6.5.2.4 Specific Results

Parts of both surveys covered similar areas to those described in the main activities of field research described earlier.

In the first survey, 48 per cent of respondents stated that they valued their job. A similar number perceived they received satisfaction from their job. However 68

per cent considered that their pay was unsatisfactory.

Only 16 per cent thought that working conditions were unsatisfactory. However, 19 per cent suggested that the organisation did not give sufficient consideration for employee health and safety.

Employees were asked about the training and development offered to them. Only 36 per cent believed that training and development was satisfactory.

Similar to findings in chapter five, the most challenging finding was that only 13 per cent thought the company valued employees. A second survey was completed one year later and concentrated on obtaining some clarity. The following results were obtained:

To the question “Does the Company senior management value its employees?”, 53 per cent said “No”, 11 per cent said “Yes”, and 36 per cent were neutral.

To the question “Are you satisfied with your Immediate manager?”, 65 per cent said “Yes”, 12 per cent said “No”, and 23 per cent were neutral.

Similar to findings arising from the main study, the results suggest that the most important reason for employee dissatisfaction is related to their perception of how well the Company values them and their needs.

6.5.2.5 Qualitative Enquiry

During field research several interviews were conducted with a cross section of employees. Results can be compared with those emanating from the main study. The following brief overview of comments represents employee views as to the management of people:

'The senior decision makers are task focussed.'

'There is a clash between the policy mission statement and actual practise - idealistic statement which is not supported by key managerial action.'

'My manager works on the basis that he is my manager so he has to exert authority over me.'

'I am committed to my team and team leader but I am not committed to the organisation.'

'...very few managers inspire a shared vision.'

'Most decisions that have a significant impact on the business come from senior management.'

'Subordinates are expected to be self-motivated and competent - this is under the influence of leadership that only uses authority to get things done.'

'...senior management are unapproachable - them and us scenarios.'

'What we have is management by intimidation.'

There are strong similarities between 'shadowing' field research and the main body of research described earlier. Similarities occur in employee perspective, employee values, the company's dominant values, managerial style and adopted theory-of-action. There are also similarities with a phenomenon captured by the IDS when they reported on the 1990 BP survey that:

'....what was particularly worrying for the company was the view, expressed by more than half of the respondents, that too little attention was paid to the interests of employees. Only a minority agrees that the company's actions demonstrated that it believed its people to be the most valuable asset.'

6.6 Explanations for Differences in Commitment Scores: Reconsidering Conceptual Information

Field results strongly support the notion that senior management theory-of-action is associated with employee commitment. Moreover, the use of conventional 'Model-One' theory-of-action seems to inhibit employee commitment. Finally,

examination for specificity of sample data did not preclude such conclusions. However, restraining enthusiasm as for field research findings, the writer returned to concepts related to the basics of behaviour and personality. Is it possible that underlying the results are basic differences in personality?

A biological answer as to why people at different levels within the organisation hold different levels of commitment may be that personality characteristics are controlled through innate process. From this functional perspective, separation of individuals into certain levels of the organisation is simply an extension of natural selection. Simply, some employees have innate capabilities that make them more worthy of senior positions. Several researchers have found and argued the prevalence of personal characteristics and traits (Brooks and Seers, 1991; Shore and Martin, 1989). Others have emphasised situational effects (Grau et al, 1991). While others have argued equal effects of both nature and nurture (O'Reilly, 1991; Welsch and LeVan, 1981).

Conceptually, it is possible to accept the notion that 'committed' types will generally move towards more responsible organisational positions. Certain 'high flyers' have characteristics that organisations value. A key characteristic is likely to be committed behaviour. In contrast, low achievers may only merit inclusion at lower levels of the organisational hierarchy. Such a notion may provide explanation as to why employee commitment levels differ in relation to hierarchical position. However, opponents of innate explanations for human behaviour would argue that, in human behavioural terms, any simple connection between genes, biological influences and behaviour cannot explain the complexity of social behaviour. Moreover, accepting the notion, one still would not discount the affect of high flyers on low achievers which in many respects has been the focus of this study.

6.6.1 A Causal Explanation for Different Levels of Commitment

A causal explanation moves the researcher to consider the working environment. For instance, can an employee learn to possess a given level of commitment, learning, that is, which the organisational context provides?

In behaviourist terms, learning is generally viewed as requiring many trials before an association is formed between a stimulus and response. Nevertheless, employees may learn to behave in a certain way which senior management desire because they receive a reward for doing so. Breland and Breland (1961) discovered that for some species shaping behaviour was relatively easy, although, certain animals were recalcitrant. However, according to Bolles (1979), learning is not one of classical behaviourist stimulus-response associations, but that an organism can come to a new learning situation already possessing an expectation of an outcome. This expectancy might be innate or learnt through past experience of the organisms environment.

Remembering that senior management were not always senior management, it is very likely that managers may have learnt to value, or at least give priority to certain organisational aspects, for instance, general principles of management, and goals such as profitability and productivity. However, does this mean other employees have decided not to value such aspects? During qualitative enquiry, a cross section of thirty-six employees of Kawneer in conversation with the researcher openly accepted the need for the Company to be profitable, competitive, and customer focussed. However, field research in chapter five also suggests that employees strongly need acknowledgement and consideration from their superiors. Interestingly, this need for acknowledgement was also expressed by senior management. The difference perhaps is that senior management are more able to gain acknowledgement through achievement as represented by organisational performance. Employees operating at lower levels within the organisation are comparatively distanced from organisational performance. Distanced by role, but also distanced by the perceived imbalance of values adopted by the organisation.

So, why have some employees learnt to commit themselves fully to the organisation and why have some not done so? It seems likely that a large part of the answer relates to employee roles, needs, their perceptions and expectations. This study and its findings strongly supports this view. It suggests that employee's perception about whether their needs are satisfied, or at worst, even considered, are associated with their perception as to their level of commitment to their organisation. Researchers generally agree that employees who do not have their

expectations met are more likely to be less committed to their organisation (Avner et al, 1982; Caldwell and O'Reilly, 1983; Cotton and Tuttle, 1986). Supportive of findings in chapter five, Porter and Steers (1973) consider that met expectations are better understood by the discrepancy between what an employee encounters in terms of positive and negative outcomes and what was expected to be encountered. The provision and responsibility for positive and negative outcomes clearly lie with senior management. Moreover, incongruence between employee expectations and senior management action has been a key theme throughout this study.

6.6.2 Contextual Considerations

Besides the issues highlighted above it is likely that the way we have been socialised is associated with our behaviour - the wider 'nurture' argument for behaviour. Schooling, parental guidance and early contact with influential members of organisations may influence our values and so make us more or less sensitive to a propensity of first acknowledging organisational goals, and secondly having the ability and developed characteristics and competencies to act upon them. Adding to the complexity of this concept, the researcher noted that many employees from administrative and team-worker levels came from a similar social background to senior management. Similarly, many lower hierarchical levels included employees with equal if not higher educational attainment to that of senior management. Unfortunately, further debate as to contextual influences outside the organisation are beyond the scope of this study.

To summarise, there are difficulties in extrapolating physical Darwinian explanations to behavioural issues. Behaviourists offer the idea that employees may behave through stimulus and reward. In a context that operates on the basis of risk and reward such a theory seems quite viable. At higher organisational levels rewards are greater and perhaps the risks of failure are greater. Moreover, in contextual terms senior management will have been urged or socialised to achieve. Measurement of success will be based on goals and targets related to organisational profitability. Thus, it seems likely that financial rewards are associated with management commitment to the Company. Clearly, such debate fits well with the application of conventional theory-of-action and what Argyris and Schon describe as instrumental and global behaviour. It is also possible that the reward and pay

relationship accepted by senior management will then be used by senior management to urge other employees to work towards the same outcome. Indeed, senior management may be surprised that this incentive often fails as adequate motivation.

During literature review in chapter three, reference was made to the state of need and the satisfaction of need. It seems appropriate to consider a state where energies are mobilised which result in personal drive to satisfy needs. It is the combination of the inner wish to satisfy a need combined with the outer aspect of directed behaviour towards a given goal, which observers would label commitment. Importantly, if employee needs remain unrecognised or unsatisfied, employees are unlikely to apply goal-directed committed behaviour on the behalf of the organisation.

