The Impact of Slow Career Growth on Organisational Commitment and Job Satisfaction: A Study of a ‘Closed’ Government Agency in Malaysia

A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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August 2014
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August 2014
AUTHOR’S DECLARATION

I certify that except where due acknowledgement has been made, the work is that of the author alone; the work has not been submitted previously, in whole or in part, to qualify for any other academic award; the content of the thesis is the result of work which has been carried out since the official commencement date of the approved research program; and any editorial work, paid or unpaid, carried out by a third party is acknowledged; ethics procedures and guidelines have been followed.

Ku Azizah Ku Daud

August 2014
DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to

my beloved parents

and

the loves of my life.
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Praise be to Allah for giving me the health, strength, patience and perseverance to carry out this research.

My PhD journey would not have been possible without the guidance of my principal supervisor, Associate Professor Rosalie Holian. I am indebted to her for her unfailing support, her academic rigour and her recommendations. Her constructive critiques have proven invaluable in refining my thesis. She has always believed in my capabilities even when I did not. I cannot thank her enough for all her genuine efforts to help me overcome my PhD hurdles. I am truly honoured and humbled to have had such a dedicated supervisor.

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<td>COLA</td>
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<td>Public Service Department</td>
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<td>RG</td>
<td>Remuneration Growth</td>
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<td>TQM</td>
<td>Total Quality Management</td>
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PUBLICATIONS, CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS AND AWARDS
OF THE CANDIDATURE ORIGINATING FROM THIS THESIS

Ku Daud, KA 2011, ‘The Role of Career Growth on Organizational Commitment and Job Satisfaction in a Malaysian Public Sector’, Confirmation of Candidature, 23 August 2011, School of Management, RMIT University, Melbourne.


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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the elements of career growth that influence and shape organisational commitment and job satisfaction in the context of a ‘closed’ government agency in Malaysia. While a number of studies report empirical research in the private sector, as yet there has been little research published on this in the public sector. To address this research deficiency, a mixed methods approach was employed in this study. The results of 40 qualitative interviews identified six dimensions of career growth – professional ability development, job rotation, promotion equity, career goal progress, promotion speed and remuneration growth – that could impact on organisational commitment and job satisfaction. The results of a subsequent survey with 370 respondents demonstrated significant relationships between career growth, organisational commitment and job satisfaction. Results of regression analysis showed significant relationships between promotion equity, professional ability development, promotion speed, job rotation and organisational commitment. Regression analysis revealed significant relationships between professional ability development, job rotation, promotion equity and job satisfaction.

This study contributes to the body of knowledge by providing empirical evidence and a better understanding of the impacts of career growth on organisational commitment and job satisfaction in the context of a ‘closed’ government agency. From a practical perspective, findings from this study may be utilised by policy makers, managers and practitioners interested in ways to enhance public sector performance and well-being.

Keywords: career growth, organisational commitment, job satisfaction, ‘closed’ government agency
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Research Background

For any organisation to prosper in an increasingly competitive global market, highly developed performance and governance practices are requisite. In view of the crucial role of people as a source of competitive advantage, practitioners and researchers have focused on developing knowledge about Human Resource Management (HRM), which is a planned approach to managing people for effective organisational performance and a sense of belonging to the organisation (Kaufman 2012; Marchington & Grugulis 2000; Monsalve & Naranjo 2012). There is a need to continue to explore and investigate different types of organisations in various nations and to identify relevant policies and practices which generate appropriate approaches to suit different organisations and countries (Gong et al. 2009; Spector 2003).

The antecedents of employee performance are complex. Employees are important assets of an organisation as they contribute to its development and success (Danish & Usman 2010). Employers need to consider what employees expect from them as well as what employees should do in return (Harzing & Pinnington 2011; Rousseau 1996, 1998). Positive attitudes such as commitment to the job and satisfaction with the working environment are vital features of organisational success (Fulmer et al. 2003). Continuous efforts must be made to determine the important factors of employee satisfaction and commitment so that employers can focus on issues that improve performance and achieve their objectives.

Organisations, especially those in the public sector, may be largely judged on the basis of the performance of their employees. According to Ingraham and Kneedler (2000), government activities are typically personnel intensive and HRM practices are therefore important factors in the quality of their services. Matthews and Shulman (2005) emphasised
the importance of having excellent quality public sector delivery systems, as poor systems can seriously undermine stakeholders’ confidence. Poor HRM practices can be one of the major causes of inefficiency and ineffectiveness in public sector service delivery. Poor practices are also not conducive to developing and sustaining a happy and committed workforce.

Some of the main HR problems in organisations have been identified as organisational politics, a deficiency of transparency and fairness in HR processes and decisions, inappropriate promotion systems and performance-based rewards, and the ineffective execution of HRM practices (Cooke & Saini 2010). These issues are the focus of this study. It is important for the public sector to make every effort to address these issues and explore what might improve the commitment of employees. Such endeavours could help to improve the general image of a public sector organisation, particularly with respect to its competency and performance. Furthermore, perceptions regarding organisational image may influence employees’ beliefs about their career opportunities with their organisation (Nouri & Parker 2013). With regard to those arguments, this study provides evidence from a ‘closed’ government agency that shows that the degree of perceived potential career growth has a substantial influence on job satisfaction and organisational commitment. For the purposes of this study, a ‘closed’ government agency is the type of public service organisation that specialises in a critical core business and normally consists of both uniformed and civilian staff. Examples include police, fire fighters, the armed services, as well as immigration and customs departments.

1.2 Rationale of the Study

There are several reasons why the researcher chose to investigate the influence of career growth on job satisfaction and organisational commitment.
Firstly, this study addresses research gaps pointed out by prior researchers (e.g., Dick 2011; Igbaria & Wormbley 1992; Juhdi et al. 2013; Kooij et al. 2010; Weng et al. 2010), who stressed that further studies need to be undertaken to examine how career growth influences job satisfaction and organisational commitment. Previous studies on the effects of demographic factors on organisational commitment have emphasised the need to study the relationship between career development and career outcomes (Igbaria & Wormley 1992; Dick 2011). Kooij et al. (2010) argued that of all the constructs of HRM practices, internal promotion appears to be the most significant, so it would be useful to study the organisational effects on employees’ career related attitudes. A few studies have revealed that it is noteworthy that there is little research concerning how career growth influences job satisfaction and organisational commitment (Nouri & Parker 2013; Weng & McElroy 2012; Weng et al. 2010). Therefore, an aim of this study is to extend our understanding of what career growth elements could influence job satisfaction and organisational commitment in the context of a ‘closed’ government agency in Malaysia.

Secondly, previous research suggests that employers who motivate and encourage employees to pursue career growth as a mutual investment in the employee-employer relationship achieve advanced levels of employee job satisfaction and organisational commitment (Nouri & Parker 2013; Tsui et al. 1997; Weng et al. 2010). While acknowledging that HRM practices have varying impacts on business performance, some prior research has argued that the impact is particularly positive for HRM practices that build organisational commitment (Juhdi et al. 2013; Miou et al. 2013; Yeung & Berman 1997). It may therefore be vital for organisations to review their practices to ensure that they improve organisational commitment (Gong et al. 2009; Meyer et al. 1989; Spector 2003). In other words, it is important to evaluate the effectiveness of implemented HRM practices rather than relying on their intended impacts on outcomes (Guest & Cowan 2011; Khilji & Wang 2006).
Indeed, a number of studies (e.g., Bowen & Ostroff 2004; Nishii et al. 2008) have highlighted an urgent need to investigate employees’ views of their employer’s motives and the effects of HRM practices on job satisfaction and organisational commitment.

Thirdly, due to high levels of job insecurity and employees’ perceptions that they are responsible for developing their own careers, a major challenge for employers is to strengthen and fortify organisational commitment (Rousseau 1996, 2001) as well as job satisfaction through effective HRM practices. Becker et al. (1997) and Ericksen and Dyer (2005) argued for measuring the results of an HRM system by examining employee outcomes such as commitment to and satisfaction with the organisation. Opportunities for internal promotion are positively related to market share, perceived profit and investment. When employees are satisfied with and committed to their employer, they put extra effort into increasing the organisation’s productivity and profit (Harzing & Pinnington 2011). Most of the research on HRM practices, job satisfaction and organisational commitment has focused on the private sector, particularly the manufacturing industry, and there is a lack of studies on the public sector (Cooke 2004; Miao 2013; Nouri & Parker 2013; Pearson & Chong 1997; Yuan 1997).

Fourthly, when investigating behaviour, attitudes and performance, it is common for researchers to utilise multivariate analysis such as multiple regression techniques and structural equation modelling to test hypotheses. Quantitative research on the relationship between HRM and performance has been conducted in many countries, especially the US and the UK, but closely followed by European and Asian countries. Previous studies (Juhdi et al. 2013; Miou et al. 2013; Weng & McElroy 2012; Weng et al. 2010) have mainly used quantitative methodology, specifically surveys, to examine the impact of HRM practices on organisational commitment and job satisfaction. A mixed method approach can provide greater completeness due to having multiple perspectives and the combination of quantitative
data and qualitative information (Denzin 2010; Jick 1979). Employing both qualitative and quantitative methods consecutively provides possible strengths that counteract the weaknesses of the single method approach (Creswell & Plano Clark 2007). As Polit and Beck (2010) argued, a mixed method approach should be considered in an environment where insights into improving practice could enrich the quantitative data. Researchers benefit from the ability of mixed methods to deal with various types of evidence (Yin 2009). The researcher therefore decided that the integration of interview and survey data would enable a clearer identification and in-depth exploration of the factors of career growth that strengthen organisational commitment and job satisfaction. Thus, one of the major features of this study is the combination of methods to address the research questions.

This study is also inspired by the researcher’s professional experience and interest in the topic and the possibility of a contribution to the department where she is employed and also a contribution to the broader public sector in the effort to improve public service delivery systems. The results of the study may serve as guidelines for improvements in career growth, job satisfaction and organisational commitment.

1.3 Malaysian Context

Successful organisations turn strategy into action, retain competent employees, and manage HRM processes intelligently and efficiently to maximise employee satisfaction, commitment and performance (Ulrich 1998). In the Malaysian context, the government has shown considerable interest in policy learning and has consequently introduced important innovations and reforms. The former Prime Minister, Dr Mahathir, introduced the Look East Policy, which exemplified the success of Japan and South Korea as role models in term of strong ethical standards, competitiveness, working culture, and management philosophy and practices. Thus, the government incorporated the best of imported elements seen as suitable
for local practices while retaining its own core values. Malaysia’s civil service approach is attributed to factors shaped and constrained by its historical roots such as the pervasive respect for authority, the ethnic mix, its Anglo-Saxon orientation and the successful economy (McCourt & Foon 2007).

Malaysia had a rapid growth in its public service after Independence in 1957. The administrative machinery left by the British was primarily oriented to the maintenance of law and order and the collection of revenue (Siddiquee 2007). Since that was insufficient to implement the present government's plans for rapid socio-economic growth and to respond to the many challenges posed by domestic and global economic and political changes, the government instituted administrative reforms to respond to these changes as the national status moved from that of a colony to self-government (Siddiquee 2006).

A key current question is whether HRM concepts that have been developed and applied in Western countries are equally applicable in Malaysia. To what extent are the HRM concepts in the Malaysian context similar to or different from those prescribed in the existing theory? And do existing models need to be modified or new models developed that are better suited to the Malaysian context? From the cultural point of view, each culture is different and needs knowledge and practices applicable to its own context to achieve effectiveness and competitiveness (Gould-Williams & Mohamed 2010; MacIntosh & Doherty 2010; Wasti 2003).

Unfortunately, not much is empirically known about career growth, job satisfaction and organisational commitment in the Malaysian public sector, especially in ‘closed’ government departments.
1.4 ‘Closed’ Government Departments

A Jabatan tertutup (‘closed’ government department) specialises in a critical field of responsibility or expertise. In Malaysia, the ‘closed’ government departments – specifically customs, military, police, fire-fighting and immigration – comprise both uniformed staff and civilian staff. Public service staff and civilian staff who work for government departments providing ‘open’ scheme services are not normally permitted to transfer to or hold operational positions in a ‘closed’ government department, except for those in a few senior administration positions. Likewise, uniformed staff in ‘closed’ government departments cannot move to similar or higher positions in ‘open’ government departments and would need to start at a junior level if they decided to change departments. Any seniority gained in a ‘closed’ government department becomes irrelevant when applying for a job in an ‘open’ government department. This situation may result in career constraint in ‘closed’ government agencies. The Malaysian Chief Secretary General, Berita Harian, (30 April 2013, p.1), stated that grade increases for civil servants in ‘closed’ government departments are quite slow compared to those in ‘open’ government departments.

There are two main reasons for this study being carried out in the Malaysian context.

Firstly, most research pertaining to HRM practices, job satisfaction and organisational commitment has been conducted in and predominantly focuses on individualist Western cultures (Abdulla et al. 2011). For the most part, the findings obtained in collectivist cultures are not easily distinguished from those of Western studies (Wasti 2005). However, Meyer and Allen (1997) suggested that normative commitment may be a better predictor of job outcomes than other kinds of commitment in a collectivist context where strong social ties and normative obligations are emphasised. Meyer (2006) and Newman et al. (2011) concluded that in exploring local research issues, Asian scholars ought to be careful in applying theories developed in other contexts and rather should develop theories that better explain Asian phenomena.
Commitment and satisfaction have gained substantial interest among organisational behaviour researchers, stemming from the belief that committed employees contribute to good organisational outcomes such as lower employee turnover and higher employee performance (Chew & Chan 2008; Kehoe & Wright 2013; Meyer & Allen 1997). While many studies have been conducted on the conceptual and empirical issues of commitment, the great majority of these have used Western samples. Only a few studies have employed samples from Asian countries such as Abdul Karim and Mohd Noor (2008), Nik Ab Rahman et al. (2008) and Noordin et al. (2002) in Malaysia, and Miao et al. (2013), Weng et al. (2010) and Weng and McElroy (2012) in China. Thus, much of the commitment literature may not appropriately portray the reality in societies that are not Western cultures. While there have been some studies of organisational commitment and job satisfaction in the Malaysian context (Abdul Karim & Mohd Noor 2008; Juhdi et al. 2013; Mustafa 2005; Nik Ab Rahman et al. 2008; Noordin et al. 2002; Pearson & Chong 1997), there is a lack of research that has specifically explored the impact of career growth on employees in Malaysian organisations.

Cultural norms and the different histories of distinct nations have some influence on aspects of human resource management: how to attract, motivate and develop employees and how to implement effective work processes to achieve organisational goals (Boxall & Purcell 2003). Appelbaum et al. (2001), who explored US models of high performance work systems, emphasised the significance of national context. In a study of diversity management, Cooke and Saini (2012) conducted interviews with Chinese and Indian managers and identified contextual differences in cultural, social, political and economic aspects between China and India and between each of these and the Western context.

With regard to those arguments, there are no strong reasons to believe that all management practices would be transferable across cultures (Hofstede 1989, 2007; Hofstede & McCrae 2004). Differences in national cultures may have distinct HRM implications for company performance, strategy and profitability (Schuler 2000). To establish the broad validity of a HRM theory, it should be tested in multiple contexts (Tsang & Kwan 1999) or modified to explain how contextual variables would influence the predictions of the models.

Most of the early studies on HRM practices, organisational commitment and job satisfaction conducted in the US and European countries focused on the private sector and the manufacturing industry with only a few studies carried out in government sectors (Cooke 2004; Guchait & Cho 2010; Koch & Steers 1978; Miao et al. 2013; Pearson & Chong 1997;
HRM practices are reported as having impacts on attitudes such as organisational commitment and job satisfaction (Boon et al. 2011; Chew & Chan 2008; Juhdi et al. 2013; Kehoe & Wright 2013; Miao et al. 2013; Wong & Cheung 2014). Given the unclear conception of these terms in the public sector, Nouri and Parker (2013), Shahzad et al. (2011), Weng et al. (2010) and Weng and McElroy (2012) investigated the effect of career growth on organisational commitment in both the private and the public sectors. However, limited research has been conducted on the impact of career growth on organisational commitment and job satisfaction in a ‘closed’ government department context. In this study, a ‘closed’ government agency was selected because of the crucial role of the department in collecting Malaysian government income. The career path of a department officer is important, so research into the department’s career structure – career growth, organisational commitment and job satisfaction – has been a rewarding exercise. This research may provide an insight into the department’s distinct sets of norms and values related to performance and so provide useful guidelines for policy makers in developing career plans that help to improve job satisfaction and organisational commitment in the department.

1.5 Research Aim

This study examines the nature of the relationship between career growth, job satisfaction and organisational commitment among employees in a ‘closed’ government agency.

1.6 Research Questions

The study has a focus on two main research questions:

- What is the nature of the relationship between career growth, job satisfaction and organisational commitment in a ‘closed’ government department?

- Does career growth influence job satisfaction and organisational commitment in this ‘closed’ government department?

1.7 Organisation of the Thesis

This thesis is divided into seven main chapters. This first chapter is an introduction to the research.
The second chapter is a literature review on HRM practices, organisational commitment and job satisfaction, including sources of competitive advantage, impacts on organisational performance, psychological contracts and social exchange theory. The literature review explores theoretical concepts and perspectives and reviews previous studies on career growth, organisational commitment and job satisfaction. It also discusses measurement scales that have been employed by other researchers to investigate the strength of the relationships between relevant variables.

The third chapter outlines the research context of the Malaysian public sector. This chapter explores the background of Malaysia and the history of the Malaysian civil service. It examines HRM policies and practices adopted by the Malaysian civil service with regard to key HRM practices. It explores the factors driving the reforms of HRM in the Malaysian public sector, including social, cultural, economic and religious factors, and political and regulatory issues. This chapter also describes the background of the ‘closed’ government department where the study took place and how it differs from an ‘open’ government department.

The fourth chapter describes the research methodology employed in the study. This includes the rationale, scope and location of the study and the reasons for selecting a mixed methods approach. This is followed by an explanation of methods and data analysis techniques, and a description of the characteristics of the interview participants and survey respondents, and how they were recruited. The details of the development of the interview questions, pilot test and final interview are discussed. The chapter presents the hypotheses and questionnaire development for the survey, and describes pilot testing, data processing and assumption testing. The use of multivariate regression analysis to test the hypotheses is described. This chapter also discusses ethical considerations.
The fifth chapter discusses the outcomes from the qualitative phase of the research, with an elaboration of the key findings that emerged from analysis of the interviews regarding elements of career growth which may influence levels of organisational commitment and job satisfaction. This chapter describes the reasons for participants choosing to work in the public sector and reveals organisational factors that may impact on job satisfaction and levels of organisational commitment (high, medium, low). This chapter also includes a reflective component and considers how the interview process may have influenced what participants said during the interviews.

The sixth chapter details the quantitative phase of the study, which involved conducting a survey and using multiple regression analysis to investigate patterns in responses. This chapter examines the association between career growth and organisational commitment, career growth and job satisfaction and the relationship between organisational commitment and job satisfaction by testing specific hypotheses developed to address the research questions. The analyses include group comparison and the moderating effects of the demographic factors of gender, age, grade and tenure.

The final chapter discusses the links between theory and practice and presents the conclusions of the study. It presents the findings in relation to the literature including theories that assist with understanding the research focus of this study. This chapter includes a discussion of the theoretical contributions of the research to knowledge about the relationships between career growth, organisational commitment and job satisfaction in a non-Western context. The elements of career growth that may influence organisational commitment and job satisfaction in other Malaysian ‘closed’ government departments are described. The decision to use mixed methods is highlighted as having enriched the findings and added to the potential contribution to the field. In terms of practical implications,
recommendations are offered for ways to improve HRM policy and management practices including critical factors to consider to effectively manage career growth, particularly in this ‘closed’ government department. The final chapter concludes by considering the limitations of the study and highlighting important areas recommended for future research.

1.8 Conclusion

This chapter has outlined the conceptual foundations of the research and given an overview of the content of subsequent chapters. It has also summarised the rationale and aim of this study of a ‘closed’ government agency in Malaysia. The next chapter reviews the theories underpinning the research, and the key relevant literature on HRM practices, career growth, organisational commitment and job satisfaction.
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter begins by providing an overview of the significance of human resource management (HRM) as a source of competitive advantage in an organisation. This is followed by a discussion of psychological contracts and social exchange theory as concepts useful in understanding HRM practices and employment relationships. The chapter highlights the concepts of career growth, organisational commitment and job satisfaction because the aim of this chapter is to build a framework to explore the relationship between these variables. The particular measurement scales employed to test hypotheses in the survey are also presented.

2.2 The Significance of Human Resource Management as a Source of Competitive Advantage

It is important to acknowledge that HRM practices impact on certain employee attitudes such as job satisfaction, organisational commitment, organisational citizenship behaviour and engagement, perceptions and behaviour that in turn can create a competitive advantage for an organisation. The interviews and a survey of UK workplaces conducted by Wood and De Menezes (1998, 2010) reported that high commitment HRM practices create conditions in which employees become strongly involved in the organisation and its overall objectives. Although Agarwala (2003) claimed that empirical evidence on the mediating role of organisational commitment between HRM practices and organisational effectiveness is still inconclusive, there is growing evidence to suggest that HRM practices can contribute to an increase in the performance and profit of organisations through bolstering the commitment and satisfaction of employees (Benkoff 1997; Huselid 1995; Wright & Kehoe 2008; Edgar & Geare 2014).
While not unequivocal, the majority of studies have reported a positive relationship between progressive HRM practices and overall organisational performance. This relationship is particularly noticeable for practices such as training and development and pay for performance that affect organisational commitment as well as organisational outcome and productivity (Clarke & Hill 2012; Yeung & Berman 1997). It is crucial for organisations to carefully select, monitor and continuously examine the effectiveness of these practices in order to improve employees’ commitment to the organisation (Meyer et al. 1989; Wong & Cheung 2014).

Effective HRM practices in areas such as training, selection, pay for performance and participation have been linked to organisational commitment which then flows through to higher quality and increased productivity, and ultimately competitive advantage (Clarke & Hill 2012; Gould-Williams & Davies 2005; Wright et al. 2005). There appear to be two key success factors in the relationship between HRM practices and positive organisational outcomes. First, positive outcomes are dependent on the effective implementation of appropriate bundles of HRM practices such as good integration of selection, training and compensation in improving organisational performance (Bowen & Ostroff 2004; Clarke & Hill 2012; Guest & Conway 2011). Effective implementation at the organisation, department and unit levels is the key; the existence of well-prepared policies is not sufficient. Second, success is associated with employee perceptions that are consistent with the organisation’s motives for implementing those practices (Clarke & Hill 2012; Guest & Conway 2011; Nishii et al. 2008). If employees perceive that practices are being implemented merely to meet their employer’s objectives, they are less likely to be supportive of those practices (Boon et al. 2011; Bowen & Ostroff 2004; Tremblay et al. 2010).
From the HRM research, it seems that it is not difficult to entice one or two employees to leave an organisation, yet it is not easy to create committed employees. Commitment may result from employees’ perception of appropriate attention to employee well-being by the employer. Several studies (Den Hartog et al. 2004; Kinnie et al. 2005; Wright & Boswell 2002) have suggested that future empirical research and theoretical development should include the perceptions of individual employees of HRM practices in addition to considering the relationship between HRM practices and outcomes such as productivity and profitability at the organisational level.

As a survey conducted by Gong et al. (2009) among managers in 463 firms in China suggested, when a group of employees is committed to an organisation and its goals, they may cooperate to achieve excellent performance. A case study conducted by Barton et al. (2011) in two Australian public sector organisations showed that skilled, knowledgeable and motivated employees may give discretionary effort with great effect on the performance and effectiveness of organisational strategies. Furthermore, Klein et al. (2009) argued that an organisation needs committed employees to execute the organisation’s mission and vision as a prerequisite for sustainability in a highly challenging and continuously changing world.

The term ‘HRM system’ refers to a set of internally consistent HRM practices (Neal et al. 2005). This current study focuses on HRM systems that are designed to enhance the knowledge, skills, ability, satisfaction and commitment of employees. This type of system has variously been termed ‘high performance’ (Huselid 1995), ‘human-capital-enhancing’ (Youndt et al. 1996) and ‘high commitment’ (Pfeffer & Ulrich 2001). It has been argued that a high performance system enhances productivity and profitability by increasing the possibility that employees will perform their jobs well and engage in behaviour such as
citizenship behaviour that produces a benefit to the organisation (Neal & Griffin 1999; Neal et al. 2005; Wright & MacMahan 1992).

The last several decades have seen an emerging interest in the crucial role of HRM and the need to explore HRM practices in improving performance and organisational effectiveness (Bowen & Ostroff 2004). Thus, different conceptual approaches have been deployed to explore the connection between HRM practices and organisational performance. Wright and Boswell (2002, p. 263) argued that in measuring HRM it is important to differentiate between policies and practices; policies are ‘the organisation’s stated intentions regarding its various employee management activities’ whereas practices are ‘the actual, functioning, observable activities, as experienced by employees’.

In regard to that difference, Wright and Nishii (2006) pointed out the distinctions between intended HRM practices (those designed at a strategic level), actual or implemented HRM practices (those actioned by the supervisor or manager) and perceived HRM practices (as viewed by the employees). Paauwe and Boselie (2005), who reviewed studies on HRM and performance, argued that there is a misalignment between how employees perceive HRM practices and the objectives of the organisation or the intended HRM practices. Most previous studies on this issue appear to focus on intended HRM practices designed at the strategic level of the organisation. As not much is understood about the actual implementation of HRM practices and employees’ perceptions of them, some HRM scholars have therefore suggested the importance of including employees’ perceptions in research (Bowen & Ostroff 2004; Paauwe & Boselie 2005; Wright & Nishii 2006).

Vandenberg et al. (1999) asserted that organisations may have an abundance of written HRM policies, and top management may even believe they are practised, but these policies are meaningless until the employees perceive them as significant to their
organisational well-being. Employees’ views were somewhat neglected in some of the early HRM studies and this absence has been claimed as a major deficit in some of the critical writing about HRM (Guest & Conway 2011). Therefore, some researchers (Becker & Huselid 2006; Wright & Boswell 2002) have suggested that there is a need to ‘open the black box’ in exploring HRM practices with a greater emphasis on employees’ perspectives. As a ‘profession’, management is learned through practice and experience where managers practise their craft more effectively if they relentlessly pursue new knowledge and insight, from both inside and outside their organisation, so they can keep updating their assumptions, skills and knowledge (Pfeffer & Sutton 2006; Kaufman 2012). This current study proposes that exploring employees’ experiences of career growth, organisational commitment and job satisfaction will add new knowledge and understanding of the complicated interactions associated with HRM practices.

HRM theories draw on the philosophy and concepts from areas such as strategic management, organisational behaviour and industrial relations. Boxall and Macky (2007) used the notion of ‘analytical HRM’ to suggest that the fundamental objective of HRM is not to propagate claims about best practice in an excellent organisation but to identify what managers actually do in HRM and how they go about it, in order to learn why they do it and who is affected by and who benefits from their actions.

In a review of studies on best practices of HRM in US companies, Pfeffer and Ulrich (2001) concluded that HRM plays a vital function that can achieve the sustained competitive success of an organisation. Research studies have found that HRM practices, either individually or in bundles, are associated with organisational outcomes such as organisational effectiveness (Amin et al. 2014; Combs et al. 2006; Kramar 2014; Yeung & Berman 1997), revenue growth (Becker & Gerhart 1996; Becker & Huselid 2006), competitive advantage
(Huselid 1995; Khan 2010; Monsalve & Naranjo 2012), productivity (Kramar 2014; MacDuffie 1995), financial returns (Delery & Doty 1996), survival (Nyberg et al. 2014; Welbourne & Andrews 1996) and turnover (Arthur & Boyles 2007; Karatepe & Vatankhah 2014). Furthermore, it has been claimed that ‘high performance work practices’ (HPWP), ‘high commitment high performance practices’ (HCHP), ‘high performance work systems’ (HPWS) and ‘best practices’ approaches have strong beneficial effects on employees and organisational performance (Arthur 1994; Combs et al. 2006; Huselid 1995; MacDuffie 1995; Macky & Boxall 2007; Wood & De Menezes 2010). Previous studies have found that HPWS, including selectivity, comprehensive training, internal career opportunities, performance appraisals, empowerment and incentive pay, are able to shape employee attitudes and behaviour to improve performance when managers connect individual HRM practices with the organisation’s particular business strategy, people, culture and processes (Bae & Lawler 2000; Delaney & Huselid 1996; Takeuchi et al. 2009; Youndt et al. 1996; Arthur 1994). As a result, organisations can produce greater productivity and profit and excellent levels of performance (Bowen & Ostroff 2004; Neal et al. 2005; Kaufman 2012).

The developing area of study on HRM practices which includes selection, training and development, performance appraisal and rewards has been integrated into ‘strategic human resource management’ (SHRM), which focuses on the strategic role of HRM in achieving business objectives such as high organisational performance and productivity (Delery 1998; Chuang et al. 2012; Ko & Smith-Walter 2013). Based on a survey on high performance work systems and employees’ attitudes conducted in manufacturing companies and the services sector in China, Singapore and Taiwan, Wu and Chaturvedi (2009) argued that, although much research has examined the effects of HRM practices on firm performance, there has been little emphasis on examining the mechanisms and boundary
conditions through which HRM practices affect employee attitudes and behaviour, and thus firm performance.

There are inconsistent results as to how HRM practices affect organisational outcomes. Examples are whether training and development may have stronger effects than rewards, and whether synergies between practices can improve organisational performance. However, it is widely agreed among scholars that a high performance HRM system is a source of business competitiveness (Amin et al. 2014; Cooke 2001; Delaney & Huselid 1996; Edgar & Geare 2014; Guest 1997; March 2007; Marchington & Grugulis 2000). In this study, by comparing the results of the research in Malaysia with research in the US, the UK and China, this research aims to reveal ways of achieving competitive advantage through people and thus add to the current body of knowledge, particularly in the Malaysian and public sector contexts.

2.3 Theoretical Foundation

In this section, the concept of psychological contract and the social exchange theory which underpin the present research are discussed in relation to career growth, job satisfaction and organisational commitment.

2.3.1 Psychological Contract

The psychological contract is regarded as one of the most useful concepts for understanding employment relationships including organisational commitment and job satisfaction. It has received ongoing attention since Rousseau's seminal reconceptualisation of the psychological contract in 1989 (Aggarwal & Bhargava 2009; Conway et al. 2011; Noblet et al. 2009; Rousseau 1989, 1996). Basically, a psychological contract refers to the relationship between the employer and the employees, particularly in regard to mutual expectations of contributions and reciprocation. There are many definitions of a
psychological contract; this study adopts Rousseau's (1989) definition that the psychological contract represents an individual's beliefs regarding employee and employer obligations and thus exists at the individual level (Aggarwal & Bhargava 2009; Festing & Schafer 2014; Rousseau 1989, 2004). In the employment context, the theory is associated with mutual obligations: the perceived fairness or balance between how the employee is treated by the employer and what the employee is willing to contribute (Rousseau 2004). Rousseau et al. (2006) suggested that the commitment of an employee to an employer is influenced not only by whether a psychological contract is fulfilled, but also by the extent to which it is perceived that an idiosyncratic deal could be found elsewhere.

The psychological contract is different from a contractual legal document. It represents the relationship, trust or understanding which can be generated between one or more employees and their employer (Rousseau 1990; Sonnenberg et al. 2011). Moreover, the psychological contract is an individual belief in reciprocal obligations between the employee and the employer (Rousseau 1989, 1990). While social exchange theory argues that relationships exist between individuals to result in the maximisation of benefits for each party (Farndale et al. 2014), Rousseau (1989, p. 123) has suggested a more narrow definition of the psychological contract, conceptualising it at the level of the individual employee and as a cognitive-perceptual entity: ‘the psychological contract is an individual’s belief in the terms and conditions of a reciprocal exchange agreement between the focal person and another party’.

A psychological contract emerges when one party believes that a promise of future returns has been made, a contribution has been given and thus an obligation has been created to provide future benefits (Farndale et al. 2014). This perception of reciprocation is subjective, so it is dissimilar between individuals, and it is dynamic in that it changes over
time during the employer-employee relationship and concerns mutual obligations and commitment to some future goal with regard to promises given (Farndale et al. 2014). Because the emphasis on the individual’s perception makes the psychological contract dynamic and subjective, it can lead to misinterpretations and problems in the relationship between the employee and the employer (Rousseau 1990; Festing & Schafer 2014). It is therefore very important for organisations to understand and manage the expectations of employees in order to fulfil the organisation's side of the contract.

Prior research has described correlations between employees’ psychological contracts and behavioural outcomes using the norm of reciprocity and social exchange theory (Conway & Coyle-Shapiro 2012; Turnley et al. 2003). If employees perceive they have fulfilled their obligations in term of the psychological contract, they expect the organisation to keep its side of the bargain (Rousseau 1996, 1998). If they perceive that the organisation does not, they may react by reducing their commitment and performance. When one party (employee or employer) perceives the exchange of contributions for inducements to be unbalanced, social exchange theory and the norm of reciprocity expect that they will put in an effort to restore balance (Blau 1964). Empirical evidence of self-reported and supervisor-rated performance appraisal (Kickul et al. 2002; Tekleab & Taylor 2003), extra-role behaviour (Riketta 2002; Rosen et al. 2009) and objective indicators of job performance (Bunderson 2001) is that employees maintain balance by matching their commitment and contributions to what they receive from their employer.

This concept is used as a framework in which to study aspects of the employment relationship, focusing particularly on the exchange of perceived promises, commitments and obligations with respect to career growth (Guest et al. 2003; Höglund 2012; Ng & Feldman 2008; Rousseau 1989; Sonnenberg et al. 2011). Depending on how well an employer is
perceived to keep promises, and on the corresponding state of the psychological contract (fulfilled, breached or violated), various individual attitudinal and behavioural outcomes can occur (e.g., job satisfaction, organisational commitment) (Cassar & Briner 2011; Conway et al. 2011). Contract violation on the part of the employer may lead to adverse, negative reactions by the injured employee, such as reduced loyalty, reduced job performance and commitment, and the intention to quit (Rousseau 1996; Sonnenberg et al. 2011).

A critical function of HRM is to develop an appropriate mutuality and reciprocity in psychological contracts as HRM practices are major determinants of employees’ psychological contracts (Dabos & Rousseau 2004). Furthermore, Freese and Schalk (2008) argued that changes in psychological contracts may have impacts on employees’ behaviour and attitudes, especially their organisational commitment. Prior research has suggested that progressive HRM practices in areas such as training and development, performance appraisal and compensation and benefits may enhance the level of job satisfaction and organisational commitment (Aggarwal & Bhargava 2009; Gong et al. 2009; Gould-Williams 2007; Huselid et al. 1997; Ito et al. 2013; McElroy 2001).

2.3.2 Social Exchange Theory

Literature about social exchange theory in a sociological context can be traced back to the seminal work of Blau (1964), who built on Gouldner’s theory about the norm of reciprocity to explain the relationship between social commitment and perceptions of fair exchange between parties. Blau (1964, p. 93) referred to social exchanges as ‘favours that create diffuse future obligations, not precisely specified ones, and the nature of the return cannot be bargained about but must be left to the discretion of the one who makes it’. The norm of reciprocity indicates that employees feel a sense of responsibility to reciprocate when they are treated well by their employer and benefit from the exchange (Blau 1964;
Gilbert et al. 2011; Xerri & Brunetto 2013). In the organisational context, social exchange theory posits that employees are motivated to commit to their organisation and job when there is a fair and balanced system of exchange (Blau 1964). This theory is employed as the lens identifying the potential outcomes when ideal employer and employee exchanges are embedded in the workplace. In ideal workplace conditions, employees perceive high levels of support from the organisation, supervisors and colleagues, and therefore reciprocate with positive actions and perceptions about the organisation (Xerri & Brunetto 2013). The theory also suggests that the employees and the employer have an exchange relationship that is strengthened to the extent that each party is willingly prepared to fulfil the expectations of the other (Okurame 2012; Sonnenberg et al. 2011).

Blau (1964) suggested that exchange benefits may include tangible goods, services and socially valued benefits such as recognition, status and prestige. Social exchange can occur between two or more people in an organisation (Gould-Williams & Davies 2005). Previous research has demonstrated that the impact of HRM practices on performance is mediated by factors such as collective human capital and the quality of social exchange relationships (Takeuchi et al. 2007, Wu & Chaturvedi 2009). Individuals in an organisation social exchange network may have different perceptions about the suitable level of reciprocation for a particular benefit of exchange and the appropriate lapse of time for reciprocating the benefit (Dabos & Rousseau 2004).

If an employee perceives that the organisation has benefited from their part of the exchange and this benefit is not reciprocated within an appropriate time, as expected by the employee, this may have a detrimental effect on the growth of the relationship (Ang et al. 2013; Cropanzano & Mitchell 2005; Molm et al. 2007; Molm et al. 2012; Lin & Huang 2010; Xerri & Brunetto 2013). Studies such as the surveys conducted by Kuvaas (2003) among
employees in the furniture industry in Norway, by Rosen et al. (2013) among part-time and full-time staff of a university in the USA, and by Wu and Chaturvedi (2009) among employees of manufacturing and service industries in China, Singapore and Taiwan have used social exchange theory to examine the impact of HRM practices on individual attitudes that are mediated by perceptions of justice. With regard to a fair social exchange experience with their organisations, employees may infer that they are valued and trusted by their organisations and thus may be more willing to return their employer’s expectations by displaying positive attitudes (Ng et al. 2010; Rosen et al. 2013). When an employee observes that an organisation has provided more benefits than had been promised, the employee perceives a positive balance in the employee-employer exchange relationship and feels an obligation to continue to commit and behave to the advantage of the organisation (Henderson et al. 2008). For instance, employees may contribute effort and loyalty to their organisation, while in return employers may provide compensation, recognition, job security and career advancement opportunities. Perceptions of fairness exist when employees’ interests are fulfilled and protected; this provides a perception of justice when employees make comparisons with others and send signals to employers about the morality of their treatment by their organisation (Schminke et al. 2002; Wu & Chaturvedi 2009).