'Man has but one basic drive or motivating force - social self-realization'

Source: Bramfield (1956, p.119)

Bramfield argues that there can be no sense of ego (esteem needs) separate from the socially perceived ego. This suggests that individuals cannot work towards satisfying higher order ego needs if they do not have self-esteem. Self esteem can only be obtained via interaction within a social setting and is directly related to the respect we receive from others, especially influential others, for example parents, school teachers and managers. We have a desire for reputation or prestige (defining it as respect or esteem from other people), recognition, attention, importance, or appreciation. Satisfaction of the need leads to greater self-esteem, self-confidence, personal worth, strength, and capability. Thwarting the need produces feelings of inferiority, of weakness and of helplessness. Consequently, if we do not feel recognised or considered by those who hold influence within the social framework of organisations, it is improbable that we can behave with greater self-esteem. Additionally, if we do not possess sufficient self-esteem we are unlikely to be able to raise our energies and achieve the goal-directed aspects required by our ego needs. This line of discussion would lead us to confirm that it is social acceptance or acknowledgement of our social worth which satisfies our need for natural recognition. Without social acceptance, commitment is likely to be subdued or

misdirected.

'Motives and actions very often originate not from within but from the situation in which the individual find themselves'

Source: Karl Mannheim (1949, p.249)

This study strongly suggests that the impact of senior management upon employee feelings are probably underestimated.

When considering the motives of senior management we must be aware of the outer influence of the business situation. Senior managers cannot satisfy inner ego-needs unless they receive recognition from certain stakeholders. Traditional economists suggest a single business motivation, that of profit maximisation. Senior management may only feel recognised if they can convince superiors and shareholders of their ability to manage the business efficiently and effectively. Personal motives are likely to have an effect. Mannheim (1940) posits that businesspeople change their motives as they assume different roles on the way up the business ladder. We can expect that senior managers may have to come to terms with the inherent conflict that arises between the acceptance of their own and other's needs to satisfy personal needs, and the overriding requirement of the role of senior manager, for instance, to maximise profit. Festinger (1958) suggests that in a situation in which the goals of the individual conflict with the goals of the firm, "there is a tendency for the person to attempt to change one of them so that they do fit together, thus reducing or eliminating the dissonance."

Study findings suggest that organisations used in this survey have been found wanting by most of their employees. It seems that the processes used by management were not succeeding in satisfying employee needs. The process most responsible was senior management's theory-of-action.

Mechanisms must be found which help monitor employee perspectives and reactions to senior management theory-of-action. Method described in this study may help. However, if a monitoring mechanism is simply aimed at helping the process of motivating employees to commit to the achievement of the

organisation's economic-rational goals, then senior management will need to accept that high commitment from most employees seems unlikely. Findings suggest that if employee perspectives are incongruent with those displayed by senior managements theory-of-action, then employee commitment cannot be optimised.

Nevertheless, there seems 'room enough' for any organisation whatever sector, market or industry to appreciate both the needs of the organisation, and employee needs, it might even be imperative. As organisations become to rely more on employee knowledge, then employee commitment will steadily become more of a priority. If employees of the organisation do not commit knowledge and other competencies then gaining competitive advantage may be elusive. Thus, owner wealth cannot be maximised. Ignoring this situation is not rational.

6.7 Research Conclusions

The conclusion of field research supports the hypothesis that senior management theory-of-action is associated with employee commitment. Field research also provides evidence suggesting that the use of conventional theory-of-action adversely affects employee commitment. Findings arising from the main survey in chapter five are supported by parallel studies. A causal explanation seems the most appropriate.

While accepting fully that further research is required, a review and summary support the following conclusions:

- Initial findings in relation to common personality characteristics of senior managers/Directors, suggest that the need for achievement highly motivates senior management. Other traits self-assessed by Directors as key factors of their personality profiles appear coherent with characteristics identified by Argyris and Schon (1974) as typical of a 'Model-One' theory-of-action.
- Observational studies confirm senior management theory-in-use as task rather than process orientated with decisions formed mainly by means of adhering to classical and economic-rational principles. Such characteristics typify what Argyris and Schon (1974, 1978) describe as the operation of a

global theory-of-action and instrumental management approach.

- Employee motivations are related to their perception of their commitment to the organisation.
- The use of personal construct theory supported the view that employees perceive work motivations in a similar way to the content theory offered by Herzberg.
- Individual employee motivations may be dynamic and may differ in intensity but categorizations are generally shared.
- Certain motivations are perceived by employee's as more closely related to their commitment to the Company. Constructs perceived as strongly associated with employee commitment include employee satisfaction with company policy, recognition of employees by the organisation, the need for confidence, contact, and consideration by senior management, and coherence between organisational values and employee values. These factors were judged to be highly associated with senior management role and responsibilities. Informing this role is senior management theory-of-action.
- Qualitative evidence was also found as to the association between senior management theory-of-action and employee commitment by reference to employee perceptions about corporate culture, organisational values, managerial style and the development of people.

The sum of field research is viewed as supportive of the study's overall hypothesis.

6.8 The Motivational Role of Senior Management Theory-of-Action: What Lessons can Senior Management Draw from this Study?

Findings strongly suggest that what senior managers do, prioritise, and act upon, strongly influences employee commitment. However, senior management often interpret working on strategic necessities (IoD 1993-1998) as involving the need to

understand and predict customer needs and market changes. In comparative terms, they often ignore the environmental analysis of the organisation's internal context. People within the organisation strongly influence the internal context. Most, if not all senior management would immediately agree with this commonsense view. Internalising this view as part of ones theory-of-action is clearly more difficult.

Managing for strategic competitive advantage seems as much to do with the need for internal integration and sustaining employee commitment as it is to understanding market trends, customer demands, and financial implications. Simply, too much concentration on external adaptation at the expense of internal integration is unlikely to lead to an optimum level of employee commitment.

Many writers focus on the need for organisations to manage change (Kanter et al, 1992; Egan, 1994; Drucker, 1985; Hassard and Sharifi, 1989), however fewer texts consider the need to manage continuity. People will always have needs. In many ways this study's findings should not be a surprise.

In principle, the key aspect which senior management may wish to integrate within their theory-of-action can be termed applying 'natural recognition.' It involves thinking and asking questions about a certain issue, person or body. It also means asking questions in relation to their needs and values, and acting upon information in a way that is supportive. Parents show recognition by asking about their children's activities, their schooling and general development, their health etc. Children also expect parents to acknowledge their existence by talking to them (Donaldson, 1988; Schaffer, 1987). Such activities are all beyond financial support and providing a safe and healthy living environment. Recognition by the parent, being an influential figure within a child's world is both an essential developmental feature and a natural occurrence (Donaldson, 1988).

Questioning is also a natural process by which recognition for another can be shown. It is not surprising therefore that this study's method gave employees the view that they mattered. According to the Personnel manager, the process promoted an immediate improvement in employee morale. It is also worthy of note that employee expectation of an improved climate was increased.

Unfortunately, unsatisfied expectations may lead to a decrease in commitment levels. The following illustrates the possible interconnection:

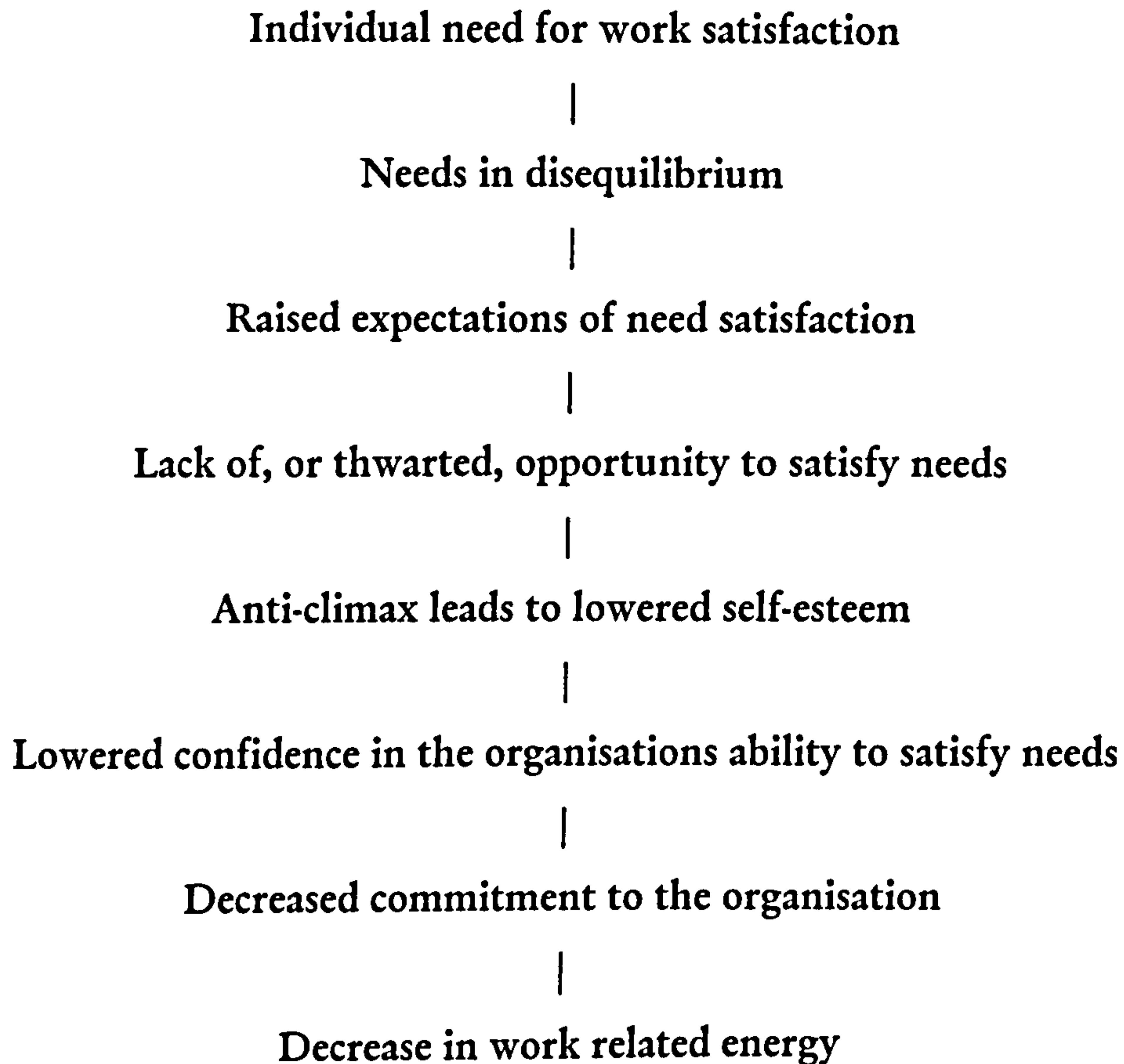


Figure 6.1 Needs in Disequilibrium

It was not surprising that findings emanating from field research urged senior management to consider how they could reduce negative outcomes of the supported association. In the final year of field study the researcher concerned himself with the following question:

'Field research strongly suggests that senior management are a key element associated with an employee's sense of their commitment to the organisation. Given that senior management are willing to work with this situation to gain positive outcomes - how best can they achieve this improved state?'

Inspired by Argyris and Schon's (1974, 1978) case study approach, the researcher agreed to work with the Company to provide the organisation with a specific framework which could assist senior management to adjust their current theory-of-

action. This work continues. Clearly, organisational learning and improved leadership will form a key part of the process.

6.8.1 Learning and Leadership

The term learning capital is used to describe a key, if not the only organisational resource which can create competitive advantage and which is identifiably human. Kolb (1974) says that learning should be an explicit organisational objective, “pursued as consciously and deliberately as profit or productivity.” He stresses that the organisation must “promote a climate which sees the value of such an approach.....developed in the organisation.”

Organisations have a need to learn at the organisational as well as the individual and team level. It is here that the organisation must develop the capacity to compete more effectively. Moreover, an organisation in a perpetual state of learning will benefit by having an adaptive relationship with its environment.

Quinn (1996) offers that intellectual capital is the sum of competence multiplied by commitment. People and their intellectual capital is the firm’s only appreciable asset (Ulrich, 1998). It is the only resource capable of turning inanimate factors of production into wealth. Employees are the sole source of creative energy in any direction the organisation dictates and fosters (Tyson and Fell, 1986). Unfortunately, although the collective brainpower of an organisation generate the wealth of that organisation, it is invisible and much more difficult to identify, develop and measure than physical assets (Lank, 1997). Nevertheless, organisations have become increasingly concerned with mentofacture (creation using the mind) rather than manufacture (creation using physical tools). Gibson (1997) writes “up ahead....we see a world of chaos and uncertainty. A world where economics will be based not on land, money or raw materials but on intellectual capital.” However, Stewart (1997) warns that “trying to identify and manage knowledge is like trying to fish barehanded. It can be done...but the object of the effort is damnably elusive.”

Kets de Vries casts doubt on senior managements ability to understand aspects of individual and organisational behaviour. He states “most executives have a

notoriously underdeveloped capacity for understanding and dealing with emotion. All but the best are reluctant to ask themselves why they act the way they do; as a result most fail to understand both their own managerial behaviour {theory-of-action} and the behaviour of others.” Moreover, Strebler (1997) asserts that top management culture has not, to this day, been open to disclosure, so changing senior management behaviour will take time. Nevertheless, Conger (1998) comments that leadership will become even more important for successful organisations in the next century, but comments that “hardly anyone understands the capabilities we need to start developing now.”

One aspect of leadership which is often ignored, is that leaders tend to learn from their experience. From an organisational rather than battlefield scenario, Argyris (1964) observed that people usually have two theories-of-action. One that actually guides their behaviour, and the other which they say is what they believe in. Argyris points out that most people are unaware of the discrepancies between their two theories because they have a theory-of-action that prevents learning. For example, all company conferences emphasise the importance of employees and training and development, often identifying ‘people’ as the most appropriate and important vehicle to aid change. However, when profit margins are thin, it is common to see an immediate cut in training budgets and reduced or shelved staff development activities. Notably, Argyris and Schon (1974) typify this learning outcome as attributable to ‘Model-One’ theory-of-action.

1. Limited or inhibited.
2. Consequences that encourage misunderstanding.
3. Self-fuelling error processes.
4. Single-loop learning.

Argyris introduces two kinds of learning to explain the above phenomenon. As mentioned earlier, he calls the first single loop learning. Here, the individual tries out various strategies for achieving a goal. Those strategies that succeed are stored in a repertoire of actions, others are discarded. Managerial strategies which gain short term action can be witnessed more easily as being effective. So managers perceive such strategies as having a greater impact. By implication, strategies that

may in the longer term prove most beneficial will become less frequently adopted. For example, discipline and negative feedback may have an immediate effect, while attitude change strategies may not be perceived or 'witnessed' at all. Consequently, it is likely that long term people related strategies are relegated to a level of 'rhetoric' - often espoused - but disregarded in use.

A conversation with Chris Argyris (in Fulmer and Keys, 1998) revealed that single loop learning occurs when one detects and corrects an error without interfering with a 'Model-One' theory-in-use. Dominant theories that relate to the same goal are maintained. The possibility of managing and leading by means of other and possibly more productive theories and goals may never enter the agenda. Hence, a senior manager may seek to maintain a conventional theory-of-action, regardless of the fact that its success may be limited.

Schein (1994) states that Argyris has always been concerned with improving the "level of psychological functioning in organizations on the assumption that if both managers and subordinates could act more psychologically mature, the organisation as well as the people in it would benefit." However, Argyris (1976) argues that the self-sealing nature of single-loop learning leads to leadership behaviour which is controlling of others with "minimal confrontation of any emotionally charged issues." Argyris (1976) offers hope for senior management by introducing what he calls 'double-loop learning'. With this methodology, goals, and actions related to goals are not taken as given but are themselves subject to examination. "When people question why the problem arose in the first place, they can then tackle its root cause" (Argyris, 1997).

There are rewards related to the adoption of double-loop learning. Kim (1993) comments that "learning with double-loop creates important opportunities for improvements in that it provides a framework to open up a totally new direction for solutions."

Double-loop learning is made possible by encouraging individuals, especially those who have a greater ability to change the direction of the organisation, to challenge deeply rooted but perhaps inappropriate organisational norms and routines. The

researcher suggests that while senior management may understand the effect of employee attitudes upon job performance, they are less knowledgeable about what within the organisation maintains undesirable employee behaviour. Continuous learning that gives senior management data that they can analyse, reflect upon, and utilised is therefore an essential requirement. Nevertheless, until values, beliefs and relationships are conducive for the implementation of learning organisation techniques, it is unlikely that the techniques will result in improved performance.