As Cooke and Saini (2010) noted, ‘How firms adopt HRM practices consequently affects employees’ perceptions of the intent of these practices, which will, in turn, affect their outcomes’ (p.381). Allen, Shore and Griffeth (2003) also emphasised that effective HR practices play a critical role in generating and sustaining the commitment of employees to the employer. Ang et al. (2013) conducted a survey on the effects of a high performance work system (HPWS) on work attitudes in an Australian hospital and suggested that when an organisation's implementation of HPWS is in line with the employees' expectations, then that
HPWS produces job satisfaction, affective commitment, a high level of engagement and low intention to leave.

A survey conducted by McAllister and Bigley (2002) among managers and professionals from a broad range of organisations and industries in the US showed that a caring organisation which emphasises human development practices such as people-oriented practices influences the organisational self-esteem of employees through their perceptions of fairness. Moreover, organisation-focused social exchanges have a positive relationship with employees’ job satisfaction and affective commitment (Aryee et al. 2002; Tekleab & Chiaburu 2011). A meta-analysis of 83 studies conducted by Kooij et al. (2010) revealed that when employees view organisational HRM practices as promoting employees’ benefit and well-being, they are more likely to commit to the organisation. Satisfied employees feel an obligation to put in extra effort at work and be enthusiastic in their commitment to the organisation (Takeuchi et al. 2009). Based on a study in 76 Japanese establishments, the development of high commitment HRM practices related to internal promotion and job enrichment was found to have strong associations with affective commitment and job satisfaction (Takeuchi et al. 2009). However, to date the literature has not sufficiently addressed the extent to which HRM practices related to career growth may influence employees’ attitudes and how employees might reciprocate in different contexts, particularly in the public sector or in a country like Malaysia.

A study conducted by Den Hartog and Verburg (2004) indicated that the relationship between organisational culture and HRM practices may vary for different cultural orientations. Thus, this study is valuable because it strives to reveal the impact of career growth on organisational commitment and job satisfaction in a Malaysian ‘closed’ government department, where a different set of values or priorities may apply. Addressing
this gap might assist managers to determine the most appropriate career growth strategy and how to enhance organisational commitment and job satisfaction and thus, potentially, the performance of both employees and the organisation.

2.4 Career Growth

While ‘career’ is understood as the succession of work experiences in an individual’s lifetime (Arthur 2008), ‘career growth’ is defined as ‘one’s perceptions of the chances of development and advancement within an organisation’ (Jans 1989). Previous research on career growth has investigated aspects such as career self-management and graduates’ early experiences in an organisation (Guterman 1991; Sturges et al. 2002). A survey conducted by Weng et al. (2010) in 176 companies in nine cities of China argued that not much emphasis has been paid to the specific ways in which experienced employees perceive their opportunities for promotion and development in an organisation.

Personal development opportunity (Juhdi et al. 2013), promotion equity and training (Wu & Chaturvedi 2009) and opportunity for learning (Ng et al. 2006) have all been shown to affect employees’ commitment to organisations. Research suggests that, in general, the ability of employees to personally grow and develop within the organisation where they are employed influences their psychological attachment to their employer.

Many HRM systems include career development, which assist employees to move through the ranks to higher positions. Spector (2003) defined career growth or the so-called ‘career ladder’ as an improvement in the positions of employees who put in an effort to gain necessary skills and upgrade their performance. The benefits gained by employers who motivate and encourage employees to pursue their career growth is a mutual investment in the employee-employer relationship (Guan et al. 2014; Tsui et al. 1997), which is manifested as advanced levels of job satisfaction and organisational commitment. According to Gong et
al. (2009), career development includes ‘high pay contingent on performance, career planning and advancement, and performance appraisal for pay and promotion purposes motivate employees to produce’ (p. 266).

A dynamic business environment and organisational restructuring together with growing workforce expectations and aspirations impel organisations to modify their HRM practices on matters such as career development on an ongoing basis in order to foster organisational commitment and job satisfaction (Rousseau 1990). Previous studies on HRM practices and performance have reported that improved organisational commitment and job satisfaction may manifest as improved organisational performance in productivity, profitability, organisational effectiveness and services delivery as well as the improved personal development of employees (Amin et al. 2014; Kaifeng et al. 2012; Si & Li 2012; Subramony 2009). Employees who are committed are likely to make greater efforts for organisation improvement.

Organisations need to provide advancement for workers in the form of career growth, career development or career success to establish and maintain the attachment of employees to the organisation (Rousseau 1998). This may involve promotion or lateral movement to new functions or knowledge and skill development or new assignments within a given area. The development processes must focus on both the organisation’s need to fill roles and employees’ needs to have some sense of advancement in their work prospects (Ang et al. 2013; Schein 1977). Surveys conducted by Hu and Zhou (2008) and Hu et al. (2008) in China on the career choice of potential employees of several organisations indicated that career development is one of the most significant factors in ideal career choice. Other research has indicated that employee perceptions of positive internal career advancement opportunities may lead to low turnover intentions (Batt 2002; Shahzad et al. 2011).
A survey conducted among managers, professional personnel and technicians in 176 companies in China suggested that employees give positive commitment to employers who back up HRM practices with a competitive reward system such as the opportunity for career growth that reinforces the value of employee contributions to the organisation (Weng et al. 2010). The study was later supported by Weng and McElroy (2012) based on a survey among managers in 131 companies operating in China, indicating that career growth has a bearing not only on an employee’s own efforts and ability to pursue personal career goals and gain new skills but also on the employer’s support in providing incentives for such activities by an increase in organisational rewards. On the other hand, when employees perceive that there is inequity in performance appraisal and compensation, this negative perception leads them to reciprocate in the form of low organisational commitment (Juhdi et al. 2013). Career growth which includes promotion speed and remuneration growth are linked to performance appraisal. Good performance appraisals from the person responsible for rating an individual employee’s performance impact on merit for promotion as well as remuneration growth (Juhdi et al. 2013).

To date, there has been no uniform view about the specific set of elements which make up career growth in a ‘closed’ government department. Weng et al. (2010) proposed four sub-constructs of career growth: career goal progress, professional ability development, promotion speed and remuneration growth. As proposed in previous research (Choi 2011; Erdogan et al. 2006; Ho et al. 2009), this research also includes two more sub-constructs – promotion equity and job rotation – which may also be significant factors in measuring career growth. It would seem that assisting employees in achieving career goals, acquiring new knowledge and skills and then reinforcing these activities by fair promotions and salary growth could increase levels of organisational commitment and job satisfaction. A study conducted by Choi (2011) in the US federal government suggested that perceptions of
organisational justice such as fair promotion and rewards are positively related to desirable work attitudes of employees such as increased job satisfaction. A survey of teachers carried out by Erdogan et al. (2006) in Turkey indicated that employers may benefit from making sure that employees perceive rewards and promotion as fair. As pointed out by Ho et al. (2009) in their study of nurses in China, job rotation can allow continuous growth at work, and extending knowledge and skills by transferring employees to different divisions of an organisation can have a positive effect on job satisfaction and organisational commitment.

Overall, as suggested by Ballout (2009) in his research on bank employees in Lebanon, highly committed and competent employees seek challenging tasks and opportunities for career growth if these can be performed successfully. Employers can reap the benefits of highly committed employees if they provide the long-term career development which contributes to career success (Ballout 2009).

2.4.1 Career Goal Progress

Achieving career goal progress is a typical example of higher order need satisfaction (Weng et al. 2010). The convergence of the employee-employer relationship correlates to employees feeling more affinity with the organisation and they experience career development when they are in jobs connected to their career goals (Hom et al. 2009). According to Gong et al. (2009), career progress practices indicate an employer’s commitment and concern for their employees’ future in the organisation. An increase in the achievement of career goals can be positively associated with affective commitment. While there is little satisfaction to be had in attempting to perform a task beyond one’s capabilities, pleasure can be derived by performing a task to the best of one’s capabilities. In other words, employees whose career goals are not easy to achieve and who have been assigned jobs that do not promote career growth are likely to be negatively associated with organisational
commitment (Weng et al. 2010). Juhdi et al. (2013), in their survey of employees in Malaysian companies, suggested that individuals who perceive they have the relevant educational backgrounds, skills and knowledge of job and company core business tend to be committed to the organisation. A survey of grocery store and hospital employees conducted by Mitchell et al. (2001) in the US argued that employees who have knowledge, job skills and abilities which fit their job descriptions may become professionally and personally attached to the organisation.

2.4.2 Professional Ability Development

Achieving professional ability development in an organisation is also an example of an advanced level of need satisfaction (Weng et al. 2010). The opportunity to gain knowledge in an organisation can be a significant determinant of employees’ work-related attitudes and behaviour and their unwritten psychological contract with the employer (Kim et al. 1996; Lankau & Scandura 2002; Miao et al. 2013). For this study, professional ability development or training is defined as the development of the knowledge, skills and abilities that employees require to perform their tasks competently (Nordhaug 1989; Nouri & Parker 2013). Hackman and Oldham (1975) argued that experiencing meaningful work is connected to positive satisfaction as well as decreased staff turnover. A survey of nurses in US public hospitals carried out by Bartlett (2001) suggested that the provision of professional ability development might be perceived as a sign that the employer is making an effort to engage in social exchange with employees, and thus might induce reciprocity in terms of the employees strengthening their emotional attachment and feelings of obligation to the organisation. A survey of employees at different levels in large manufacturing firms in the US conducted by Ehrhardt et al. (2011) reported that the relationship between employee and employer can be conceptualised by perceived training comprehensiveness, which relates to organisational commitment. A survey conducted by Judge et al. (2010) in US companies reported that
increased education qualifications and training help employees to cope with the demands placed on them and develop their self-confidence and commitment to performing the job. Meyer and Smith (2000) and Newman et al. (2011) suggested that training may not be associated with increased commitment unless it is tied to career development opportunities. A survey conducted by Ng et al. (2006) with a national retailer in the US argued that the level of learning opportunities in an organisation indicates to what extent the employer cares about and supports workers. If the employer encourages employees to improve their job skills, then perceptions of professional development are positively related to continuance commitment, and pursuing a job change is viewed as potentially risky (Ng et al. 2006). Employees who perceive a low opportunity for professional development may tend to show low job satisfaction and low organisational commitment and pursue better job opportunities elsewhere (Ng et al. 2006).

2.4.3 Promotion Equity

The relationship between job attitude (job satisfaction and organisational commitment) and employees’ perceptions of equity is based on a natural desire to be treated and compensated in a fair manner by the employer (Erdogan et al. 2006). Other studies have suggested that employees’ perceptions of organisational justice such as procedural justice are positively related to job satisfaction and negatively associated with intention to leave (Aryee et al. 2002; Choi 2011; Sweeney & McFarlin 1993). Specifically, in line with the view of balance social exchange and psychological contract when expected outcomes such as promotion and pay increases are seen to be fairly executed, this is positively associated with job satisfaction and organisational commitment. In reference to social exchange, a person evaluates the amount of benefits gained from a relationship compared to their own contribution as well as the amount of effort the other person puts into the exchange (Guan et al. 2014). For instance, an employee tends to compare the internal promotion speed among
employees with similar qualifications and seniority either in the same organisation or in other organisations. The findings of a longitudinal survey conducted by Burnett et al. (2009) on graduates from a mid-Atlantic university before and after being employed suggested that, as long as the promotion policy was perceived to be fair, employees were likely to retain positive perceptions even when the employer was unable to compensate them with a high salary and career advancement.

2.4.4 Promotion Speed

Seibert et al. (2001) defined ‘promotion’ as any increase in level and or any significant increase in job responsibilities or job scope. Promotion speed was described by Dries et al. (2008) as the pace at which the employee has climbed the ladder as opposed to stagnating in the same function for long time. Where internal promotion speed appears to match employees’ contributions to the success of the organisation, those employees are more likely to be satisfied and develop a sense of belonging (Salamin & Hom 2005; Weng et al. 2010). The longitudinal survey conducted by Salamin and Hom (2005) in a Swiss bank showed that job titles and levels in the occupational hierarchy were uniform and conveyed similar status distinctions, prestige and meaning across the organisation. Thus, upward career mobility represented a highly visible organisation-wide sign of accomplishment (Salamin & Hom 2005). A survey carried out by Danish and Usman (2010) on line and middle-level employees in the Pakistani public and private sectors indicated that promotion opportunities improve motivation and increase job satisfaction. Another survey conducted by Weng et al. (2010) suggested that an increase in promotion speed results in a positive impact on organisational commitment which related to belief of balance social exchange and psychological contract between employees and employer. On the other hand, a slow promotion speed despite an employee’s ongoing contributions to the organisation may reduce an employee’s commitment.
2.4.5 Remuneration Growth

In addition to promotion speed, remuneration growth also provides a measure of how employees are evaluated by employers (Weng et al. 2010). Employees expect fair value and return from their employers as referred to psychological contract and balance social exchange (Blau 1964; Rousseau 1989). Surveys conducted by Weng et al. (2010) and Weng and McElroy (2012) in China reported that remuneration growth is positively associated with organisational commitment when employees perceive that their contributions are valued by the employer in terms of remuneration and rewards. Remuneration encompasses fringe benefits, salary and yearly bonus (Malhotra et al. 2007). Moreover, Juhdi et al. (2013) in their survey among employees of universities, banks, insurance and finance companies in Malaysia and Miao et al. (2013) in their survey among full-time employees of government administration departments in China suggested that remuneration has a positive influence on organisational commitment, as when employees perceive that what they think they should receive is being met by the employer, then organisational commitment tends to increase.

2.4.6 Job Rotation

A survey of plant managers of US manufacturing establishments conducted by Osterman (1994) advocated job rotation as an innovative work practice in addition to practices such as teams, quality circles and TQM. ‘Job rotation’ is defined as ‘a self-explanatory example’ (Osterman 1994, p.187), where an employee spends a certain period in one division and then other periods in other divisions to learn every aspects of the company’s core business.

Järvi and Uusitalo (2004) in their survey among nurses in a hospital in Finland suggested that job rotation as part of a career development program helps new employees to acquire an adequate level of knowledge and competence in the core business and is an instrument for developing professional skills. Job rotation is also a way to plan on-the-job
training to cultivate future versatile employees by transferring them from one division to another to enrich their understanding and credentials in various aspects of an organisation (Jaturanonda et al. 2006). In addition to mastering different job skills from a range of divisions, job rotation is also adopted as a method of job design to reduce employee fatigue caused by tedious job assignments. The challenge of a new role can develop an employee’s enthusiasm and enhance their morale to improve performance and productivity (Ho et al. 2009; Jaturanonda et al. 2006; Kalleberg et al. 2006). For instance, interviews conducted by Kalleberg et al. (2006) among human resource managers of public and non-profit organisation in the US showed that, in the public sector, multiskilling practices such as job rotation could build organisational capacity and flexibility by making employees capable of performing a variety of tasks and encouraging them to develop and enhance skills by exposing them to different parts of the organisation, helping to reduce boredom, enrich jobs and promote personal growth for individuals.

In the present study, the researcher defines ‘job rotation’ as moving people within an organisation with a systematic plan to improve employees’ versatility and broaden their knowledge of the organisation’s core business while enriching their job experience and skills and also helping to cultivate interpersonal relationships by shifting employees to different divisions or units.

Job rotation may involve neither salary increment nor job promotion. Even though job rotation does not associated with salary and promotion, it still can be considered as employer efforts to expose and enrich individual employee with related knowledge, skill and ability of the core business which can be associated with balance system of exchange between both parties (Jaturanonda et al. 2006). As part of career growth, expose employee to the
organisation core business by transferring them from one section to another section could be viewed as an employer’s signal of a positive exchange.

Job rotation has also been adopted to avoid malpractice, conflict of interest and other undesirable relationships between employees and clients (Boehm 2007; Jaturanonda et al. 2006).

2.5 Organisational Commitment

For many years, organisational theorists have alluded to employment as the exchange of employees' efforts and loyalty for the organisation's provision of material and socio-emotional benefits (Aselage, & Eisenberger 2003; Mowday et al. 1979; Porter et al. 1974). These aspects of the employee-employer relationship emphasise an organisation’s attainment of positive outcomes through the good treatment of employees. Employees who are fairly treated are more likely to become affectively committed to the organisation (Ang et al. 2013; Kooij et al. 2010; Meyer & Allen 1997; Mowday et al. 1979).

Organisational commitment has been the focus of many human resource management studies for more than three decades. Organisational commitment is a stabilising force that binds individuals to organisations (Ng & Feldman 2011; Meyer & Herscovitch 2001; Riketta 2008). This behavioural outcome is one of the most commonly examined attitudes in the organisational sciences literature (Meyer et al. 2002). The term ‘organisational commitment’ is derived from earlier influential scholars (Buchanan 1974; Meyer & Allen 1997; Mowday et al. 1979; Porter et al. 1974; Steers 1977) who referred to employees’ commitment to employers as including belonging, personal meaning and being part of the organisation. According to Macey and Schneider (2008), commitment and engagement are closely associated, and they argued that commitment is an aspect of the state of engagement. Organisational commitment can take different forms such as a psychological state of
attachment, a binding force between an individual and an organisation, or a combination of effort and pride. All these forms can affect organisational effectiveness and employee performance (Macey & Schneider 2008; Meyer et al. 2004; O'Reilly III & Chatman 1986).

Changes in markets and in the characteristics of organisations may be among the major reasons why organisational commitment is still an important topic of research. The degree of human involvement and participation in an organisation is crucial when continuous innovation and improvement, high quality standards of services and competitive prices are demanded of companies (Gonzalez & Guillen 2008). Employee discretionary effort and contribution are seen as essential to the level of performance of an organisation. A large body of research indicates the benefits of commitment for both employers and employees, making this a potential win-win situation (Meyer & Maltin 2010). Due to its impact upon organisations, organisational commitment has acquired a pertinence (Mathieu & Zajac 1990) which is reflected in a growing proliferation of studies on its definitions (Macey & Schneider 2008; Meyer et al. 2004; Simo et al. 2014), its antecedents (Morrow 2011; Ehrhardt et al. 2011; Fu et al. 2011), its correlations (Ehrhardt et al. 2011; Fu et al. 2011; Lapointe et al. 2011; Meyer & Maltin 2010; Meyer et al. 2012) and its consequences (De Gieter Hofmans & Pepermans 2011; Lapointe et al. 2011; Meyer & Maltin 2010; Simo et al 2014).

2.5.1 Definition of Organisational Commitment

Before seeking to measure its impacts on employees and employers, it is important to clarify what organisational commitment is and to identify its different forms and aims. Commitment is described as a force that holds an employee to a course of action in accomplishing mutual objectives and can be achieved in various ways (Meyer & Herscovitch 2001). ‘Organisational commitment’ has been defined variously by researchers and scholars in different fields in relation to their areas of interest. Earlier scholars such as Porter et al.
(1974) characterised organisational commitment as having three factors: firstly, a strong belief in and acceptance of the organisation’s goals and values; secondly, a willingness to exert extra effort on behalf of the organisation; and thirdly, a definite desire to maintain and retain organisational membership. Mowday et al. (1979, p. 226) defined organisational commitment as a unidimensional construct, ‘an active relationship with the organisation such that individuals are willing to give something of themselves in order to contribute to the organization’s well-being’. Organisational commitment has also been defined as ‘the strength of an individual’s identification with and involvement in a particular organisation’ (Mowday et al. 1979, p. 226).

Later, Allen and Meyer (1990, p.1) argued that organisational commitment is ‘a “psychological state” or force that binds an individual to a course of action of relevance to one or more aims of the organisation’. People could be attached to organisations or occupations, through ‘attitudinal commitment’ or through some course of action such as continuing membership or adherence to goals or policies in the form of ‘behavioural commitment’ (Meyer & Allen 1997). Mathieu and Zajac (1990, p.171) argued that organisational commitment ‘is a bond or linking of the individual to organisation’. In this regard, organisational commitment is described as ‘the psychological attachment felt by the person for the organization and it will reflect the degree to which the individual internalizes or adopts characteristics or perspectives of organization’ (O’Reilly III & Chatman 1986, p. 493). Meyer and Herscovitch (2001) in their study of the workplace proposed that commitment is a force that binds an employee to a course of action that can be influenced by mind-sets such as desire, obligation or perceived cost to continue the plan, and that play a role in shaping the behaviour of an employee.
At a broad level, Allen and Grisaffe (2001) and Vandenberghe et al. (2007) argued that most researchers would agree that organisational commitment is ‘a psychological state’ that characterises an employee’s relationship with the employer and occurs when the employee continues with and commits to the organisation. There are various opinions, however, about the nature of this ‘psychological state’. Efforts to accommodate these differences have resulted in multidimensional approaches to organisational commitment (Meyer & Allen 1991). Social exchange theory (Blau 1964) has posited that employees who believe that they are sincerely appreciated reciprocate with loyalty and dedication to their employers. Accordingly, the social contract of employment is the ‘societal context for understanding the individual psychological contracts that employment creates’ (Rousseau 1996, p.204).

According to the multidimensional approach by Allen and Grisaffe (2001), Meyer et al. (1993) and Meyer and Allen (1991), organisational commitment has three components:

(a) Affective commitment is an employee’s emotional attachment to, identification with and involvement in the organisation. Thus, employees with a strong affective commitment remain in the organisation because they want to.

(b) Continuance commitment is an employee’s awareness of the costs associated with leaving the organisation. Accordingly, they have to or need to stay due to the disadvantages of leaving the organisation.

(c) Normative commitment is a feeling of obligation to the organisation based on an employee’s personal norms and values. The employee remains in the organisation because they feel they ought to.
Additionally, commitment to an organisation has been found to relate positively to a variety of desirable work outcomes including employee job satisfaction, motivation and performance, and has been negatively correlated to absenteeism, intention to leave and staff turnover (Allen & Meyer 1990; Mathieu & Zajac 1990; Turner & Chelladurai 2005). According to Allen and Meyer (1990), it is clear that there are different types of commitment, although the relationships described above are common to them all. In reference to balance social exchange and psychological contract between employer and employees, employees with strong affective commitment remain because they want to, those with strong continuance commitment because they need to, and those with strong normative commitment because they feel they ought to (Allen & Meyer 1996; Meyer & Allen 1997). For instance, employees who receive attractive benefits and incentives might portray their employers as responsible and caring and therefore they develop an affective commitment (Allen & Meyer 1996; Meyer & Allen 1997). Additionally, they believe that to lose such incentives and seniority would be costly and therefore they develop continuance commitment, and because they feel grateful they develop a normative commitment (Allen & Meyer 1996; Meyer & Allen 1997).

2.5.2 Measurement Scale of Organisational Commitment

In contrast to previous studies on public sector employees, which typically use uni-dimensional constructs to measure organisational commitment (Gould-William 2007; Dick 2011), this current study examines the impact of career growth using well-established multi-dimensional scales of organisational commitment developed by Meyer and his colleagues (Meyer & Allen 1991; Meyer et al. 1993). The reliability and validity of the three components model has been largely supported by a substantial body of research (Allen & Meyer 1990, 1996; Cohen 2007; Meyer et al. 1993; Meyer et al. 2012; Miao 2013; Sinclair et al. 2005; Weng et al. 2010). The measurement scale and factors are psychometrically sound
(Allen & Meyer 1990), and measure relatively different variables than in earlier models (Becker 1960; Mowday et al. 1979).

An additional reason for separating organisational commitment into three sub-constructs is the expectation that the sub-constructs can have different implications for job behaviour (Meyer & Allen 1991, 1997; Meyer et al. 2012). Meta-analyses to assess the relationships between affective, continuance and normative types of commitment and an organisation indicate that affective commitment is most strongly associated with job performance followed by normative commitment and continuance commitment (Meyer et al. 2002). The measurement scales correlate with the three constructs purported to be antecedents of organisational commitment (Allen & Meyer 1990) and are associated with job performance, satisfaction and behaviour (Hackett et al. 1994; Meyer et al. 2012).

2.5.3 Affective Commitment

‘Affective commitment’ refers to employees’ psychological attachment to an organisation due to their identification with the objectives and values of that organisation. Initially, Porter et al. (1974) characterised affective commitment by three factors: (1) belief in and acceptance of the organisation’s goals and values, (2) a willingness to make every effort to help the organisation achieve its goals and (3) a desire to maintain organisational membership. Later, Mowday et al. (1979) added that affective commitment occurs ‘when the employee identifies with a particular organisation and its goals in order to maintain membership to facilitate the goal’ (p.225). These conclusions were supported by Meyer & Allen (1997) as they suggested that employees develop affective commitment to an organisation to the extent that it helps them to satisfy their primary needs and to accomplish significant objectives. According to March (2007) and March and Simon (1958), affective commitment is a higher ranking commitment than the other types of commitment because
emotional attachment motivates employees to exert greater effort and performance, not just to remain in the organisation.

‘Affective commitment’ is defined as the emotional attachment, identification and involvement that an employee has to an organisation (Lam 2012; Meyer et al. 1993; Mowday et al. 1979). A survey carried out among automobile dealership employees by Lam and Liu (2014) in China reported that affective commitment was positively related to organisational identification and job performance and negatively related to turnover intention. In other words, employees may be loyal and chose to remain with their organisation because they want to (Meyer et al. 1993). One reason that employees remain loyal to an organisation is related to the ability of individuals to satisfy their needs such as personal growth and job security at work (Gong et al. 2009; Hackman & Oldham 1975). Evidence found by Allen and Meyer (1990) in their survey among full-time, non-unionised employees in two manufacturing firms and a private university as well as a survey conducted among individuals employed in the US by Ng and Feldman (2008) suggested that affective commitment was better predicted than continuance or normative commitment by work experiences that promote feelings of belonging to the organisation such as perceptions of organisational dependability or reliability. This argument was supported by Meyer, Allen and Smith’s (1993) contention that affective commitment is higher for employees whose experiences in their organisation fulfil their needs than for employees with less satisfying organisational experiences and high personal competence. It appears that genuinely satisfied employees may tend to add more value to an organisation and make greater efforts towards its growth. Both scholars and practitioners have focused on affective commitment based on the belief that organisations with committed employees are more effective and productive, and employees who show high levels of affective commitment are less likely to leave the organisation (Morrow 2011).
Meyer and Smith (2000) suggested that effective HRM practices could be perceived as evidence of organisational support for employees, which may lead to affective commitment. Additionally, Sinclair et al. (2005, p.1280) suggested that employees with strong emotional attachments ‘believe their values match those of their employer’ and tend to identify with their organisation. In reference to social exchange theory, strong affective commitment in exchange for good treatment by the employer such as fair compensation and promotion would result in better performance. Affective commitment in return can improve the administrative effectiveness and efficiency of an organisation (Ostroff 1992).

The links between affective commitment and turnover and between affective commitment and performance are strongly supported by previous research (Morrow 2011; Cooper-Hakim & Viswesvaran 2005; Riketta 2008). The results of a survey on employee and supervisor dyads from a US manufacturer conducted by Shore et al. (2008) indicated a negative relationship between affective commitment on the one hand and absence from work and engagement in counterproductive behaviour on the other hand. Employees low in affective commitment are more likely to be absent from work and engage in undesirable behaviour such as power abuse and deceitful activities (Shore et al. 2008).

2.5.4 Continuance Commitment

Continuance commitment is a function of the perceived cost of leaving an organisation, which Becker (1960) defined as ‘side bets’. This form of commitment involves an awareness of the disadvantages of discontinuing a job (Huselid & Day 1991). In other words, people may feel a sense of commitment to their organisation because they feel they have to remain there (Meyer et al. 1993). Meta-analytic findings have indicated that continuance commitment is negatively related or unrelated to attendance, task performance and helping behaviour (Meyer et al. 2002). Continuance commitment ‘often is assumed to be
undesirable, because studies frequently show that it is negatively or unrelated to job performance and citizenship behaviour’ (Sinclair et al. 2005, p.1280). Additionally, Meyer and Allen (1991) and Allen and Meyer (1990) suggested that any factors that increase the perceived costs of resigning such as fear of losing benefits, seniority status and gratuities can be seen as predictors of continuance commitment. According to Meyer and Smith (2000) and Sinclair et al. (2005), effective HRM practices could be perceived as an investment that makes it costly for an employee to leave the organisation and take a risk to pursue their career in another company. As suggested in a survey among employees at managerial and administrative levels in Chinese multinational enterprises conducted by Newman et al. (2011) as well as a survey carried out by Ahmad and Bakar (2003) among white collar workers employed in the private and public sectors in Malaysia, employees who have gained the benefit of training and development provided by their current employer may not leave the organisation as they may worry about missing out on career development opportunities in other organisations.

A survey conducted by Vandenberghe et al. (2011) among members of a human resource management professional association in Canada suggested that continuance commitment is negatively associated with turnover but positively related to risk aversion. Furthermore, a survey carried out by Taing et al. (2011) among part-time and full-time employees of services, manufacturing and professional companies in the US reported that continuance commitment related to a lack of alternative employment opportunities has a negative relationship with turnover intention. A survey conducted in China by Gong et al. (2009) suggested that as continuance commitment is positively related to a maintenance-oriented HR sub-system, employees may choose to stay because of concern about losing benefits such as employment security and status.
With regard to these findings, it seems that fear may also be a factor that must be taken into account when considering continuance commitment. A high unemployment rate or a highly competitive profession where there is an oversupply may help to engender this type of commitment. The fear of losing one’s job in the knowledge that another would probably not be readily secured could bring about enforced commitment to the present job.

2.5.5 Normative Commitment

Normative commitment is one of the three forms of commitment included in Meyer and Allen’s three-component model (TCM) (Meyer & Allen 1991, 1997). It refers to an employee’s psychological attachment to the employer and loyalty or moral obligation to be grateful for the incentives which have benefited them (Meyer et al. 1993). According to Meyer and Smith (2000), when employees receive what they perceive to be a benefit, this could lead to normative commitment.

Normative commitment has received less attention than affective and continuance commitment because it is sometimes dismissed as a redundant construct that bears many similarities to affective commitment and does not explain work behaviour not covered by the other two components (Meyer & Parfyonova 2010). A survey and interviews conducted by San Martín (2008) among employees and managers in Spanish companies found that affective commitment positively correlated to normative commitment, thus contributing to the intention to commit to the organisation in the future. This result was reinforced by the findings of a survey among top-level executives conducted in Fortune 500 firms in Turkey by Yucel et al. (2014) which also suggested that a number of relational variables, including employee trust in the firm, employee satisfaction, flexibility, solidarity and participation in decision making, indirectly influence normative commitment through affective commitment. Meyer and Parfyonova (2010) argued that the mind-set of obligation underlying normative
commitment is distinguishable from the mind-set of desire, and so is worthy of continuing investigation. A survey conducted by Khan et al. (2013) with academics in higher education institutions in Pakistan indicated that normative commitment is a consequence of individual employee’s sense of obligation to remain as part of the institution. A survey conducted by Choong et al. (2012) among academicians of Malaysian private universities suggested that employees who feel that they should be faithful to their employer continue to commit to and work for that particular organisation.

2.6 Job Satisfaction

According to previous research, there is no agreed definition of job satisfaction among scholars. Basically, ‘job satisfaction’ means ‘the degree to which people like their jobs’ (Spector 1997, p. 7). Job satisfaction has also been defined as ‘the pleasurable emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one’s job as achieving or facilitating the achievement of one’s job values’ (Locke, 1969, p. 316) and ‘the satisfaction an individual feels when he or she considers all aspects of their career’ (Dries et al. 2008, p. 923). To simplify, job satisfaction is a set of attitudes that employees have to their jobs (Melbourne 2005) such as a positive emotional state when employees’ expectations about the work role are met (Mathis & Jackson 2007; Currivan 1999), the degree to which they like their work (Agho Mueller & Price 1993; Ellickson & Logsdon 2001), the fulfilment of needs (Maslow 1943; Herzberg et al. 1959), the attainment of value (Locke 1969; Loher et al. 1985), equity (Adam 1966; Mowday et al. 1979), job traits (Hackman & Oldham 1975), organisational justice (Sweeney & McFarlin 1993) and personal characteristics (Ellickson & Logsdon 2001).

There are conceptual overlaps between job satisfaction, job involvement and job engagement. Harter et al. (2002) described job satisfaction as an employee’s involvement,
engagement and enthusiasm for work. Hall and Lawler (1970) argued that job involvement is a concept that emphasises how a job helps characterise an individual’s identity. Thus, an individual employee who is involved in their job may find their job motivating, be committed to their work and organisation, and engage in professional relationships with superiors, colleagues and subordinates (Hall & Lawler 1970), whereas job satisfaction describes how content an employee is with their job (Locke 1969). A longitudinal survey conducted on employees of a bank in the UK by Rayton and Yalabik (2014) suggested that job satisfaction is a combination of what employees feel about their work and what they think about range of the work aspects.

Herzberg et al. (1959) described the fundamentals of Herzberg’s theory of job satisfaction, and how the factors which motivate people at work are different from and not simply the opposite of the factors which cause dissatisfaction. The major factors related to the executing of the job itself (recognition, achievement, growth, advancement and responsibility) are the primary determiners of job satisfaction and are designated as job content, intrinsic or motivator factors (Huczynski & Buchanan 2007). The intrinsic factors determine intrinsic rewards which are defined as valued outcomes or benefits that occur from individual feelings of satisfaction, self-esteem, accomplishment and competence.

The other major factors related to the job environment or ‘hygiene’ are the organisational factors (salary, company policies and practices, supervisory style, working conditions, status and security) that cause job dissatisfaction. These are extrinsic factors and they determine extrinsic rewards such as promotion, increase in salary, facilities and equipment, a suitable and pleasant working environment and office space (Huczynski & Buchanan 2007). A survey among employees about a range of employment including supervisors, professionals and administrators in an American organisation conducted by
Herzberg (2003) revealed that motivators were the essential cause of satisfaction whereas ‘hygiene’ factors were the primary cause of unhappiness or dissatisfaction on the job. It was argued that personnel practices such as recognition for achievement in the organisation can reduce the dissatisfaction of employees but can never raise job satisfaction levels.

2.6.1 Studies of Job Satisfaction

Early research on job satisfaction tended to focus on areas such as the hierarchy of needs (Maslow 1943), the value system (Trompenaars 1993) and the dimensions of cultural values (Hofstede 1989, 1980). Judge et al. (2001) argued that, although ongoing research concerning re-conceptualisations of job satisfaction and job performance has been conducted, continuing study on job satisfaction is still essential.

Job satisfaction has been under the microscopes of researchers who have investigated its antecedents (Abdulla et al. 2011; Ang et al. 2013; Choi 2011; Burnett et al. 2009; Chovwen 2007; Chuang et al. 2012; Darmon 2011; Yang 2010) and its consequences (Bowling et al. 2010; De Gieter et al. 2011; Yang 2010) in terms of organisational, job related and individual factors. Researchers are still attracted to investigating job satisfaction and motivation because of its central significance to organisational success (Herzberg 2003). Job satisfaction has inevitably sparked a great deal of research interest because it is postulated to affect organisational commitment, performance and other areas related to effective human resource management (Van Scotter 2000). A meta-analysis conducted by Judge et al. (2001) connected job satisfaction to job performance and suggested that this mostly occurs as a one-way correlation. Specifically, better performance is caused by job satisfaction, but superior performance is not a cause of better job satisfaction. The important of studying job satisfaction emerges from two significant sets of findings: positive job satisfaction and negative job satisfaction.
Firstly, positive job satisfaction is related to organisational commitment (Yang 2010; Lee et al. 2008). A survey carried out by Yang (2010) of front-line employees in Taiwanese international tourist hotels showed that increased job satisfaction results in increased organisational effectiveness such as greater affective and continuance commitment and lower employee turnover intentions. Furthermore, Rayton (2006) conducted a mixed methods study among different levels of employees in UK high-technology manufacturing companies which revealed that perceived high levels of job involvement, salary satisfaction, organisational support and career opportunities were positively related to job satisfaction. In addition, well-being plays an important role in job satisfaction, such as employees being treated with fairness and respect, and having their psychological and physical needs met (Burnett et al. 2009; Spector 1997; Ellickson & Logsdon 2001). Burnett et al. (2009), in their longitudinal survey on graduates from a mid-Atlantic university before and after being employed, reported that employees can show high levels of job satisfaction even when they perceive their work environment as having low levels of extrinsic rewards such as pay and promotion, provided there are high levels of procedural fairness. Steers and Porter (1983) argued that performance correlates to rewards which may then lead to satisfaction. Additionally, Herzberg (2003) argued that an employer could motivate or satisfy employees by focusing on factors associated with the job itself or its outcomes such as promotion opportunities, personal growth and recognition which are intrinsically rewarding and have an attachment effect on employees’ attitudes. These studies have suggested that a pleasant workplace environment, including how one is treated by one’s superiors and fellow employees and being valued by an employer, can promote job satisfaction. Ziegler et al. (2012), in their survey on managers of a German IT company reported a positive correlation between job satisfaction and performance with higher satisfaction is related to higher performance. A survey conducted by Susanty et
al. (2013) on staff of an Indonesian company suggested that job satisfaction is positively correlated to employee’s job performance.

Other research has reported that negative job satisfaction is related to negative outcomes such as customer dissatisfaction, low productivity, increased staff turnover and decreased organisational effectiveness (Abdulla et al. 2011; Yang 2010). It has been argued by Igbaria and Wormbley (1992) that a lack of career growth opportunities is a main factor of dissatisfaction among employees.

To add to the existing studies on job satisfaction (Bowling et al. 2006; Bowling et al. 2010; Ellickson & Logsdon 2001; Eugenia Sanchez Vidal et al. 2007; Fulmer, Gerhart & Scott 2003; Spector 1997; Top & Gider 2012), there is a need for further research which considers public sector and cultural contexts when examining the determinants and consequences of job satisfaction. Work-related attitudes are variable, which is one reason that, even though some stable factors related to job satisfaction have been established by prior research, it is still useful to examine job satisfaction in relation to other attitudes and antecedents such as career growth and organisational commitment, as investigated in this study.

2.6.2 Measurement Scales of Job Satisfaction

The definition of ‘job satisfaction’ used in this thesis is an individual employee’s positive feeling about a job resulting from an evaluation of its characteristics, which is a complex collection of many discrete elements (Robbins et al. 2014). There are two popular and useful approaches to measuring job satisfaction: a single rating as a response to one question; or the summation of job facets, which is a more sophisticated approach and identifies key elements such as the nature of the work, supervision, present pay, promotion opportunities and relationship with co-workers (Robbins et al. 2011). The single rating
method measures overall job satisfaction and is not very time consuming; however, because the concept of job satisfaction is so complex, a single question cannot really capture its essence and so a global rating is preferable (Robbins et al. 2011).