Learning organisations are those that incorporate double loop learning. Keuning (1998) offers that a 'learning organisation' is one that operates according to the double-loop learning model. Consequently, one can assume that before an organisation can be judged to be a learning organisation it must review its senior management theory-of-action and establish a double-loop learning process. Of course, this would only be worthwhile if by doing so the performance of people within the organisation could be enhanced. It is also not clear as to the design and operation of such a process. Importantly, before double-loop learning can occur, senior management must be willing to consider alternate concepts and challenge deeply rooted organisational norms which may have previously been presumed to be incapable of changing.

A process of double-loop learning seems vital for managers to learn and adjust accordingly. Senior management are required to question what doing the right thing means, and continually learn from the experience. It is therefore both a quality and much needed skill of a leader. Unfortunately, Argyris points out that most organisations are run in such a way as to produce a level of psychological immaturity in most of their members.

"The significant problems we face today cannot be solved at the same level of thinking we were at when we created them"

Albert Einstein

De Geus (in Pickard, 1998a) offers the hypothesis that decision making is a learning process; in making really difficult decisions, we are not applying knowledge, but having to find new solutions. However, literature suggests there is little doubt

that the accepted purpose of most organisations is that they exist to succeed by means of profit. Decisions reflect this imperative. The overall aim in relation to the workability of interventions must therefore be judged as whether they assist this end. However, concentrating on the 'bottom line' may inhibit learning.

Field research and literature review supports the notion that senior management adherence to financial aspects rests on economic-rational assumptions. The need for an adequate return on owner investment explains much of the reason as to why senior management tend to concentrate on these factors. Interviews with senior management also revealed that financial performance and control indicators are regarded by senior management as a form of applied science. Such an idea fits well with a rational view of management discussed in chapter two.

As the study moved on to what is best called a process of intervention and action-learning, the researcher considered that absolute adherence to finance aspects was preventing senior management from moving away from what Argyris and Schon (1978) call single-loop learning. Consequently, the approach binding the researcher's actions was to confront senior management involved in field research with the possibility that financial performance indicators are of limited value. Such a notion would be supported by observers who subscribe to the worth of people while urging management to reflect on the worth of finance and financial measures (Gratton, 2000; Adshead, 1996; Arie de Geus, 1996; Kets de Vries, 1996; Evans, 1996). The following extract represents the writer's critique as to whether finance is a science or an art form.

Man has conventionally turned to evidence from the physical sciences as for technological improvement. Physical substances act as we rationally feel they ought. Finance is defined in the Oxford Illustrated Dictionary as 'Management of revenue - a science of revenue'. In the same source, science is defined as 'systematic and formulated knowledge.' Science is concerned with the exact knowledge based upon universal truths and general laws, general laws that are repeatable which experiment can demonstrate. Science is the subject therefore that refines the laws that govern changes and conditions by using objective information and associated decision making. Commonsense thinking may consider science to mean that there

is a precise way of completing any task and that there are rules that govern completion. Such argument helps clarify why senior management may tend to adopt classical principles of management as part of their theory-of-action.

Within finance various rules operate, some of which are imposed by regulatory bodies, and some which one could almost consider rules of nature. The basic and most obvious rule are that of mathematics. Mathematics is often described as the purest science. It can be argued that as the mechanics of finance is totally dependent upon 'numbers' then the mathematics of science becomes a direct association. By using both simple and complex equations and formulas then the science of mathematics is part of the science of finance. Nevertheless, we should bear in mind that the numbers are based on interpretations and assumptions and involve internal politicking, corporate culture and other quite subjective interferences.

Adaptation of data concerns the accountant's skill rather than rules of nature, mathematics or any other science. For example, finance is far more than simply preparing financial statements, much of the information exists to help management decision making. Data can be produced in many different ways, the skill and art of finance is to understand user requirements and to provide purposeful information that relates to requirements. However, the interpretation upon which the manager decides is often a matter of personal intuitive judgement rather than any scientifically proven theory.

Along with other social sciences such as economics and politics, Glautier and Underdown (1991) describe finance as a social science. It seems that despite the unfortunate and stereotyped 'number crunching images' that accountants are often mistakenly accused, accountants often need to display a fair degree of flair, understanding and experience. Sometimes accounting methods are politically motivated, and in consequence they may say more about the decision maker than the numbers concerned with the decision - not a totally rational means to an end.

When we move away from the process of recording transaction towards a science that helps in the decision making process, finance can be seen as an

interdisciplinary science involving economics, behavioural science and sociological science. Perhaps this interrelationship supports the conclusion that finance is a science but perhaps not the pure science that many managers perceive it to be.

Strategic decision is based on assumptions. Moreover, a senior manager's worth is judged by the accuracy of assumptions in relation to the 'actual's' recorded by the accountancy function. There are managers who seem totally to subscribe to financials to conduct the process of management. In many aspects senior management rely upon past data as an indication of future performance. However, financial information does not provide all the data by which management should decide. The decision maker's skill will relate to his or her ability to assess the situation with regard to all organisational resources and the organisations attitude to risk. The Dearing report (1988) observed that there is "a need for a forum to deal with new issues relating to organisational performance and reporting, people issues being one of them, however - as yet there was no conceptual framework for them."

From the researcher's viewpoint, field research findings brought senior management close to accepting the need to move from a state whereby senior management adoption of Argyris and Schon's (1994,1996) 'Model-One' theory-in-use could be challenged. Perhaps moving towards their 'Model-Two':

Model-Two Theory-in-Use

1. Utilise valid information.
2. Promote free and informed choice.
3. Assume personal responsibility to monitor one's effectiveness.

Learning Outcomes

1. Learning is facilitated.
2. Persistent reduction of defensive organizational routines is facilitated.
3. Double-loop learning is generated.

To help establish the advantages of 'Model-Two', it was thought senior management must enhance questioning, reduce reliance on conventional programmed knowledge, and help the organisation to learn from experience

derived from actions.

A key aspect of the learning organisation is that the company must consciously transform itself (Pedler, Burgoyne and Boydell, 1995). Thus, the concepts of transformational leadership and the learning organisation complement each other. By using the word 'consciously', Pedler et al intend that learning organisations transform themselves with "a sense of awareness and intentionality, rather than reacting to change by being buffeted by an ever increasing turbulent external environment." Study findings suggest senior management use of conventional theory-of-action may prevent self-awareness. Consequently, intention may not exist. Nonetheless, the notion that organisational leaders can respond or pre-empt environmental changes by being conscious or self-aware, is derived from the idea of viewing the organisation as a living organism. Rather than a mechanical entity formed to generate a good financial return, as an organism, the organisation can think and learn. The product is still an efficient and effective organisation, but the means to the ends is refreshingly different.

Learning involves all members of the organisation, not just the learning of a tiny elite. Gillen (1996) reflecting on the changing nature of the psychological contract writes, "employees care less about being a good company person than about their own employability, lifelong learning and life planning should be encouraged." However, the process of learning is obviously in the hands of senior management. Pedler et al (1986) hold that the leader has an important role to play in making learning part of organisational life, to the point that learning itself becomes ingrained and integrated within the organisational culture. Moreover, Argyris has focussed on a methodology for implementing action theory on a broad scale called "action science" and the role of learning at the organizational level (Argyris, 1993). This perspective examines reality from the point of view of human beings as actors. It focusses on 'actors' theory-of-action with a view to changing values, behaviour and leadership.

While accepting the contingent or situationally specific nature of leadership style (Fieldler, 1967, 1969), it seems that certain motivational factors are directly linked with employee perception of quality leadership. Motivational factors such as

autonomy (empowerment), responsibility, pay and achievement are essentially factors relating to the job. Involvement and recognition, however, are factors associated with how senior management lead. It seems probable that senior managers in the survey are generally regarded as portraying qualities categorised by Kotter (1982, 1990) as the attributes of management. Not in evidence, is the willingness to motivate, inspire, and recognise the values of followers by satisfying their basic need for recognition.

The difference between transactional and transforming leadership (Bass, 1990; Tichy and Devanna, 1986; Armstrong, 1996) was discussed in chapter three.