Tett and Meyer (1993) argued that the summation of job facet measures may include some items that may be irrelevant for a given individual. On the other hand, too few job facets may omit some important items of job satisfaction (Scarpello & Campbell 1983). A global rating of overall job satisfaction is generally recommended to measure general job satisfaction inclusively (De Jonge & Schaufeli 1998; Linz & Semykina 2012; Price 1997; Rayton 2006; Seklecka et al. 2013; Spector 1997; Takeuchi et al. 2009; Van Scotter 2000; Wanous et al. 1997; Hudy 1997).

2.7 The Relationship between Career Growth, Organisational Commitment and Job Satisfaction – The Empirical Evidence

A meta-analysis conducted by Combs et al. (2006) on 92 studies reported a positive impact of high performance work practices (HPWP) on organisational performance. HPWP such as incentive compensation, internal promotion policies and performance appraisal are considered to offer incentives to increase motivation and leverage employees’ knowledge, skills and abilities (Delery 1998; Huselid 1995), which may lead to job satisfaction and organisational commitment. Interviews of senior managers and a survey of employees in UK companies conducted by White and Bryson (2013) indicated that the influence of HRM practices on employees’ attitudes to their job and the organisation depends on how intensively the HRM system has been developed and practised. If employees have positive perceptions of the practices, they tend to have positive job satisfaction and organisational commitment.

Based on the survey on career commitment and career success among managers and administration staff of banks in Lebanon carried out by Ballout (2009), it is suggested that
employees can find personal growth in other organisations if career opportunities are perceived to be lacking in their current organisation. Loss of a talented and skilful worker is a cost to the organisation, so organisations strive to retain valuable employees by developing a committed workforce and preparing them for future organisational development and commitment (Ballout 2009). A survey conducted by Nouri and Parker (2013) in a public accounting firm in the US suggested that opportunities for career growth are positively related to affective organisational commitment. For instance, employees who have a balanced social exchange, strong psychological contract and opportunities for career growth may perceive that they receive good treatment from the employer (Nouri & Parker 2013). This may increase the employees’ attachment and commitment to the organisation.

Due to high levels of job insecurity and employees’ perceived responsibility for developing their own careers, a major challenge for employers is to strengthen and fortify organisational commitment (Rousseau 1996) as well as job satisfaction through effective HRM practices. A review of studies of HRM practices, organisational commitment, job satisfaction and firm performance identified thirteen HRM practices that are commonly examined. These are internally consistent HR bundles, rewards, training, participation, coaching, information sharing, decentralisation, recruitment and selection, formal procedures, HRM planning, employment security, autonomy and opportunities for internal promotion. These studies have illustrated the relationships between HRM practices and organisational performance in factors such as employee turnover, delivery system, productivity and financial performance. Among the various constructs of HRM practices, internal promotion or career growth is a significant factor that correlates to job satisfaction and organisational commitment. Opportunities for internal promotion are positively related to market share, perceived profit and future investment when employees are satisfied and committed to their employer (Harzing & Pinnington 2011).
Much of this research relied on samples from developed Western countries, although a few have also been conducted in Japan and China. The different national cultures of different countries may have implications for HRM practices (Schuler 2000). A survey linking management practices and the culture of the organisation conducted by Robert et al. (2000) among employees of a multinational company operating in the US, India, Mexico, and Poland showed results relating to the different cultures of those countries. For instance, the findings showed that organisational commitment correlated strongly with turnover in the US and Poland. This correlation was weaker in Mexico and it was not significant in India. Thus the researchers suggested that the results of a study conducted in one country may not be applicable to other countries. In line with that suggestion, it is argued that studies must take the specific context into consideration when examining the implementation of HRM practices that may influence levels of attitudes such as organisational commitment and job satisfaction. The idea of culture differences among countries can be extended to culture differences among organisations. Previous studies on career growth, organisational commitment and job satisfaction have focused on the private sector (Liu et al. 2010; Weng et al. 2010; Weng & McElroy 2012) and their findings may not be generalisable to an organisation in the public sector such as a Malaysian ‘closed’ government department.

It is possible that much of the findings related to career growth, commitment and satisfaction may not appropriately portray the reality in non-Western societies. This research aims to provide an insight into some of the distinct sets of norms and values related to performance in a Malaysian ‘closed’ government organisation. With so little research on the relationship between career growth, organisational commitment and job satisfaction, this area is significant for further study (Nouri & Parker 2013; Weng et al. 2010; Weng & McElroy 2012).
Even though previous surveys (Nouri & Parker 2013; Weng et al. 2010; Weng & McElroy 2012) have reported the impact of HRM practices including career growth on individual workers such as positive organisational commitment and job satisfaction, they have not provided detailed descriptions of how or why each of these practices influences those attitudes. As suggested by Gould-Williams and Mohamed (2010) in their survey of workers, supervisors and managers of Malaysian and UK local government authorities, a mixed methods approach could address questions such as how, to what extent and why those practices are influential. Therefore in this study a sequential exploratory design with mixed methods was employed to examine career growth elements that impact on organisational commitment and job satisfaction in a ‘closed’ government agency.

2.8 The Relationship between Job Satisfaction and Organisational Commitment

The correlation between job satisfaction and organisational commitment has been a subject of great interest among scholars for over 50 years. These research studies have enhanced our knowledge of the antecedents and predictors of these variables, but some inconsistencies remain despite the cumulative findings of these studies. Thus, organisational commitment may be strongly related to job satisfaction, but findings have shown distinct differences in the nature of relationship between those variables (Tett & Meyer 1993). As Rayton (2006) argued, the relationship between organisational commitment and job satisfaction is complex and still not fully understood. Because of the disparity of results, researchers need to continue to investigate the relationship between job satisfaction and organisational commitment.

One point of view finds no conclusive evidence of any link between organisational commitment and job satisfaction. From this point of view, both concepts are employee attitudes or ‘orientations’ and the relationship commonly found between job satisfaction and
commitment is spurious due to their having similar determinants and consequences (Currivan 1999). In other words, the two concepts may have no significant relationship. Satisfaction is seen as the extent to which employees like their work, whereas commitment focuses on the loyalty of employees to their employer (Price 2001).

A second group of studies has argued that job satisfaction is related to organisational commitment either as a predictor of organisational commitment or as a consequence of organisational commitment (Lincoln 1990; Mowday et al. 1979; Rutherford et al. 2009; Schwepker 2001; Van Scotter 2000). Job satisfaction is perhaps the most frequently cited correlator and predictor of organisational commitment (Spector 1997).

With reference to this, job satisfaction can positively contribute to the outcomes of organisational commitment and decrease employees’ tendency to leave, resulting in reduced staff turnover. Some studies have identified a significant relationship between job satisfaction and organisational commitment, in that a lack of both job satisfaction and organisational commitment increases the possibility for turnover among employees (Steers, 1977; Koch & Steers 1978; Eugenia Sánchez Vidal et al. 2007; Landry et al. 2010; Rayton 2006; Yao & Wang 2006). A survey of employees in high-tech companies in Beijing conducted by Yao and Wang (2006) found that affective commitment was highly associated with individual attitudes to job satisfaction, absenteeism and turnover intention, which is consistent with some research in Western cultural contexts (Mathieu & Zajac 1990) and some Eastern cultural contexts (Top & Gider 2012; Takeuchi et al. 2009). A survey by Takeuchi et al. (2009) on HPWS among managers and employees in Japanese manufacturing and trading companies indicated that affective commitment is positively related to job satisfaction. A survey of hospital employees in Turkey conducted by Top and Gider (2012) showed a strong relationship between organisational commitment and job satisfaction. It appears that
genuinely satisfied employees add value and effort to the growth of an organisation (Top & Gider 2012).

Furthermore, studies such as those by Bateman and Strasser (1984) and Slocombe and Dougherty (1998) have argued that organisational commitment is a predictor of job satisfaction rather than a consequence of it. This was supported by Mueller and Lawler (1999) and Currivan (1999), who extended this to the relationship between working conditions, job satisfaction and organisational commitment. They argued that working conditions produce positive or negative emotions, such as job satisfaction, and employees attempt to understand the contextual sources of such emotions. The organisation becomes a target for these feelings and is viewed as responsible for positive emotions, which is likely to elicit an affective attachment from employees. In other words, through the evaluation of costs and benefits, employees’ needs and desires are satisfied resulting in a positive affective reaction to an organisation, job related aspects and working environments (Boles et al. 2007).

In the light of these findings, it is anticipated that a relationship may exist between job satisfaction and organisational commitment, which seem to be inextricably linked. Genuine satisfaction may result in a reasonable level of commitment. The researcher argues that both internal and external contexts (such as career growth and working environment) can play major roles in determining job satisfaction and are highly related to organisational commitment, especially affective commitment. Despite the massive research on HRM practices, organisational commitment and job satisfaction already conducted, repeated examination of links among these variables would permit richer meta-analytic investigation and evidence in this field of study (Tett & Meyer 1993). Even though the researcher has discussed in detail the three components of organisational commitment, for the purpose of this study, organisational commitment will be treated as a single variable in the analysis. The
above arguments and discussions illustrate the basic processes that seem to be required for career growth to impact on organisational commitment and job satisfaction in a ‘closed’ government department.

2.9 Conclusion

This chapter has focused on conceptual issues as they relate to career growth, organisational commitment and job satisfaction. The concept of a psychological contract and the social exchange theory which underpin this study have also been discussed. Career growth, organisational commitment and job satisfaction are essential to study in this Malaysian ‘closed’ government department whether they converge with or contradict the Western concepts of managing people in an organisation. Factors such as the limited studies conducted in the Malaysian public sector and the lack of research employing mixed methods contribute to the significance of this study. Having set the theoretical context for the study, the next chapter provides details of the Malaysian public sector context.
CHAPTER 3: MALAYSIAN CONTEXT

3.1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to provide contextual information and clarification in regard to the people of Malaysia, the political and economic background, and the influence of religiosity and technology on human resource management in the Malaysian public sector.

To understand the importance of career growth and its influence on organisational commitment and job satisfaction in the public sector, it is necessary to understand the contextual aspects of these issues. Thus, this chapter begins by reviewing current and emerging factors that influence the human resource practices of the public sector in Malaysia: the management of the Malaysian government in general, and the political, social, economic, cultural, religious and technological aspects which play important roles in shaping the Malaysian public service. For instance, the ethnic diversity in Malaysia may be among the factors that influence human resource practices. Malays and Bumis account for nearly 68% of the total population of 29 million people, Chinese account for 24% and Indians represent 7%. Malaysia therefore has a diverse workforce comprising individuals with distinct cultural beliefs and values.

As well as that, factors such as globalisation, technology innovations, cost-effective service delivery and the quest for more efficient human resource practices influence the Malaysian civil service reform agenda. Even though it is clear that context matters, there has been little study on HRM in Malaysia and how the contextual setting may influence HR practices, especially in ‘closed’ government sectors. For that reason, data for this research are drawn from responses to interviews and a survey among middle management as well as lower level employees in the selected ‘closed’ government department in Malaysia.
3.2 Government of Malaysia

Malaysian government has three tiers: federal, state and local (Malaysiafactbook 2014; Munn, Foo & Spilling 2012). Politics takes place in the framework of a federal representative demographic constitutional monarchy, in which the Yang di-Pertuan Agong (His Majesty the King) is the head of the country while the Prime Minister of Malaysia is the head of government under the executive power vested in the Parliament of Malaysia.

i) Federal Government

The federal or central government elected by the people through general elections is the ultimate authority in Malaysia and is based in the federal territory of Putrajaya. The federal government adopts the principle of separation of powers which divides power into executive, legislature and judiciary (Figure 3.2). Executive power is exercised by the federal government and the thirteen state governments. Federal legislative power is vested in the federal parliament and the thirteen state assemblies that are empowered to legislate on state matters such as land matters, public works, local government, agriculture and forestry, Islamic law and public holidays. The executive and legislative are closely related to each
other because Malaysia practises a system of government in which members of the legislative are also members of the executive body. Parliament also controls government finances. For instance, taxes and federal rates can be increased only by Parliament, as expressed in the federal constitution. The judiciary is independent of the executive and the legislature, although the executive maintains a certain level of influence in the appointment of judges.

Figure 3.2: Separation of powers in the federal government of Malaysia
Source: Ahmad Mokhtar (2011)

a) Legislature

The bicameral parliament consists of the lower house, the House of Representatives (Dewan Rakyat or the Chamber of the People), and the upper house, the Senate (Dewan
Negara or the Chamber of the Nation). All 70 Senate members sit for three-year terms (to a maximum of two terms); 26 are elected by the 13 state assemblies and 44 are appointed by the King based on the advice of the Prime Minister. The 222 members of the Dewan Rakyat are elected from single-member districts by universal adult suffrage (age of majority is 21). The parliament follows a multi-party system and the governing body is elected through a first-past-the-post system (won by the candidate with more votes than any other). Parliament has a maximum mandate of five years. The King may dissolve parliament at any time and also upon the advice of the Prime Minister.

b) Executive

Executive power is vested in the cabinet led by a Prime Minister. The Malaysian constitution stipulates that the Prime Minister must be a member of the Lower House of Parliament and must, in the opinion of the Yang di-Pertuan Agong, command a majority in parliament. Currently, it is led by Prime Minister Dato' Sri Haji Mohammad Najib bin Tun Haji Abdul Razak, who is the sixth Prime Minister of Malaysia since 2009. The cabinet is chosen by the Yang di-Pertuan Agong from among members of both houses of parliament and is responsible to the legislative body. Prior to the appointment of the cabinet, the Yang di-Pertuan Agong appoints the Prime Minister to lead the cabinet ministers who are responsible for various functions such as Finance, Agricultural and Defence.

c) Judiciary

The judiciary is a separate and independent body from the political, to ensure justice in the country. The highest court in the judicial system is the Federal Court, followed by the Court of Appeal and two High Courts, one for Peninsular Malaysia and one for East Malaysia. The subordinate courts in each of these jurisdictions include Sessions Courts,
Magistrates Courts, and Courts for Children. Malaysia also has a Special Court to hear cases brought by or against all Royalty.

ii) State Government

Malaysia is divided into thirteen states, Perlis, Kedah, Pulau Pinang, Perak, Selangor, Negeri Sembilan, Kelantan, Terengganu, Johor, Pahang, Melaka, Sabah and Sarawak, and three Wilayah Persekutuan (federal territories), Kuala Lumpur, Putrajaya and Labuan. Each state government in Malaysia has its own state constitution and each state has a unicameral Dewan Undangan Negeri (State Legislative Assembly) whose members are elected from single-member constituencies. State governments are led by Menteri Besar (Chief Ministers), who are state assembly members from the majority party in the Dewan Undangan Negeri. In each of the thirteen states with a hereditary ruler, the Chief Minister is required to be Malay and is appointed by the Sultan upon the recommendation of the Prime Minister.

iii) Local Government

The local government or local authority is the third level in the system of government in Malaysia. It has the power to collect taxes such as assessment and land taxes, to create by-laws and rules on matters such as land matters and to grant licences and permits for operating businesses, in addition to providing basic amenities, collecting and managing waste and garbage as well as planning and developing facilities such as community halls in the area under its jurisdiction. Each local authority in Malaysia is generally under the exclusive purview of the state government and is headed by a civil servant with the title Yang Di-Pertua (President). Local government areas and boundaries are usually consistent with district boundaries but there are some places where the boundaries are not consistent and may overlap with adjoining districts, especially in urban areas.
Unlike the federal and state governments, the local governments in Malaysia are not elected. They have been appointed by the state government since local council elections were suspended by the federal government in 1965.

3.3 Malaysian Public Sector

The terms ‘public sector’ and ‘civil service’ are used inclusively and interchangeably in this study. Overall, Malaysian public sector organisations have to fulfil the responsibilities of government and are expected to be involved in policy development, especially by their heads of department, as well as delivering services to the public. In 2010, the Malaysian government was the single largest employer in the country’s labour market, with 28 schemes of government service amounting to 1.2 million employees or approximately 10% of the total workforce. In 2013, there were 1.4 million civil servants, making up 10.8% of the total labour force (Malaysiafactbook 2014; Department of Statistics Malaysia 2013). This present study aims at improving public sector efficiency and performance in the delivery of services.

In recent statistics published by the World Economic Forum (WEF) reported Malaysia lagging behind all but two Southeast Asian countries in gender equality and ranked Malaysia 102 out of 136 countries, with other ASEAN countries beating Malaysia except Cambodia and Myanmar (Leong, 2013). The report did not mention about the context of the research such as public sector or private sector. This study also tested the influence of gender differences on commitment and satisfaction among ‘closed’ government employees.

Public sector organisations have a broad role to serve the public interest and provide public goods and services. Because of this special relationship with their clients, individuals who work in public sector organisations receive close scrutiny to ensure they adhere to a high standard of fairness, conscientiousness, accountability and trust-worthiness (Ward & Mitchell 2004). According to contemporary Malaysian and Islamic perspectives, effective governance
requires not only good collaboration between the three main agents – public sector, private sector and constituents or community – but also requires eradicating and preventing malpractice and power abuse (Ismail 2011).

A long-held belief in Malaysia is that working for the government is very different from working for employers in the private sector, as the government sector offers a high level of job security and the guarantee of a lifetime career (Lavelle 2006) but this perception is not true because if employees are not committed to their jobs or are involved in malpractice, they may be penalised and terminated.

Overall, the private sector is profit oriented and focuses on financial gain. In contrast, the public sector is expected to develop and deliver services for the benefit of the populace (Matthews & Shulman 2005). The current changing environment and the increasing expectations of its stakeholders and clients are motivating the public sector to review, rethink and transform to upgrade its performance. The Malaysian public sector also has to find and use techniques to produce better value from the country’s remaining resources by delivering targeted outcomes more cost effectively, such as through research and development programs (Ahmad Mokhtar 2011).

Boyne (2002) conducted a study of the theoretical arguments on the differences between the public and private sectors. The research covered the relationships between public and organisational goals, organisational environments, organisational structures and managerial values and was based on the results of 34 empirical studies in the UK and the US. The data suggested that the public sector is seen as more bureaucratic than the private sector and public sector managers are considered less materialistic than private sector managers (Boyne 2002).
The Malaysian civil service can be traced back to the period of the Malacca Sultanate where the Head of State was the Sultan (King) who was supported by several ministers such as the Bendahara (Prime Minister), Laksamana (Admiral), Temenggong (Chief of the District) and Shahbandar (Harbour Master) for administrative matters such as financial matters and national security. Kerajaan (government) derives from the root Raja, which means king. Serving the King or the palace is considered an honour and is well respected in the Malaysian community. The preference for working for the government began during the rule of the Sultans when Malaya was colonised by the British. As the Malays are the natives of Malaya, the British realised that, due to the large numbers of sultans and ministers, to govern the country effectively they had to get support from the Malays (Aziz 2012). At the end of British rule, with the intention of preparing the Malays for their own administration after independence, the British continued the tradition of recruiting Malays to serve the government. They were guided by the Malacca Code and the maritime laws which had gone through a series of changes during colonisation by the Portuguese (from 1511), the Dutch (from 1641) and the British (from 1824).

The Malaysian Establishment Office commenced on 22 August 1934 and functioned as a civil service department, later being replaced by the Federal Establishment Office. After Independence in 1957, a further change took place when on 15 August 1968 the Federal Establishment Office was transformed into the Malaysian Public Service Department.

The role of the public service has been significantly reformed over the years, in line with Malaysian economic development. Its missions, objectives and functions have undergone changes under the direct and indirect impacts of transformations in the country’s policies and development strategies. These reforms took place in two phases during a period of rapid economic growth in the 1960s and 1970s, when they focused on administration and
institution development. A third period from 1980 to the present has involved the strengthening and upgrading of the government machinery and delivery systems (Ariff 1998). In spite of these reforms, the Malaysian civil service still operates to some extent under the shadow of the former British colonial administration and is deliberately politicised by local interest (Ayob 2004; Chew 2005). For example, Malays and the Bumiputra ethnic group predominate in public administration, a pattern which is a legacy from the British colonial administration (Aziz 2012; Chew 2005).

Due to the historical links between the British and Malaysia and the influence of British policy, Malaysian organisational practices still reflect aspects of those practised in the UK such as the adoption of best practice HRM (Gould-Williams & Mohamed 2010). Chew (2005) has suggested that HRM practices in Malaysia are artefacts of both indigenous and Western practices dating back to British colonisation in the nineteenth century.

Malaysia continues with various transformation programs such as the New Economic Policy and Vision 2020 to enable it progress significantly and respond to global demands. The aspiration of Vision 2020, launched in 1991, is not only for Malaysia to advance economically but also for the nation to achieve a stable social and political environment. To achieve the challenges of Vision 2020, the government has developed a transformation plan based on four pillars: the One Malaysia Concept (People First, Performance Now), the Government Transformation Program (GTP), the New Economic Model (NEM) and the 10th Malaysia Plan (10 MP) (Economic Planning Unit 2014; Parasuraman & Ab Rahman 2011). These are complemented by the inculcation of the core values of innovation, enhancing integrity, assimilating creativity, accelerating implementation and increasing cost efficiency (Parasuraman & Ab Rahman 2011).
The public service is entrusted with the task of implementing the five-year economic plan (2011–2015) (Public Service Department 2012). To ensure the successful implementation of these strategies, efforts have been made to upgrade the planning and performance capabilities of the civil service such as improving communication of information, training and technology, so that the plans can be executed efficiently.

3.4 Factors Driving Reform of HRM in the Public Sector

3.4.1 The People

Malaysia is a multiracial country in which the major ethnic groups, Malays, Chinese and Indians, practise their distinct cultures, customs, traditions, languages, norms, values and beliefs, and maintain their ethnic identities openly and unrestricted (Abdul Rashid & Ho 2003). In giving priority to preserving a harmonious environment, Malaysia demonstrates a strong humane orientation while respecting hierarchical dissimilarity, recognising citizens’ status differences such as royalty, religious standing and awards for service to the state (Kennedy 2002). Malaysians uphold values of self-respect (face), sensitivity to the feelings of other people, politeness and indirectness in daily communication (Bakar et al. 2007). As demonstrated in Figure 3.1, the Malaysian population of about 29.2 million consists of 68% Malay and indigenous Bumiputras, 24% Chinese, 7% Indians and 1% others (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2013).
Based on his work in 1980 and 2001, Hofstede (2007) suggested that Malaysians had high power distance, low individualism, moderate masculinity and relatively weak uncertainty avoidance scores when compared with Western countries such as the UK and Australia, which are categorised as individualistic cultures, the self being distinct from the in-group. However, a study conducted by Noordin et al. (2002) on career commitment in Malaysia and Australia argued that while Malaysians are basically collectivists in terms of their social relations, self-sacrifice and family integrity, at the same time, they also demonstrate elements of competition, which is an individualist factor, at least in their working life, particularly the people who are high achievers and looking for challenging jobs and a good income in private and multinational companies in Malaysia.

Religious and cultural exchange during the Spice Route period has produced a vibrant culture in this part of Asia. After the British colonisation of the Malay states in 1875, Chinese and Indian people came to the country for political and economic reasons, including the exploitation of mineral resources and rubber estates in the form of indentured labour (Hirschman 1986; Selvarajah & Meyer 2008). Before that time, the population was
predominantly Malay and other indigenous ethnic groups, *Bumiputera* (‘sons of the soil’) (Hirschman 1986; Selvarajah & Meyer 2008).

Rowley and Jackson (2011) highlighted culture as a factor that differentiates people’s behaviour and economic activity. Cultures evolve as an outcome of national patterns and the formative influences of geography, religion, education and language (Rowley & Jackson 2011). Culture can be defined as: (1) something shared by all or more than half of the members of a given social group, (2) something older members of a group transfer to younger generations or (3) something (as in the case of morals, laws and customs) that shapes structures or behaviour and a person’s perception of the world (Adler & Gundersen 2008). Cultural values are considered to be deep-seated and enduring, and culture may be considered to be immutable (Adler & Gundersen 2008).

The Malaysian workforce is shaped by the religious backgrounds, ethnicity, traditions, histories and social systems which transfer Malaysians’ sense of belonging and family centeredness to membership of an organisation (Selvarajah & Meyer 2008). Their study also showed that the Malay and Indian managers put greater emphasis on morality, religion and trust than Chinese managers do. This is closely related to the values, traditions and strong religious influences of the Islamic and Hindu faiths. Employees’ feelings of kinship and family centeredness must be integrated into an organisation. When managers insist on loyalty and trust from the employees, they need to make sure that these expectations are reciprocated.

The confluence of two dominant nations, India to the west and China to the east, formed the Malay Archipelago. The seafarers from China brought Buddhism, Taoism and Confucianism and those from India brought Islam and Hinduism to the archipelago. Mansor and Ali (1998) argued that Malaysian management practices should be understood in the
context of elements of Islamic, Confucian, Hindu and Western values. Under the influence of colonisation – the Portuguese in the sixteenth century and then the Dutch in the eighteenth century followed by the British in the nineteenth century – Christianity and Western systems of economic and political institutions were gradually established. Malaya was also occupied by the Japanese for more than three years (1942–1945) during the Second World War before attaining independence from the British in 1957.

3.4.2 Religious Perspective

Religion plays a crucial role in the development of work values by providing the fundamental values and beliefs which develop individuals’ value systems and behaviour (Abdul Rashid & Ho 2003). When religious beliefs are embedded in a society, its members have difficulty understanding conduct based on other assumptions (Abdul Rashid & Ho 2003; Adler & Gundersen 2008). For instance, something acceptable to the Chinese such as gambling may not be acceptable to the Malays because of the Islamic belief that it is wrong conduct. Adler and Gundersen (2008) suggested that value is a direct derivative of the cultural context and as such it provides for explicit and implicit expressions of what is right and what is wrong. Religions provide values that define right or wrong, the basic values of a culture (Abdul Rashid & Ho 2003). As argued by Hofstede (1980), a belief system guides a person in the right way to feel, think, perceive and respond to the environment.

Islamic values emphasise the important of honesty, self-discipline, motivation, consensus and teamwork in daily life. If management practices and employee behaviour are consistent with these values, the Malaysian workforce would be expected to be highly motivated and self-disciplined (Gould-Williams & Mohamed 2010). Religion also provides a defence mechanism which preserves values and norms. For instance, holding firmly to religious convictions, may guard Malaysians against the influence of Western secular culture.
which is perceived as a cause of moral decay, manifested in practices such as tattooing and vandalism.

Religion as well as culture may play an important role in the interplay between HRM practices and organisational commitment in the Malaysian public service. The institutionalisation of Islamic values in the public sector began in the 1980s with the introduction of *Penerapan Nilai-Nilai Murni* (The Application of Pure Values) as a policy guideline for the incorporation of Islamic ethics in the workplace. Since the majority of the population is Muslim, work values tend to be underpinned by Islamic concepts based on the *Quran* (Ismail 2011). Such ethics associate work as giving meaning to life, economic activity as an obligation and commitment to a task as a virtue (Yousef 2001). *Islam Hadhari* (Civilisational Islam), introduced by the former Prime Minister Abdullah Badawi, has contributed to the way Malaysian organisations are managed (Abdul Hamid 2010). Thus, an employee’s attitude to work is very much affected by their religious resources. Islamic values particularly emphasise *amannah* (upholding trust) in daily life, and if a Muslim observes that value, he or she will not cheat in business or accept bribes.

As the majority of public service employees in Malaysia are of Malay Muslim origin, management practices are influenced by key Islamic values and principles. While there is as yet limited literature on the influence of religion and culture on employees commitment and satisfaction in the Malaysian context (Hashim 2010; Sloan-White 2011), it has been argued that Muslim employees are expected to be honest, trustworthy, and determined to continuously strive for the best, regardless of who they work for (Hashim 2010). The brief review of Malaysian society illustrates the social, cultural and religious imperatives that affect human resource management practices in Malaysia.
3.4.3 Politico-Economic Perspective

Malaysia has a multi-party system in which political parties have gained control of government separately or in coalition since the first election in 1955. The ruling party at that time was the Alliance Party coalition (Parti Perikatan). Since 1973, the ruling party has been the Barisan National Front coalition, which consists of the United Malays National Organisation (UMNO), the Malaysian Chinese Association (MCA) and the Malaysian Indian Congress (MIC).

Economically, Malaysia is upper middle income and is an advanced developing country (The World Bank 2014) with an impressive development reputation. Malaysia has taken a number of strategic reform initiatives such as New Economic Policy (NEP) to expedite the country’s competitiveness and enhance its growth potential in order to become a developed nation and to achieve the high income status envisaged in Vision 2020. Since the 1970s it has become transformed from a producer of raw materials into an emerging multi-sector economy, including technology, manufacturing and agriculture (Index Mundi 2013), with exports of electronics products as well as oil and gas, palm oil and rubber.

To attract foreign investments in Islamic finance, biotechnology, high technology industries and the services sector, the government has made great efforts to provide stable platforms, supportive infrastructure and a conducive environment (Index Mundi 2013). The New Economic Policy (NEP) was introduced in 1971 with the tandem objectives of eradicating poverty and restructuring society. It entailed the correction of an economic imbalance so as to eventually eliminate identification of race with economic function in Malaysia. This identification of race with occupations had occurred since British colonisation in 1824. Malays worked as farmers, Chinese worked in mines and Indians worked as rubber tappers on the rubber estates. The objective of the New Economic Policy (NEP) was to
ensure that Malays and other Bumiputeras become involved in all aspects of the economic life of the country.

Since 1983 the government has also established major structural modifications in the economy. For instance, persyarikatan Malaysia (Malaysian incorporation policy) between the private and public sectors and the privatisation of public sector activities were introduced. The economy grew rapidly and registered a growth of 9.3% per annum between 1988 and 1990, the highest recorded since Independence (Economic Planning Unit 2014). This era also witnessed the establishment of more advanced industries and the production of a national car, the Proton Saga, in 1987. By 1989 the contribution of the private sector to economic growth surpassed that of the public sector, heralding the transformation of the Malaysia economy to that of a private-sector-driven economy. However, during the Asian Financial Crisis in 1997 and 1998, the Malaysian economy was severely affected. The government accordingly took measures to strengthen the resilience of the financial sector to prevent systemic risk and to support the effective functioning of the banking system as an intermediary to assist the economic recovery (Economic Planning Unit 2014). As reported by the Central Intelligence Agency (2014), Malaysia is the 44th most populated country in the world and the third largest economy in South East Asia. It ranks 30th in the world with a gross domestic product (GDP) of USD 525 billion in 2013 with a total population of 30 million and a literacy rate of 93.1%.

The Malaysian tax regime is not a deterrent to local or foreign investment. An accommodative monetary policy has been administered in tandem with the fiscal policy so as to encourage investment while maintaining price and exchange rate stability. Thus, monetary and fiscal policies are administered to ensure they facilitate economic activities.

The Malaysian government embraces a pro-business administrative policy, which includes improving the civil service delivery system to enhance efficiency and performance,
cut the cost of doing business and promote competitiveness. This is being achieved through reducing unnecessary bureaucratic delays and duplication as well as improving the effectiveness of regulations and procedures which promote integrity, equitable, accountability and transparency (Ismail 2011; Munn et al. 2012; Siddiquee 2010).

In implementing policies in Malaysia, the Government’s approach has consistently been responsive to current changes and public demand. Normally, policies are designed based on input and feedback from stakeholders, which include chambers of commerce and industry, non-government organisations and trade associations. Information is also acquired through seminars and open dialogues such as the National Economic Consultative Council, the MITI Dialogues and the Annual Budget Consultations. As a result of the New Economic Policy (NEP), eventually poverty decreased, the labour force pattern become more reflective of the national racial composition and the equity ownership pattern improved considerably. For instance, the unemployment rate of 3.4% in 1982 decreased to 3.0% in 2000. Malaysian poverty statistics (1970–2007) showed that the overall incidence of 49.3% households in poverty in 1970 decreased to 3.6% of households in 2007 (Economic Planning Unit 2014). Although absolute poverty has largely been eradicated, a hefty 40% of Malaysian households remain in the low income category, earning less than RM1,500 per month, and income disparities between ethnic groups and regions must still be addressed (Economic Planning Unit 2014; Hill et al. 2011).

3.4.4 Technology

The public service has to deal with the competing demands, needs and expectations of the different interest groups of public customers, private sector interests and political stakeholders. The allocation of resources aligned with the national priorities for the country’s transformation into a knowledge-driven economy is designed to maximise economic and
social returns. Thus, the public sector needs to establish and improve mechanisms such as service standards, citizens’ feedback procedures, and output-based performance rating systems for effective and efficient public services (Asean Secretariat 2009).

Six principal strategies have been employed by the Public Service Department (PSD) to re-engineer the public service by advancing reforms which include a focus on human resource development in the public sector. This encompasses the upgrading of knowledge and skills in advanced technology and developing expertise and specialisation through lifelong learning programs (Abdul Karim 1997; Siddiquee 2010).

With the latest advancements in the field of information technology (IT) and the enabling effects of its numerous systems and applications, the public service has incorporated the extensive use of IT to strengthening these strategies. When Malaysian public sector agencies are networked, electronic applications are put in place to implement electronic procedures, enhancing the standard and quality of the delivery system.

3.5 HRM in the Malaysian Public Sector

The HRM policies and practices of the Malaysian Public Service Department (PSD) are still largely influenced by the British colonisation experience of the nineteenth and early twentieth century. It is commonly considered that HRM practices in Malaysia are artefacts derived from an integration of Western and indigenous practices (Chew 2005). Aziz (2012) categorised Malaysian HRM practices into two main streams: British-oriented values and the ethnic values of the Malays, Chinese and Indians. This approach can be traced to the introduction of Western management and education systems since Independence. In addition, the increased convergence of work-related values and the expectations of Malaysian overseas graduates accelerate the absorption of current Western ideas and may reshape the value systems of Malaysians (Aziz 2012).
In Malaysia, the Public Service Department (PSD), specifically the Civil Service Commission, is responsible for managing the employment and the working conditions of civil servants, overseeing employment and promotions, and promoting the values of the public service (Commonwealth Secretariat 2004), including formulating policies pertaining to HRM such as recruitment and selection, training and development, compensation and benefits, performance appraisal and the promotion system. Civil service commissions are often independent from elected politicians (Commonwealth Secretariat 2004). The core guidelines for the public service are known as the General Orders; they are complemented by the services’ circulars and circular letters.

3.5.1 Training and Development

Training and development is an important component of human resource development in the Malaysian public sector. It is necessary to maintain and improve the skills and performance of the civil service workforce in order to deliver quality services. In addition, training and development is aimed at enhancing the ability of each member of the civil service to address both present and future objectives of their organisation.

Normally, training policy in the Malaysian civil service is well documented and training starts almost immediately once candidates have accepted job offers. In-service training has become an important requirement for career development, and induction courses have become mandatory for new employees. The induction program is principally organised by individual departments to familiarise new employees with job requirements and procedures, organisational goals, performance standards and values. Orientation programs are important as new employees gain ‘first impressions’ which may be positive or may inhibit adjustment in the organisation. Also, the initial impressions of organisational norms and
values as communicated by management are quickly internalised by employees and guide their future work-related behaviour (Ng & Feldman 2007).

Training activities in the civil service are guided by the training policy as documented in Service Circular No. 6/1984 with its main objectives being the enhancement of skills, efficiency and productivity and the development of capable and qualified employees who are able to produce output of high quality.

A major policy introduced recently by the Public Service Department (PSD) was the Training Policy for Human Resources in the Civil Service, as stipulated in Service Circular No. 6/2005 and Service Circular No. 2/2005. This policy seeks to ensure that the implementation of training is in line with the main objectives set out in the Malaysia Remuneration System (MRS) of encouraging self-development, knowledge management, creativity, innovation and skills enhancement among civil servants. In the five-year plan of public service management, the organisation offers rewards for innovation and attractive incentives for further learning and improved educational qualifications among government servants.

The monitoring of training and other developmental aspects of human resources management is delegated to the HRM unit or division which exists in all ministries or departments. In an effort to achieve this goal, and in conjunction with the issuance of the circular, several approaches have been taken by the departments, including conducting in-house training courses either through their own training section or by outsourcing to the private sector. HRM managers are involved in ensuring that all HRM functions are carried out effectively in an integrated manner. The devolution of power and HRM functions plus the creation and strengthening of these HRM units are steps towards ensuring that HRM in the civil service can be executed more effectively, responding to the needs and demands of the
particular organisation while operating within the key HRM policies for the civil service determined by the PSD. To ensure that HRM managers are aware of changes taking place in the HRM field, regular meetings and seminars are organised by the PSD to inform them of recent developments in HRM and to monitor as well as provide guidelines for managing human resources in their departments (Public Service Department 2012).

3.5.2 Performance Appraisal

‘Performance appraisal’ can be defined as periodic evaluation of the output of an individual measured against certain expectations (Ahmad & Ali 2004) and thus it has a direct influence on job satisfaction and motivation. Managing the implementation and outcomes of performance appraisal is a challenging task for policy makers in the Malaysian civil service. This is because performance appraisal decisions may impact on employees’ compensation and recognition, referrals to disciplinary procedure, training and promotion (Amin et al. 2014) and also affects employees’ perception of employer recognition of their efforts (Juhdi et al. 2013).

After ten years of the implementation of the New Remuneration System (NRS) inherited from the British, the performance appraisal system was confronted with massive criticism and comments from public servants and the labour union (Ahmad & Ali 2004). The main issue was the fairness of evaluation decisions. Many raters did not seem to have enough knowledge and skills to evaluate their subordinates (Ahmad & Ali 2004). The issue of subjectivity also arose when some raters were perceived as having bias and not being fair or objective (Ahmad & Ali 2004; Prowse & Prowse 2009).

The performance appraisal system in the Malaysian civil service runs from January to December each year. Performance appraisal assesses the performance of civil servants based
on previously agreed work objectives. The first step involves annual departmental planning and setting targets for activities by those at the top management level (Ahmad & Ali 2004).

Annual planning is based on central government policy and planning, budget allocation, staffing and facilities allocation. The second step is for the first rater officer (FRO) and the second rater officer (SRO) of the unit or division to determine their subordinates’ work targets. The process involves two-way interaction between the subordinate and their supervisor where subordinates are guided to complete the plan of the annual work targets (Siddiquee 2010).

‘Competency assessment’ refers to a specified level in the acquisition of knowledge and skills as well as good personal values in carrying out tasks. The purpose of job competency assessment in relation to determining salary movements and promotion is to encourage civil service employees to continuously improve their knowledge and job competencies through courses and personal learning. This is in line with the intention of the government to transform the civil service into a knowledge-based civil service and to create more knowledgeable workers. In addition, competency assessment is used to encourage employees’ self-development through continuous learning, the cultivation of a learning organisation culture and a competency-based human resource management in the civil service (Ahmad & Ali 2004).

Competency assessment is implemented through examinations and courses that evaluate the competency level of employees in the performance of their duties and their general knowledge of civil service benefits and responsibilities, as stated in the General Order of Public Service Department such as eligibility to occupy government quarters, annual leave and termination of service. The heads of services or departments are required to develop the examination syllabus and the course curriculum based on the duties and responsibilities of
their employees for the purpose of the competency assessment. Employees in the appointment grades are required to pass competency assessment levels (Competency Assessment Level 1 and Competency Assessment Level 2), and for every promotional grade, employees are required to pass one competency assessment level at each grade (Competency Assessment Level 3 and above). The number of competency assessment levels is related to the particular service group (Ahmad & Ali 2004).

3.5.3 Promotion Policy

Promotion denotes that an individual is seen to have acquired the competencies such as skills, abilities, knowledge and attitudes required for promotion to the next higher position (Dries 2008). The competencies reflect the knowledge and skills exhibited in observable behaviour in the relevant areas of work (Azmi 2010). The possibility of promotion may motivate employees to put more effort into their work and improve their performance and is an important part of performance management (Dick 2011). The principle of merit or the best person for the job is the key criterion for promotion. Ability, credentials and experience are taken into account in the assessment. The process of assessment is meant to be fair, transparent and kept separate from the day-to-day management of performance and from the annual performance appraisal (O’Donnell & Shields 2002). The former should be a continuous process, while the latter can be used to assist in determining suitability for promotion (O’Donnell & Shields 2002).

In the Malaysian public sector, the promotion criteria for the first promotion of an employee in the professional and management group (Levels 41 to 44) are: attending the compulsory nation-building course, passing the stated competency exam level, three consecutive years’ performance appraisal of good standing (minimum score of 85%) and recommendation from the head of department. The basic promotion of an officer is as stated
in public official regulations for appointment, promotion and termination of service (Public Service Department 2005):

1) The promotion of an officer is based on merit.

2) In considering an officer for promotion, the Promotion Board shall take into consideration:

a) the officer’s work efficiently and performance
b) the officer’s qualifications, knowledge, skills and experience
c) the officer’s personal characteristics, including his suitability for the promotional post, integrity, potential
d) the officer’s extra-mural activities and contributions to the country and society

(3) In addition to the matters mentioned in sub-regulation (2), the Promotion Board may consider any other aspect which it thinks relevant.

Notwithstanding sub-regulation (1), if two or more officers are to be judged equal in terms of merit, the academic qualifications or working experience related to the promotional post as well as the seniority of the officers shall also be a basis for selection and taken into consideration.

In reference to the appointment of recruits to professional and management group Level 41, the applications can be from new graduates or internal support group staff who have done further study to improve their education qualification during their service. When a vacancy is filled internally, the department saves on the training costs of providing a new employee from outside the organisation with the knowledge and skills required for the department’s core business. In addition, the department benefits when trained employees are promoted and utilise their acquired skills and experience rather than taking their talents to
other organisations (Bayo-Moriones & Ortín-Angel 2006). However, in a ‘closed’
government department, there is no guarantee that improvement in education level will
automatically provide promotion. Those internal candidates need to compete with the
outsiders by undergoing similar recruitment procedures such as interviews. Sometimes this
situation may lead to low commitment and encourage experienced and talented staff to find
better job prospects outside the department. This issue needs to be addressed to strengthen
organisational commitment and job satisfaction in ‘closed’ departments.

3.6 HRM in Malaysian ‘Closed’ Government Departments

Overall, Malaysian ‘closed’ government departments such as police, army, fire-
fighting, customs and immigration are seen as having high levels of organisational
commitment because they exhibit organisational cultures that have strong norms for
obligation, internalisation and identification, all of which are conditions that facilitate
organisational commitment. With their particular organisational culture that emphasises
commitment to the profession and organisation as well as the maintenance of hierarchical
rank and status, these departments rely on staff with physical capabilities, experience and
knowledge to deal with their critical core business and to protect national security and the
national interest (Bergman 2006; Dick 2011; Dick & Metcalfe 2001; Noblet et al. 2009).

Dick and Metcalfe (2001), in their survey of a police department in the UK, suggested that an
employee’s work role is more positively experienced the higher the position in the
organisation’s hierarchy. But is this proposition true for a Malaysian ‘closed' government
department?

What should be the minimum and maximum time of attachment to each division? The
department has had a job rotation system since its inception. Initially this system operated on
a discretionary basis, with the particular candidates, their placements and the duration of
placements being at the discretion of the department executives. Since that time, there have been a standing orders documented and implemented by the department. However, their implementation and their effectiveness continue to be questioned by employees. Taking into account the historical record of standing orders numbered 18, 45 and 63, dated 2 June 1993, 23 October 1997 and 25 June 2007 respectively (Table 3.1), it is suggested that job rotation should be scheduled within the minimum and maximum years of attachment subject to the critical conditions of each division.

Table 3.1: The standing orders on the duration of job rotation in the department

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Standing Orders (Year)</th>
<th>Minimum Years</th>
<th>Maximum Years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18 (1993)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45 (1997)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>63 (2007)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Department Standing Orders

Interviews and a survey are utilised in this study to address this issue. The findings could be used by policy makers and human resource managers as a guide to planning and implementing job rotation. The suggestions based on the point of view of department officers could result in more effective job rotation.

3.7 The ‘Closed’ Government Agency

The department studied is established under the Ministry of Finance with responsibilities including administering the national tax policy and country security. A tax administration system had already existed before there was any Western influence on tax collection. In the era of the Malacca Sultanate and Johor-Riau Sultanate, there were naval and harbour laws which dealt with tax collection from local and foreign merchants. In 1937, the department was officially launched and after Independence, the administrative structure was reshuffled to include Sabah and Sarawak.
The main mission of this ‘closed’ government agency is to collect government revenue and provide facilitation to the trade and industrial sectors while improving compliance with legislation to protect the nation’s economic, social and security interests. In line with the department’s aim to become world class in its core business administration by 2015, a thorough evaluation of the present level of job satisfaction and organisational commitment among the department’s employees could contribute much to the department, so the results of this study are particularly relevant and timely.

3.7.1 Functions

1. To collect government income and protect revenue for the country efficiently and effectively in accordance with the national and strategic policy of the country

2. To provide efficient facilitation to trade and industrial sectors to develop the industrial and economic growth of the country

3. To improve and increase prevention activities with regard to contraband in order to protect the economic, social and security interests of the country

4. To continuously evaluate and develop the human capital of the department

3.7.2 Organisational Structure

The department is headed by the Director General and assisted by Deputy Directors General. At the state level it is headed by a Director and assisted by five deputies who head the six main divisions. Training is provided by the department’s own academy, which was established in August 1956 and has four branches in Malaysia.

In facing the development of world trading domestically and in relation to foreign countries, the role of the department is always challenging. The department is also the main revenue collector for the country and is responsible for facilitating the functions of the
commercial and industrial sectors and their compliance with the law. At 31 December 2010, the department had a total of 12,080 staff, which increased to 12,479 staff at 31 December 2013, of whom approximately 2,000 were civilian staff and the remainder were uniformed officers (Department Annual Report 2010, 2013). The breakdown according to service group is demonstrated in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2: Department Grades and Entry Level under the Malaysian Remuneration System

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Entry Level/ Minimum Qualification</th>
<th>Staffing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Top Management</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turus III</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jusa A Premier</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jusa B (Special)</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jusa C (Special)</td>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional and Management</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 54</td>
<td></td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 52</td>
<td></td>
<td>143</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 48</td>
<td></td>
<td>371</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 44</td>
<td></td>
<td>815</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Level 41</strong></td>
<td><strong>Entry level Bachelor degree at Grade 41</strong></td>
<td>696</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support Group I</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 36</td>
<td></td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 32</td>
<td></td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 27</td>
<td>Entry level Diploma/ Malaysian Higher School Certificate of Education (HSC) at Grade 27</td>
<td>242</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support Group II</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 26</td>
<td></td>
<td>274</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 22</td>
<td></td>
<td>1020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 17</td>
<td>Entry Level Malaysian Certificate of Education (MCE) and equivalent at Grade 17</td>
<td>5593</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Unit</td>
<td></td>
<td>640</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Common User/ Civilian Staff</td>
<td></td>
<td>2148</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>12,080</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: Malaysian Public Service Department (Service Circular No. 4/2000) and the Department’s Annual Report 2010
With reference to this study, prior research on career growth as a predictor of organisational commitment and job satisfaction (Gong et al. 2009; Juhdi et al. 2013; Weng et al. 2010; Weng & McElroy 2012) has had a limited focus on public sector employees, especially those in Malaysian ‘closed’ government departments.

3.8 Conclusion

A Malaysian ‘closed’ government department has been selected as the setting of this study on the nature of the relationship between career growth, organisational commitment and job satisfaction. This chapter has provided a broad overview of the Malaysian background and study context. Culture, economy, technology, and the social, religious and political contexts play important roles in shaping HRM practices in the Malaysian public sector. Those practices may have a significant effect on the way employees identify with work and whether they are committed to the organisation and satisfied with their work. Malaysia has been striving to adopt Western HRM models, particularly in the government’s implementation of high performance service delivery systems, since Independence. However it is questionable whether these models are always appropriate in the Malaysian ‘closed’ government department context and so the task of this thesis is to examine aspects of this issue in depth. The next chapter discusses the research methodology used in this study.
CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the methodology and research strategies adopted in the present study. To address the research questions, this study collected data through both qualitative and quantitative methods, using mixed methods techniques. The chapter is organised in the following manner. It begins with consideration of the research paradigm, scope and location of the study and the rationale for employing a mixed methods approach. This is followed by a description of the research context, which includes sampling, data collection procedures and instruments. The chapter also discusses data analysis techniques, data processing, reliability analysis and assumption tests as well as ethical considerations.

4.2 Justification of Research Paradigm

There has been much debate in social science research on the relative merits of the two broad research paradigms of a positivist quantitative approach and a constructivist qualitative approach (Tashakkori & Creswell 2008). Teddlie and Tashakkori (2012, p. 1) contended that, despite arguments for the ‘incompatibility of methods thesis’ by scholars who believe that it is inappropriate to mix quantitative and qualitative methods because of the fundamental differences between these paradigms, mixed methods can be appropriate in order to thoroughly investigate the phenomena of interest.

‘Paradigm’ is generally defined as a world view (Morgan 2007; Tashakkori & Teddlie 2009; Creswell & Plano Clark 2007, 2011) or a point of view based on philosophical assumptions about how the world is experienced (Tashakkori & Teddlie 2009). The point of view may be associated with values, morals, aesthetics and beliefs (Morgan 2007) and may comprise perspectives adopted from the principles of ontology, epistemology, axiology and methodology (Creswell & Plano Clark 2011). Based on these dimensions, Creswell and Plano Clark (2011) described four world views that are commonly agreed among scholars: post-positivism, constructivism, participatory and pragmatism (see Table 4.1).
Table 4.1: Elements of world views and implications for practice

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>World View Element</th>
<th>Post Positivism</th>
<th>Constructivism</th>
<th>Participatory</th>
<th>Pragmatism</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ontology (What is the nature of reality?)</td>
<td>Singular reality (e.g., researchers reject or fail to reject hypothesis)</td>
<td>Multiple realities (e.g., researchers provide quotes to illustrate different perspectives)</td>
<td>Political reality (e.g., findings are negotiated with participants)</td>
<td>Singular and multiple realities (e.g., researchers test hypothesis and provide multiple perspectives)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Epistemology (What is the relationship between the researcher and that being researched?)</td>
<td>Distance and impartiality (e.g., researchers objectively collect data on instruments)</td>
<td>Closeness (e.g., researchers visit participants at their sites to collect data)</td>
<td>Collaboration (e.g., researchers actively involve participants as collaborators)</td>
<td>Practicality (e.g., researchers collect data by ‘what works’ to address research question)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Axiology (What is the role of values?)</td>
<td>Unbiased (e.g., researchers use checks to eliminate bias)</td>
<td>Biased (e.g., researchers actively talk about their biases and interpretations)</td>
<td>Negotiated (e.g., researchers negotiate their biases with participants)</td>
<td>Multiple stances (e.g., researchers include both biased and unbiased perspectives)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methodology (What is the process of research?)</td>
<td>Deductive (e.g., researchers test a priori theory)</td>
<td>Inductive (e.g., researchers start with participants’ views and build up to patterns, theories and generalisations)</td>
<td>Participatory (e.g., researchers involve participants in all stages of the research and engage in cyclical reviews of results)</td>
<td>Combining (e.g., researchers collect both quantitative and qualitative data and mix them)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rhetoric (What is the language of research?)</td>
<td>Formal style (e.g., researchers use agreed-on definitions of variables)</td>
<td>Informal style (e.g., researchers write in an informal style)</td>
<td>Advocacy and change (e.g., researchers use language that will help bring about change and advocate for participants)</td>
<td>Formal and informal (e.g., researchers may employ both formal and informal styles of writing)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Cresswell and Plano-Clark (2011)

The post-positivist view is underpinned by a quantitative approach to data collection and analysis and by formulating hypotheses through deductive reasoning, to test and refine a theory utilising statistical procedures (Creswell & Plano Clark 2011). Constructivism or interpretivism is underpinned by a qualitative approach to data collection and analysis which typically relies on participants’ perspectives through interviews, observations and document analysis (Creswell & Plano Clark 2011). Constructivists argue that experiences of reality are socially constructed, and they aim to understand the world of human experience and phenomena through participants’ subjective views (Mertens 2010). A participatory world
view is self-reflexive and is often identified with a qualitative approach and with participating in collaborative forms of research, believing that everyone is a part of the whole rather than apart (Heron & Reason 1997).

Pragmatism is pluralistic in nature and selects appropriate methods from the full array of qualitative and quantitative methods (Tashakkori & Teddlie 2003; Teddlie & Tashakkori 2012). Pragmatists adopt inter-subjective methods, which encompass subjective as well as objective components. The decision whether to utilise a single method or mixed methods relies on the ‘what’ and ‘how’ research questions that the research aims to answer. From the metaphysical point of view, it is possible to mix methods as long as there is no attempt to mix paradigms (Creswell 2003; Lincoln et al. 2011; Teddlie & Tashakkori 2012). A pragmatic paradigm allows for ‘multiple methods, different worldviews, and different assumptions, as well as different forms of data collection and analysis in a mixed-methods study’ (Creswell 2003, p. 12).

Having understood the nature of the different paradigms and embracing the theory of complementary strengths (Bryman et al. 2008; Duffy 1987; Plowright 2011), this study has adopted a pragmatist approach.
4.2.1 Scope and Location of the Study

This study was conducted in a ‘closed’ government agency in Malaysia. Target respondents of this research were those in the Management and Professional Group (Levels 41 to 54) and the Support Group (Levels 17 to 36) who had a minimum of three years of relevant work experience and were currently employed by the ‘closed’ government agency in Malaysia. All the respondents were located in the Klang Valley area of Peninsular Malaysia. Employees in a range of work environments (airport, headquarters, capital city and suburban areas), territories and levels were chosen to reflect a broad range of roles and environments.
It should be noted that the participants worked 8½ hours a day, five days a week and included employees at the grassroots level and the middle level. It is important to solicit information from higher-level officers on the effects of the HRM practices on employee attitudes as well as to obtain information from lower-level officers, as suggested by Nishii et al. (2008).

Consequently, their information and feedback are useful in assessing the influence of career growth on job satisfaction and organisational commitment as they have personally experienced it. As Bowen and Ostroff (2004) and Cooke and Saini (2010) argued, assessing the view of employees in various contexts may assist the researcher to evaluate the strength of HRM practices. Thus, it is crucial to determine whether these differences lead to different results in comparison between various ranks.

The rationale for selecting these sites, as well as the willingness of the department to cooperate and participate in the research, was so that the study in a ‘closed’ department could help to address HRM issues such as lack commitment and satisfaction in a public sector of considerable size and workplace diversity.

4.2.2 Rationale for Mixed Methods

According to the literature review, most research on HRM practices in this area have employed either quantitative or qualitative approaches; only a few have employed mixed methods (Abdulla et al. 2011; Abreu et al. 2013; Chew & Chan 2008; Paik et al. 2007; Wasti 2003). The applicability of mixed methods in social science research has been widely recognised (Onwuegbuzie et al. 2009a, 2009b; Tashakkori & Creswell 2007a, 2007b). Furthermore, the mixed methods approach is increasingly recognised as the third main research paradigm and is being increasingly used (Olsen 2004).

Utilising both quantitative and qualitative approaches was seen as a way to provide valuable insights and enhance validity in this research (Cameron 2010; Creswell 2003), to overcome some of the weaknesses of each individual approach, and to strengthen theory building, hypothesis testing and generalising from the findings (Creswell 2003). The employment of mixed methods can enhance confidence in the research data and enrich the interpretations and conclusions (Maylor & Blackmon 2005).
It has been argued that the corroboration of findings by the use of both quantitative and qualitative methods can articulate critical interpretive approaches, provide comprehensive, significant answers to research questions and validate interview results (Creswell et al. 2006). Additionally, mixed methods research gathers comprehensive information, utilises counterpart analysis to address the same research questions and allows the researcher to test complicated research questions and obtain a valid and complementary range of results (Yin 2009).

Qualitative and quantitative techniques can be viewed as complementary rather than as opposites (Jick 1979). Each method has its own advantages and disadvantages, and neither may be sufficient to explain all research observations alone. Triangulation of data offers the researcher the ability to utilise a combination of methods for greater accuracy and richness and can also lead to more comprehensive and accurate results than a single method (Jick 1979; Maylor & Blackmon 2005).

Despite these advantages, conducting mixed methods research is a challenge because of the time and resources required to collect and analyse both quantitative and qualitative information, and it also requires the researcher to be familiar with both types of data collection and analysis (Yin 2009). However, the advantages of using mixed methods for this study seemed to outweigh the potential difficulties of the combined approach.

4.2.3 Sequential Exploratory Design

A sequential exploratory design was adopted (Figure 4.2), beginning with a qualitative approach of conducting interviews followed by the development of a survey questionnaire. Quantitative methods were used to extend the findings from the qualitative research, especially to further explore the nature of the relationships between career growth, organisational commitment and job satisfaction. Based on the data drawn from the interviews, the researcher was able to identify major factors of career growth which appeared to influence organisational commitment and job satisfaction. This enabled the researcher to design a survey to test the hypotheses generated from both the interviews and the literature analysis. The results of the interviews and the survey were then integrated and interpreted holistically in relation to the relevant literature.
According to Bryman and Bell (2007), qualitative data allows the researcher to gain access to the perspectives of participants, whereas quantitative data allows the researcher to investigate specific issues of interest. The main advantage of a sequential exploratory design is that ‘its two-phase approach makes it easy to implement and straightforward to describe and report’ (Creswell 2003, p.216), to not only explore a phenomenon but also to extend on the qualitative findings.

4.3 Qualitative Part: Semi-Structured Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were employed in this study to address the first research question:

- What is the nature of the relationship between career growth, job satisfaction and organisational commitment in a ‘closed’ government department?

Semi-structured interviews are a bit more informal than structured interviews and while the researcher still covers every question, there is some ‘wiggle room’ to explore participant responses by asking for clarification or additional information (Santiago 2009). Semi-structured interviews are useful when one is investigating a topic that is very personal to participants (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree 2006; Santiago 2009). The benefits include the ability to gain rapport and participants' trust, as well as a deeper understanding of the facts (Santiago 2009).
In this study the interviews were also the basis for the survey questionnaire development. Employees’ interpretations of their experiences at work allowed for in-depth insights into their perceptions of their work experiences. A small sample size was able to be used because of the intensive nature of interview data in qualitative research (Sekaran 2003).

The purpose of the interviews was to gain the perspectives of employees in different grades on their experiences of the relationships between career growth, organisational commitment and job satisfaction. In contrast to the questionnaire survey, the interviews enabled participants to define and elaborate their experience and allowed the interviewer to delve deeply into social and personal experiences (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree 2006).

It has been argued that respondents may prefer to articulate their experiences and ideas to an interviewer who is interested in what they think (Kidder & Sellitz 1981) rather than simply completing a written questionnaire. Other advantages of interviews are that the researcher is able to identify and correct misunderstandings of questions and to probe insufficient or unclear responses, both of which are important in obtaining complete and valid information (Kidder & Judd 1986). Kidder and Judd (1986) also suggested that interviewers can create rapport, which motivates participants to give precise rather than general answers, thus improving data quality.

**4.3.1 Sampling for Interviews**

The purposive sampling technique (Creswell 2003) was employed for the interviews where uniformed officers from a ‘closed’ government department in Malaysia were invited to participate in this research because of certain characteristics: their job positions were either management and professional group (Levels 41 to 54) or support group (Levels 17 to 36) and they had at least three years of relevant work experience in the department. Forty semi-structured interviews were conducted with selected participants (14 male, 26 female) from four different states and six major divisions. (Details of participants’ attributes are provided in Chapter 5).

According to Bertaux (1981, p. 37), 15 is the minimum sample size recommended for qualitative research, while Morse (1994, p.225) suggested that six respondents could be the smallest number for phenomenological research. Creswell (1998) proposed that a range of between five and 25 interviews is sufficient for this type of study. Thus, the total of 40 interview participants in this study should be considered sufficient for the purpose.
4.3.2 Interview Question Development

Interview questions were developed to address the first research question. Based on feedback from pilot interviews, the interview questions were prepared in both English and Malay. To check consistency, interview measures were independently translated back and forth from the original English version (Brislin 1980). Two Malaysian students undertaking postgraduate studies in Melbourne, Australia, were employed to translate the content of the interview questions into Malay and then back to English to ensure there was no loss in understanding.

The interview questions were divided into two sections. Section 1 consisted of four major questions designed to gather information about the participants’ satisfaction with their work, their experiences and perceptions of career growth in the organisation, their perceptions of organisational commitment and the reasons they chose to work in the department.

Section 2 comprised ten items related to participants’ profiles and socio-demographic information. (includes a copy of the interview schedule is in Appendix A.)

4.3.3 Pilot Interviews

A pilot study was conducted to ensure that the questions being asked were precisely and clearly worded and were serving the objectives of the research to indicate if revision and refinement was needed prior to the main study. The pilot study mirrored the actual interviews with all of the questions being asked in order to identify any mistakes and to check validity and reliability (Fink 2009).

The pilot study resulted in a positive outcome, with understandable statements, ease of answering and a reasonable length of time taken for an interview. The pilot interview participants made several constructive comments for improvement such as:

- A little rewording to make some questions more clear and precise
- As one question appeared too similar to another, one of them was omitted

4.3.4 Interviews Conducted

Interviews were conducted in Malaysia between February and March 2012 in four ‘stations’ of the ‘closed’ government department: Putrajaya, Kuala Lumpur, Perak and Kuala
Lumpur International Airport. These stations were among the largest in the department and provided relevant potential participants from a range of backgrounds and working environments (headquarters, airport, city and border). The email list used to invite employees to be interviewed was obtained from the list of directories readily available on the official department website and was not confidential. Potential participants who responded were contacted to arrange the date, time and place for their interview.

The interviews lasted approximately 30–40 minutes. An audio recorder was used to capture the conversation and participants were made aware beforehand that the interview would be recorded and that this could be stopped at any time if they requested. Formal consent was granted by signing a participant consent form. Interviews were conducted in an office or other quiet setting in the department to ensure participants' privacy and confidentiality.

As part of the interview process, participants were given a briefing on the purpose of the research and their rights as participants. The researcher explained the confidentiality of the interview and that their identity would remain confidential. (Copies of the invitation, plain language statement and consent form are in Appendix B.)

Open-ended questions with prompting and probing strategies were utilised to elicit further explanation from the participants as they shared their experiences (Chovwen 2007). Interviews were conducted until theoretical saturation was achieved (Strauss & Corbin 1998; Yin 2009). Strauss and Corbin (1998) posited that theoretical saturation is accomplished when all elements are accounted for, the relationships among variables are validated and well established, and there is no new information forthcoming from the participants.

4.3.5 Interview Data Analysis

An analytical method for qualitative data was followed by aggregating words into information categories to present the diversity of ideas gathered during data collection (Creswell & Plano Clark 2007). All of the interviews were recorded in real audio format, then transcribed into documents with three components: transcript of actual conversation, notes of important points and subjective impressions. The transcripts of the interview were then manipulated for coding and analysis of data to produce meaningful results such as key themes and categories of concepts (Bazeley 2007).
NVivo 10, an open-code software package, was employed to assist with the analysis of the qualitative data. The process involved examining the transcripts, noting like answers, and segregating the information into categories. Each response category was assigned a theme. The themes and subthemes were corroborated by quotations from the interviews (Creswell 2003). The researcher focused on indices of saturation, reiteration in the data collected and confirmation of previously obtained information (Morse 1994, p. 230).

The researcher ensured the confidentiality of the data collected for this research. The audio recordings, original transcripts and respondents’ names and contact details were kept secure and details which may identify participants have not been used in published research reports. The findings of the qualitative analysis are discussed in detail in Chapter 5.

4.4 Quantitative Part: Survey

A survey was employed in this study to address the second research question:

- **Does career growth influence job satisfaction and organisational commitment in this ‘closed’ government department?**

A questionnaire survey is one of the most popular data collection methods in business studies (Ghauri & Gronhaug 2005) and sits within the positivist approach to social science (Neuman 2003). According to Strauss and Corbin (1998), by employing a survey the researcher is able to test the relationships among the independent and dependant variables. There were three main reasons why a survey was selected as a form of data collection for this study. Firstly, a survey is an effective tool to draw out respondents’ attitudes, views and explicit opinions (Ghauri & Gronhaug 2005) related to the hypotheses being tested, and respondents may be willing to respond truthfully if provided with privacy to write their feedback anonymously (Alreck & Settle 1995). Secondly, surveys are useful for capturing information from a large population. Thirdly, the use of questionnaires might produce convincing results in terms of the reliability and validity of the gathered data (De Vaus 2002).

In order to ensure a good response rate to the survey, efforts were made during the questionnaire design process to minimise the number of questions while still being able to collect sufficient meaningful data, and to keep the questions short, precise and easy to understand.
It was important that when answering the questions respondents did not feel forced to
give responses (Singer et al. 1992). A covering letter on university letterhead was attached to
the questionnaire, and this letter explained the purpose of the study, the benefits of their
participation, a guarantee of confidentiality, an assurance of the right to withdraw at any time,
and an explanation that since there were no right or wrong answers they could answer the
questionnaire honestly. The final questionnaire contained 43 closed questions and was
divided into three sections, which are discussed further below. Details of the questionnaire
development are provided in section 4.4.3. (Copies of the questionnaire and plain language
statement are in Appendices C and D.)

4.4.1 Survey Sample

The survey in this study targeted employees in four of the 13 ‘stations’ of the
department: Putrajaya, Kuala Lumpur, Perak and Kuala Lumpur International Airport. These
were selected due to the large number of uniformed staff from both the management and
professional group (Levels 41 to 54) and the support group (Levels 17 to 36) at these stations,
which allowed good representation from both these groups.

Tabachnick and Fidell (2001, 2007) suggested that a sample size with a ratio of 1:40
to independent variables is needed if regression is to be employed. Thus, 240 cases were
recommended. Furthermore, Green (1991) argued that if there are six independent variables,
104 + 6 = 110 cases are needed to test individual predictors and 50 + (8) (6) = 98 sample size
to test the regression. But if the researcher interested in both, the larger number should be
chosen to determine the minimum sample size needed to test the regression. Approximately
2,000 survey questionnaires were distributed to staff across the four stations through the
station training officers with a total of 370 completed questionnaires returned, which
satisfied the statistical requirements. (Details of respondents’ attributes are provided in
Chapter 6.)

4.4.2 Development of Hypotheses

The links between career growth and organisational commitment, and career growth
and job satisfaction, and the relationship between organisational commitment and job
satisfaction provide avenues for examining significant issues that may enhance our
theoretical and empirical understanding of the process through which career growth has an
influence on organisational commitment and job satisfaction in a ‘closed’ government department (Figure 4.3).

The basis for this conceptual framework is outlined in the literature review in Chapter 2 and present section. It was hypothesised that connections may exist between career growth, organisational commitment and job satisfaction.

Interviews and a survey carried out by Purcell and Hutchinson (2007) in UK companies showed that positive employee perceptions of career opportunities indicate positive relationships with organisational commitment. Surveys conducted by Weng et al. (2010) and Weng and McElroy (2012) in China reported that increase in career growth correlates to improvement in organisational commitment. A survey of employees in a

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**Figure 4.3: Conceptual Framework**

The basis for this conceptual framework is outlined in the literature review in Chapter 2 and present section. It was hypothesised that connections may exist between career growth, organisational commitment and job satisfaction.

Interviews and a survey carried out by Purcell and Hutchinson (2007) in UK companies showed that positive employee perceptions of career opportunities indicate positive relationships with organisational commitment. Surveys conducted by Weng et al. (2010) and Weng and McElroy (2012) in China reported that increase in career growth correlates to improvement in organisational commitment. A survey of employees in a
Canadian hospital carried out by Tremblay et al. (2010) found a positive relationship between career development activities and organisational commitment. A survey of employees in a Malaysian university reported that career development has a significant relationship with organisational commitment. Based on the review of the literature this study proposes:

**Hypothesis 1:** There is a significant relationship between career growth and organisational commitment in the ‘closed’ government department.

As suggested in surveys carried out by Weng et al. (2010) and Weng and McElroy (2012), there is a positive relationship between career goal progress and organisational commitment. Thus, an increase in career goal progress contributes to positive organisational commitment. A survey conducted by Hom et al. (2009) in Chinese companies indicated that career goal progress is positively related to organisational commitment. Gong et al. (2009), in their survey of managers in Chinese firms, reported a positive relationship between career goal development and organisational commitment. Juhdi et al. (2013), in their survey of employees in Malaysian companies, suggested that person-job fit has a positive relationship with organisational commitment. A survey of grocery store and hospital employees conducted by Mitchell et al. (2001) in the US found that employee knowledge fit with the organisation relates positively to organisational commitment. This leads to the development of the following hypothesis:

**H1a:** Greater career goal progress produces greater organisational commitment.

Based on a survey carried out in US manufacturing firms, Ehrhardt et al. (2011) argued that, from a psychological contract and social exchange perspective, if an employee perceives professional ability development offered in the organisation as being comprehensive, this may be interpreted as the employer’s commitment to the employee and
will relate positively to the employee’s organisational commitment. This finding is similar to those of previous studies (Bartlett 2001; Weng et al. 2010; Weng McElroy 2012) that suggested that training and development are the employer commitment side of the exchange relationship, while organisational commitment is the employee contribution side; therefore, an increase in training and development is positively related to organisational commitment. A survey of government workers in the UK carried out by Gould-Williams and Gatenby (2010) found a positive relationship between training and development and worker commitment. A survey conducted by Bartlett (2001) in US public hospitals argued that perceived benefits and access to training, employer support for training and motivation to learn are positively related to organisational commitment. A survey conducted by Allen et al. (2003) in US firms indicated that positive growth opportunities contribute to positive organisational commitment. A survey of white-collar workers in Malaysia conducted by Ahmad and Bakar (2003) also suggested a positive relationship between training and organisational commitment. A survey conducted by Malhotra et al. (2007) in a UK bank indicated a positive correlation between training and organisational commitment. A survey in a Malaysian university carried out by Amin et al. (2014) indicated that training is positively related to organisational commitment. A survey of police officers in the UK conducted by Dick (2011) found a significant relationship between training and development and organisational commitment. In their survey in a Canadian hospital, Tremblay et al. (2010) found that skill development efforts are positively related to organisational commitment. It is accordingly hypothesised that:

**H1b: Higher professional ability development produces higher organisational commitment.**
A survey conducted by Weng et al. (2010) in Chinese companies found that promotion speed is positively related to organisational commitment. A survey of US Navy staff carried out by Kumazawa (2010) suggested that promotion speed is correlated to retention. A survey at the Australian Army Department and the Department of Finance and Administration conducted by O’Donnell & Shields (2002) found that promotion is related to organisational commitment. A survey carried out by Dick (2011) in a UK police department reported that there is a significant relationship between promotion speed and organisational commitment. A survey of employees carried out by Malhotra, et al. (2007) in a UK bank suggested that promotional opportunities are related to organisational commitment. It is therefore proposed that:

**H1c: Higher promotion speed produces higher organisational commitment.**

Weng et al. (2010) suggested that remuneration growth is positively related to organisational commitment. A survey of Canadian workers conducted by Godard (2010) reported a positive correlation between pay and organisational commitment. Weng and McElroy (2012), in their survey in Chinese companies, argued that organisational rewards have a positive relationship with organisational commitment. Juhdi et al. (2013), in their survey of employees in Malaysian companies, and Miao et al. (2013), in their survey of government administration departments in China, suggested that remuneration has a positive impact on organisational commitment. A survey of employees in a UK bank conducted by Malhotra et al. (2007) found that a positive perception of rewards is related to positive organisational commitment. It is hypothesis that:

**H1d: Greater remuneration growth produces greater organisational commitment.**
A survey conducted by Folger & Konovsky (1989) in US companies found that with an increase in the perception of fairness in promotion, employees’ organisational commitment tends to increase. A meta-analysis study conducted by Cohen-Charash and Spector (2001) reported that when employees perceive their organisation to be fair due to fair procedures for promotion and resource allocation, they develop positive organisational commitment. A survey in UK companies conducted by Meyer and Smith (2000) suggested that fair and supportive career development is related to positive organisational commitment. A survey conducted by Allen et al. (2003) in US firms indicated that a positive perception of the fairness of rewards and promotion correlates to an increase in organisational commitment. A survey in a Malaysian university carried out by Amin et al. (2014) suggested that equitable compensation is related to organisational commitment. In their survey, Tremblay et al. (2010) found a positive correlation between fair rewards and organisational commitment. Based on the review of the literature, this study proposes:

**H1e: Higher promotion equity produces higher organisational commitment.**

Ho et al. (2009), in their survey in a Chinese hospital, reported that job rotation has a positive impact on organisational commitment. A survey of plant managers of US manufacturing establishments conducted by Osterman (1994) indicated that job rotation has a positive relationship with organisational commitment. A survey of employees in Netherlands companies conducted by Sonnenberg et al. (2011) reported that job rotation induces greater organisational commitment. A survey of employees in a US pharmaceutical company conducted by Campion et al. (1994) suggested that job rotation has positive relationship with motivation and organisational commitment. A survey of Canadian workers conducted by Godard (2010) suggested a positive relationship between job rotation and organisational commitment. A survey conducted by Jaturanonda et al. (2006) in Thai public and private
sector organisations suggested that job rotation has a positive influence on organisational commitment. Interviews conducted by Kalleberg et al. (2006) in a US public sector organisation reported a positive relationship between multi-skilling and organisational commitment. This study proposes:

**H1f: Higher job rotation produces higher organisational commitment.**

Based on a survey in US companies, Liden et al. (2000) argued that when employees perceive that their contribution in the organisation is meaningful and appreciated, they tend to feel more satisfied with their job. A survey carried by Macky and Boxall (2007) in New Zealand companies suggested that employees in companies with well-developed HRM practices such as career development report high job satisfaction. A survey in a Malaysian university carried out by Amin et al. (2014) indicated positive relationships between career development and job satisfaction and job performance. A survey conducted by Wright et al. (2003) in US and UK businesses found that HRM practices are positively related to organisational commitment. Interviews and a survey conducted by Purcell and Hutchinson (2007) in UK companies reported that positive employee perceptions of career opportunities have positive correlations with job satisfaction. Drawing on this research, this study proposes:

**Hypothesis 2: There is a significant relationship between career growth and job satisfaction in the ‘closed’ government department.**

A survey conducted by Mitchell et al. (2001) in US grocery stores and a hospital reported that a good employee knowledge fit with the organisation positively relates to job satisfaction. A survey of professionals in Egyptian health and higher education sectors carried out by Mostafa and Gould-Williams (2013) suggested that person-organisation fit is positively related to job satisfaction. It is hypothesised that:
H2a: **Greater career goal progress produces greater job satisfaction.**

A survey conducted by Allen et al. (2003) in US firms showed that positive growth opportunities contribute to positive job satisfaction. A survey of UK government workers conducted by Gould-Williams and Gatenby (2010) suggested a positive relationship between training and development and job satisfaction. A survey in a Malaysian university conducted by Amin et al. (2014) reported a positive correlation between training and development and job satisfaction. This study proposes:

H2b: **Higher professional ability development produces higher job satisfaction.**

A survey carried out by Ellickson and Logsdon (2001) in US municipal organisations indicated that promotional opportunities are related to enhanced job satisfaction. A survey in Australian Federal public sector organisations conducted by O’Donnell and Shields (2002) suggested that promotion is related to job satisfaction. A survey conducted by Katou and Budhwar (2010) indicated that promotion has a positive influence on the job satisfaction of employees in Greek manufacturing companies. A survey carried out by Danish and Usman (2010) in Pakistani public and private sectors indicated a significant correlation between promotion opportunities and job satisfaction. This study hypothesises that:

H2c: **Higher promotion speed produces higher job satisfaction.**

A survey conducted by Ellickson and Logsdon (2001) in US municipal organisations showed that an adequate level of pay is positively related to job satisfaction. A survey of engineers in US public utility companies carried out by Sweeney and McFarlin (2005) indicated a relationship between salary and job satisfaction. A survey of employees in Greek manufacturing organisations conducted by Katou and Budhwar (2010) suggested that incentives and remuneration have positive impacts on job satisfaction. A survey of Canadian
workers conducted by Godard (2010) reported positive correlation between salary and job satisfaction. This study proposes:

**H2d:** Greater remuneration growth produces greater job satisfaction.

Folger & Konovsky (1989) suggested that a positive perception of fairness in promotion tends to increase job satisfaction. A survey carried out by Allen et al. (2003) in US firms showed that an increase in the fairness of rewards contributes to improvement in job satisfaction. A survey conducted by Danish and Usman (2010) found a significant relationship between an increment in pay and job satisfaction. A survey in a Malaysian university carried out by Amin et al. (2014) suggested a positive relationship between equitable compensation and job satisfaction. It is hypothesised that:

**H2e:** Higher promotion equity produces higher job satisfaction.

Ho et al. (2009), in their survey of nurses in China, indicated that job rotation has a positive influence on job satisfaction. In their survey in Thailand, Jaturanonda et al. (2006) reported that positive job rotation is related to positive job satisfaction. A survey of nurses conducted by Järvi and Uusitalo (2004) in a Finnish hospital argued that job rotation has a positive relationship with job satisfaction. A survey of Canadian workers conducted by Godard (2010) claimed a positive correlation between job rotation and job satisfaction. Interviews conducted by Kalleberg et al. (2006) among managers of public organisation in the US suggested a positive relationship between job rotation and job satisfaction. This study proposes:

**H2f:** Higher job rotation produces higher job satisfaction.

Ho et al. (2009) in their survey in China showed that job satisfaction has a positive effect on organisational commitment. Research conducted by Schwepker (2001) of
salespeople in US companies indicated that job satisfaction is a significant predictor of organisational commitment. A survey conducted by Fu et al. (2011) among workers in Chinese companies suggested that job satisfaction has a significant impact on organisational commitment. A survey conducted by Allen et al. (2003) in US firms found a positive relationship between job satisfaction and organisational commitment. Drawing on these studies, this research proposes:

**Hypothesis 3: There is a significant relationship between job satisfaction and organisational commitment in the ‘closed’ government department.**

4.4.3 Questionnaire Development

The design of the survey instrument was based on a combination of the findings in the literature and the results of the qualitative interviews conducted during the first phase of this study. The questionnaire was divided into three sections. The questions in Section 1 were based on the literature review and supported by the interview results which identified the key themes of career growth elements of a ‘closed’ government department in Malaysia. Section 2 further investigated the findings of the interviews that related to the minimum and maximum duration of job rotation and the criteria for promotion suggested by participants. Lastly, Section 3 consists of the respondents’ demographic data.