Atkinson (1988) states that progression to the level of senior management is usually determined by transactional type managers. Past performance as a middle or lower level manager has been more closely related to doing things right rather than doing the right things. It should not be surprising therefore that performance measures, sticking to budget and applying the organisation's personnel procedures and practices have become a way of life. The charismatic figure of Sir John Harvey Jones comments that "if all that I had achieved in life was meeting budget then I have achieved nothing."

Employees are now better educated and litigious. The extent to which employees feel an obligation to any one employer is decreasing. Leaders must be far more sensitive to the needs and rights of their employees. Those who fail will have considerable difficulty getting anything accomplished.

To be a leader, a manager must "persist tirelessly to develop strong relationships with employees...be committed to work with employees and develop a deep sense of confidence with the ability to explore and reflect" (Tjosvold, 1991). Leaders are not leaders unless followers recognise them as leaders. In the light of this study's findings, figure 6.2 lists 'bullet point' behavioural recommendations which senior management could apply if they wish their employees to view them as leaders rather than managers.

Include employee needs
 Monitor behavioural signals
 Develop an understanding of employee environmental pressures
 Consider Psychological Contracts and Contracts of Employment
 Enthuse by means of consideration
 Support learning and development
 Work with and develop formal and informal rewards
 Ensure two-way continuous commitment
 Rationally consider both task and process needs

Figure 6.2 Recommended Behavioural Characteristics for Senior Management

Kets de Vries (1996) asserts that senior management leadership needs to change their attitudes and become organisational detectives. He writes “I want them to learn how to look beyond the obvious to find deeper meaning of certain actions.” However, organisational maps, images and managerial theory-of-action will have to be challenged before a vital attitudinal change can take place.

6.9 Study Conclusion

What this study proposes is that senior management may need to adopt a different approach to the management of people. An approach that acknowledges the fundamental nature of the organisation’s purpose within a capitalist economy but also accepts the need to demonstrate within their theory-of-action the importance of people. The incentive is better motivated people who are more committed to their company. Better motivated and committed employees are more likely to enhance company performance. After all, the height of any individual or groups accomplishments will be equal to the depth of their commitment. If conventional theory-of-action prevents or subdues commitment then adjusting same seems sensible. The alternative is to accept that sub-optimised employee commitment is a simple bi-product of conventional theory-of-action. As such, senior management and owners of organisations will need to learn to live with many poorly committed employees. Perhaps, this is the scenario of the past. Unfortunately, as employee knowledge becomes more vital, the scenario will become less valid. Time will tell.

6.9.1 Study Reflections

The researcher continuously considered key questions as to quality of the thesis. First, has literature pointed to the right facts? The study allowed access to apply differing methods of research and encouraged reference to many disciplines each providing scope for discussion and analysis of results. Literature was an important backbone. It provided a wealth of conceptual material by which commonsense notions could be examined and explored.

How could improved data be obtained? Despite the need for continuous improvement, data collection method described in chapter four proved both adequate and appropriate. Perhaps if personnel specialists follow the same research process similar outcomes may be witnessed in other organisations, industries and markets. Although the analytic survey proved appropriate, the most important design improvement is to work to refine the statements contained within each construct. One element of the method that the writer would not wish to change would be the depth of data obtained from any one organisation. It is the depth of data that provides confidence in the findings.

What are the results suggesting? Analysis of literature and observations of senior management behaviour support the notion that economic-rational ideals predominate senior management thinking and the decisions and interventions the organisation pursues. Findings also suggest strong correlation between individual work motivations and commitment to the company. Motivational factors similar to Herzberg's (1966) theory of motivation influence employee perception of their commitment. Moreover, the study suggests a strong association between employee perception of their need for senior management recognition, consideration and contact, and their commitment to their organization. Indeed, consideration can be viewed as a key variable in the relationship between senior manager and employee. It would be characterised by mutual trust, two-way communication, respect for employee's ideas and needs, and consideration of their feelings. The combined affect is that the study provides support for the notion that there is association between senior management theory-of-action and employee commitment. Employee satisfaction with human resource policy was found to be a strong indicator of the link between employee commitment and senior

management theory-of-action. Findings in chapter five suggest appropriate human resource policies would be the natural outcome of consideration of employee needs and cohesion between organisational and individual values.

Senior management theory-of-action provides substance for employee perceptions. The use, and possible over-use of what Argyris and Schon describe as 'Model-One' theory-of-action has been highlighted. The application of conventional theory-of-action by senior management is a cause for concern if employee commitment from all employees is sought.

Phillips and Pugh (1992) urge PhD students to concentrate on trying to find the limits of previous proposed generalisations. While the study has relied heavily on generalisation related to motivation theory and the conceptual nature of employee commitment, it has incorporated a degree of exploratory research and problem solving. Essentially, this variation occurred because of the writer's wish to learn and the subject organisations need for greater explanation. However, when should a researcher feel that sufficient volume and quality of data has been obtained in order to generalise? The answer must be - never. Perhaps it is far wiser to ask the question 'has appropriate data been collected which when analysed provide good indications in support or otherwise of the conclusions offered.' My answer is - yes, but, extensive additional research is needed to discover the extent of the conclusions claimed.

Field research has mainly involved the writer playing a major part within one organisation. Possible specificity of both data and findings has been explored. Nonetheless, over-generalising the study at this stage is not recommended. Of interest however, is the bulk of previous research in this area that also relies heavily upon the samples of workers within a single organisation. See, for instance, Becker, 1992; Becker et al, 1995, and O'Reilly and Chatman, 1986. Nonetheless, Alexandre Dumas suggested that "All generalisations are dangerous - including this statement!" The findings therefore, in absolute terms, must be regarded as contingent in nature. To improve confidence of data and explanations, more studies across different organisations involved in different industry's, markets and sectors are required. It is the writer's intention to continue research, to improve

method, and cross correlate findings.

Has the work provided any practical contribution? Comment from senior management involved in field research suggest a major contribution. However, more generally, short termism exists, the strength and influence of shareholders predominate, and employees may still be viewed as a cost to the company. In this environment step improvement seems improbable. Comment and articles in respected journals such as the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development's 'People Management' constantly remind organisations of the importance of people. But change is slow, for instance Argyris and Schon's work, which has been key to the writer's interest, is still not widely known and it was first published in 1974. To change this scenario, a greater understanding of the importance of employee motivation and commitment and the implications of senior managements ability to recognise employees will be needed. The linkages are complex. Although this work, and others like it, may help the 'process' of understanding - the task seems formidable.

Genuine concern not manipulation should be successful. However, this can only be accomplished if senior management theory-of-action encompasses employee needs. Senior management attending the Institute of Director's programme in 1993 called for research that could help their understanding about employee motivation and commitment. Ironically, this study suggests that recognition by senior management of employees is a vital key to optimising the potential psychological energy of employees. If further research confirms the above conclusion, then findings should be conveyed to senior management.

It is also hoped that this work, its findings, interpretations and conclusions help in moving the probable association between employee commitment and senior management theory-of-action from conjecture and association 'one step' closer towards theory.

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Addendum

'The increasing importance of people as the primary source of sustainable competitive advantage makes it ever more important that dedicated resources and thinking time are applied to the strategies through which people are developed and managed'

Source: Institute of Personnel and Development, 1994.

In terms of action learning within Kawneer, the aim was to assist senior managements to be aware of the association between employee commitment to their organisation and senior managements theory-of-action. This work continues. Nonetheless, in June 1999 the researcher was invited back into the organisation by the Group's Human Resource Director to 'hear about the behavioural changes which had taken place'. An interview with the Marketing Director was arranged to discover the impact of the writer's research with the Company. The following is the actual transcript of the Marketing Director's comments:

"You (the researcher) provided the information and the process that made us think about the need for senior management to focus on commitment, not simply skills and knowledge. We (senior management) are now convinced that we are crucial in terms of ensuring the 'willingness of staff'. We need to send the right messages. Other companies just don't know how important all this is to your organisation. If you work at it, you will get results. Suddenly, you find your human resources working with you - and you make profits. I am convinced that the whole organisational culture revolves around the way senior management behave - we set the values, we communicate the values, and we hold responsibility for them. If we ignore employee values we can't expect their commitment." He then finished by saying "..but don't tell our competitors."