Section 1 of the questionnaire contains 30 items related to career growth, organisational commitment and job satisfaction. The items were modified from the widely used models developed by earlier researchers and adapted to apply to the Malaysian context. Employing previously validated and reliable data collection instruments can save time in developing new instruments and contribute to a study's credibility (Creswell 2003).
Career Growth

As summarised in Table 4.2, six dimensions of career growth that comprised career goal progress, professional ability development, promotion speed, remuneration growth, promotion equity and job rotation were used to measure six dimensions of career growth.

Table 4.2: Measures for career growth

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sub-constructs</th>
<th>Original Scales</th>
<th>Measures Used in the Study</th>
<th>Authors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Career Goal Progress    | 1) My present job moves me closer to my career goals  
                            2) My present job is relevant to my career goals and vocational growth  
                            3) My present job sets the foundation for the realisation of my career goals  
                            4) My present job provides me with good opportunities to realise my career goals | 1) My present job sets the foundation for the realisation of my career goals  
                            2) My present job provides me with good opportunities to realise my career goals  
                            3) My present job is relevant to my career goals | Weng et al. (2010) |
| Professional Ability Development | 1) My present job encourages me to continuously gain new and job-related skills  
                            2) My present job encourages me to continuously gain new job-related knowledge  
                            3) My present job encourages me to accumulate richer work experiences  
                            4) My present job enables me to continuously improve my professional capabilities | 1) My present job encourages me to continuously gain new and job-related skills  
                            2) My present job encourages me to continuously gain new job-related knowledge  
                            3) My present job encourages me to accumulate richer work experiences | Weng et al. (2010) |
| Promotion Speed         | 1) My promotion speed in the present organisation is fast  
                            2) The probability of being promoted in my present organisation is high  
                            3) Compared with previous organisations, my position in my present one is ideal  
                            4) Compared with my colleagues, I am being promoted faster | 1) My promotion speed in the present organisation is fast  
                            2) The probability of being promoted in my present organisation is high  
                            3) Compared with my colleagues, I am being promoted faster | Weng et al. (2010) |
### Table 4.2: Measures for career growth, continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sub-con structs</th>
<th>Original Scales</th>
<th>Measures Used in the Study</th>
<th>Authors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Remuneration Growth   | 1) My salary is growing quickly in my present organisation  
2) In this organisation, the possibility of my current salary being increased is large  
3) Compared with my colleagues, my salary has grown more quickly                                                                                      | 1) My salary is growing quickly in my present organisation  
2) In this organisation, the possibility of my current salary being increased is large  
3) Compared with my colleagues, my salary has grown more quickly                                                                                     | Weng et al. (2010) |
| Promotion Equity      | 1) I can count on my organisation to have fair policies in internal promotion  
2) Where I work, the organisation’s rules and regulations are very fair  
3) The procedures my organisation uses to make decisions on promotion are fair  
4) We generally have fair procedures in my organisation  
5) I am rewarded fairly considering the responsibilities that I have                                                                                     | 1) I can count on my organisation to have fair policies in internal promotion  
2) Where I work, the organisation’s rules and regulations are very fair  
3) The procedures my organisation uses to make decisions on promotion are fair                                                                 | Folger and Konovsky (1989) |
| Job Rotation          | 1) Job rotation broadens my knowledge and skills in other fields  
2) I believe job rotation is an excellent system in this organisation  
3) Overall, I like job rotation  
4) I am willing to accept job rotation now                                                                                                                                 | 1) Job rotation broadens my knowledge and skills in other fields  
2) Overall, I like job rotation  
3) I am willing to accept job rotation now                                                                                                              | Ho et al. (2009) |

The items were measured on a 5-point Likert scale from (1) Strongly Disagree to (5) Strongly Agree.

Weng et al. (2010), the developers of the career growth measurement scales, were contacted through email and provided permission to use their instruments. They also advised that it was not necessary to asked for permission to use the measurement scales as these were in the public domain by virtue of appearing in a journal article.
Organisational Commitment

For the purpose of this study, the researcher adapted the instruments shown in Table 4.3 developed by Meyer et al. (1993) which highlighted the importance of an individual's identification with the organisation's goals and value system (Meyer & Allen 1997). The term ‘organisation’ was replaced by the term ‘department’ in this study to better suit the local context.

Table 4.3: Measures for organisational commitment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sub-Construct</th>
<th>Original Scales</th>
<th>Measures Used in the Study</th>
<th>Authors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Affective Organisational Commitment</td>
<td>1) I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career with this organisation. 2) I do not feel a strong sense of belonging to my organisation. (R) 3) This organisation has a great deal of personal meaning for me. 4) I really feel as if this organisation’s problems are my problems</td>
<td>1) I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career with this organisation. 2) This organisation has a great deal of personal meaning for me. 3) I really feel as if this organisation’s problems are my problems</td>
<td>Meyer et al. (1993)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continuance Organisational Commitment</td>
<td>1) Right now, staying with my organisation is a matter of necessity as much as desire. 2) It would be very hard for me to leave my organisation right now, even if I wanted to. 3) Too much of my life would be disrupted if I decided/wanted to leave my organisation now. 4) I feel that I have too few options to consider leaving this organisation.</td>
<td>1) It would be very hard for me to leave my organisation right now, even if I wanted to. 2) Too much of my life would be disrupted if I decided/wanted to leave my organisation now. 3) I feel that I have too few options to consider leaving this organisation.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Normative Organisational Commitment</td>
<td>1) Even if it were to my advantage, I do not feel it would be right to leave my organisation now. 2) I would feel guilty if I left my organisation now. 3) This organisation deserves my loyalty. 4) I would not leave my organisation right now because I have a sense of obligation to the people in it. 5) I owe a great deal to my organisation. 6) I do not feel any obligation to remain with my current employer (R).</td>
<td>1) Even if it were to my advantage, I do not feel it would be right to leave my organisation now. 2) I would not leave my organisation right now because I have a sense of obligation to the people in it. 3) This organisation deserves my loyalty.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
This involves the internalisation of strategic objectives and values and can be considered a prime motivator for goal accomplishment and performance improvement, since individuals who closely identify themselves with their employer are more likely to direct their efforts to organisational objectives (Dick 2000; Farndale et al. 2014; Guchait & Cho 2010).

The items were measured on a 5-point Likert scale from (1) Strongly Disagree to (5) Strongly Agree.

**Job Satisfaction**

This study uses the single global rating method established by Spector (1997) for measuring job satisfaction (Table 4.4).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sub-construct</th>
<th>Original Scales</th>
<th>Measures Used in the Study</th>
<th>Authors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Job Satisfaction | 1) All in all I am satisfied with my job.  
|                | 2) In general, I like working here.                                               | 1) All in all, I am satisfied with my job                                                   | Spector (1997)  |
|                | 3) All things considered, I am satisfied with my current job.                      | 2) In general, I like working here                                                        |                  |
|                |                                                                                 | 3) All things considered, I am satisfied with my current job as (name of the job)       |                  |

The items were measured on a 5-point Likert scale from (1) Strongly Disagree to (5) Strongly Agree.

Section 2 involved the collection of information about respondents’ perspectives on the minimum and maximum years before being considered for job rotation and promotion possibility. These questions were based on the interview findings in Phase 1 of this study where participants described their ideal minimum and maximum number of years – from a choice of six months, one year, two years, three years, four years or five years – before being
considered for job rotation. Weightings to be considered for promotion were also established from the results of the interviews and these were divided into four criteria: length of service, department examinations, extra-mural activity and performance.

Section 3 comprised ten items related to a respondent’s demographic characteristics: gender, age, marital status, highest academic qualification, division, number of divisions experienced, grade and tenure. Demographic items were clustered in a single section and inserted at the end of the questionnaire, in the hope that respondents would be unlikely to decline to answer these and discontinue participating since they had been participating for some time (Alreck & Settle 1995). Even if a few respondents chose not to answer this section, the data obtained in the earlier section of the questionnaire would still be valuable and of benefit for analysis (Alreck & Settle 1995).

Demographic variables such as gender, education, position, age, marital status and tenure were included as part of data analysis, as prior research had shown that these variables may be associated with employees’ performances and attitudes, and may distort the overall results of the research by the size, presence or absence of an association (Mathieu & Zajac 1990; Su et al. 2009, 2012; Tsui & O'Reilly 1989).

The researcher designed the questionnaire with 5-point Likert scale responses which enabled the participants to complete the questionnaire in 20 to 30 minutes. As Alreck and Settle (1995) posited, an advantage of the Likert scale is the ability to acquire a summated value in the analysis and to assess a more general construct. The standardised format and Likert-scale question type may reduce problems that may occur with certain questions because of different interpretations and answers by different respondents (Gill & Johnson 2002). A 5-point scale was used on the basis that an increase from five to seven or nine points on a rating scale does not appear to enhance the reliability of ratings (Elmore & Beggs 1975; Jeyaraman & Teo 2010). It was important to keep reliability at an acceptable level and provide flexibility in data analysis techniques for both metric and non-metric variables, while minimising the number of potential participants who may have been reluctant to answer a lengthy and visually unattractive questionnaire (Ghauri & Gronhaug 2005).

Most of the respondents were Malay, Chinese and Indian who spoke both English and the Malaysian national language, Bahasa Melayu. As it was anticipated that a few of the
respondents might not understand English clearly, the questionnaire was prepared in both English and Bahasa Melayu. The questionnaire was initially designed in English and then translated into the Malaysian national language. To ensure the accuracy of translation, the survey was translated by a professional translator of the Malaysian Translation Institute (Institut Terjemahan Negara Malaysia). This institute was established by the Malaysian government to deal with matters relating to translation at all levels. The use of a translated version can increase readability for respondents (Bates & Khasawneh 2005; Zumrah et al. 2013).

4.4.4 Survey Pre-test

A pre-test of the survey was conducted in December 2012. This research employed pre-testing for several reasons: to test whether the instrument would be able to achieve the objectives of the study, to evaluate whether the substance of the instrument was sufficient and valid, to assess whether participants could understand the meaning of the questions, to measure qualitative features of the instruments employed such as the sequence and structure of the questions and to establish suitable methods for data collection in the field environment (Dekeba 2011). The pre-testing also allowed an estimation of the time needed to complete the data collection process. An expert opinion analysis (EOA) was then conducted. The questionnaire was sent to three staff familiar with the organisation and also to three Malaysian academics with expertise in research in order to gain their feedback on the content validity of the items used in explaining the variables of the study (Kidder & Judd 1986). This enabled the researcher to discover reactions to the questions, especially participants’ understanding of the items used in the survey and their comprehension of key concepts (Singer & Couper 2008). The revised survey following this stage was then used for a pilot study of the survey.

4.4.5 Survey Pilot Study

A pilot study of the survey was conducted in January 2013. A pilot study is a small-scale study carried out before embarking on the real study for the purpose of ensuring the validity and reliability of the research instrument (Bryman & Bell 2007; Dekeba 2011). A total of 30 completed questionnaires were analysed in the pilot study.

To test the reliability and consistency of the respondents’ answers to all items, Cronbach’s coefficient alpha was used (Fink 2009; Sekaran 2003). According to Sekaran
(2003), the higher the coefficient, the better the measuring instrument. Analysis of the 30 questionnaires from the pilot study confirmed acceptable internal consistency, reliability and construct validity for all measurement items of the ten constructs as the lowest Cronbach’s alpha was 0.799 (Table 4.5). Exceeding a minimum α value of 0.70 for constructs indicated that the variables were internally consistent and were acceptable measures of the sample under study (Hair et al. 2010; Pallant 2011).

Table 4.5: Reliability of scales for pilot study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scales</th>
<th>Cronbach’s Alpha (α)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Career Goal Progress</td>
<td>0.799</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Ability Development</td>
<td>0.903</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promotion Speed</td>
<td>0.801</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remuneration Growth</td>
<td>0.871</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promotion Equity</td>
<td>0.898</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job Rotation</td>
<td>0.953</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affective Commitment</td>
<td>0.799</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continuance Commitment</td>
<td>0.849</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Normative Commitment</td>
<td>0.810</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job Satisfaction</td>
<td>0.885</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.4.6 Survey Conducted

The survey was conducted as a cross-sectional study, with self-administered questionnaires distributed and collected across four branches of the ‘closed’ Malaysian government department – Putrajaya, Kuala Lumpur, Perak and Kuala Lumpur International Airport – from January to February 2013. The advantages of conducting a cross-sectional survey were that this was relatively inexpensive and required little time to conduct compared to a longitudinal survey (Levin 2006). Respondents were asked to complete the questionnaires within a week. The cooperation of the organisation’s personnel and training division officers in distributing the questionnaires was an enormous help. Although they assisted with this aspect of survey administration, they had no access to the completed surveys. Questionnaires were distributed at the beginning of events that had been organised by the department such as Perhimpunan Setia dan Mesra (The Assembly of Loyal and Friendly) and Program Nilai-nilai Murni (The Adoption of Pure Values Program). This
ensured that staff who served in a wide range of capacities were reached. Data were collected from respondents at the four sites concurrently within the two-month period.

4.4.7 Level of Measurement of Variables

There are four fundamental types of scales for quantifying data: nominal, ordinal, interval and ratio (Bryman & Bell 2007; Sekaran & Bougie 2010). Ordinal scales with fewer than five categories and nominal measures are often classified as categorical, whereas those with five or more categories, interval and ratio scales are often classified as continuous (Field 2009; Pallant 2011). These two types of measurements relate to two types of statistical tests: parametric and non-parametric (Field 2009).

In reference to these criteria, this study categorised some demographic constructs in Sections 2 and 3 (gender, marital status, academic qualification, division, number of division, grade and promotion criteria) as categorical variables. On the other hand, the other demographic constructs (age, years of service, tenure in current position, maximum and minimum years for job rotation) and the items used for measuring career growth, organisational commitment and job satisfaction were classified as continuous variables.

4.5 Data Processing

4.5.1 Data Entry

The hard-copy completed questionnaires were coded and each assigned a number for ease of double checking and further examination of specific information. Each item in the questionnaire had a unique variable name (Pallant 2011). For instance, for categorical data such as gender, male was coded as 1 and female was coded as 2. For each data set, a unique identifier was assigned (Pallant 2011). For example, respondent number 1 from Place A was coded as A001, respondent number 1 from Place B was coded as B001, respondent number 1 from Place C was coded as C001 and so on.

4.5.2 Missing Data and Cleaning up

Examination of data entry and cleaning of data prior to data analysis are important to ensure the accuracy of data characteristics (Hair et al. 2010) Therefore, to obtain a high level
of accuracy in the data-entry process, a double-check procedure was performed. The first check involved verifying all entries case-by-case for any mistakes in the data-entry process such as typing errors, and appropriate corrections were done. Furthermore, as a second check, descriptive statistics including frequency distribution, maximum and minimum value, and mean and standard deviations were conducted and verified. This verified that there were no mistakes of those kinds before analysis was undertaken. The final number of cases for the study was 370.

4.6 Reliability Analysis

4.6.1 Content Reliability

With reference to content reliability, the qualitative interviews were conducted prior to the survey to identify the elements of career growth which influenced organisational commitment and job satisfaction. Questionnaire items were also adopted from previous research which had been tested for reliability and validity (Allen & Meyer 1993; Weng et al. 2010). Furthermore, in order to check the content reliability, expert opinions were obtained to get constructive comments and feedback on the suitability of the questions in this organisational context. A pilot test was also conducted to test whether the target respondents would understand the questions and be able to answer them. These approaches prior to conducting the main survey may have ensured that the right questions were asked of appropriate respondents and have produced meaningful and reliable results.

4.6.2 Consistency Reliability

As discussed in Section 4.3.4, the Cronbach’s alpha for all items under each criterion should be above 0.70, indicating that the items deal with the same underlying construct (Pallant 2011; Hair 2010). Cronbach’s alphas were checked for each of the variables as well as the dimensions in the variables to ascertain the extent to which the items making up the dimensions and variables shared common aspects. Table 4.3 illustrates that the reliability
analysis ranged from 0.722 to 0.850, which meant that all scales were retained as they presented adequate and acceptable internal consistency reliabilities (Pallant 2011; Field 2013).

Table 4.6: Reliability Scores for All Scales

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scales</th>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Cronbach’s Alpha</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Career Growth</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career Goal Progress (CGP)</td>
<td>3 items</td>
<td>0.784</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Ability Development (PAD)</td>
<td>3 items</td>
<td>0.832</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promotion Speed (PS)</td>
<td>3 items</td>
<td>0.798</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remuneration Growth (RG)</td>
<td>3 items</td>
<td>0.850</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promotion Equity (PE)</td>
<td>3 items</td>
<td>0.829</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job Rotation (JR)</td>
<td>3 items</td>
<td>0.837</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career Growth (all items)</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.816</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Organisational Commitment</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affective Organisational Commitment (AOC)</td>
<td>3 items</td>
<td>0.722</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continuance Organisational Commitment (COC)</td>
<td>3 items</td>
<td>0.836</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Normative Organisational Commitment (NOC)</td>
<td>3 items</td>
<td>0.772</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organisational Commitment (all items)</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.759</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Job Satisfaction</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job Satisfaction (all items)</td>
<td>3 items</td>
<td>0.742</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.7 Assumption Test

Given the strong underlying assumption of multivariate normality demanded of the regression analysis employed in this study, with violation of this assumption likely to lead to incorrect interpretations of the findings, the researcher screened the data prior to testing the specified model.

Preliminary analyses were performed as suggested by Tabachnick and Fidell (2007) to ensure there were no violations to the assumptions of multiple regression such as sample size, normality, outliers, linearity and multicollinearity, to avoid problems in data analysis (Tabachnick & Fidell 2007).
4.7.1 Sample Size

When the sample size is adequate, the results can be generalised to the target population. Different formulae for calculating the sample size required for multiple regressions have been suggested by different authors. Green (1991) suggested focusing on the number of predictors that are going to be used in the study, specifically, \( N > 50 + 8m \) (where \( m \) = number of predictors). In this study, there are six independent variables, so an adequate sample size should be more than 98 cases. According to Tabachnick and Fidell (2007), if regression is to be employed, a ratio of 1 to 40 should be considered to ensure the result of the statistical regression can be generalised beyond the sample. Therefore, the sample size for six independent variables would be more than 240 cases. Based on these guidelines, the 370 cases which made up the total sample size for the survey in this study was substantial enough to produce meaningful results.

4.7.2 Assessment of Normality, Linearity and Homoscedasticity

Screening variables for normality is an important phase in a multiple regression. The normal distribution is often measured by examining the skewness and kurtosis values (Hair et al. 2010). Data distribution with either a highly skewed nature or with high kurtosis is indicative of non-normality, which has random effects on specification and estimation (Hall & Wang 2005). This non-normality may exist due to the presence of outlier cases in the data set. To assess the normality of the data, descriptive statistics analysis using the mean score of components of dependent and independent variables was performed. The results confirmed that multivariate non-normality did not exist in the data set, because all skewness values (-0.095 to -0.944) fell within an acceptable range of -1 to +1 (Hair et al. 2010) and the kurtosis scores for all the variables (0.092 to 2.594) including the dependent variables did not exceed the maximum level of normality range (≤3) (Hair et al. 2010), and had no effect on the overall findings of the study (Table 4.7).
Table 4.7: Descriptive Statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Min</th>
<th>Max</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Skewness</th>
<th>Kurtosis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Career Growth</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career Goal Progress (CGP)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.700</td>
<td>0.687</td>
<td>-0.468</td>
<td>0.287</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Ability Development (PAD)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.010</td>
<td>0.578</td>
<td>-0.538</td>
<td>1.706</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promotion Speed (PS)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.650</td>
<td>0.848</td>
<td>-0.095</td>
<td>-0.392</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remuneration Growth (RG)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.740</td>
<td>0.800</td>
<td>-0.291</td>
<td>0.152</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promotion Equity (PE)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.000</td>
<td>0.820</td>
<td>-0.539</td>
<td>0.092</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job Rotation (JR)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.860</td>
<td>0.666</td>
<td>-0.944</td>
<td>2.594</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Organisational Commitment</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affective Organisational Commitment (AOC)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.590</td>
<td>0.694</td>
<td>-0.691</td>
<td>1.281</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continuance Organisational Commitment (COC)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.530</td>
<td>0.840</td>
<td>-0.856</td>
<td>1.229</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Normative Organisational Commitment (NOC)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.630</td>
<td>0.779</td>
<td>-0.835</td>
<td>1.127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Job Satisfaction (JS)</strong></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.920</td>
<td>0.616</td>
<td>-0.763</td>
<td>1.803</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Based on a Likert scale from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree)

Normality, linearity and homoscedasticity are assessed by scatterplot on the relationship between two variables which should be oval shaped and roughly the same width all over with some bulging towards the middle (Tabachnick & Fidell 2007). Figures 4.4, 4.5, 4.6 and 4.7 show the outputs from the regression analysis, and display the scatterplot of items for job satisfaction, affective organisational commitment, continuance organisational commitment and normative organisational commitment, all of which tested the relationship with career growth (independent variable).
Figure 4.4: Scatterplot of job satisfaction (JS)

Figure 4.5: Scatterplot of affective organisational commitment (AOC)
Figure 4.6: Scatterplot of continuance organisational commitment (COC)

Figure 4.7: Scatterplot of normative organisational commitment (NOC)
The results confirmed that the variables were normally distributed and linearly related as the scatterplot was oval shaped. Furthermore, the variables were also homoscedastic as the scatterplots between the variables were of roughly the same width all over with some bulging towards the middle.

4.7.3 Assessment of Outliers

It is important to screen dependent and independent variables for outliers in a regression analysis. A 1.5 box-lengths (and more) from the edge of the box in the boxplots indicates univariate outliers (Pallant 2011). These are defined as outliers by SPSS. Organisational commitment had 11 outliers, career growth 10 outliers and job satisfaction 24 outliers. To check how much of a problem these outlying cases were likely to be, a descriptive table was also referred to. The information in the descriptive table showed that the value of 5% trimmed mean and the mean values were very similar for all of the variables (the differences in their values were not more than 0.06), which indicated no obvious problems of these outliers. As a result, all the 370 cases were retained in the data file.

Bivariate and multivariate outliers can be detected by examining Mahalanobis Distance (D) statistics that are provided by the multiple regression analysis (Tabachnick & Fidell 2007). D is distributed as a chi-square variable, with a degree of freedom equal to the number of independent variables (Tabachnick & Fidell 2007). For multivariate outliers, there are six independent variables in this study: career goal progress (CGP), professional ability development (PAD), promotion speed (PS), remuneration growth (RG), promotion equity (PE) and job rotation (JR). To determine which cases have multivariate outliers, the researcher identified the critical chi-square at the desired alpha value (values larger than a critical value are considered multivariate outliers).
The results indicated that the maximum D-value in the data file was 35.34, which exceeds the critical value of 22.46 (p<0.001) (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). As indicated in the casewise diagnostics table, the outliers were from case numbers 96, 170, 220 and 301. Further analysis was carried out using Cook’s Distance to check whether this had undue influence on the results as a whole. According to Tabachnick and Fidell (2007), cases with Cook’s Distance larger than 1 are a potential problem. The maximum value for Cook’s Distance in this data set was 0.179, suggesting no critical problems.

4.7.4 Assessment of Multicollinearity

Hair et al. (2010) defined ‘multicollinearity’ as the extent to which any variable’s influence can be explained by other variables in the analysis. Assumptions for multicollinearity are tested via correlation matrices and collinearity diagnostics. Tabachnick and Fidell (2007) suggested that researchers should omit highly correlated variables (> 0.7). For this study, correlation values were calculated for the six independent variables, CGP, PAD, PS, RG, PE and JR (Table 4.5).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>CGP</th>
<th>PAD</th>
<th>PS</th>
<th>RG</th>
<th>PE</th>
<th>JR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>CGP</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.648</td>
<td>0.442</td>
<td>0.448</td>
<td>0.417</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PAD</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.227</td>
<td>0.358</td>
<td>0.271</td>
<td>0.509</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PS</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.690</td>
<td>0.719</td>
<td>0.168</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RG</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.594</td>
<td>0.210</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PE</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.253</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JR</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The correlation values ranged between 0.168 and 0.719. The correlation values for the constructs’ items fell into low to high values. No items were found to be highly correlated except for PS-PE (0.719), which is higher than 0.7. Because of the slight difference (0.019),
the researcher decided to maintain the variable with a slightly over-correlated coefficient, which did not have a huge effect on the regression analysis (Stevens 2009).

In addition, to further determine the collinearity diagnostics, tolerance values (1-squared multiple correlation) and variance inflation factors (VIF) were examined. Tolerance value < 0.1 and VIF value >10 indicated that multiple correlation with other variables was high, suggesting the possibility of multicollinearity (Pallant 2011). The results of the analysis indicated that the tolerance values for all items ranged from 0.357 to 0.718, which meant all were above 0.1, confirming that the assumption had not been violated. The other value given is VIF, which is the inverse of the tolerance value. VIF values for this analysis were between 1.392 and 2.797, which are below 10, indicating no possibility of multicollinearity. (Table 4.9).

**Table 4.9: Coefficients**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Collinearity Statistics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tolerance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CGP</td>
<td>0.481</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PAD</td>
<td>0.485</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PS</td>
<td>0.357</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RG</td>
<td>0.467</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PE</td>
<td>0.449</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JR</td>
<td>0.718</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.8 **Statistical Analysis Method**

In the analysis of survey data, the researcher used several types of statistical analysis to address the research questions (Table 4.10).
Table 4.10: Analytical Techniques Used for Dependent-Independent Variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Measures</th>
<th>Independent Variable</th>
<th>Continuous</th>
<th>Categorical</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dependent Variable</td>
<td>Continuous</td>
<td>Parametric analysis (Correlation, regression)</td>
<td>Parametric analysis (e.g. t-test, one way ANOVA)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Categorical</td>
<td>Not applicable in this study</td>
<td>Non-parametric analysis (e.g. Chi square)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The analysis included an examination of the demographic factors of gender, age, year of service, number of divisions and job position for any significant differences or patterns.

The raw data obtained from the questionnaires was analysed using SPSS Version 21 for Windows software provided by IBM Corporation. The SPSS software was used in this research because it is particularly designed for statistical analysis and generating accurate results, and helps a researcher to determine the best techniques for interpreting the results in order to answer the research questions and objectives of the study such as correlation and regression (Field 2013).

**Correlation:** Correlation was employed in this study to explore the strength of the relationship between two continuous variables. As indicated by the correlation matrix, all of the six factors comprising career growth were positively and significantly correlated to organisational commitment at the 0.01 level. However, because correlation analysis does not consider other variables when calculating the correlation coefficient between two variables, and it does not provide direction between variables, it would not be appropriate to rank the predictive power of the six career growth factors on organisational commitment by using correlation only (Field 2013; Pallant 2011). Thus multiple regressions were employed where all the six factors were considered simultaneously.

**Regression analysis:** The second statistical procedure involved multiple regression analysis to investigate the underlying components of the independent variables (career
growth elements) and how these factors impact on the dependent variables (organisational commitment and job satisfaction) (Pedhazur 1982). Thus, regression analysis helps to test the hypotheses and identify the major influence factors. Since the interest of this study is not to test the overall relationship between career growth, job satisfaction and organisational commitment but to test the separate relationships between career growth and organisational commitment, between career growth and job satisfaction, and between organisational commitment and job satisfaction, multiple regression analysis rather than Structural Equation Modelling was chosen for analysing the quantitative data. Prior to the survey, interviews and feedback from industry and academic experts were sought to explore the effects of career growth on organisational commitment and job satisfaction. In addition to this, items from established questionnaires were adopted from previous research (Weng et al. 2010; Meyer et al. 1993; Spector 1997) which had run factor analysis and confirmed structure validity.

4.9 Ethical Considerations

This thesis followed the Human Ethics Procedures prescribed by RMIT University policy and procedure. Prior to data collection, ethics approval was obtained to carry out this study. The research was thoroughly prepared, organised, and considerate of participants in this study. The main ethical considerations for both phases of data collection were to ensure confidentiality and protect the identity of the participants, including in the thesis and any other publications. Participation in the interviews and survey was completely voluntary and only those who gave informed consent are included. A copy of the Ethics Approval is attached in Appendix E.

4.10 Conclusion

In summary, this chapter has described the research methods employed in the study. Due to its suitability for addressing the research questions, mixed methods integrating both
qualitative and quantitative approaches were used in this research. Semi-structured interviews and a questionnaire survey were conducted consecutively in four selected ‘stations’ of a ‘closed’ Malaysian government department for primary data collection. Results of the analyses of the data collected were utilised to described and explain the nature of the relationships between career growth, organisational commitment and job satisfaction. Chapter 5 presents the results from the qualitative approach, followed by the quantitative findings in Chapter 6.
CHAPTER 5: INTERVIEW FINDINGS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter describes and explores employees’ experiences of aspects of career growth that influence organisational commitment and job satisfaction in this ‘closed’ public sector organisation. This chapter includes a discussion of key themes with supporting quotes from the interviews and with links to participants’ attributes.

Interview participants were drawn from both management and professional group and support group employees and 40 semi-structured interviews were conducted. (The interview questions are in Appendix A). Participants were asked to reflect on and share their experiences of career growth, organisational commitment and job satisfaction. The interviews and the analysis of the data collected were designed to address the following research question:

- What is the nature of the relationship between career growth, job satisfaction and organisational commitment in a ‘closed’ government department?

The semi-structured interviews covered areas of organisational commitment, job satisfaction and career growth and were open and flexible enough to allow new themes to emerge that had not been identified from the literature. Interview responses also contributed to theory building and the development of the survey that was used in the following stage of the research. NVivo 10 (QSR International 2011) was used to assist with a comprehensive and systematic analysis. The interview data was analysed by going back and forth between the transcribed interviews and an emerging framework of themes (Corbin & Strauss 2008). As participants repeated ideas that were of significance for them, this contributed to the development of concepts used as a basis for constructing nodes (Ryan & Bernard 2003).
This chapter has five main sections. The first section provides the demographic data of the interview participants. The second section outlines the reasons given by the participants for their decision to work in the department under study. The third section describes the range of levels of organisational commitment and the factors associated with high, medium and low levels of organisational commitment among participants. The fourth section discusses the levels of organisational commitment and job satisfaction. The final section brings together aspects of employees’ experiences and the eight key themes of career growth that influence organisational commitment and job satisfaction that emerged from the interview data. Six of these elements of career growth were relevant for further investigation using the survey that was then developed for the next stage of the research.

5.2 Participants’ Attributes

Interview participants (14 male, 26 female) were drawn from four different work areas across six major divisions (Table 5.1).

The ages of participants ranged from 25 to 56, with the majority in their 40s (60%). Most participants were married (87.5%). A majority (82.5%) were from the professional and management group, grades 41 to 54. These participants had bachelor degrees or higher. However, only a few of them had improved their formal education levels since joining the department. While all divisions were represented, there were only two participants from C division (5%). The largest number was from F division (32.5%), which included employees from Human Resource Management and Public Relations units.

Interview participants were from both the professional and management group and the support group levels. The need to include junior employees’ views in addition to those of staff at a more senior level has been recommended by Bowen and Ostroff (2004) and Nishii, et al. (2008).
The number of participants from the professional and management group grade (Levels 41 to 54) (82.5%) was higher than from the support group grade (Levels 17 to 36) (17.5%). The professional and management group were seen to be key informers as their position in the ‘middle’ of the department means that they interact with both junior level employees and top level management. Their roles normally include involvement in policy making, and they are seen to be the backbone of the organisation when policy is implemented as they lead, supervise, monitor and report on the progress of their units and staff. The majority of the participants had worked for the department for more than eight years; the longest serving participant had worked there for 37 years and the shortest serving had worked there for five years at the time of the study. Only two participants were at an early career stage, in their first five years of service.

In terms of tenure, 70% of the participants had been appointed to their present position for more than a year. With regard to promotions, most (95%) had been promoted to a higher grade position at least once.

Table 5.1: Participants’ attributes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>Number of employees</th>
<th>Percentage (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gender</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age group</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between 25-34</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between 35-44</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between 45-54</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>47.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55 or older</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Marital status</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>87.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Divorced/Separated/Widowed</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Categories</td>
<td>Number of employees</td>
<td>Percentage (%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Highest education when joined service</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower than diploma</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>17.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diploma</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelors</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masters</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PhD</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Highest education at present</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower than diploma</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diploma</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelors</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>57.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masters</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>17.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PhD</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Division</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>22.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>32.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Grade</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 41-54</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>82.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 17-36</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>17.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tenure in the present organisation</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than 3 years</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-10 years</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-18 years</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19-26 years</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27 years or more</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>17.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tenure in the present position</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 year</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 years</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 years</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 years</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 years</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 years</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Number of promotions</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>42.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5.3 Findings and Key Themes

This section highlights participants’ subjective experiences of organisational commitment and job satisfaction. The themes were defined based on the relationships between the attributes coded from the interview data (Bazeley 2007; Welsh 2002). A code is an abstract representation of a phenomenon or object (Strauss & Corbin 1998) or a mnemonic device employed to identify themes in a text (Ryan & Bernard 2003). When it comes to coding, there are ‘splitters’, which maximise differences between text passages, looking for fine-grained themes, and ‘lumpers’, which minimise differences, looking for overarching themes (Ryan & Bernard 2003, p. 95). The approach used was to start with some general categories and then code in more detail (Bazeley 2007). The researcher examined the relationships by considering: (1) the number of sources (participants) who stated something about the relevant concepts, (2) the number of references to the concepts (frequency with which the attributes were stated) and (3) the depth, richness and quality of the information provided related to the themes or concepts (Bazeley 2007).

Concepts can be clustered in order to identify common dimensions across them or essential elements within them (Bazeley 2007; Ryan & Bernard 2003). This study investigated evidence for the respective themes ranging from very common to occasional (Table 5.2).

Table 5.2: ‘Strength’ of sources

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sources (no. of participants)</th>
<th>Strength</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>30-40</td>
<td>Very common</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-29</td>
<td>Common</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-19</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-9</td>
<td>Occasional</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5.3.1 Why Did They Choose to Work in the Government Sector?

Participants were asked why they chose to work in the government sector instead of the private sector. Table 5.3 summarises the reasons why participants joined the public sector, which were also the main reasons why they still remained in and were committed to the department. The reasons were job security, perks and the nature of the job.

Table 5.3: Criteria for choosing government sector

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Career Development</th>
<th>Government Bonded</th>
<th>Nature of Job</th>
<th>Perks</th>
<th>Security</th>
<th>Spouse Job</th>
<th>Uniform</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>References</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Participants found the government sector offerings overall more attractive than those of the private sector. Monetary reward was not the prime consideration in their decisions. Participant no. 3 encapsulated this by stating:

Job security, that is, the government sector offers a greater degree of permanency than can be found in the private sector. Accordingly, perks such as government loans, free hospitalisation, and normal working hours.

The sentiments expressed by this group of participants are understandable because government employees can apply for government loans to buy a house, a car and other major purchases at much lower interest rates than on offer in the private sector or bank loans. Benefits include free hospital, medical and dental treatment. There are extra allowances in addition to the fixed monthly salary such as housing allowances, public service allowances and cost of living adjustment (COLA) allowances.

In the government sector, the normal working hours are 8.00 a.m. to 5.30 p.m., five days per week, and participants perceived these hours as reasonable when compared to the usually longer working hours in the private sector. Because of the standard normal working hours, participants felt that they had ample time to spend with their family and still had a
sufficient income to live on. Thus, the majority of participants reported that overall they were happy and satisfied. While these government sector employees may have to forgo the possibility of a high income, they enjoy relative job security, perks and time to spend with their families. In their view, while private sector employees may enjoy higher salaries, profit sharing and substantial career development opportunities, this is at a cost. In this regard, participant no. 23 summed up the sentiments of many when she stated:

I chose to work in this government department because my previous job in the private sector required extremely long working hours which did not allow me to fully commit to my family.

This participant regarded her family commitment rather than high salary as the top priority.

It is generally believed that the government sector in Malaysia also offers a greater degree of employment stability than does the private sector, particularly with respect to retrenchment during times of recession.

In this ‘closed’ government department, all of the employees except for civilian staff are required to wear a uniform. Participants believe that the uniform gives them a shared identity and a sense of belonging and represents professionalism and trust.