Appendix 'A'

The Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ)

Source: Mowday, R.T., Steers, R.M., and Porter, L.W. (1979) "The Measure of Organizational Commitment". Journal of Vocational Behaviour, vol. 14, p.228.

Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ)

1. I am willing to put in a great deal of effort beyond that normally expected in order to help this organization be successful.
2. I talk up this organization to my friends as a great organization to work for.
3. I feel very little loyalty to this organization (R)
4. I would accept almost any type of job assignment in order to keep working for this organization.
5. I find that my values and the organization's values are very similar.
6. I am proud to tell others that I am part of this organization.
7. I could just as well be working for a different organization as long as the type of work was similar. (R)
8. This organization really inspires the very best in me in a way of job performance.
9. It would take very little change in my present circumstances to cause me to leave this organization. (R)
10. I am extremely glad that I chose this organization to work for over others I was considering at the time I joined.
11. There's not too much to be gained by sticking with the organization indefinitely. (R)
12. Often, I find it difficult to agree with this organization's policies on important matters relating to its employees. (R)
13. I really care about the fate of this organization.
14. For me this is the best of all possible organizations for which to work.
15. Deciding to work for this organization was a definite mistake on my part.(R)

Responses to each item are measured on a 7 point scale point anchors labelled: (1) strongly disagree; (2) moderately disagree; (3) slightly disagree; (4) neither disagree nor agree; (5) slightly agree; (6) moderately agree; (7) strongly agree. An "R" denotes a negatively phrased and reverse scored item.

Appendix 'B'

Independent Variables: Item Statements

Independent Variables: Item Statements

Achievement

- I would want the team to work longer hours
- Standard work processes would be expected
- Team members could decide how to solve problems
- Team members could do their own work as they feel best
- I would not give the team much autonomy
- I would decide priorities and work methods
- I would demand higher output
- I would leave team members to get on with their job
- My predictions would usually be right
- I would take responsibility for allocating team tasks
- Changes would be welcomed by team members
- Team members should always make more effort
- I would trust the team members judgement
- I would not explain my actions
- I would sell my ideas to team members
- The team could work at its own speed
- I would not consult the team
- I would expect rules to be obeyed

NB If responders were not a team leader, supervisor or manager they were asked to answer the following questions in terms of 'how they would likely behave if they were a team leader, supervisor or manager'.

Advancement

- I am satisfied with my chances for advancement
- This company does all it can to promote good people
- I find it difficult to make career progressions

Company policy

- I am content with Company policies that are related to its human resources
- Often, I find it difficult to agree with this organisation's policies and procedures on important matters relating to its employees

Empowerment

I get the chance to work alone

I can do different things from time to time

My job makes good use of my abilities

I have freedom to use my own judgement

I get the chance to try out my own methods of doing my job

Employee are trusted to make decisions about their work process so that they can improve performance quickly

Employees are organised so teams can work together with the common objective of improving service to the customer

There are few layers of management because all employees are involved in decision making and take responsibility for their own work

I am involved in important decisions that will effect the way I do my work

Employees are trusted to make decisions so that they can improve performance on the spot

Interpersonal relations

I am satisfied as to how my co-workers get along with each other

Pay

I am satisfied with my pay in terms of the amount of work I do

Recognition

I receive appropriate feedback about my job performance

I get satisfactory praise for doing a good job

Achievement by individuals is formally acknowledged

Non-verbal praise (for example a smile of approval) is frequently seen

In general, I feel my efforts are recognised

I seem to care more about my job than management do

Responsibility

I am interested in gaining additional responsibility

I would get more pleasure from my job if I could increase my job responsibilities

I have far too much job responsibility

Senior management theory-of-action

I have confidence in senior management

My needs and those of senior management are similar

Senior management show they are considerate of the needs of the workforce

Senior management understand employee needs

I am satisfied with the contact I have with senior managers

All senior management are interested in is getting the job/task done

Technical supervision

I feel my immediate supervisor/manager is competent in making work decisions

My immediate supervisor/manager understands what the job entails

I am confident in my supervisor/manager as for work/task related issues

Training and Development

My company encourages educational fulfilment

I receive appropriate training and development from this organisation

Work itself

I am able to keep busy all the time

When I need to, I get the chance to work alone

I can do different things from time to time

My job provides steady employment

My job makes good use of my abilities

In my job I get a strong feeling of accomplishment

I find some of my job related tasks boring

Generally, my job is important to me

A major satisfaction in my life comes from my job/role in the organisation

I have other activities far more important than my job

My job is very important to me mainly because I fear unemployment

I used to care about my work, but now other things are more important to me

Any job can be made more stimulating

Working conditions

I am satisfied with my working conditions

I work in a safe and comfortable environment

Appendix 'C'

Version One of the Analytic Questionnaire

Employee Questionnaire

KAWNEER EUROPE

David Cooper

You will know that I am presently involved in research activities. This is an independent survey. All employees are invited to contribute. It should take approximately 15 minutes to complete.

You will not be asked for your name and I will not supply any information to any Company representative that could be used to identify any employee. Please answer honestly.

As a small way of showing my appreciation for your time, I will be sending a fifty pence contribution to the charity 'Children in Need' for every completed questionnaire returned to me.

My sincere thanks.

About You

The following information is only required to assist me in categorising responses.
Please be assured of anonymity.

(1) Could you please indicate your position within the organisation by ticking one of the following employee categories:-

- a) Shop floor employee
- b) Supervisor
- c) Administration/Clerical
- d) Middle manager
- e) Senior manager

(2) Please state your age group (by ticking one box only)

- a) 20 or below
- b) 30 or below
- c) 40 or below
- d) 50 or below
- e) 60 or below
- f) above 60

(3) Please indicate whether you are Male or Female

- a) Male
- b) Female

Could you please answer the following questions:

It is important that you use the following 7 point scale for all questions: (1) Strongly disagree; (2) Moderately disagree; (3) Slightly disagree; (4) Neither agree nor disagree; (5) Slightly agree; (6) Moderately agree; (7) Strongly agree. Only insert One number per question. Thank You.

1. I am willing to put in a great deal of effort beyond that normally expected in order to help this organization be successful.
2. I talk up this organization to my friends as a great organization to work for.
3. I feel very little loyalty to this organization.
4. I would accept almost any type of job assignment in order to keep working for this organization.
5. I find that my values and the organization's values are very similar.
6. I am proud to tell others that I am part of this organization.
7. I could just as well be working for a different organization as long as the type of work was similar.
8. This organization really inspires the very best in me in a way of job performance.
9. It would take very little change in my present circumstances to cause me to leave this organization.
10. I am extremely glad that I chose this organization to work for over others I was considering at the time I joined.
11. There's not too much to be gained by sticking with the organization indefinitely.
12. Often, I find it difficult to agree with this organization's policies on important matters relating to its employees.
13. I really care about the fate of this organization.
14. For me this is the best of all possible organizations for which to work.
15. Deciding to work for this organization was a definite mistake on my part.
16. I am able to keep busy all the time.
17. When I need to, I get the chance to work alone.
18. I can do different things from time to time.
19. My job provides steady employment.
20. My job makes good use of my abilities.
21. In my job I get a strong feeling of accomplishment.
22. I find some of my job related tasks boring.

23. Generally, my job is important to me.
24. A major satisfaction in my life comes from my job/role in the organisation.
25. I have other activities far more important than my job.
26. My job is very important to me mainly because I fear unemployment.
27. I used to care about my work, but now other things are more important to me.
28. Any job can be made more stimulating.
29. I am satisfied with my working conditions.
30. I work in a safe and comfortable working environment.
31. My company encourages educational fulfilment.
32. I receive appropriate training and development from this organisation.
33. I get the chance to work alone.
34. I can do different things from time to time.
35. My job makes good use of my abilities.
36. I have freedom to use my own judgement.
37. I get the chance to try out my own methods of doing my job.
38. Employee are trusted to make decisions about their work process so that they can improve performance quickly.
39. Employees are organised so teams can work together with the common objective of improving service to the customer.
40. There are few layers of management because all employees are involved in decision making and take responsibility for their own work.
41. I am involved in important decisions that will effect the way I do my work.
42. Employees are trusted to make decisions so that they can improve performance on the spot.
43. I am content with Company policies that are related to its human resources.
44. Often, I find it difficult to agree with this organisation's policies and procedures on important matters relating to its employees.
45. I feel my immediate supervisor/manager is competent in making work decisions.
46. My immediate supervisor/manager understands what the job entails.
47. I am confident in my supervisor/manager as for work/task related issues.
48. I have confidence in senior management.
49. My needs and those of senior management are similar.
50. Senior management show they are considerate of the needs of the workforce.
51. Senior management understand employee needs.
52. I am satisfied with the contact I have with senior managers.

- 53. All senior management are interested in is getting the job/task done.
- 54. I am interested in gaining additional responsibility.
- 55. I would get more pleasure from my job if I could increase my job responsibilities.
- 56. I have far too much job responsibility.
- 57. I receive appropriate feedback about my job performance.
- 58. I get satisfactory praise for doing a good job.
- 59. Achievement by individuals is formerly acknowledged.
- 60. Non-verbal praise (for example a smile of approval) is frequently seen.
- 61. In general, I feel my efforts are recognised.
- 62. I seem to care more about my job than management do.
- 63. I am satisfied with my pay in terms of the amount of work I do.
- 64. I am satisfied with my chances for advancement.
- 65. This company does all it can to promote good people.
- 66. I find it difficult to make career progressions.
- 67. I am satisfied as to how my co-workers get along with each other.

Regardless of whether you are a team-leader, supervisor or manager please ensure you complete all the following questions. If you are not a team-leader, supervisor or manager answer the following questions in terms of 'how you would likely behave if you were a team-leader, supervisor or manager'.

- 68. I would want the team to work longer hours.
- 69. Standard work processes would be expected.
- 70. Team members could decide how to solve problems.
- 71. Team members could do their own work as they feel best.
- 72. I would not give the team much autonomy.
- 73. I would decide priorities and work methods.
- 74. I would demand higher output.
- 75. I would leave team members to get on with their job.
- 76. My predictions would usually be right.
- 77. I would take responsibility for allocating team tasks.
- 78. Changes would be welcomed by team members.
- 79. Team members should always make more effort.
- 80. I would trust the team members judgement.
- 81. I would not explain my actions.
- 82. I would sell my ideas to team members.

83. The team could work at its own speed.

84. I would not consult the team.

85. I would expect rules to be obeyed.

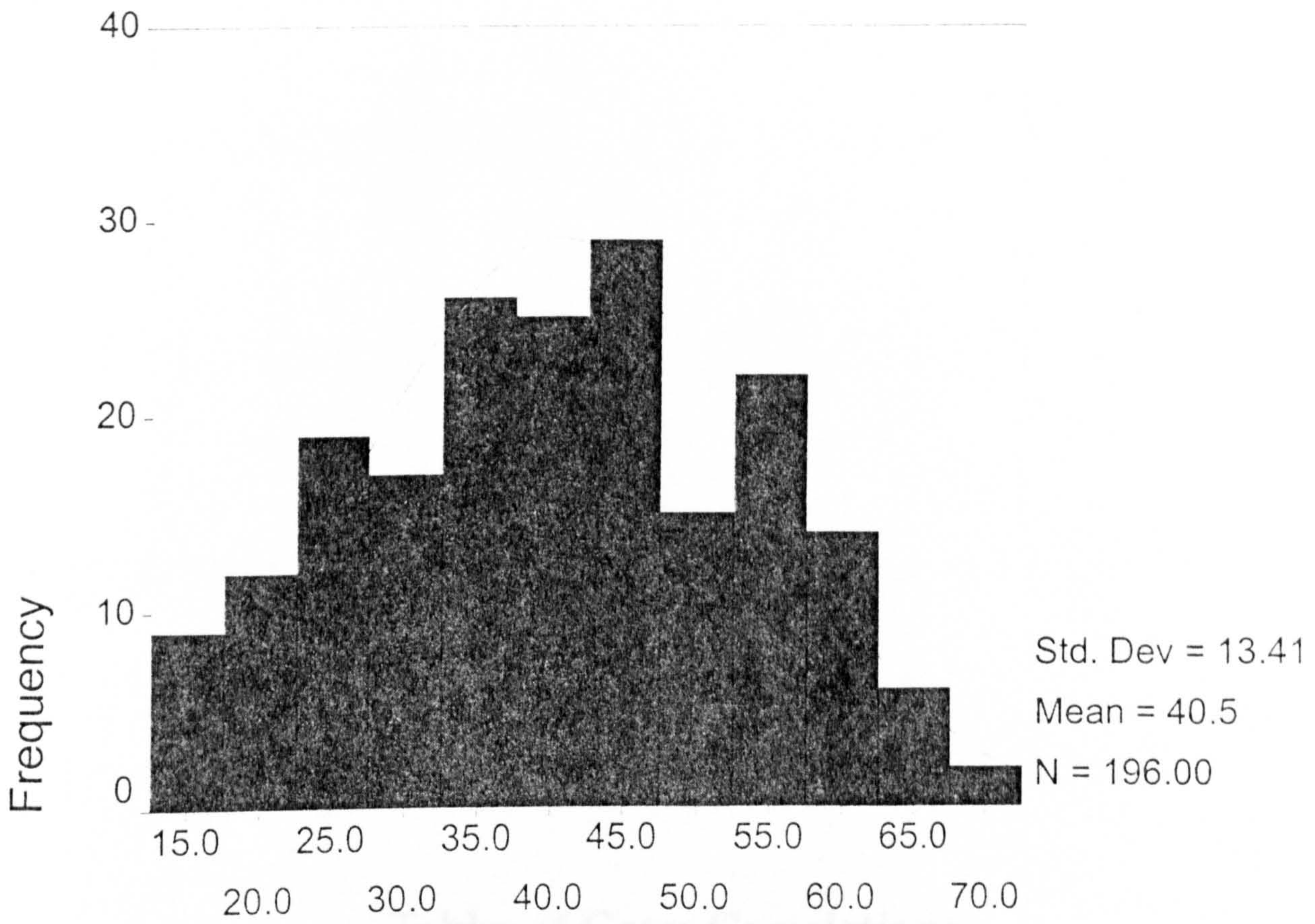
Would you like to make any comments about the survey or its contents? If so, you can use the attached space or contact me direct.

Finally, please accept my thanks for taking part in this survey. Can you ensure that you return the whole questionnaire in the self-sealing envelope to me. I am on-site (including evenings) and can be contacted at anytime in the staff meeting room or by internal telephone x236.

Appendix 'D'

Normality of Distribution Organizational Commitment Questionnaire

Employee commitment measure (OCQ)



Employee commitment measure (OCQ)

Appendix 'E'

Tables of Cross Correlations

Spearman's rho	Employee commitment measure (OCQ)	Need for recognition	Satisfaction with pay/salary	Need for advancement	Need for achievement	Satisfaction with work-itself
	Employee commitment measure (OCQ)	1.000	.497**	.562**	.203**	.676**
	Need for recognition	.641**	.452**	.561**	.147*	.584**
	Satisfaction with pay/salary	.497**	1.000	.383**	.155*	.300**
	Need for advancement	.562**	.383**	1.000	.143*	.511**
	Need for achievement	.203**	.155*	.143*	1.000	.273**
	Satisfaction with work-itself	.676**	.300**	.511**	.273**	1.000
	Need for empowerment	.554**	.288**	.465**	.237**	.723**
	Satisfaction with working conditions	.527**	.477**	.353**	.091	.471**
	Satisfaction with interpersonal relationships	.289**	.134*	.224**	.004	.301**
	Satisfaction with immediate supervisory technical support	.501**	.397**	.457**	.069	.494**
	Need for recognition	.641**	.452**	.561**	.147*	.584**
	Satisfaction with pay/salary	.497**	1.000	.383**	.155*	.300**
	Need for advancement	.562**	.383**	1.000	.143*	.511**
	Need for achievement	.203**	.155*	.143*	1.000	.273**
	Satisfaction with work-itself	.676**	.300**	.511**	.273**	1.000
	Need for empowerment	.554**	.288**	.465**	.237**	.723**
	Satisfaction with working conditions	.527**	.477**	.353**	.091	.471**
	Satisfaction with interpersonal relationships	.289**	.134*	.224**	.004	.301**
	Satisfaction with immediate supervisory technical support	.501**	.397**	.457**	.069	.494**