Participant no. 38 encapsulated the sentiments of other participants:

Loved the nature of the job and the tone that is set by the organisation such as employees are required to wear uniforms. Furthermore, prior exposure to the customs environment and the diverse range of jobs to be found in a large government department like this ‘closed’ government agency meant that I could find something suitable for my experience and qualifications.

Participants described their employment in the government sector in terms of career development and fulfillment. They were able to find a position to match their qualifications
and level of education. Prior to finding employment with the department while working in other government departments, some participants had been confined to the support group or junior level. Since joining this ‘closed’ government agency, they had been able to further their studies to gain new qualifications or upgrade their existing qualifications, which made them eligible for promotion to positions with more responsibility. Participant no. 21 indicated why she chose to work in the department:

Previously, I worked in another government sector at the support group level. My application for promotion at this time to a higher level was not successful because my upgraded qualification was rejected. I was able to join this government department at the professional and management level using this same degree qualification.

Interestingly, a few participants openly declared that they were not working in the government sector by choice. They were there because they had previously accepted a government scholarship to further their studies. Those who accept a government scholarship are bonded by contract to work as public servants for a given number of years – five to seven, depending on the particular area of their study. To seek employment elsewhere before their contract expired would automatically mean a breach of contract and the need to repay their sponsorship costs. Out of the 40 participants, one had a unique reason to stay, stating that this was because her spouse was running his own business and they needed a fixed income in the family in case there were unexpected problems with the business.

The reasons that participants work in the department may determine their level of organisational commitment and job satisfaction. If the work is their career of choice, they appear to be committed and satisfied with their job and with the department. However, their perception of the extent to which the department treats them well is also a factor influencing their commitment to the organisation.
5.4 Level of Organisational Commitment

As summarised in Table 5.3, the level of organisational commitment of the participants can be divided into three main categories: high (22 participants), medium (10 participants) and low (8 participants). This classification of the level of commitment was based on the answers given by the participants when asked about their level of organisational commitment in general. Interestingly, a higher proportion of men (9 out of 14) who participated in interviews reported a high level commitment than did women (13 out of 26). This may be related to the nature of the physical and psychological job demands of roles related to prevention and law enforcement.

Table 5.4: Level of Organisational Commitment and Gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of Organisational Commitment</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Participants</strong></td>
<td><strong>26</strong></td>
<td><strong>14</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1) **High**

Those reporting a high level of commitment in an unequivocal and whole-hearted manner also saw the majority of other employees as having the same level of commitment. They perceived the organisation as valuing the contribution they made, caring about their wellbeing and treating them fairly. As participant no. 38 expressed:

I am loyal and proud to introduce myself as a staff of this department. This department becomes part of my life.
Those included in this category expressed that they enjoyed their job. Reasons given for commitment included the perks of being government employees, such as pensions, loans and health care.

However, some of those with this high level of commitment said their high commitment was related to fear of changing organisations. Although they believed that promotion was too slow, they were still committed to stay because this was a ‘closed’ department with a focus on the specific core business. They felt that they were left with no choice to try to move to another organisation as they were middle aged and senior in service at this government department. They were afraid of losing benefits and perks if they decided to join the private sector or of losing seniority if they chose to start a new career in another public sector department. Therefore they said that they would stay and put in a full effort to benefit the department.

2) Medium

Some participants expressed some negativity or dissatisfaction in their responses despite their overall commitment. This negativity or dissatisfaction was often occasioned by a lack of transparency in the organisational promotion process, such as no explanation having been given for failure in promotion, perceived bias, cronyism and a lack of opportunity to use one’s initiative. This was perceived as unfair treatment. As expressed by participant no. 4:

I am not really committed because promotion didn’t conduct in fair and neutral manner. Perception of unfairness may make employees less enthusiastic to work harder and might not give high commitment to the organisation.

Opportunities for further study during service in the department are provided by the organisation but the employees need to apply for them. Employees have a perception that the
department does not recognise and acknowledge their initiatives to improve their educational qualifications as they need to compete with outsiders for advanced job positions.

As articulated by participant no.1:

[My commitment is] average as department not inspires and motivates us to be proactive in improving current education qualification. Thus, many junior officers here hesitates to put initiative to further study or attend courses but merely stay in at the office, perform job as regular basis and wait for further order from their superior. Incentives such as internal promotion for those who succeed in improving their educational qualifications could motivate and inspire others to put an effort to improve their educational qualifications too.

Such incentives and recognition could retain these employees who are knowledgeable, skilful and understand the department’s core business. The department would lose these valuable assets if these employees joined other organisation to obtain advanced job positions.

3) Low

A number of participants expressed a low level of commitment for themselves and also saw low levels of commitment in other employees. Some of these participants were near retiring age and saw little or no prospect of further promotion. Many participants had waited 15 to 25 years before achieving their previous promotion. However, this ‘low’ level of commitment category also included some junior employees who were not satisfied with elements of the promotion process, such as the lack of transparency and perceived favouritism. For instance, participant no. 9 articulated that:

Low. Many of the employees have expressed their disappointment on the slow promotion exercise, biasness, unfair treatment and cronyism. Definitely they will leave the department if they able to get better offer.

Additionally, participant no. 25 disclosed that:
Low. Individual commitment is influence by working environment. Sometime they do the job because they have to do it not because they want to. The longer you are in certain grade, the lower the organisational citizenship behaviour of the department, decrease in job satisfaction and organisational commitment, no sense of belonging and do not feel associated to the organisation as no career path expected.

Looking in further detail at the demographic data (Table 5.5), participants’ level of commitment might be influenced by the number of times they have been promoted.

**Table 5.5: Level of Commitment and Number of Promotions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of Commitment</th>
<th>No. of Promotions = 4</th>
<th>No. of Promotions = 3</th>
<th>No. of Promotions = 2</th>
<th>No. of Promotions = 1</th>
<th>No. of Promotions = 0</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Since they were recruited, most of the ‘high’ level of commitment participants had been promoted more than once whereas most of the ‘low’ level of commitment participants had been promoted only once. Two participants who had not been promoted and who were at a medium level of organisational commitment were in the early stage of their career (first five years).

Even though only 8 out of the 40 participants expressed a low level of commitment, the impact of this could affect individual and team performance achievements. It is also worth noting that those who said that they were highly committed were not always satisfied with aspects of career growth such as promotion, facilities, training and career development. While in the interviews many participants stated that they were highly committed, some seemed ambivalent based on subjective components such as their body language and intonation, which indicated possible inconsistencies between their words and feelings. Many
also used terms such as ‘not really’ or ‘depends’ in relation to questions about commitment to the department. However they may not want to leave the department because of the reasons they were attracted to work as public servants and the perks of government employment.

Only a few of the participants said that they intended to leave the department and these included those satisfying their bond with the government. However, they indicated that they might be willing to continue with the department if given fair promotion and roles related to their formal education qualifications.

Participants said that they felt sympathy with and were unhappy about friends who had not been promoted for some time despite being good workers, senior in service and always contributing to the department. Based on their perceptions, this seemed to have happened because these friends did not have good rapport with their manager or top level management, and so were not given priority for opportunities for career growth and promotion. Low commitment may lead to low morale, low productivity and a lack of a sense of belonging to the organisation. To explore what other job variables and human resources practices could influence organisational commitment, the relationship between level of organisational commitment and job satisfaction was examined.

5.5 **Level of Commitment and Job Satisfaction**

The findings from the 40 participants of the ‘closed’ government agency who provided information about their views on job satisfaction could be divided into two main categories: satisfied (34) and lack of satisfaction (6), based on their responses (Table 5.6). The researcher segregated these to understand to what extent participants liked their job and what factors influenced their preferences.
Table 5.6: Level of Commitment and Level of Job Satisfaction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of Commitment</th>
<th>Satisfied</th>
<th>Lack of Satisfaction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Participants</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1) Satisfied

This category included participants who said that they loved the inherent nature of their job. These participants appeared outwardly happy to share their views about their achievements and contributions for the benefit of the organisation and to say that they were continuously performing their duties to the best of their ability to increase the productivity of the department. They said that they were thankful for being recruited to do a job that both serves the public and protects the national interest. Interview results also suggested that when participants felt that they were able to apply knowledge gained in their tertiary education in their working environment they felt confident and satisfied.

Table 5.7: Level of Commitment and Factors Related to Satisfaction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of Commitment</th>
<th>Satisfaction Factors</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Knowledge &amp; Experience</td>
<td>Promotion &amp; Rewards</td>
<td>Working Environment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Participants indicated that their enthusiasm to work hard and acquire new knowledge and skills was associated with the interesting nature of their work, a supportive working environment and sufficient equipment and work facilities to perform the job. The broad range
of duties available in the department that were suited to their career goals and educational background were also factors related to satisfaction and commitment. The sentiments of the majority of those satisfied were summed up by participant no. 27, who stated:

Yes, I can apply the knowledge I have gained at university throughout my daily job. The job is in line with my qualification. Moreover, the scope of my job and the core business of department provide ample opportunities for further learning.

Furthermore, participants who had gained a high level of seniority and expertise in the department felt a sense of satisfaction when their achievements were recognised by their subordinates, colleagues or supervisor. For example, a participant who will retire next year said he enjoyed his job and felt that he had gained knowledge and experience, including the chance to get to know people from other agencies both local and overseas, and was recognised as a technical expert. Although he had a high level of commitment and high satisfaction, he viewed his friends and subordinates’ level of commitment as low. They made known to him as their senior officer that:

Many of them have expressed their disappointment on the slow promotion exercise, biasness and cronyism. Thus, definitely they will leave the department if they are able to get better offer. (Participant no. 24)

The 29 out of the 34 satisfied participants who expressed high and medium levels of organisational commitment viewed their contributions as recognised and valued. This included promotions, service excellence awards and ‘best officer of the year’ awards. They reported that receiving such evidence of recognition motivated them to put in an even greater effort and strive to exceed expectations. Participant no. 3 represented the sentiments of these satisfied participants by stating:

Yes, I have received recognition for my contribution and have been sufficiently rewarded in terms of promotion and its accompaniments of remuneration and a service excellence award, and for those reasons I am happy to work harder and put extra efforts towards the betterment of the organisation.
2) Lack of Satisfaction

While the results of the interviews suggested that the majority of the participants were committed and expressed satisfaction with their job, this related primarily to their personal work duties. Despite their contribution having been recognised by means of promotion and rewards, their satisfaction was not all encompassing. Some remained less satisfied with the perceived lack of efficiency in policy implementation given that the department had well documented plans. There was also a perceived absence of new prospects in another department if they opted to change jobs, inconsistencies in the promotion system, insufficient rewards and a perceived absence of a supportive working environment (Table 5.8).

Table 5.8: Level of Commitment and Lack of Satisfaction Factors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of Commitment</th>
<th>Implementation</th>
<th>Prospects</th>
<th>Promotion System</th>
<th>Rewards</th>
<th>Working environment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Furthermore, their lack of satisfaction stemmed from perceptions of an absence of fairness and transparency in the department’s promotional practices and poor management of these. Participant no. 9 articulated the majority viewpoint by stating:

Over bureaucratic. Also the senior management level like to choose from a small pool of employees in their immediate surround. These employees are always given priority relative to recognition and promotion.

Other major promotion-related issues that contributed to forming their outlook included the criteria for promotion and promotion speed. In the criteria for promotion in Malaysian public service departments, merit is the core criterion for promotion rather than seniority. Most of the participants argued that seniority, which they saw as associated with
knowledge and experience, should also be given priority, as they had been loyal and committed to stay and be part of the department for so many years.

As suggested by participant no. 3:

Selection criteria for promotion should be balance between seniority and merit with certain prerequisites such as examination, no disciplinary action, knowledge and skill gained in certain division. Proper implementation is very important.

A few other participants also expressed sentiments which were best articulated by participant no. 22:

Criteria for promotion are merely based on merit rather than knowledge, service, seniority, service record and disciplinary action. Once it based on merit or performance, the evaluation and measurement is not standardised. As a result, large number of officers from a small station been promoted rather than a big station if all the stations did not follow the standard performance appraisal stated by the headquarters. For example, the state of Selangor is the highest [productivity] in [the department] but only one officer been promoted from this station. If compared to the state of Kedah, among the smallest [productivity], there were three officers been promoted. The top level didn’t proportionate the number of officers been promoted with the contribution or workload of the station. The department should have a standardised performance appraisal at all stations and being monitored by non-interest panels or non-aligned panels from time to time.

The department could address this issue by revising the promotion criteria from time to time to suit dynamic changes of structure and function and, most importantly, the criteria could be applied and implemented to the whole organisation. If the promotion policy is perceived as transparent, fair and meeting the needs of the majority of employees, this may lead to enhanced levels of job satisfaction and organisational commitment.
Interestingly, in reference to the difference in job satisfaction between genders, 100% (14/14) of the male participants reported that they were satisfied with their job whereas only 77% (20/26) of the female participants said that they were satisfied (Table 5.9). Of the six female participants who reported a lack of satisfaction, two reported a high, one a medium and three a low level of organisational commitment. One of the reasons for their lack of satisfaction and lower level of organisational commitment was to do with the tarnished public image of the department that they had recently experienced. Power abuse and corruption allegations had recently dogged the department. As participant no. 29 expressed:

No, the public perception of corruption in this department is too high. I feel ashamed to go outside and introduce myself as an officer of this department.

This view is somewhat subjective because the media in Malaysia had greatly exaggerated incidents involving officers of the ‘closed’ government agency under investigation by the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC). The public had tended to pre-judge these officers as being guilty before the investigation had been completed; nevertheless, the image of the department had indeed been tarnished by these incidents.

The six participants who said that they experienced lack of satisfaction also reported that they were unfamiliar with their allotted tasks and confused about what they needed to do to perform well. They believed that the knowledge and skills they had gained in previous placements were not being utilised and that their input was consequently only of partial

Table 5.9: Job Satisfaction and Gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Job Satisfaction</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Satisfied</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of Satisfaction</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
benefit to the department. Their sentiments were best summed up by participant no. 32 in a revealing comment when she said:

Depends on where the department assigns me, for example if they assign me to the A division I would be satisfied because not only would I know what I am to do, but I would have some opportunity to contribute my knowledge and skills. In this B division I am unclear about how I should perform my allotted tasks and in consequence they provide me with no real satisfaction.

This answer prompted the researcher to cross-check this with the participant’s responses to other questions: Do you think you will be still doing the same job in five years’ time? Do you anticipate any internal promotion opportunities in the near future? Her answer was clear and to the point, ‘No, I am looking forward to retire soon’.

This participant had been promoted twice and been given a service excellence award and appreciation certificate for high productivity. The generally accepted retirement age in Malaysia is well above the fifties, yet this woman who was still in her forties felt she had no other employment alternatives of similar status and seniority outside the department given that she worked in a ‘closed’ department. To make a move to another government department would mean she would have to start over again as a junior officer with limited career prospects.

This woman’s predicament is an interesting example. Her level of organisational commitment was high, which she attributed to having a guaranteed regular salary and also her religious conviction of her accountability to God on the day of judgement. Although she loved the department, she remained frustrated with her situation. This employee was dedicated and committed to her job and as such could rightly be considered an asset to the department. Her lack of satisfaction was associated with feeling unclear about how to perform some tasks and feeling that she could not fully utilise the knowledge and skills she
had already acquired in the department. This particular case demonstrates the need to give attention to talent utilisation and to place people in the right positions, ensuring that they have the knowledge and skills to perform their roles and tasks.

5.6 Career Growth Themes

This section highlights participants’ subjective experiences of organisational commitment and job satisfaction and is discussed according to the themes and concepts of career growth. The coding process resulted in eight key categories or themes in reference to career growth which may influence organisational commitment and job satisfaction. The majority of the coded references emphasised professional ability development, followed by promotion speed, job rotation, promotion equity, job expert, career goal progress, support system and remuneration growth, as summarised in Table 5.10. This section provides an overview of the role of career growth and its influence on organisational commitment and job satisfaction, followed by descriptions of each of the elements identified.

Table 5.10: Coding and Elements of Career Growth

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Career Growth</th>
<th>Sources</th>
<th>References</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Professional Ability Development</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promotion Speed</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job Rotation</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promotion Equity</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job Expert</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career Goal Progress</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support System</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remuneration Growth</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Based on the interview results, career growth plays a prominent role in organisational commitment and job satisfaction. Career growth can be seen as recognition, appreciation and reward for employees’ contributions and may be a catalyst that motivates them to be more
committed to the department and satisfied with their jobs. In this public sector organisation, other than standard annual salary increments, participants did not expect an increase in salary without promotion. Participants suggested that top level management needs to identify the significant elements of career growth that support staff morale, commitment and motivation so that employees strive harder to boost productivity and are proud to be members of the department.

As suggested by several participants and directly expressed by participant no. 1:

With the right and proper career growth as part of recognition on what you have contributed may give motivation to the department’s officers to be committed to the department and satisfied with their jobs. Otherwise the productivity will decrease and image of department will be tarnished and seen as not efficient.

These suggestions are in line with participant no. 2’s views:

If we didn’t have career development throughout our working journey then how we and organisation supposed to develop. If we do the same job without any career growth and static at certain position or level, there will be no satisfaction and commitment in our life.

Participants suggested the importance of career growth not only for work-related matters but also for personal development. While managers cannot promote every employee simultaneously, especially if the number who can be promoted is limited, they can prepare development and succession plans. Furthermore, participants indicated that the department could develop employees by enriching their experience, knowledge and skills, which would prepare them to be an asset to the department. This could involve training, courses, opportunities for further study to upgrade formal educational qualifications and job rotation, all of which can help employees improve their knowledge and skills and benefit the department. In addition to more sophisticated technology, equipment and tools, human resource management should also be upgraded in line with transformation, innovation and
dynamic changes in the department. Without appropriate knowledge and skills, modern
technology and sophisticated equipment and tools cannot be fully utilised by employees. The
impact of this competitive advantage may also be of benefit to stakeholders including
business licensees and manufacturers in terms of an efficient service delivery system.

As mentioned by participants, while an employer may not be able to satisfy every
employee’s expectations, especially if promotion is limited, they can assist with the
development of career growth plans which provide direction as to what employees can
reasonably expect from the organisation over a certain period of time. For example, after 15
years of service, employees may be able to expect that they will be exposed to a minimum of
three divisions and be promoted at least once provided they have fulfilled the criteria for
promotion (e.g., the previous three years performance appraisals rated as excellent and
passing the departmental examination). The participants also suggested that the promotion
criteria should be standardised and applicable to every employee of the organisation. The
career growth plan could include aspects of job and organisation such as knowledge, skill,
experience, promotion and rewards that should be effectively implemented and perceived as
fair by employees.

As participant no. 3 expressed:

Career growth is really important to increase and motivate employees to be satisfied
and committed to their organisation. We need improvement in our career from time to
time and not only static at certain position.

With each year of service, participants said that they expected to gain knowledge,
skills, experience and indeed benefits and compensation for their efforts and contributions.
Participants justified the importance of career growth in increasing organisational
commitment and job satisfaction, and said they became bored doing work at the same grade
or level for a long time without any advancement. Furthermore, participants said that a lack
of career advancement may lead to a career plateau and a decrease in commitment to the organisation. Being promoted from time to time was seen as providing excitement, as a change in work could provide new experiences in different positions and divisions.

The words participants used, ‘stagnant’ and ‘static’, when at the same grade for a long time, were associated with work being boring and dull which was demotivating and led to low commitment.

As participant no. 7 disclosed:

It is not really good for an employee to have stagnant level of position for a long period of time. He needs to have career growth by being recognized and compensated to increase their self-motivation and self-esteem in the organisation. Accordingly they will satisfy and commit to their employer. For me I would be disappointed and not satisfy if being left out by others either in term of monetary or non-monetary career growth.

These views were also supported by participant no. 8:

In my career, I have my own aims. Accordingly I need push factor to achieve that aims. Once I have achieved that goal then I will satisfy and committed to what I am doing. For instance, when I have contributed towards the increase in income of the government, department should recognised me with the career growth such as promotion, remuneration and reward me with opportunity to further study at higher educational level. Then I will satisfy and commit to the department and will work harder.

For this participant, her personal goals and organisational objectives were aligned, and achieving these would meet mutual expectations. Career growth that encompasses self-development, compensation and benefits can motivate employees to work harder and also provides personal satisfaction as well as commitment to fulfil organisational goals for productivity and excellent delivery systems.

Participant no. 9 described the role of career growth:
Because it is a sort of a catalyst to make me give more commitment to my organisation. With the knowledge and experience as well as recognition anybody will be very happy, satisfied, committed to the organisation and surely will show good performance in every assignment.

This statement was in line with those of other participants who emphasised that career growth was a very important mechanism in improving their level of commitment to the organisation. For these participants, knowledge, experience and skills gained in the department as well as recognition and rewards for their contribution made them happy, satisfied and committed to putting in extra effort for the benefit of the organisation.

As suggested by participant no. 22:

In assurance of full commitment and cooperation from the employees, department should have catalysts to promote such good behaviour. Normally with proper encouragement and incentive every employees will strive towards excellent result.

Based on the interviews, career growth plays an important role in increasing organisational commitment and satisfaction as participants said they aimed for a better life, brighter future and better prospects in the department. Likewise, they revealed that career growth was a motivating factor for them to achieve their goals for a better income and higher position, and once they achieved their goals, they were satisfied and committed, had a sense of belonging, and were happy to stay in the department.

This was illustrated by participant no. 23:

Career growth is connected to financial remuneration and self-development. If you feel that you are given opportunity to develop, you will feel satisfied and content. As our nature of job is more on chain of command, responsibility increase once you been promoted. It is not appropriate if you are senior in service but junior in position. For instance, you have worked in the department for ten years, by right you should be given priority for promotion if compared to those who worked less than ten years. If department did not give priority to seniority instead of other criteria for promotion,
for example, performance, department examination, could decrease my satisfaction and commitment to organisation.

The interview results suggested that elements of career growth such as remuneration, promotion equity and self-development play important roles in contentment and satisfaction for those who work under supervision. In a ‘closed’ government agency, designation or job position indicates the level of responsibility and chain of command, and promotion normally increases with years of service. In this department, power and authority come in tandem with position, and the higher the position, the greater the respect and acknowledgment that can be expected from others. Participants believed that recognition and appreciation for their service and performance should be in line with their work experience and years of service.

As disclosed by participant no. 37:

When we recruited as level 41 in the early career, later we should have progress and end our career at higher position such as level 48 or 52. Career advancement and enrichment will lead to job satisfaction and commitment to the organisation.

And as participant no. 27 stated:

With the right and proper implementation of career growth may lead to commitment to the department and satisfaction with our job and also an increasing in my economic level and financial stability.

When career growth was seen as slow, employees may have perceived their manager as not being committed to their well-being. Slow promotion practices were perceived as related to unfair selection, too frequent job rotation or no job rotation and limited opportunities for training and developments.

Personal economic rewards and financial stability are products of promotion and an increase in salary when career growth is implemented effectively. Employees could plan and expect what would happen in their career development over the next 10 years if career
succession plans were consistent and properly implemented according to the well-documented policies of the department. However, if career succession plans are vague and variable, employees may feel insecure with this organisation since staff in other public sector departments could receive more promotion and higher income after the same period of service.

As participant no. 31 described:

When you are climbing the career ladder, career growth is one form of appreciation of the department and you will satisfy with what you are doing and committed to make it success ...Identify and train the potential officers so that they can become upcoming expert officers to replace the outgoing officers in the future. If the management not cater the welfare of the employees and they are not happy then how they want to serve the department.

As emerged from the interviews, career growth can be seen as a ‘push factor’ that helps enhance commitment to the organisation and job.

For instance, participant no. 34 noted:

Career growth can be a push factor for me to work harder and achieve my target in line with my aim and motivation to have career advancement in my life. When I get promoted then I will be satisfied and committed to perform my job and loyal to the department.

This was also mentioned by participant no. 33:

I need career development throughout my working journey. There are opportunities in this department, so I just need to find the opportunities and make use of it and pursue my career growth. Once I have achieved my goals through career growth in this department, I will be more satisfied and committed with my job and organisation.

Overall, career growth was seen to play an important role as a ‘push’ factor and was associated with motivation, recognition, rewards, self-development and professional development in reciprocation of employees’ contributions. Specifically, elements of career
growth, promotion and remuneration were seen as rewards and recognition for employee contributions; professional ability development and job rotation were seen as ways for developing employees’ knowledge and skills. Perceptions of equity in the implementation of career growth should also be considered when developing department objectives to increase organisational commitment and job satisfaction. In the next section, the eight emerging elements of career growth are described in detail.

### Table 5.11: Elements of career growth and organisational commitment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Elements of Career Growth</th>
<th>High</th>
<th>Medium</th>
<th>Low</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Professional Ability Development</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promotion Speed</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job Rotation</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promotion Equity</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job Expert</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support System</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career Goal Progress</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remuneration Growth</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### 5.6.1 Professional Ability Development

‘Professional ability development’ is defined as opportunities to gain knowledge and skills in an organisation. It encompasses training such as attending courses in the department training academy or e-learning delivered from the headquarters or training academy, further study at a local or overseas university to upgrade formal qualifications, and attachments at private companies which are the clients of the department for an agreed period of time.

As summarised in Table 5.10, 32 participants mentioned professional ability development as a factor of career growth that influenced their organisational commitment. Reasons given for this were related to opportunities and benefits such as self-enrichment, being valued by the department, creating a sense of belonging, a boost to their morale and
being confident that they had the knowledge and skills to perform their assigned job successfully.

As suggested by participant no. 23:

Our organisation should focus on the professional ability development of the employees. To increase job satisfaction, organisational commitment and develop sense of belonging, we must have skill, knowledge and feel needed by the department by played an important role in the department such as an expert and been valued more. Training and opportunities to further study and attend courses can be one of the factors to improve our skill and knowledge from time to time and build individual self-confidence in performing tasks and deal with the public.

Professional ability development assists an employee to be an asset to the department throughout their service. If they decide to pursue alternative prospects outside the department, they may be in high demand because of their education qualifications, skills and knowledge. However, they usually prefer to stay because of the support and opportunities they have gained in the department. Based on the interviews, when participants perceive that their manager cares about their well-being, they are likely to put in extra effort for the sake of the organisation.

This was emphasised by participant no. 40, who said his ambition had been to work as a uniformed officer and his loyalty and commitment to the department were because of feeling cared for and well treated by the organisation and being given the chance to upgrade from Malaysian Education Certificate to degree level after he joined. When asked whether he would still be doing the same job in five years’ time, he said:

I will stay in this department but most probably not in the same category (support group officer) because I will finish my study at a local university and be graduating this year (2012).
It was normally seen as participants’ own responsibility to improve their education background, knowledge and skills throughout their service. Opportunities to attend courses at the department training academy and the public service department training centre (INTAN) were available. In addition, managers may play an important role in encouraging subordinates to acquire appropriate training and skills. In this ‘closed’ department, information on training, courses and opportunities for further study, including Master’s and PhD programs are notified by internal circular through managers or the Head of Division. It is at the superior’s discretion whether to support an application to attend these courses. The benefits gained by attending such courses may develop employees’ self-esteem and commitment to the department, as providing them with these opportunities is perceived as caring about their well-being.

Participant no. 1 articulated that:

To increase job satisfaction and develop sense of belonging, you must have skill, knowledge and feel needed by the department, plays an important role in the department as an expert and been valued more. Without skill and knowledge, the department’s officer cannot address the problem such as licensing procedure, classification and attempt the queries by our clients and public. Furthermore, without proper knowledge and skill, superior won’t assign us with any challenging tasks. We will feel left out and may lead to low self-esteem and commitment.

By acquiring appropriate skills, knowledge and experience, participants felt that they could contribute towards expediting the operating procedures and service delivery service to the public and clients. For instance, expert audit officers who are able to detect malpractice and increase compliance among clients help to escalate annual revenue. As emphasised by participant no. 9:

Through training, seminar, courses and e-learning the department’s officers will be occupied with the knowledge of the department core business. This will make them more committed to perform and put extra efforts for the sake of the organisation.
Training organised by the department might encompass core business matters, human resource management and administration, public speaking and training of trainers, and special courses on technical issues such as forensic accounting and firearms maintenance. As suggested by participant no. 18:

Knowledge and training will make them more knowledgeable, mentally and physically confident in performing their tasks. Recognition and remuneration is a bonus not a main objective. So that they are happy to work and stay in the department. Always looking forward to come and perform the job assigned.

In the context of a ‘closed’ department, the participants emphasised that when employees are well prepared mentally and physically, and have suitable technology and equipment provided by department, their confidence and their commitment to ensure the job is successfully executed are both at high levels. This may be the reason that the department has compulsory activities which every employee must attend including annual marching training and weekly exercise in addition to on-the-job training and courses.

In this public sector organisation, the opportunity to study for a higher level of education is open to all department officers who have been employed in the department for more than five years and have an average score of annual performance appraisal reports (LNPT) of at least 85% for three years consecutively. Generally their tuition fees will be paid by the government of Malaysia through the Public Service Department. They could choose to enrol on a full-time or part-time basis at local and overseas universities, with certain conditions and limitations such as the age of the candidates not exceeding 46 years for a Master’s degree and 44 years for a PhD.

As expressed by participant no. 11:

Training such as e-learning, attending courses at the department training academy and chances are given to department’s officers to further study at local or overseas
universities and improve their formal education qualifications may increase their sense of belonging and commitment to the organisation.

In the interviews, most of the participants reported that they wanted to have career growth throughout their service with the department, especially enrichment in their knowledge and skills of the core business. This may enable them to become expert advisers and future key assets of the department. Furthermore, if given the chance and qualified, they said they were willing to learn and improve their education level, especially those who were junior officers, aiming to achieve internal promotion or to compete in the job market. As mentioned by participant no. 13:

To develop commitment and be part of the organisation, you must have skill. Extra knowledge plays important role as an asset to the department and make the job meaningfulness. Regular training and long life learning programs, formal or informal education, may enrich and enhance our knowledge and skill in core business and contemporary issues.

The small number of vacancies compared to the large number of potential candidates on the waiting list for promotion makes professional development particularly relevant to participants as a way to make them outstanding and more competent than other candidates. Based on the interviews, committed high achievers tend to take every opportunity offered for training and further study to upgrade their knowledge and skills, to prepare them to be an asset to the department and competent enough to be promoted to a higher level.

5.6.2 Promotion Speed

For the purpose of this study, ‘promotion speed’ is defined as the pace of climbing the career ladder as opposed to vegetating in the same role for a long time (Dries 2008). Interview feedback suggested that no one wanted to stand still in the same position without any development in their career path. The participants indicated that advancement in an
individual employee’s position after a period of time was important to reflect their career development and their perception that the department cared about their career growth.

The interview results showed that 16 participants indicated that promotion speed was an element of career growth that contributed to organisational commitment and job satisfaction. The participants acknowledged that their internal promotion speed may reflect their contributions to the organisation and could be seen as mutual reciprocation between employees and employer. For example, participants’ hard work and efforts in increasing organisation productivity and public compliance had been recognised and rewarded by the employer in terms of promotion from time to time. This could increase organisational commitment and job satisfaction. As expressed by participant no. 31:

How you are rewarded and appreciated by your department will be the main factors you feel committed to the department. To improve commitment and satisfaction, department should improve our welfare and recognised our achievement such as give better promotion for our service and performance and rewards for high [revenue] collector besides upgrading working facilities, equipment and tools.

Participants did not simply accept whatever they had been given in return for their contributions without comparing themselves to others around them. As suggested by participant no. 21:

If we are being promoted as regularly as other government agencies practices then it may make us committed and satisfied with our job.

Promotion speed and commitment is associated with rank seniority and a long length of service to the department. As articulated by participant no. 35:

Promotion speed. In my opinion and based on my own experience after optimum age 35–45 years, employees may focus more on their job and department if compared to other age. At this stage they acquired enough experience and prepare themselves to lead the unit or division. If the promotion speed is too slow, it will discourage them to work harder and committed to the department.
One of the reasons participants chose to work in the public service was career development. Some joined the department from other government departments as they increased their educational level and, not surprisingly, expected career advancement in this department. In the interviews, participants mentioned that long service as an employee was associated with experience and seniority in the department. Senior officers were perceived as having acquired more knowledge and skills than junior officers and were the ‘go to’ or reference people and mentors in the core business. Accordingly, their workloads keep on increasing as length of service became prolonged, and they had been trusted with more challenging tasks because of their experience in the organisation. Promotion brought increasing responsibility in the chain of command as well as an increase in salary.

Managers in this ‘closed’ department need to understand the fluctuations in the level of commitment of employees throughout the stages of their employment. Along their journey in an organisation, employees may go through an entry phase, a settling period and a stage of withdrawal or drawing towards retirement.

The results of the interviews showed that most of the participants started to be promoted after three to ten years of service, and after 11 to 18 years all participants had been promoted at least once. After 19–26 years, most had experienced a second promotion. However, according to the participants, a few of them and others who did not participate in the interviews had been left out. Only four out of the 40 participants had been promoted more than twice, and this was because they had started in the rank and file (support group) and then after further studies had been promoted to the professional and management level.

Most participants had only been promoted for the first time after 10 years of service (29/40), as summarised in Table 5.12. Only 11 of the 40 participants were fortunate enough to be promoted in less than 10 years and this was due to improving their level of education.
qualifications or a change in departmental promotion criteria to include those who had served the department for more than seven years.

Table 5.12: Level of organisational commitment and first time promoted

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First time promoted</th>
<th>Level of Organisational Commitment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Yet</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than 3 years</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-10 years</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-18 years</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19-26 years</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27 years or more</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Most of the participants (22 out of 40) reported a high level of organisational commitment. Surprisingly, one of the participants who was promoted after 3–10 years in service reported a low level of organisational commitment. When the researcher asked why she stayed in the department, she responded:

My spouse is doing business so we need fixed income every month and back-up if anything happened to his business. (Participant no. 29)

However, she was disappointed with the promotion as she felt that she deserved a higher position because she had fulfilled all the promotion requirements (her performance appraisal was more than 85%, she had passed the department examination and been granted a service excellence award) and yet her name had not been included in the latest promotion list.

Regular promotion to more senior roles reflecting performance and length of service could be an element of career growth which may impact on organisational commitment and job satisfaction. In reference to the interview results, it can be argued that the impact of promotion speed can be experienced when an employee compares their position with those of
their colleagues in the same department and those of people in other public sector departments.

5.6.3 Job Rotation

The interviews revealed that there were other elements of career growth besides professional ability development and promotion speed needing consideration. Of the 40 participants interviewed, 17 indicated that job rotation had an important role to play in career growth. In this ‘closed’ government department, job rotation was regarded as a kind of on-the-job training where an employee of a unit or department could learn diversified job skills during a specific period of time.

According to the interviews, the department did have employee rotation plans that focused on employees’ learning capability and adjustment time. The duration spent by an employee in a certain division may depend on the employee’s ability to cope with new tasks within a specific period of time. Some employees may need more time to learn and the manager may monitor that their development has been satisfactory before a new rotation can be conducted. As expressed by participant no. 34:

Job rotation is a good mechanism but it should not be rotated too frequent because in the short spend of time we won’t be able to acquire much knowledge and skill in the divisions. A suitable minimum year in certain division is three years.

While job rotation may not be viewed as assisting with job promotion or pay adjustment, it can be regarded as part of career development by means of providing a new learning environment and new work challenges. In a sense, job rotation is a work expansion mechanism for employees in that it broadens their job knowledge and skill base, stimulates their desire to face new challenges and tasks in other divisions and helps cultivate their interpersonal relationship skills as they get to know new people in other divisions. When officers shift from division A to either C or D with different job descriptions and
responsibilities, this may give them new opportunities to perform and to be exposed to more of the core business of the department rather than continuing to do the same tasks and deal with similar people for many years of service.

**Table 5.13: Level of Commitment and Number of Division Attached**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of Commitment</th>
<th>Number of Divisions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In reference to organisational commitment, the interview findings were that most participants who were at the high level of organisational commitment had been attached to more than two divisions. Of the total 40 participants, the 19 who had a high level of organisational commitment had been attached to four or more divisions (Table 5.13). This indicates that there is relationship between job rotation and organisational commitment. Organisational commitment may be indirectly occasioned by the acquisition of a broad range of knowledge, skills and experience resulting from systematic job rotation.

**Table 5.14: Job Satisfaction and Number of Divisions Attached**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Job Satisfaction</th>
<th>Number of Divisions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfied</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of Satisfaction</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

With regard to job satisfaction, interviews results indicated that most participants were satisfied with their job even in the early stages when they had only a few divisions ‘under their belt’. This satisfaction may be related to the reasons participants chose to work in
the public sector rather than the private sector, namely, job security, the nature of the job and the perks that the government sector offers. As participants were rotated from one division to another, they believed that they become more knowledgeable, skilful and expert in the department’s core business and enjoyed their work more. A broadened level of exposure to core business enabled participants who had the aptitude to attain a high level of proficiency and expertise which advanced their prospect of further training for specialist duties in the department. For example, in the ‘closed’ department, Division A (a single core business) and Division B (other core businesses) are considered to be the most critical divisions that everyone should be experienced in as an officer of the organisation. The job rotation system implemented in these divisions could ensure that all officers acquired adequate knowledge and skills relative to the core business of the department. As articulated by participant no. 10:

Fresh recruits could be posted to [Division A] and [Division B] for set periods, e.g., three years, and then be relocated accordingly. They could then be posted to [Division C] or [Division D] as they would have acquired the basic level of competency needed to work in these divisions. In this manner, the department officers would become well-grounded in critical procedure, full-fledged and consequently well equipped to perform their duties effectively.

In a similar fashion, participant no. 31 stated:

Spending a great many years in a particular division might be too long, that is, counter-productive because it may lead to decline in the performance of some employees. Employees would need to be placed in various divisions to acquire proper knowledge of department procedure.

As proposed by participant no. 1, who had definite view on the matter:

Job rotation should be implemented to expose every department officer to the core business of the department, especially in the larger state or station. Uniform officers should be systematically rotated every three years in the early stages of their service. After acquiring a broad knowledge and skill base they could then receive further specialist training in certain critical divisions.
In the interviews, job rotation was also viewed as a way to help prevent the formation of interdependencies and close relationships between uniformed officers and clients which may lead to undesirable activities and corruption.