		Employee commitment measure (OCQ)	Need for recognition	Satisfaction with pay/salary	Need for advancement	Need for achievement	Satisfaction with work-itself
Spearman's rho	Satisfaction with Co HR policies	.789**	.723**	.478**	.520**	.185**	.531**
		Correlation Coefficient					
		Sig. (1-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.005	.000
			196	196	196	196	196
	Confidence in senior management	.663**	.675**	.520**	.489**	.086	.452**
		Correlation Coefficient					
		Sig. (1-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.114	.000
			196	196	196	196	196
	Satisfaction with contact with senior management	.490**	.715**	.340**	.349**	.203**	.493**
		Correlation Coefficient					
		Sig. (1-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.002	.000
			196	196	196	196	196
	Need for senior management to show consideration of employees	.641**	.730**	.474**	.515**	.143*	.477**
		Correlation Coefficient					
		Sig. (1-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.023	.000
			196	196	196	196	196
	Senior management interest in getting the job done	.389**	.445**	.289**	.327**	.054	.311**
		Correlation Coefficient					
		Sig. (1-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.225	.000
			196	196	196	196	196
	Employee need for coherence between their values and those of the organisation	.753**	.539**	.392**	.392**	.168**	.541**
		Correlation Coefficient					
		Sig. (1-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.009	.000
			196	196	196	196	196
	Senior management understanding of employee needs	.338**	.382**	.197**	.308**	.046	.171**
		Correlation Coefficient					
		Sig. (1-tailed)	.000	.003	.000	.260	.008
			196	196	196	196	196

Spearman's rho	Employee commitment measure (OCQ)	Need for empowerment	Satisfaction with working conditions	Satisfaction with interpersonal relationships	Satisfaction with immediate supervisory technical support	Satisfaction with Co HR policies	Confidence in senior management
	Correlation Coefficient	.554**	.527**	.289**	.501**	.789**	.663**
	Sig. (1-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
		196	196	196	196	196	196
	Correlation Coefficient	.616**	.590**	.359**	.687**	.723**	.675**
	Sig. (1-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
		196	196	196	196	196	196
	Correlation Coefficient	.288**	.477**	.134*	.397**	.478**	.520**
	Sig. (1-tailed)	.000	.000	.031	.000	.000	.000
		196	196	196	196	196	196
	Correlation Coefficient	.465**	.353**	.224**	.457**	.520**	.489**
	Sig. (1-tailed)	.000	.000	.001	.000	.000	.000
		196	196	196	196	196	196
	Correlation Coefficient	.237**	.091	.004	.069	.185**	.086
	Sig. (1-tailed)	.000	.102	.476	.169	.005	.114
		196	196	196	196	196	196
	Correlation Coefficient	.723**	.471**	.301**	.494**	.531**	.452**
	Sig. (1-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
		196	196	196	196	196	196
	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.461**	.259**	.451**	.537**	.431**
	Sig. (1-tailed)	.	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
		196	196	196	196	196	196
	Correlation Coefficient	.461**	1.000	.324**	.470**	.494**	.518**
	Sig. (1-tailed)	.000	.	.000	.000	.000	.000
		196	196	196	196	196	196
	Correlation Coefficient	.259**	.324**	1.000	.382**	.336**	.245**
	Sig. (1-tailed)	.000	.000	.	.000	.000	.000
		196	196	196	196	196	196
	Correlation Coefficient	.451**	.470**	.382**	1.000	.476**	.492**
	Sig. (1-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.	.000	.000
		196	196	196	196	196	196

Spearman's rho	Satisfaction						
	Satisfaction with Co HR policies	Need for empowerment	Satisfaction with working conditions	Satisfaction with interpersonal relationships	Satisfaction with immediate supervisory technical support	Satisfaction with Co HR policies	Confidence in senior management
	.537**	.494**	.336**	.476**	1.000	.783**	
	Correlation Coefficient	Correlation Coefficient	Sig. (1-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	
	196	196	196	196	196	196	
Confidence in senior management	.431**	.518**	.245**	.492**	.783**	1.000	
	Correlation Coefficient	Correlation Coefficient	Sig. (1-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	
	196	196	196	196	196	196	
Satisfaction with contact with senior management	.533**	.465**	.226**	.413**	.579**	.592**	
	Correlation Coefficient	Correlation Coefficient	Sig. (1-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	
	196	196	196	196	196	196	
Need for senior management to show consideration of employees	.548**	.537**	.267**	.469**	.729**	.690**	
	Correlation Coefficient	Correlation Coefficient	Sig. (1-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	
	196	196	196	196	196	196	
Senior management interest in getting the job done	.326**	.425**	.595**	.368**	.413**	.439**	
	Correlation Coefficient	Correlation Coefficient	Sig. (1-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	
	196	196	196	196	196	196	
Employee need for coherence between their values and those of the organisation	.490**	.386**	.203**	.354**	.706**	.502**	
	Correlation Coefficient	Correlation Coefficient	Sig. (1-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	
	196	196	196	196	196	196	
Senior management understanding of employee needs	.217**	.248**	.238**	.179**	.611**	.475**	
	Correlation Coefficient	Correlation Coefficient	Sig. (1-tailed)	.001	.000	.000	
	196	196	196	196	196	196	

Spearman's rho	Satisfaction with senior management		Need for senior management to show consideration of employees		Employee need for coherence between their values and those of the organisation		Senior management understanding of employee needs	
	with senior management	with contact with senior management	management to show consideration of employees	Senior management interest in getting the job done	coherence between their values and those of the organisation	Senior management understanding of employee needs		
Employee commitment measure (OCQ)	.490**	.490**	.641**	.389**	.753**	.338**		
	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000		
	196	196	196	196	196	196		
Need for recognition	.715**	.715**	.730**	.445**	.539**	.382**		
	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000		
	196	196	196	196	196	196		
Satisfaction with pay/salary	.340**	.340**	.474**	.289**	.392**	.197**		
	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.003		
	196	196	196	196	196	196		
Need for advancement	.349**	.349**	.515**	.327**	.392**	.308**		
	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000		
	196	196	196	196	196	196		
Need for achievement	.203**	.203**	.143*	.054	.168**	.046		
	.002	.002	.023	.225	.009	.260		
	196	196	196	196	196	196		
Satisfaction with work-itself	.493**	.493**	.477**	.311**	.541**	.171**		
	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.008		
	196	196	196	196	196	196		
Need for empowerment	.533**	.533**	.548**	.326**	.490**	.217**		
	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.001		
	196	196	196	196	196	196		
Satisfaction with working conditions	.465**	.465**	.537**	.425**	.386**	.248**		
	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000		
	196	196	196	196	196	196		
Satisfaction with interpersonal relationships	.226**	.226**	.267**	.595**	.203**	.238**		
	.001	.001	.000	.000	.002	.000		
	196	196	196	196	196	196		
Satisfaction with immediate supervisory technical support	.413**	.413**	.469**	.368**	.354**	.179**		
	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.006		
	196	196	196	196	196	196		

Spearman's rho	Satisfaction with Co HR policies	Correlation Coefficient	Sig. (1-tailed)	Satisfaction with contact with senior management	Need for senior management to show consideration of employees	Senior management interest in getting the job done	Employee need for coherence between their values and those of the organisation	Senior management understanding of employee needs
		.579**		.729**	.413**	.706**	.611**	
		.000		.000	.000	.000	.000	
		196		196	196	196	196	
	Confidence in senior management	.592**		.690**	.439**	.502**	.475**	
		.000		.000	.000	.000	.000	
		196		196	196	196	196	
	Satisfaction with contact with senior management	1.000		.526**	.378**	.426**	.356**	
		.000		.000	.000	.000	.000	
		196		196	196	196	196	
	Need for senior management to show consideration of employees	.526**		1.000	.402**	.482**	.401**	
		.000		.000	.000	.000	.000	
		196		196	196	196	196	
	Senior management interest in getting the job done	.378**		.402**	1.000	.256**	.227**	
		.000		.000	.000	.000	.001	
		196		196	196	196	196	
	Employee need for coherence between their values and those of the organisation	.426**		.482**	.256**	1.000	.281**	
		.000		.000	.000	.000	.000	
		196		196	196	196	196	
	Senior management understanding of employee needs	.356**		.401**	.227**	.281**	1.000	
		.000		.000	.001	.000	.000	
		196		196	196	196	196	

** . Correlation is significant at the .01 level (1-tailed).

* . Correlation is significant at the .05 level (1-tailed).