As suggested by no. 33:

Job rotation is also suitable to avoid malpractice and monopolise power by certain officers in certain divisions.

Many participants, both satisfied and not satisfied, expressed their sentiments regarding job rotation and career growth. The common theme was that to ensure one’s abilities are adequate for the task at hand, if more attention were given to job rotation, it would benefit all concerned. It was generally felt that spending short periods in each division is not sufficient as too frequent rotations do not allow the necessary time for comprehensive learning. It was suggested that a minimum of three years be spent in each division.

In view of the interview findings, there is a strong case to argue that employees who enjoy their job greatly benefit both themselves and their employer because they tend to maintain a positive outlook which translates into extra productivity. In summary, interview results suggested that job rotation may play an important role in increasing organisational commitment and job satisfaction provided it is properly implemented.

### 5.6.4 Promotion Equity

Out of the 40 participants interviewed, 13 mentioned promotion equity as an element of career growth that has an influence on organisational commitment and job satisfaction. ‘Promotion equity’ is defined here as fairness and transparency in the treatment of people when executing the process of promotion and implementing the promotion system in the organisation. The selection criteria and procedure of promotion should be fair, transparent and equitable, without bias or undue favour. Even if a manager does not like an employee or
is not one of their social contacts, each employee should be treated fairly if they have executed their job properly as assigned by their superior. Furthermore, participants said that it is not fair when one of the criteria considered for promotion was networking within the so-called ‘golden circle’ with the superior rather than the criteria being based on seniority and excellence performance. As suggested by participant no. 16:

The higher management level such as immediate superior or head of department must practice fairness when making decision on promotion and rewards. For that reason, every worker gets the right and fair treatment in accordance to their performance. If this is a practice, then everybody will satisfy and give full commitment to the organisation.

From the point of view of participants, when the top level management sets the standard criteria for promotion, these should be applied consistently to everybody in every station of the department. According to the participants, employees at different stations and in different states tended to compare the practices implemented by top level management. For instance, top level management had stated that the promotion criteria are seniority followed by performance but in implementation, employees had been promoted who were junior in service even though they had performed well. This may have been perceived as not fair when there were others who were senior in service and had also performed well. This may happen when a station does not follow the guidelines for standard performance appraisal scores as stated by headquarters. In such a case, top level management may need to play a role to ensure that every station complies with these orders. A department can have 15 stations and the employees would expect that the same criteria would be applied to all of the stations and every employee. The perception of fair treatment of employees may influence their level of organisational commitment and satisfaction.

As suggested by several participants and best said by participant no. 35:
All of employees should equally be evaluated based on their performance and seniority rather than undue favour.

Later, when asked about how she would improve career growth policy in her department, participant no. 35 articulated:

I would improve in the promotion equity, where everybody is treated fair and neutral and those who strive for excellent they will succeed.

From their perspectives, the participants want transparent practices that are seen to be fair to everybody, with promotion criteria standardised throughout the organisation rather than implemented in only a few stations’. For example, if the promotion criteria are seniority or performance, these criteria should be focused on rather than extra-mural activities such as joining the national soccer team or being on the committee of a non-government organisation (NGO).

As convincingly expressed by participant no. 1:

There is a grey area in promotion criteria. Sometimes they based on performance and later time based. There is lack of transparency in promotion exercise. It depends on the human judgment normally superior and top level management rather than the real performance. They being promoted because of good rapport and know the superior rather than the quality of their job.

As mentioned by participant no. 4:

For career growth there must be fair and transparent where everybody feels fair and transparent in the eyes of the people then it is the best motivation for the employees to work hard.

As articulated by participant no. 20:

No cronyism, no favourable and be compensated in fair and neutral manner will not lead to upsetting or disappointing of certain officer.
In this organisation, cronyism or favouritism is appointing long-standing friends or those in social contact to advanced positions of authority, regardless of their qualifications and without taking into account meritocracy, performance or seniority. For instance, a perception of favouritism occurred when the top level manager who had a say in the selection committee regarding promotion was on good terms with certain employees because they knew each other beforehand and had worked together in the same station. This may influence the decision-making process and may be perceived as bias if the reasons for promotion are not clarified and seen as transparent.

One of the senior officers, participant no. 34, justified the need for transparent, fair and neutral decisions in promotion exercises:

If the person deserved to be promoted yet was not promoted, it will affect the morale and motivation of the officer himself. Other fellow with less performance was given promotion then it will lead to less commitment of the person who is left behind towards the organisation.

Those who reported a medium level of organisational commitment mentioned that they were not fully committed because the promotion exercises were not conducted in a fair and neutral manner. Perceptions of bias may make employees less enthusiastic to work harder and they may hesitate to give a high commitment to the organisation.

### 5.6.5 Job Expert

‘Job expert’ is defined here as an employee’s outstanding ability and knowledge being recognised and acknowledged for expertise in certain areas. Not all employees can be a job expert, but those who are have certain interests, skills, knowledge and expertise which could be an asset to the organisation. This expertise in certain critical areas might benefit the organisation when involved in decision making and preparing policy and assessments, and could help the organisation to increase government revenue and to improve service delivery.
As illustrated in Table 5.11, 11 out of 40 participants suggested that being a job expert was a factor of career growth that influenced organisational commitment and job satisfaction. As mentioned by participant no. 22:

To develop an expert person, department should recognise, train and encourage potential officers to be an expert in certain subject matter, e.g., if someone is given recognition and passion in certain area, the employer should recognise his expertise and place him at the appropriate division and don’t simply transfer him to other unrelated division where he could not fully utilised his potential capability to the department.

Based on the interviews, it appears that participants who are motivated and committed to work hard, feeling responsible for organisational progress and success, are also content with their job and department. The reverse also seems to obtain. As suggested by a senior officer, participant no. 31:

Department should identify and train the potential officers so that they could become upcoming expert officers to replace the outgoing officers in the future. If the management did not cater for the welfare of the employees and they were not happy then how they wanted to serve the department.

As expressed by participant no. 33:

The expert officer should focus on certain divisions only, such as classification and technical services; they should be exempted from job rotation after having mastered all of the core business of the department.

Generally in this organisation, newly recruited officers will be subject to job rotation as they need to be exposed to and enriched by the knowledge and skills required by the various divisions and aspects of the core business. When they have fully rotated through the major divisions, then they could be considered for job expert roles based on their passion, knowledge and skills. Being an ‘expert’ in the department is regarded as a form of recognition and acknowledgement, and it was suggested that the department could provide a
special allowance or incentive to acknowledge this extra contribution and expertise. An incentive or allowance could provide motivation to develop expertise in specific areas rather than to work at a daily routine for the sake of receiving a standard salary.

As articulated by participant no. 37:

Reward those who have expertise and recognise them as an expert in the department. They should be given priority for promotion and special allowance and incentive for being expert.

In this ‘closed’ government agency, the role of job expert was only applicable to selected senior managers or professionals and was not applicable to the support group staff who perform routine tasks such as cashier and assisting senior officers. The survey conducted as part of this study did not test the influence of having a role as a job expert on organisational commitment and job satisfaction because of the small number of job experts. For this reason, the influence of being a job expert on organisational commitment and job satisfaction will need to be considered for further research.

5.6.6 Career Goal Progress

As shown in Table 5.11, only 8 of the 40 participants reported career goal progress as an element of career growth that may influence organisational commitment and job satisfaction.

Based on the interviews, it was commonly preferable for employees to do a job related to their qualifications, aims and interests. Employees could apply their knowledge and skills in specific areas to help the department move forward and achieve its mission.
As revealed by participant no. 2:

I can apply my knowledge that I had learned at the university [law background] throughout my daily job. Moreover the scopes of the job and core business in the department are broad and I can learn new things from time to time.

Table 5.11 shows that only five participants indicated that their high level of organisational commitment was linked to career goal progress as an element of career growth.

As mentioned by participant no. 15:

For almost 20 years I have served the department and the job is in line with my qualification (accountancy). I am really committed and will spend the rest of my service in this department.

Not all of the participants appeared to care whether their qualifications and strongest skills matched their current job’s key requirements. This may be because the department had not restricted particular subject areas of academic background as a requirement for recruitment. In order to promote more candidates to join the government sector during the recession, those from areas such as pure sciences had been recruited as department officers. As a result, some people cannot apply what they had learned in their tertiary education studies directly to their current work roles. This is different from other departments such as the Malaysian National Accountant Department or the Department of Health, which recruit staff based on specific qualifications such as accountancy or medicine, respectively. However, in the department studied, broad areas of the core business can be explored and learned by new recruits through training and courses provided by the department training academy and by the training units in every branch.
5.6.7 Support System

In this study, the ‘support system’ encompasses facilities and equipment as well as cooperation and support from colleagues, superiors, and subordinates. Interview results suggested that tangible resources such as computers, standard operating procedure (SOP), vehicles, office equipment, and internet access are important in elevating organisational commitment and job satisfaction. A supportive working environment and knowledgeable and good supervisors can also motivate employees to put in extra effort.

As expressed by participant no. 35:

Basic facilities should be provided by the department to facilitate the employees in their daily work. Accordingly, sufficient and updated machine, vehicle, and SOP are important to suit the latest changes in the modern contemporary environment and help the organisation achieve their expectation.

Proper support systems were seen to be needed to execute daily jobs and tasks efficiently. The support system can be a catalyst and an important mechanism in the proper implementation of career succession plans in the organisation. Good facilities and proper supervision may help employees to perform well.

As suggested by participant no. 10:

Not every employee managed to perform assigned job successfully according to the plan without sufficient guides and assistances from appropriate support system. Support system can be in term of material (e.g., machine, tools, vehicles, standard operating procedure) or intangible term (e.g., moral support, guidance).

In the interview findings, the support system was seen as related to career growth. The role of the support system may be subject to the organisational culture at the time of the study. Interviewees viewed support systems as important in facilitating their daily work rather than assisting their career growth. Perhaps the support system would be suitable to be adopted as a major construct in influencing organisational commitment and job satisfaction.
rather than considered a sub-construct of career growth. For that reason, the support system was not further investigated in the survey as an element of career growth.

5.6.8 Remuneration Growth

The interviews also indicated that other elements might be relevant to career growth besides professional ability development, promotion speed, promotion equity, job rotation and career goal progress. Of the 40 participants who were interviewed, five articulated that remuneration growth had an important role in career growth (Table 5.10). Remuneration growth in this public sector context is recognised and rewarded financially by the employer in the form of salary or allowances. This is in contrast to the private sector where remuneration growth can also include profit sharing or allotment of shares based on performance and contribution to the productivity and income of the company.

The reasons that participants chose to work in the government sector rather than the private sector and why none offered salary as one of their key reasons may help to explain why not many of the participants suggested remuneration growth as an element of their career growth. Those who mentioned remuneration growth may have done so because for them increasing rewards and appreciation such as salary, bonus and allowances are important factors which complement other elements in increasing organisational commitment and job satisfaction. So even though it was not one of the most important elements of career growth, yet it was present.

5.7 Conclusion

Results from the interviews suggested that career growth plays an important role in increasing organisational commitment and job satisfaction in this ‘closed’ government department, as summarised in Table 5.15.
### Table 5.15: Key findings of the qualitative research

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimensions of career growth</th>
<th>Drivers of organisational commitment and job satisfaction</th>
<th>Inhibitors of organisational commitment and job satisfaction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Professional ability</td>
<td>personal development</td>
<td>low self-esteem and inappropriate support system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>development</td>
<td>self-enrichment</td>
<td>irrelevant training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>valued by the department</td>
<td>lack of succession planning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>career succession plan</td>
<td>career plateau</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>acquired skills, knowledge and experience</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>support and opportunities to improve their formal education qualifications</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>boost morale and confident levels</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promotion speed</td>
<td>perceive that their hard work and efforts are recognised by employer</td>
<td>static</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>lack of transparency of promotion system by top management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>slow promotion exercise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job rotation</td>
<td>practical on-the-job training in all aspects of department core business</td>
<td>too frequent rotation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>exposure to every division of the department</td>
<td>too long in one division</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>versatile and full-fledged officer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promotion equity</td>
<td>selection conducted in fair, transparent and equitable manner without perceived bias</td>
<td>selection based on ‘who you know’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>selection based on networking or ‘golden circle’ with the superior bias perceived</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career goal progress</td>
<td>job related to an employee’s qualifications, aims and interest</td>
<td>department did not restrict any area of academic background for additional short-term recruitment during the recession</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>cannot apply what they learned at their tertiary education level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remuneration growth</td>
<td>monetary reward was not the prime consideration for working in public sector</td>
<td>salary in private sector organisation higher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>job security</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>perks and nature of job</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Managers would be wise to put in every effort to examine and implement career growth and evaluate its effectiveness on employees’ motivation, morale and commitment as there are dynamic innovation changes in the department such as changes in organisational structure and practices. As is the case with organisational commitment, career growth has a
critical role to play in increasing levels of job satisfaction for officers in ‘closed’ government departments. Fair treatment, recognition of contributions, job rotation and training can all be catalysts of satisfaction and commitment. The perception of unfair treatment and the often cumbersome bureaucratic nature of the processes of promotion, training and rotation have a negative impact on the satisfaction and commitment of employees. This negative sentiment may affect an increasing number of employees in the department if not addressed.

Staff turnover was not an issue in this organisation because the majority of the participants indicated that they were attracted to working in the public sector because of the benefits, perks and job security and they stay there due to limited career prospects outside the ‘closed’ department. The department could experience a decrease in organisational commitment and job satisfaction which may indirectly affect the performance of employees and department productivity. Even though the department has comprehensive plans for career growth, some of the fundamentals are not being properly executed such as fair implementation of the promotion system and timing of job rotation. Based on the findings from these interviews, top level management and managers should look into the inconsistency in promotion criteria and performance appraisal which participants perceived as not being consistently applied throughout the whole organisation, as well as the minimum and maximum years for job rotation.

The interview results strongly suggest that when employees are in receipt of well-considered sound management practices together with a supportive working environment, such as dedicated supervisors, colleagues and subordinates, they have every chance of experiencing job satisfaction and organisational commitment. Moreover, the participants also suggested that if employees have some concrete evidence that their efforts are recognised and valued, it is likely that they will reciprocate by putting in an even greater work effort.
Increases in organisational commitment and job satisfaction could be realised in terms of excellent performance by employees and an increase in the productivity of the organisation.

To achieve competitive advantage through human capital development, the career growth and career paths of employees need to be considered seriously. The following chapter presents the results of the survey conducted to further investigate the roles of career growth and to augment the interview findings of this study in relation to organisational commitment and job satisfaction in the ‘closed’ government department.
CHAPTER 6: SURVEY FINDINGS

6.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the analyses and results of the quantitative study which investigated the relationship between career growth, organisational commitment and job satisfaction. The chapter is divided into five sections. First, the chapter describes the demographic data of the survey respondents. Next is a report on the tests of group differences which related to organisational commitment and job satisfaction. Third, the findings from a series of regression analyses in testing the hypotheses are provided. Fourth, tests of moderating effects of demographic group differences on relationship between career growth, organisational commitment and job satisfaction are presented, followed by a conclusion. The hypotheses were tested by examining the direct relationships between variables by using a series of multiple regressions. According to Hair et al. (2010), multiple regression analysis produces the best estimates of a dependent variable from a number of independent variables. Regression analysis, using SPSS 21, was further conducted to assess the relationships between career growth elements, organisational commitment and job satisfaction. The hierarchical regression procedure specifies that the variables are entered into the equation in a specific order in blocks, supported by a theoretical argument to determine the contribution of each independent variable to the prediction of the dependent variables, after other demographics variable are controlled for (Hair et al. 2010).

6.2 Sample Profile

This section provides a general summary of the demographic attributes of the respondents to the survey in the second phase of data collection (Table 6.1) and presents the extent to which the sample is representative of the population studied.
Table 6.1: Respondents’ characteristics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>Number of employees</th>
<th>Percentage (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gender</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>45.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>203</td>
<td>54.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age group</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24 or younger</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-29</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>14.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-34</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>23.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35-39</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>12.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40-44</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>13.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45-49</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>7.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-54</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>16.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55-59</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>10.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Marital status</strong></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>12.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>320</td>
<td>86.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Divorced/Separated/Widowed</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Highest education when joined service</strong></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower than diploma</td>
<td>151</td>
<td>40.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diploma</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>17.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor’s degree</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>40.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master’s degree or PhD</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Highest education at present</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower than diploma</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>37.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diploma</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>17.6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bachelor’s degree</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>38.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Master’s degree or PhD</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>6.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Division of work</strong></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>10.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>164</td>
<td>44.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>6.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>15.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>8.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>14.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Number of divisions served</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-3</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>40.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-6</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>30.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7-9</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>8.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 or more</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>20.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Grade/ job position</strong></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Levels 17 to 36</td>
<td>199</td>
<td>53.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Levels 41 to 54</td>
<td>171</td>
<td>46.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A total of 370 respondents participated in the survey by completing the questionnaires; 45.1% were male and 54.9% were female, which represented the gender balance in the department.

In terms of age distribution, the largest age group was aged 30 to 34, comprising 23% of total respondents. The smallest age group was 24 or younger, consisting of five respondents (5%). In terms of marital status, the majority of the respondents were married, accounting for 320 respondents (86.5%).

The distribution of the sample based on educational qualifications at the time of joining the department indicated that non-degree holders, who belonged to the support group (Levels 17 to 36), contributed 58.1% of the total respondents. Degree holders, who were members of the professional and management group (Levels 41 to 54), accounted for 41.9% respondents. This distribution produces roughly equal numbers of voices.
What is interesting in the distribution of the sample based on educational qualification when joining the department compared to educational qualification at present is that there was a significant increase in educational qualification in the sample profile. As can be seen in Table 6.1, the number of holders of Master’s degrees and PhDs increased by 3.3% to 167 respondents. In comparison, there was a decrease in the number of non-degree holders from 215 to 203, which indicates that during their service, some of the respondents have made an effort to improve their educational level to gain better opportunities in the future.

There are six main divisions of the ‘closed’ government department: A, B, C, D, E and F divisions. The largest number of respondents, 164 (44.3%), were from B division. The smallest number of respondents (6.8%) were from C division. The small percentage of respondents from C division was caused by the nature of their work, which requires them to perform duties outside the office and thus fewer were available to participate in the survey.

In respect to the number of divisions respondents had served in, the largest number of respondents, 150 (40.5%), had been rotated to one to three divisions during their service. The smallest number of respondents, 31 (8.4%), had had experience in seven to nine divisions. Among the sample respondents, 76 can be considered the most experienced as they had been rotated to more than 10 divisions. After rotation, all the respondents were transferred back to their original divisions in accordance with department policy.

The distribution of the sample based on grade or job position shows two ranks: 53.8% from the support group (Levels 17 to 36) and 46.2% from the professional and management group (Levels 41 to 54). This balance might produce fair results.

With regard to tenure in the department, the largest number of respondents, 112 (30.3%), had worked in the department for between three and 10 years. This group can be considered as being in the early stage of exposure to and experience of department core
business. The smallest number of sample respondents (15.1%) had worked in the department for between 19 and 26 years.

In terms of tenure in their present position, most of the respondents, 336 (90.9%), had been in their present position for not more than 10 years. The rest of the respondents, 34 (9.2%), had been in their present position for more than 11 years.

6.3 Overall Organisational Commitment and Job Satisfaction Scores

The results of the descriptive analysis on organisational commitment and job satisfaction from 370 respondents showed a mean for organisational commitment of 3.57, and a mean for job satisfaction of 3.92. In both cases, the range was from 1 to 5 (Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree, respectively). This indicates that respondents’ commitment and satisfaction are above the average level of organisational commitment and job satisfaction but not markedly high. It is a positive signal about employees’ attachment to the organisation and the extent to which they like their job.

6.4 Organisational Commitment and Job Satisfaction: Differences between Demographic Groups

This section presents the result from different sets of respondents by comparing their mean scores of organisational commitment and job satisfaction. Independent sample t-tests were used when comparing two different groups’ scores on one occasion of data collection. ANOVA were utilised when comparing more than two different groups of respondents.

6.4.1 Gender

Independent sample t-tests were conducted to compare the organisational commitment and job satisfaction scores for males and females. The results showed there was no significant difference for organisational commitment in the scores for males (M=3.58,
SD=0.675) and females (M=3.58, SD=0.611); t (368) = 0.003, p=0.997, two tailed). This is summarised in Table 6.2.

### Table 6.2: T-Test – Gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Mean (Male)</th>
<th>Mean (Female)</th>
<th>T-value</th>
<th>Significant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Organisational Commitment</td>
<td>3.580</td>
<td>3.580</td>
<td>0.003</td>
<td>0.997</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job Satisfaction</td>
<td>3.940</td>
<td>3.900</td>
<td>0.580</td>
<td>0.869</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Furthermore, the results of the independent sample t-test indicated that there was no significant difference for job satisfaction in the scores for males (M=3.940, SD=0.627) and females (M=3.900, SD=0.608); t (368) = 0.580, p=0.869, two tailed). The results of the analysis show that whether the respondents are male or female has no significant impact on their organisational commitment and job satisfaction.

#### 6.4.2 Age

A one-way between-groups analysis of variance was utilised to explore the impact of age on organisational commitment (Table 6.3).

### Table 6.3: ANOVA – Age

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Mean (&lt;24)</th>
<th>Mean (25-29)</th>
<th>Mean (30-34)</th>
<th>Mean (35-39)</th>
<th>Mean (40-44)</th>
<th>Mean (45-49)</th>
<th>Mean (50-54)</th>
<th>Mean (55-59)</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>OC</td>
<td>4.020</td>
<td>3.720</td>
<td>3.470</td>
<td>3.500</td>
<td>3.700</td>
<td>3.600</td>
<td>3.450</td>
<td>3.700</td>
<td>2.010</td>
<td>0.053</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Employees were divided into eight groups according to their age. Levene’s test for homogeneity of variance was greater than 0.05 (p=0.266), which meant that the study did not violate the homogeneity of variance assumption. However, there was no statistically
significant difference at the 0.05 level in organisational commitment scores for the eight age groups (p=0.053).

A one-way between-groups analysis of variance was performed to examine the influence of age on job satisfaction (Table 6.3). Levene’s test for homogeneity of variance was greater than 0.05 (p=0.097), which meant that the study did not violate the homogeneity of variance assumption. There was no statistically significant difference at the p<0.05 in job satisfaction scores for the eight age groups (p=0.26). The results indicate that age group does not have a significant implication for organisational commitment and job satisfaction.

6.4.3 Marital Status

A one-way between-groups analysis of variance was conducted to examine the impact of marital status on organisational commitment (Table 6.4).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Mean (Single)</th>
<th>Mean (Married)</th>
<th>Mean (Divorced/Widowed)</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Organisational commitment</td>
<td>3.530</td>
<td>3.580</td>
<td>3.780</td>
<td>0.408</td>
<td>0.665</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job satisfaction</td>
<td>3.870</td>
<td>3.930</td>
<td>4.070</td>
<td>0.330</td>
<td>0.720</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Employees were divided into three groups according to their status: single, married and divorced or widowed. Levene’s test for homogeneity of variance was greater than 0.05 (p=0.905), which meant that the study did not violate the homogeneity of variance assumption. There was no statistically significant difference at the 0.05 level in engagement scores for the three marital status groups (p=0.665).

A one-way between-groups analysis of variance was performed to investigate the effect of marital status on job satisfaction (Table 6.4). Levene’s test for homogeneity of variance was more than 0.05 (p=0.962), which meant that the study did not violate the
homogeneity of variance assumption. There was no statistically significant difference at the 0.05 level in job satisfaction scores for the three marital status groups (p=0.720).

The results suggest that whether the respondents are single, married, widowed or divorced does not have any significant influence on their organisational commitment and job satisfaction.

6.4.4 Educational Qualification

A one-way between-groups analysis of variance was conducted to explore the impact of educational qualification when first joining the department on organisational commitment (Table 6.5).

Table 6.5: ANOVA – Educational qualification

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Mean (&lt; Diploma)</th>
<th>Mean (Diploma)</th>
<th>Mean (Bachelor’s)</th>
<th>Mean (Master’s/PhD)</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Organisational commitment</td>
<td>3.640</td>
<td>3.470</td>
<td>3.560</td>
<td>3.640</td>
<td>1.180</td>
<td>0.319</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job satisfaction</td>
<td>3.960</td>
<td>3.880</td>
<td>3.900</td>
<td>3.800</td>
<td>0.470</td>
<td>0.710</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Respondents were divided into four groups according to their formal educational qualification: lower than diploma, diploma, Bachelor’s degree and Master’s degree or PhD. Levene’s test for homogeneity of variance was greater than 0.05 (p=0.077), which meant that the study did not violate the homogeneity of variance assumption. There was no statistically significant difference at the 0.05 level in organisational commitment scores for the four groups (p=0.319).

Similarly, a one-way between-groups analysis of variance was carried out to analyse the effect of educational qualification when first joining the department on organisational commitment (Table 6.5). Levene’s test for homogeneity of variance was more than 0.05.
(p=0.321), which meant that the study did not violate the homogeneity of variance assumption. There was no statistically significant difference at the 0.05 level in job satisfaction scores for the four groups (p=0.710). The results of the analysis show that educational qualification has no significant impact on the rating of organisational commitment and job satisfaction.

6.4.5 Division

A one-way between-groups analysis of variance was conducted to examine the impact of the division that the employees were attached to on organisational commitment (Table 6.6).

Table 6.6: ANOVA – Division

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Mean Division A</th>
<th>Mean Division B</th>
<th>Mean Division C</th>
<th>Mean Division D</th>
<th>Mean Division E</th>
<th>Mean Division F</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>OC</td>
<td>3.670</td>
<td>3.540</td>
<td>3.430</td>
<td>3.750</td>
<td>3.540</td>
<td>3.550</td>
<td>1.430</td>
<td>0.212</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JS</td>
<td>3.970</td>
<td>3.880</td>
<td>3.950</td>
<td>4.110</td>
<td>3.930</td>
<td>3.810</td>
<td>1.650</td>
<td>0.150</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Respondents were divided into six groups according to their current division: A, B, C, D, E and F. Levene’s test for homogeneity of variance was greater than 0.05 (p=0.192), which meant that the study did not violate the homogeneity of variance assumption. There was no statistically significant difference at the 0.05 level in organisational commitment scores for the six groups (p=0.212).

Similarly, a one-way between-groups analysis of variance was performed to analyse the influence of the respondents’ division on organisational commitment (Table 6.6). Levene’s test for homogeneity of variance was more than 0.05 (p=0.225), which signified that the study did not violate the homogeneity of variance assumption. There was no
statistically significant difference at the 0.05 level in job satisfaction scores for the six groups (p=0.150).

The results of the analysis signify that the division the respondents work in has no significant influence on their organisational commitment and job satisfaction.

6.4.6 Number of Divisions

A one-way between-groups analysis of variance was carried out to explore the impact of the number of divisions the respondents had worked in on organisational commitment (Table 6.7).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Mean(1-3)</th>
<th>Mean (4-6)</th>
<th>Mean(7-9)</th>
<th>Mean(10+)</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Organisational</td>
<td>3.590</td>
<td>3.590</td>
<td>3.400</td>
<td>3.620</td>
<td>0.899</td>
<td>0.442</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>commitment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job satisfaction</td>
<td>3.960</td>
<td>3.830</td>
<td>3.740</td>
<td>4.060</td>
<td>3.130</td>
<td>0.030</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Respondents were divided into four groups according to the number of divisions they had experienced: 1 to 3 divisions, 4 to 6 divisions, 7 to 9 divisions, and more than 10 divisions. Levene’s test for homogeneity of variance was greater than 0.05 (p=0.868), which meant that the study did not violate the homogeneity of variance assumption. There was no statistically significant difference at the 0.05 level in organisational commitment scores for the four groups (p=0.442). The results suggest that the number of divisions employees have worked in has no significant influence on their organisational commitment.

Likewise, a one-way between-groups analysis of variance was conducted to investigate the influence of the number of divisions experienced on job satisfaction (Table 6.7). Levene’s test for homogeneity of variance was more than 0.05 (p=0.584), which signified that the study did not violate the homogeneity of variance assumption. The results
indicated a statistically significant difference at the 0.05 level in job satisfaction scores for the four groups (p=0.030).

The result of the analysis of job satisfaction indicates that the number of divisions an employee has worked in has a significant positive effect on job satisfaction. Respondents who had worked in more than 10 divisions showed higher job satisfaction than those who had worked in fewer divisions. This may be because the experience of the core business they gained made them more satisfied with their job.

6.4.7 Grade

An independent sample t-test was performed to compare the organisational commitment scores for employees in the support group (Levels 17 to 36) and those in the professional and management group (Levels 41 to 54). The results presented in Table 6.8 show that there were no significant differences in scores for support group (M=3.58, SD=0.62) and professional and management group (M=3.580, SD=0.660; t(368) = -0.026, p=0.979).

Table 6.8: T-Test – Grade

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Mean (17-36)</th>
<th>Mean (41-54)</th>
<th>T-value</th>
<th>Significant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Organisational commitment</td>
<td>3.580</td>
<td>3.580</td>
<td>-0.026</td>
<td>0.979</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job satisfaction</td>
<td>3.940</td>
<td>3.900</td>
<td>0.721</td>
<td>0.471</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Furthermore, results of the independent sample t-test (Table 6.8) indicated that there was no significant difference between the support group (M=3.940, SD=0.616) and the professional and management group (M=3.900, SD=0.617); t(368)= 0.721, p=0.471, two tailed) in job satisfaction scores. The results of the analysis indicate that the grade or job position of the respondents, whether in the professional and management group (Levels 41 to
54) or the support group (Levels 17 to 36), has no significant influence on their organisational commitment and job satisfaction.

6.4.8 Tenure

A one-way between-groups analysis of variance was conducted to explore the impact of tenure on organisational commitment (Table 6.9). Respondents were divided into five groups according to their tenure: less than 3 years, 3 to 10 years, 11 to 18 years, 19 to 26 years, and 27 years and above. Levene’s test for homogeneity of variance was more than 0.05 (p=0.209), which meant that the study did not violate the homogeneity of variance assumption. There was no statistically significant difference at the 0.05 level in organisational commitment scores for the five groups (p=0.621).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Mean (&lt;3)</th>
<th>Mean (3-10)</th>
<th>Mean (11-18)</th>
<th>Mean (19-26)</th>
<th>Mean (27+)</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Organisational commitment</td>
<td>3.68</td>
<td>3.52</td>
<td>3.63</td>
<td>3.57</td>
<td>3.56</td>
<td>0.659</td>
<td>0.621</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job satisfaction</td>
<td>4.07</td>
<td>3.85</td>
<td>3.91</td>
<td>3.82</td>
<td>4.01</td>
<td>1.880</td>
<td>0.110</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the same way, a one-way between-groups analysis of variance was also performed to analyse the influence of tenure in the department on job satisfaction (Table 6.9). Levene’s test for homogeneity of variance was greater than 0.05 (p=0.260), which signified that the study did not violate the homogeneity of variance assumption. There was no statistically significant difference at the 0.05 level in job satisfaction scores for the five groups (p=0.110).

The results of the analysis suggest that whatever the duration of service, whether less than three years, more than three years or even more than 27 years, there is no significant impact on organisational commitment and job satisfaction.
6.4.9 Tenure in Present Position

A one-way between-groups analysis of variance was run to examine the impact of tenure in present position on organisational commitment (Table 6.10). Respondents were divided into five groups according to the number of years in their current position: less than 3 years, 3 to 10 years, 11 to 18 years, 19 to 26 years, and 27 years and above. Levene’s test for homogeneity of variance was more than 0.05 (p=0.506), which meant that the study did not violate the homogeneity of variance assumption. The results indicated that there was no statistically significant difference at the 0.05 level in organisational commitment scores for the five groups (p=0.055).

Table 6.10: ANOVA – Tenure in present position

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Mean (&lt;3)</th>
<th>Mean (3-10)</th>
<th>Mean (11-18)</th>
<th>Mean (19-26)</th>
<th>Mean (27+)</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Organisational</td>
<td>3.67</td>
<td>3.52</td>
<td>3.37</td>
<td>3.20</td>
<td>3.55</td>
<td>2.334</td>
<td>0.055</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>commitment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job satisfaction</td>
<td>3.95</td>
<td>3.88</td>
<td>4.03</td>
<td>3.75</td>
<td>4.10</td>
<td>0.668</td>
<td>0.615</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Likewise, a one-way between-groups analysis of variance was performed to investigate the influence of tenure in the present position on the job satisfaction scores of the five groups (Table 6.10). Levene’s test for homogeneity of variance was more than 0.05 (p=0.69), which showed that the study did not violate the homogeneity of variance assumption. There was no statistically significant difference at the 0.05 level in job satisfaction scores for the five groups (p=0.615). The results of the analysis indicate that length of service in the present position has no significant influence on organisational commitment and job satisfaction.

6.5 Regression Analyses for Testing Hypotheses

Each of the hypotheses proposed in Chapter 4 was tested (Figure 6.1).
Figure 6.1: Conceptual framework: impact of career growth on organisational commitment and job satisfaction

Standard regression analyses were used to explore the relationships between the independent and dependent variables. Hierarchical regression analyses were employed because the researcher can assess the improvement of the model at each stage of the analysis (change in $R^2$) and assess whether the change is significant (Field 2009). The possible effects of demographic variables such as age, gender, and organisational tenure were controlled to test whether a block of independent variables is able to explain some of the remaining variance in the dependent variable. This test was based on the qualitative and quantitative review conducted by Judge et al. (2001) on the relationships between job satisfaction and job performance which reported that these variables were found to be related to job attitudes. The regression coefficients (Beta coefficients), the coefficients of determination (R square value) and the p-values for each of the significant relationships were reported. Field (2009) suggested that the significance level (p-value) for each variable should be less than 0.05 to produce a statistically significant contribution to the prediction of the dependent variable.
Hypothesis 1: There is a significant relationship between career growth and organisational commitment in the ‘closed’ government department.

The analysis demonstrated that organisational commitment regressed by career growth resulted in a significant positive correlation between career growth and organisational commitment ($\beta=0.601$, $p=0.000$) (Table 6.11). Hypothesis 1 is therefore supported. The conclusion is that there is a significant effect of career growth on organisational commitment in the ‘closed’ government department.

**Table 6.11: Regression of career growth on organisational commitment**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organisational Commitment</th>
<th>$\beta$</th>
<th>$t$ value</th>
<th>$p$-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Correlation</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career Growth</td>
<td>0.601</td>
<td>14.410</td>
<td>0.000**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$R^2$</td>
<td>0.361</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjusted $R^2$</td>
<td>0.359</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$F$ value</td>
<td>207.690</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Individual Career Growth Elements</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Constant) $\alpha = 0.779$</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career Goal Progress</td>
<td>0.087</td>
<td>1.489</td>
<td>0.137</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Ability Development</td>
<td>0.224</td>
<td>3.829</td>
<td>0.000**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promotion Speed</td>
<td>0.195</td>
<td>2.859</td>
<td>0.004*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remuneration Growth</td>
<td>-0.063</td>
<td>-1.065</td>
<td>0.288</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promotion Equity</td>
<td>0.229</td>
<td>3.768</td>
<td>0.000**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job Rotation</td>
<td>0.193</td>
<td>4.023</td>
<td>0.000**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$R^2$</td>
<td>0.397</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjusted $R^2$</td>
<td>0.387</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$F$ value</td>
<td>39.850</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p<0.05, **p<0.01
Hypothesis 1a: There is a significant relationship between career goal progress and organisational commitment in the ‘closed’ government department.

The standard regression analysis showed that when the six elements of career growth are considered simultaneously, career goal progress is not significant (p=0.137) in explaining the variance of organisational commitment at the 0.05 level. Therefore, Hypothesis 1a is not supported.

Hypothesis 1b: There is a significant relationship between professional ability development and organisational commitment in the ‘closed’ government department.

The analysis demonstrated that professional ability development showed a significant relationship with organisational commitment and takes second place for the prediction of organisational commitment (β=0.224, p<0.01). Hypothesis 1b is therefore supported. Thus, the more professional ability development is emphasised, the greater the organisational commitment will be.

Hypothesis 1c: There is a significant relationship between promotion speed and organisational commitment in the ‘closed’ government department.

Promotion speed indicated a significant relationship with organisational commitment and takes third place in explaining the variance (β=0.195, p<0.01). Hypothesis 1c is therefore supported. The greater the promotion speed, the greater the organisational commitment will be.

Hypothesis 1d: There is a significant relationship between remuneration growth and organisational commitment in the ‘closed’ government department.

The standard regression analysis showed that the other element of career growth, remuneration growth, was an insignificant predictor (p=0.288) to organisational commitment at the 0.05 level. Hypothesis 1d is therefore not supported. Remuneration growth does not make a significant contribution to the prediction of organisational commitment.
Hypothesis 1e: There is a significant relationship between promotion equity and organisational commitment in the ‘closed’ government department.

The standard regression analysis showed that promotion equity takes the first place in explaining the variance of OC (β=0.229, p<0.01), which is in line with the correlation analysis. It was the strongest predictor of the six elements of career growth which influence organisational commitment. Hypothesis 1e is therefore supported. The more effectively promotion equity is implemented by the employer, the higher the employee’s organisational commitment will be.

Hypothesis 1f: There is a significant relationship between job rotation and organisational commitment in the ‘closed’ government department.

Job rotation also suggested a significant relationship and takes the fourth place for the prediction of organisational commitment (β= 0.193, p< 0.01). Hypothesis 1f is therefore supported. The more job rotation is practised, the greater the level of organisational commitment will be.

To remove any possible effect of a variable external to the proposed model, the six control variables (gender, age, marital status, number of division, grade and tenure) were taken into consideration and entered simultaneously in the hierarchical regression equation.

Analysis of the control variables revealed that no control variables were significantly related to the impact of career growth on organisational commitment at the 0.05 level. Thus, results in table 6.11 are shown without controls for parsimony as the effects of the controls were insignificant.

Correlation analysis was also conducted to examine the statistical relationship between career growth (CG) and the dimensions of organisational commitment: affective organisational commitment (AOC), continuance organisational commitment (COC) and
normative organisational commitment (NOC). The results of the correlation analysis showed a statistically significant positive relationship between career growth and all three dimensions of organisational commitment. Affective organisational commitment received the largest effect \((r=0.572, p<0.01)\) followed by normative organisational commitment \((r=0.509, p<0.01)\) and then continuance organisational commitment indicated the smallest positive relationship \((r=0.424, p<0.01)\) with career growth, as illustrated in Table 6.13.

**Table 6.12: Correlations between career growth and dimensions of organisational commitment**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>CG</th>
<th>AOC</th>
<th>COC</th>
<th>NOC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CG</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.572**</td>
<td>0.424**</td>
<td>0.509**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AOC</td>
<td>0.572**</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.370**</td>
<td>0.494**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COC</td>
<td>0.424**</td>
<td>0.370**</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.667**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NOC</td>
<td>0.509**</td>
<td>0.494**</td>
<td>0.667**</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

Consequently, the conclusion is that there is a statistically significant positive relationship between career growth and organisational commitment. The greater the adoption of career growth, the greater the level of organisational commitment will be.

**Hypothesis 2: There is a significant relationship between career growth and job satisfaction in the ‘closed’ government department.**

The analysis showed that job satisfaction regressed by career growth resulted in a significant positive correlation between career growth and job satisfaction \((\beta=0.521, p=0.000)\) (Table 6.12). Hypothesis 2 is therefore supported. The conclusion is that there is a significant impact between career growth and job satisfaction in the ‘closed’ government department. Thus, the more career growth is implemented by the employer, the higher the degree of the employee’s job satisfaction will be.
Table 6.13: Regression of career growth on job satisfaction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Correlation</th>
<th>Job Satisfaction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>β</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career Growth</td>
<td>0.521</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R²</td>
<td>0.271</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjusted R²</td>
<td>0.269</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F value</td>
<td>136.85</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Individual Career Growth Elements</th>
<th>Job Satisfaction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Constant) α = 1.435</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career Goal Progress</td>
<td>0.033</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Ability Development</td>
<td>0.271</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promotion Speed</td>
<td>0.035</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remuneration Growth</td>
<td>0.110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promotion Equity</td>
<td>0.161</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job Rotation</td>
<td>0.177</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R²</td>
<td>0.325</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjusted R²</td>
<td>0.302</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F value</td>
<td>14.312</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p<0.05, **p<0.01

Hypothesis 2a: There is a significant relationship between career goal progress and job satisfaction in the ‘closed’ government department.

The standard regression analysis showed that when all the six elements of career growth are considered simultaneously, career goal progress is not significant (p=0.608) in explaining the variance of job satisfaction at the 0.05 level. Therefore, Hypothesis 2a is not supported.

Hypothesis 2b: There is a significant relationship between professional ability development and job satisfaction in the ‘closed’ government department.

The analysis demonstrated that professional ability development showed a significant relationship with job satisfaction and takes first place for the prediction of job satisfaction.
(β=0.271, p<0.01). Hypothesis 1b is therefore supported. Thus, the more professional ability development is emphasised, the greater the job satisfaction will be.

Hypothesis 2c: There is a significant relationship between promotion speed and job satisfaction in the ‘closed’ government department.

The analysis indicated that promotion speed is not significant (p=0.627) in explaining the variance of job satisfaction at the 0.05 level. Therefore, Hypothesis 2c is not supported. Thus, in contrast to organisational commitment, promotion speed does not make a significant contribution to predicting job satisfaction.

Hypothesis 2d: There is a significant relationship between remuneration growth and job satisfaction in the ‘closed’ government department.

The standard regression analysis showed that the other element of career growth, remuneration growth, was found as an insignificant predictor (p=0.089) of job satisfaction at the 0.05 level. Therefore, hypothesis 2d is not supported. Therefore, remuneration growth does not make a significant contribution to the prediction of job satisfaction.

Hypothesis 2e: There is a significant relationship between promotion equity and job satisfaction in the ‘closed’ government department.

The standard regression analysis showed that promotion equity takes the third place in explaining the variance of job satisfaction (β=0.161, p<0.05), after job rotation. Therefore, hypothesis 2e is supported. Thus, the better promotion equity is implemented by the employer, the higher the employee’s job satisfaction will be.

Hypothesis 2f: There is a significant relationship between job rotation and job satisfaction in the ‘closed’ government department.

Job rotation also suggested a significant relationship and takes the second place for the prediction of job satisfaction (β= 0.177, p< 0.05). Hypothesis 2f is therefore supported. Thus, the research suggests that the more job rotation is practised, the greater the level of job satisfaction will be.
To mitigate any possible effects of demographic variables on the proposed model, the six control variables (gender, age, marital status, number of divisions, grade and tenure) were taken into account and entered simultaneously in the regression equation. Analysis of the control variables revealed that no control variables were significantly related to the impact of career growth on organisational commitment at the 0.05 level. Thus, results in table 6.13 are shown without controls for parsimony as the effects of the controls were insignificant.

**Hypothesis 3:** There is a significant relationship between job satisfaction and organisational commitment in the ‘closed’ government department.

The regression analysis revealed a significant positive relationship between job satisfaction and organisational commitment (β=0.602, p=0.000) (Table 6.14). Thus, Hypothesis 3 is supported and it can be concluded that there is a significant relationship between job satisfaction and organisational commitment in the ‘closed’ government department.

**Table 6.14: Regression of job satisfaction on organisational commitment (with control variables)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Organisational commitment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Model 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>β</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control variables</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>-0.007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>-0.017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marital status</td>
<td>0.037</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of divisions</td>
<td>0.004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade</td>
<td>0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tenure</td>
<td>-0.013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main effect</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R²</td>
<td>0.002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjusted R²</td>
<td>-0.015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F value</td>
<td>0.096</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p<0.05, **p<0.01
To exclude any possible effect of demographic variables on the proposed model, the six control variables (gender, age, marital status, number of divisions, grade and tenure) were entered simultaneously in the regression equation. The results of the first model explained 2% of the variance in the effect of job satisfaction on the degree of organisational commitment (Table 6.16). In the second model, the main effect of job satisfaction was entered and resulted in a significant model at the 0.000 level as the total variance explained by the model as a whole was 36.2% (R²=0.362, Adjusted R²=0.349).

Analysis of the control variables demonstrated that no control variables had a significant effect on the relationship between job satisfaction and organisational commitment (p<0.05). Therefore, as a positive correlation between job satisfaction and organisational commitment, the greater the increase in job satisfaction, the greater the degree of organisational commitment will be.

Further analysis on the dimensions of organisational commitment – affective organisational commitment (AOC), continuance organisational commitment (COC) and normative organisational commitment (NOC) – was conducted to examine the level of statistically significant relationships between job satisfaction (JS) and those three dimensions.

The correlation results (Table 6.15) display that all three types of organisational commitment are significantly related to job satisfaction. Specifically, normative organisational commitment shows the strongest positive relationship with job satisfaction (r=0.582, p<0.01), followed by affective organisational commitment (r=0.519, p<0.01). Continuance organisational commitment indicates the smallest positive relationship with job satisfaction (r=0.393, p<0.01).
Table 6.15: Correlations between job satisfaction and dimensions of organisational commitment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>JS</th>
<th>AOC</th>
<th>COC</th>
<th>NOC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>JS</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.519**</td>
<td>0.393**</td>
<td>0.582**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AOC</td>
<td>0.519**</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.370**</td>
<td>0.494**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COC</td>
<td>0.393**</td>
<td>0.370**</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.667**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NOC</td>
<td>0.582**</td>
<td>0.494**</td>
<td>0.667**</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

6.6 Moderating Effect of Demographic Factors on the Relationship between Career Growth and Organisational Commitment

The analysis also examined the moderating effects of the demographic factors of gender, age, grade and tenure on participants’ responses regarding the relationship between career growth and organisational commitment as this is the main focus of this study, rather than the other two relationships: between career growth and job satisfaction, and between job satisfaction and organisational commitment. It would be of interest to know whether the relationship between career growth and organisational commitment varies depending on differences in gender, age, grade and tenure.

The potential moderating effect of gender on the relationship between career growth and organisational commitment was explored. The results of the univariate analysis of variance showed that there is no statistically significant interaction effect of gender on the relationship between career growth and organisational commitment (p>0.05) (Table 6.16).

Table 6.16: Univariate Analysis of Variance on moderating effect of gender on relationship between career growth and organisational commitment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parameter</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
<th>95% Confidence Interval</th>
<th>Partial Eta Squared</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Lower Bound</td>
<td>Upper Bound</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intercept</td>
<td>0.854</td>
<td>0.516</td>
<td>1.654</td>
<td>0.099</td>
<td>-0.161</td>
<td>1.870</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CG</td>
<td>0.850</td>
<td>0.154</td>
<td>5.512</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>0.547</td>
<td>1.154</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gender</td>
<td>0.221</td>
<td>0.340</td>
<td>0.650</td>
<td>0.516</td>
<td>-0.447</td>
<td>0.889</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CG * gender</td>
<td>-0.086</td>
<td>0.101</td>
<td>-0.857</td>
<td>0.392</td>
<td>-0.285</td>
<td>0.112</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Dependent Variable: Organisational commitment
In the same way, the moderating effect of age on the relationship between career growth and organisational commitment was also tested. As depicted in Table 6.17, the analysis suggested that there is no statistically significant effect of age on the relationship between career growth and organisational commitment (p>0.05).

Table 6.17: Univariate analysis of variance on moderating effect of age on relationship between career growth and organisational commitment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parameter</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
<th>95% Confidence Interval</th>
<th>Partial Eta Squared</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Lower Bound</td>
<td>Upper Bound</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intercept</td>
<td>1.520</td>
<td>0.445</td>
<td>3.417</td>
<td>0.001</td>
<td>0.645</td>
<td>2.395</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CG</td>
<td>0.600</td>
<td>0.129</td>
<td>4.638</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>0.346</td>
<td>0.855</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>-0.073</td>
<td>0.084</td>
<td>-0.867</td>
<td>0.387</td>
<td>-0.237</td>
<td>0.092</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CG * age</td>
<td>0.026</td>
<td>0.025</td>
<td>1.056</td>
<td>0.292</td>
<td>-0.022</td>
<td>0.074</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Dependent Variable: Organisational commitment

The moderating effect of an employee’s grade on the relationship between career growth and organisational commitment was also tested. The results of the analysis (Table 6.18) indicated that there is no statistically significant moderating effect of grade on the relationship between career growth and organisational commitment (p>0.05). In other words, there is no significantly change in the correlation between career growth and organisational commitment based on the level of the job.

Table 6.18: Univariate analysis of variance on moderating effect of grade on relationship between career growth and organisational commitment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parameter</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
<th>95% Confidence Interval</th>
<th>Partial Eta Squared</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Lower Bound</td>
<td>Upper Bound</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intercept</td>
<td>0.743</td>
<td>0.535</td>
<td>1.388</td>
<td>0.166</td>
<td>-0.309</td>
<td>1.795</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CG</td>
<td>0.870</td>
<td>0.160</td>
<td>5.450</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>0.556</td>
<td>1.184</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade</td>
<td>0.286</td>
<td>0.338</td>
<td>0.848</td>
<td>0.397</td>
<td>-0.378</td>
<td>0.951</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CG * grade</td>
<td>-0.098</td>
<td>0.100</td>
<td>-0.976</td>
<td>0.330</td>
<td>-0.295</td>
<td>0.099</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Dependent Variable: Organisational commitment
Lastly, the moderating effect of years of service on the relationship between career growth and organisational commitment was tested. The outcomes of the analysis (Table 6.19) illustrated that there is no statistically significant moderating effect of years of service on the relationship between career growth and organisational commitment (p>0.05). The length of service does not impact on the relationship between the two variables.

Table 6.19: Univariate analysis of variance on moderating effect of tenure on relationship between career growth and organisational commitment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parameter</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
<th>95% Confidence Interval</th>
<th>Partial Eta Squared</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Lower Bound</td>
<td>Upper Bound</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intercept</td>
<td>1.237</td>
<td>0.443</td>
<td>2.791</td>
<td>0.006</td>
<td>0.365</td>
<td>2.108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CG</td>
<td>0.681</td>
<td>0.128</td>
<td>5.322</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>0.429</td>
<td>0.933</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tenure</td>
<td>-0.024</td>
<td>0.128</td>
<td>-0.192</td>
<td>0.848</td>
<td>-0.276</td>
<td>0.227</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CG * tenure</td>
<td>0.015</td>
<td>0.037</td>
<td>0.405</td>
<td>0.686</td>
<td>-0.058</td>
<td>0.088</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Dependent variable: Organisational commitment

6.7 Conclusion

The results provided significant support for the hypothesised relationships (Table 6.20).

Table 6.20: Summary of hypotheses testing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hypotheses</th>
<th>Results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hypothesis 1</td>
<td>Supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hypothesis 2</td>
<td>Supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hypothesis 3</td>
<td>Supported</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There was support for the predicted relationship between career growth and organisational commitment (Hypothesis 1) and also between career growth and job satisfaction (Hypothesis 2). There was also evidence for the proposed significant correlation between job satisfaction on organisational commitment (Hypothesis 3). Furthermore, the
results also showed that demographic factors did not influence the relationships between those variables except for a positive effect of a high number of divisions on job satisfaction. Respondents who had worked in more than 10 divisions had greater job satisfaction than those who had worked in fewer divisions. In the next chapter, these outcomes will be discussed with regard to the interview findings, the theories and the existing empirical research on career growth, job satisfaction and organisational commitment in the context of the aim of the study.
CHAPTER 7: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

7.1 Introduction

Understanding the factors that affect employees' commitment and satisfaction is important for organisations seeking to develop a motivated and competent workforce. The main objective of this thesis was to examine the nature of the relationship between career growth, job satisfaction and organisational commitment in a Malaysian ‘closed’ government department. This concluding chapter presents an overview of the findings in relation to the two research questions. The chapter begins by addressing these research questions. This is followed by a discussion of the theoretical and methodological contributions of the research and the practical HRM implications. The chapter concludes by considering the limitations of the study and recommending important areas for future research.

Career growth mechanisms can be interpreted by employees as the organisation caring and being concerned about their well-being (Den Hartog et al. 2004; Tremblay et al. 2010). The effective implementation of career growth, which includes skills development opportunities and recognition practices, may signal that the employer values employees’ contributions (Tremblay et al. 2010). These signals may not be interpreted or reacted to in a similar way by each employee due to differences in experience, preferences and values.

All HRM practices communicate messages constantly and in unintended ways, and messages can be understood idiosyncratically, whereby two employees interpret the same practices differently (Bowen & Ostroff 2004, p. 206).

Similarly, Boon et al. (2011) proposed that the effects of HRM practices on employees’ attitudes and behaviour occur through employees’ perceptions of the practices. They suggested that it is not the outcomes of HRM practices as intended by policy makers, but rather how employees experience the practices that affect employee outcomes (Boon et
al. 2011). The extent to which employees perceive that management practices are indeed offered to them may influence their level of commitment and satisfaction.

7.2 Multiple Data Sources

7.2.1 Observations

The researcher observed that participants engaged in serious conversation and expressed and shared their opinions and sentiments when asked about career growth, especially promotion, job rotation and exposure to the core business and how this influenced organisational commitment and job satisfaction. The level of openness in the interviews may have been influenced by the researcher being seen as an ‘insider’ and accepted as one of them. Participants encouraged the researcher to play a role as an agent of change to help the organisation to progress and hoped that the research results could be brought to the attention of the top level of management to improve in HRM practices for the benefit of both employees and the department.

7.2.2 Demographic Overview

The demographic characteristics of research participants such as age, gender, tenure, role and position have long been considered important variables which may influence the results of research (Tsue & O’Really 1989). Previous research has suggested that demographic factors are associated with characteristic perceptions, behaviour or work outcomes in significantly different ways (Su et al. 2009, 2012).

The interview and survey results in this study indicated no patterns in the responses related to levels of organisational commitment and job satisfaction which were associated with gender, age, length of service, divisions and job positions. While gender differences may have been expected, and may have an influence, there was only a limited indication of evidence for this in this study. The quantitative survey revealed no significant gender
differences in responses related to organisational commitment and job satisfaction; although analysis of the qualitative data indicated that the male participants reported being more committed and satisfied than the females who were also interviewed. This inconsistency between qualitative and quantitative findings may be an artefact of different sample sizes as well as a different gender ratio between the qualitative and quantitative components of the study. In the qualitative phase there were only 40 participants of which 65% were female, whereas in the quantitative phase there were 370 respondents of which 45% were male."

Another possible contributing factor to the difference between responses in the qualitative and quantitative findings is that the gender of the interviewer (female) may have had an influence on responses of participants when engaged in face to face discussions with the researcher. If this may have been the case then the pattern observed in the survey results may be the more accurate representation of individual views.

It is also possible that one reason for this may have been because the study was conducted in the public sector, and in particular a ‘closed’ government department. Why this may have dampened the potential impact of otherwise significant effects of demographic factors such as gender and marital status on commitment and satisfaction is not yet known.

Future research may be able to explore if and how demographic differences such as age, gender and marital status issues may impact on individual behaviours in this type of organisation.

The other possible reason to explain this, may be due to most of the male participants being ‘breadwinners’ for their families while many of the female participants said that they work because they have qualifications and want to earn extra income for the family. It is likely that married female employees faced different challenges to married male employees with regard to work life balance, for example related to child bearing and primary child care
responsibilities, as is often reported elsewhere. As a result male employees may appear to have more focus and commitment to their job than female employees.

The nature of the risk of physical harm due to the at times dangerous work required in this organisation, dealing with hostile and potentially violent offenders may also have been be a reason why female employees expressed less commitment than male employees when discussing this with the researcher during the face to face interviews.

It is not clear why during the interview more females than males mentioned concerns about the potential damage to the reputation of the organisation as a result of recent allegations and charges of corruption.

It is acknowledged that the patterns in the findings described in this study are context, and time, dependent, and describe what was observed based on the information collected in the interviews and the data provided by respondents to the survey. In this study the majority of participants, and employees of the organisation, were Malay and Muslim, and therefore this may have had an influence on the responses obtained.

Due to this relatively narrow diversity of cultural and religious backgrounds of participants in this organisation and study, there was insufficient data from employees with other types of backgrounds to permit comparisons to be made. The recommendations based on the findings of this research may not be able to be extrapolated to other public sector organisations, or to private sector organisations within Malaysia.

The results of the interviews also indicated that the greater the number of divisions in which participants had worked, the longer their length of service and the more their promotions, and the higher their reported level of organisational commitment and job satisfaction. However, there was no particular pattern in the interview responses related to
differences in marital status, the division in which participants were currently located or their educational qualifications. The former may be related to the psychological contract and a perceived system of fair and balanced exchange between employee and employer where these participants believed that they had received recognition for their contributions to the organisation. However, the quantitative findings of this study revealed no statistically significant differences in reference to the same variables except for a relationship between number of divisions experienced and job satisfaction. The results indicated that respondents who had worked in more than 10 divisions were more satisfied than those who had worked in fewer. This may be related to the knowledge and skills of the core business gained from experience in many divisions, enabling them to perform well and enjoy their work because they were able to contribute great value to the organisation. These respondents would have experienced the same division more than once as they had been rotated more than 10 times within the six divisions of the department. Except for this finding, the analysis of the quantitative data suggested that other demographic variables were not significant factors in influencing career growth, organisational commitment and job satisfaction in this ‘closed’ government department. This result was similar to that of Top and Gider (2012) in their survey among private and public hospitals employees in Turkey, which found no statistically significant relationships between demographic factors and organisational commitment or job satisfaction. However, the pattern was not similar to that found by Su et al. (2009, 2012), who examined the relationship between demographic factors (gender, age, education, duration of employment and position level) and the level of organisational commitment in Australian manufacturing and public sector organisations. They reported that the level of organisational commitment differed only in respect to managerial positions. The result of the study also was not in line with a survey conducted in a UK police department by Dick (2011), where rank seniority had a significant impact on organisational commitment rather type of division and
tenure. Differences in the outcomes of the studies may be because of the dissimilar cultures, values and contexts of each study as these can have an effect on the perception of career growth, organisational commitment and job satisfaction (Meyer et al. 2012). For instance, the absence of gender differences in this study may be related to the practice of gender equality in Malaysia which is a Muslim majority country where the value of equal employment rights and opportunities for both men and women is emphasised (Syed & Van Buren 2014).

Furthermore as the demography of this ‘closed’ government department was such that there was a higher proportion of Malay and Muslim members than other ethnic groups as well as in the population of Malaysia overall.

7.2.3 Key Findings

As Creswell and Plano Clark (2007) suggested, mixed methods research requires the researcher to collect and analyse data from multiple data sources and then integrate these in order to draw inferences. In this study, the qualitative information and quantitative data were integrated (see Figure 7.1 and Table 7.1) to produce an overall picture developed from both perspectives. The focus of this chapter is to pull together the threads obtained from both approaches and present a synthesis of these to address the research questions.

Research Question 1: What is the nature of the relationship between career growth, job satisfaction and organisational commitment in a ‘closed’ government department?

Research Question 2: Does career growth influence job satisfaction and organisational commitment in this ‘closed’ government department?

This study was designed to examine the effects of career growth on organisational commitment and job satisfaction among officers of a ‘closed’ government department. The
results of the interviews indicated that career growth plays an important role in influencing organisational commitment and job satisfaction. This is in line with the propositions and findings in prior studies on behavioural outcomes (Weng et al. 2010; Weng & McElroy 2012; Juhdi et al. 2013).

Based on the findings of this study and consistent with the findings of previous studies (Jans 1989; Weng et al. 2010; Gong et al. 2009), ‘career growth’ refers to employees’ perceptions of the opportunities for development and advancement in an organisation that include career planning and advancement, fair performance appraisal and promotion – opportunities which may lead to an increase in organisational commitment and job satisfaction.

![Figure 7.1: Role of career growth on organisational commitment and job satisfaction](image)

Figure 7.1: Role of career growth on organisational commitment and job satisfaction
As summarised in Figure 7.1, based on the findings from this study career growth was seen as recognition, appreciation and reward for employees’ contributions and may be a catalyst that motivated those employees to be satisfied with their jobs and committed to the organisation. If employees perceive that they are positively and fairly compensated for their contributions with effective career growth, they may put in extra effort to the benefit of the organisation. In the interviews, employees strongly expressed how important career growth was not only for work-related performance but also for personal development.

While managers cannot satisfy every need of all employees, especially when the number who can be promoted is limited, they can prepare and communicate development and succession plans. While these plans may focus on promotion and financial rewards, they should also include pathways for self-enrichment of knowledge and skills. Effective training and development opportunities offered by the organisation may develop the skills and self-confidence to perform assigned roles better and may increase organisational commitment. In addition to training courses, exposure to the range of the business conducted across the organisation is an important part of career growth. If this can be implemented as part of the programmed development plan for employees, then levels of organisational commitment and job satisfaction may increase. This was in line with the survey conducted by Ehrhardt et al. (2011) in US manufacturing firms, which suggested that employees’ perceptions of training comprehensiveness positively related to organisational commitment. In particular, exposure to multiple divisions of an organisation may create a greater sense of belonging and prepare employees to be versatile, knowledgeable and skilful in performing their tasks. A positive perception of opportunities for career growth can motivate employees to reciprocate by performing well and contributing to the achievement of the goals of the organisation. From the perspectives of social exchange and psychological contract theory, if a party offers a
benefit, the receiving party is expected to positively reciprocate and a successful exchange process often contributes to feeling of mutual commitment (Cropanzano & Mitchell 2005; Ehrhardt et al. 2011).

On the other hand, employees who have negative perceptions about their employer’s level of concern for their career growth and well-being may have lower commitment and reduced levels of performance. The findings of this study were consistent with social exchange theory and the concept of psychological contracts, where positive exchanges can enhance workers’ attitudes and behaviour, and negative exchanges can reduce motivation and commitment (Gould-William 2007; Rousseau 1989, 1996, 1998). The research results are also consistent with the findings on how the work context can lead to employee self-definition in the study conducted by McAllister and Bigley (2002). A caring organisation which emphasises human development practices can promote the self-esteem of employees through their perceptions of fairness. Furthermore, when an employer acknowledges employees’ efforts by offering opportunities and benefits, employees may feel obligated to reciprocate and be more committed to the organisation (Tansky & Cohen 2001). The rewards and benefits represent an exchange of social benefits between the employer and the employees (Sweeney & McFarleen 2004). When employees feel valued, they exert efforts to the betterment of the organisation. Satisfied employees are likely to be motivated and committed to their work, and loyal to their organisation (Homberg & Stick 2004). With regard to psychological contract, when an individual employee believes that a promise of future reciprocations has been made, tasks have been delivered thus an obligation has been generated for the provision mutual benefits between employee and employer (Farndale et al. 2014). Career growth which includes fair promotion and remuneration may lead to employee to believe that their employer cares about their wellbeing and recognises how their efforts contribute towards the progress of the organisation.
7.2.4 Qualitative and Quantitative Key Findings

Table 7.1: Qualitative and quantitative key findings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Relationships</th>
<th>Quantitative Hypotheses</th>
<th>Qualitative Career Growth Dimensions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Career Growth and Organisational Commitment</td>
<td>Supported</td>
<td>Professional Ability Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Promotion Equity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career Growth and Job Satisfaction</td>
<td>Supported</td>
<td>Job Rotation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Promotion Speed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job Satisfaction and Organisational Commitment</td>
<td>Supported</td>
<td>Career Goal Progress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Remuneration Growth</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As demonstrated in Table 7.1, the interview findings revealed six themes of career growth – career goal progress, professional ability development, promotion speed, remuneration growth, promotion equity and job rotation – which influence organisational commitment and job satisfaction. Professional ability development was the element of career growth most often mentioned in the interviews as having an effect on organisational commitment and job satisfaction.

Based on the interviews, each of the six elements has its own unique effect and can differ with regard to strength in creating a sense of commitment and satisfaction for employees. So how can we determine which elements of career growth can produce high organisational commitment and job satisfaction? The survey was developed and employed to further investigate the qualitative findings and statistically test the individual impact of the six career growth elements. Overall, the quantitative findings indicated positive relationships between career growth, organisational commitment and job satisfaction (Table 7.1).

With regard to professional ability development and job rotation, the interview findings indicated that enhancing knowledge and skills in core business areas can be an
advantage for employees by preparing them for career advancement. As a consequence, employees feel more confident to continuously push their limits and strive for excellence at work, looking forward to new experiences and learning new things. Personal and professional development are considered to be linked to career growth when knowledge and skills are recognised by the employer and able to be utilised for the benefits of the organisation. The mutual benefits for employees and the employer may also increase organisational commitment and job satisfaction.

Regarding promotion speed, some participants used expressions such as ‘stagnant’, ‘static’, ‘at the same grade for a long time’, ‘boring’, ‘de-motivated’ and ‘dullness’, which indicated low commitment and low job satisfaction. A ‘career plateau’ (hierarchical plateau and job content plateau) is defined as the point in a career where the likelihood of further promotion is very low (Wickramasinghe & Jayaweera 2010; Ference et al. 1977). Based on the interviews, it appears that some participants felt that they had reached a career plateau, either because there were limited higher positions, many of which were not open to these candidates because others with more potential were vying for the positions, or else they were close to retirement. Other reasons for feeling that they had reached a career plateau could be the lack of challenging and satisfying work or a loss of motivation due to unmet career expectations. Employees may sometimes hit a point of stagnation or career plateau because of a lack of rewards or the inability to utilise new skills (Choudary et al. 2013; Nachbagauer & Riedl 2002).

The identification of a career plateau for some employees was similar to the findings of the survey conducted at the Vienna University by Nachbagauer and Riedl (2002). Perceptions of a career plateau are derived from the way an employee perceives, assesses and reacts to their present job and an evaluation of career growth in the organisation. The feeling
of being ‘at a dead end’ may have a number of influencing factors including personal commitment, perceived advancement opportunities and promotion practices in the organisation, fair treatment by the employer, micro-politics in the department and length of tenure (Nachbagauer & Riedl 2002). Nachbagauer and Riedl (2002) argued that perceptions of career immobility can arise due to the pyramid structure commonly found in organisations. Long tenure in the same position, a perception of poor prospects for further promotion and an absence of new challenges and varied tasks or doing a routine job for an extended period of time may lead to a decrease in performance and loss of motivation and commitment (Bardwick 1983; Rotondo & Perrewé 2000; Wickramasinghe & Jayaweera 2010).

None of the interview participants said that they ‘couldn’t care less’ about career growth or would be satisfied to be left out of consideration for potential promotion and monetary or non-monetary rewards. Quitting their job to seek better prospects outside was seen as a hard choice and high risk option when there was a high level of job security in their current role. The nature of the ‘closed’ government agency meant that they would not be likely to advance their career prospects outside the department by being either transferred or promoted to a more ‘open’ government service. Because of the nature of a ‘closed’ government department, opportunities for being promoted or transferred are only within the department and are not likely to go beyond the organisation. If employees choose to leave the ‘closed’ government department and are recruited into another government department, they would probably have to start as new employees at a more junior level, as their previous service and seniority would not be taken into account. For instance, if an employee’s job position in the ‘closed’ government department was grade 44 and they chose to work in another government department, they would start at grade 41, the base level of the professional and management group. Although employees who have acquired a higher education qualification during service, such as a PhD, may be able to gain a better position as
an academic at a local university, few have had the opportunity to study to achieve a PhD during their service and few said that they were interested in becoming a lecturer.

Alternatively, Choudary et al. (2013) argued that the current job may offer a greater opportunity to advance one’s career path if the barriers of a stagnant workplace can be removed. For that reason, career growth can play an important role in enhancing organisational commitment and job satisfaction. As suggested by Nachbagauer and Riedl (2002), the commitment of employees is expected to be enhanced by a target-oriented design of organisational culture and individualised employee incentive systems including an effective career growth system. With regard to psychological contract, if employees perceive they have fulfilled their obligations in term of the psychological contract such as being hard working with full commitment to work for the benefit of the organisation, then in return they expect the organisation to keep its side of the bargain (Rousseau 1996, 1998). If their expectations are not fulfilled, employees may react by decreasing their commitment and performance (Festing & Schafer 2014).

As revealed in the interviews, each participant had their own individual aims and some needed a push to achieve these. When they contributed to the productivity of the organisation, they considered that recognition in terms of promotion was a justified reward. It is a natural tendency for a human being to be inspired for growth throughout their life, from basic needs to self-actualisation (Maslow 1943). As suggested by previous research, the ability of employees to achieve personal development in the organisation may influence their psychological commitment to the employer (Ng et al. 2006; Weng et al. 2010; Juhdi, et al. 2013). However, the relationship between career growth and behavioural outcomes is subject to whether the employee is committed to pursuing career advancement rather than simply being employed for the sake of gaining income (Weng & McElroy 2012).
The study results, which are consistent with prior findings (Weng et al. 2010; Juhdi et al. 2013), suggest the importance of career growth and the importance of managing it well because employees with good career growth will reciprocate with high commitment and extra effort towards organisational success. A key finding of this study is that an organisation could develop its human resources through providing better targeted training and on-the-job experiences to enable employees to enhance their professional abilities and skills and improve their chances of career growth.

This evidence is an addition to the findings of previous studies which considered remuneration growth, professional ability development, promotion speed and career goal progress to be the factors related to organisational commitment and job satisfaction (Weng et al. 2010; Weng & McElroy 2012). The findings also support the claims that perception of fair and supportive HRM practices such as training and career development relate to positive organisational commitment, job satisfaction and performance (Meyer & Smith 2000). However, these studies did not identify aspects of career growth that may have positive effects on organisational commitment and job satisfaction in the context of a ‘closed’ government agency.

**Career Growth and Organisational Commitment**

The outcomes of this study indicate a positive impact of career growth on organisational commitment ($\beta=0.601$, $p=0.000$, $R^2= 0.361$). The results of the analysis demonstrate that career growth explains 36.1% of the variance in organisational commitment. The researcher analysed the individual contributions of the career growth elements in explaining the variance of organisational commitment. The standard regression analysis indicated that four elements of career growth were positively and significantly correlated to
organisational commitment. They were promotion equity, professional ability development, promotion speed and job rotation. The positive relationships between these four elements and organisational commitment indicates that when employees are given sufficient fair career support and professional and personal development, they perceive themselves to be appreciated and to be a valuable part of the organisation.

A key finding is that promotion equity was identified as the most important factor in explaining the variance of organisational commitment, which is in line with the correlation analysis. Promotion equity, which is related to the perception of fair and transparent promotions, could also influence organisational commitment and job satisfaction. As the longitudinal survey conducted by Burnett et al. (2009) suggested, if promotion policy is perceived as fair, this can have a positive effect on employees’ commitment and willingness to work for the benefit of the organisation. As social exchange theory and psychological contract theory suggest, employees commit to their employer and job when there is a fair and balanced system of exchange (Blau 1964; Rousseau 1996, 2004; Sweeney & McFarleen 2004). Employees are drawn to invest in organisational commitment, after which they may feel obliged to return benefits to their employer in exchange (Kehoe & Wright 2013). Furthermore, when an individual is happy with the recognition and rewards given by their organisation, they reciprocate by developing positive behaviour such as a higher level of commitment (Blau 1964; Rousseau 1995; Miao et al. 2013). In the context of public sector organisations, while employees might not be rewarded with very competitive salaries, they do expect fair treatment in promotion and opportunities for gaining knowledge and skills during their working life.

This may be why in this study professional ability development showed a statistically significant relationship, taking second place in explaining the variance of organisational
commitment. Promotion speed also had a significant relationship with organisational commitment and took third place in explaining the variance. Job rotation also suggests a significant relationship, in fourth place for the prediction of organisational commitment. These results support earlier research indicating that developing new skills (Thomas 2009) and receiving work-related rewards (Gould-Williams & Gatenby 2010; Weng et al. 2010) are associated with how employees perceive their organisation.

The quantitative analysis also showed that of the other two elements of career growth, career goal progress was not statistically significant and remuneration growth had a negative impact in explaining the variance of organisational commitment. The findings of this study therefore differ from previous research conducted by Weng et al. (2010) and Weng and McElroy (2012) among private sector employees in China, which suggested that career goal progress has the greatest effect, followed by organisational rewards (promotion and remuneration) to explain the variance of organisational commitment in that context. This difference might be partially explained by Meyer et al. (2012), who argued that employees in different countries and different contexts may be influenced by the dominant values of their culture and this might have an impact on their organisational commitment.

**Affective Organisational Commitment and Career Growth**

Results of the quantitative analysis showed that affective organisational commitment received the largest effect of career growth followed by continuance organisational commitment and normative organisational commitment. This is consistent with the findings of Meyer and Herscovicth (2001) and Weng et al. (2010) that affective organisational commitment reflects employees’ perceptions of how much their contribution is valued by their employer. Affective commitment is regarded as an emotional state of fit with and commitment to an organisation and is believed to be a more significant type of commitment
than the others (Meyer & Allen 1991). Furthermore, affective organisational commitment reflects the extent to which organisational members are loyal and willing to work towards organisational objectives (Meyer & Allen 1997; Pierro et al. 2013).

There are several possible explanations for this result. It may reflect a desire to participate in the accomplishment of organisation goals and feeling pride in being part of that success (Cohen 2007; Kehoe & Wright 2013). In addition, affective commitment has been identified as affected by employees’ work and organisational experiences, including career growth (Meyer et al. 2002; Cohen 2007).

Affective commitment as a key linking mechanism between HRM practices, higher level performance outcomes and competitive advantage has been identified in previous studies (Gong et al. 2009; Kehoe & Wright 2013). In reference to the results of this study, effective implementation of career growth may increase the level of affective organisational commitment to motivate employees to work hard and contribute to the progress of the organisation, and genuine commitment of employees may lead to excellent performance and improved services.

Through the lens of social exchange theory and psychological contracts, affective commitment has a positive impact for both employees and employers (Meyer & Maltin 2010). It emerged from the interviews that a perception of positive career growth opportunities was likely to influence employees to perceive their exchange relationship with the organisation as characterised by a supportive employer willing to invest in employee skills, transparent performance appraisal, fair and unbiased rewards for performance including remuneration and promotion opportunities, and mutual efforts toward meaningful outcomes. This is consistent with the findings of previous studies (Kehoe & Wright 2013; Nouri & Parker 2013; Wright et al. 2005). In these circumstances, employees are likely to
feel an obligation to contribute to organisational success and to develop an affective bond with the organisation which may be defined as affective commitment (Cohen 2007; Kehoe & Wright 2013). It would seem that if the Malaysian ‘closed’ government agency seeks affective organisational commitment, it could inculcate this through the effective implementation of career growth. As suggested by Weng et al. (2010), it may be useful for career growth strategies which enhance commitment to be directed towards newcomers from the beginning of their recruitment as well as being implemented for longer-service employees. This could provide a clear message of the employer’s commitment to employees’ career plans. Career development plans may need to be monitored and evaluated from time to time to ensure effectiveness for employees and the organisation.

Good human resource management that includes career growth elements such as promotion equity, professional ability development, promotion speed and job rotation is expected to result in positive job experiences. In turn, employees are expected to feel satisfied with their job and thus increase their commitment to the organisation. As indicated by Takeuchi et al. (2009), satisfied employees feel an obligation to put in more effort at work and be more enthusiastic in their commitment to the organisation.

These results are consistent with the results of a study conducted by Pattakos (2004) on the intrinsic values of individuals who choose to remain in the public sector. Based on interviews with 200 public service employees from the US and Canada, Pattakos (2004) reported that money is not the main motivator for public servants and further indicated that they want to make a genuine difference through performing roles that contribute to the public good.
Moral and Religious Influences

It possible that this outcome was related to commitment to the organisation because of the employees’ attitude of treating work as a moral obligation (Parboteeah et al. 2009), being happy with the work environment and receiving fair treatment from superiors rather than because of satisfaction with the job itself.

Consistent with previous studies (Abbasi & Hussain Rana 2012; Branine & Pollard 2010; Rokhman & Hassan 2012; Yousef 2001), the study found that Islamic religiosity had consequences for management practices, work-related values and employee behaviour. As outlined in Chapter 3, most of these ‘closed’ public service department employees were Muslim Malay. If they followed the Islamic ethics and values where an employee should treat work as ibadah (worship), they would be committed and would put every effort into accomplishing whatever job was assigned to them. The Quran and hadith (tradition) put great emphasis on discouraging laziness, which explains, at least partially, why religious employees in this ‘closed’ department may generally be committed to their work and the organisation. The Islamic work ethic emphasises working hard as enhancing personal growth, self-respect and satisfaction. The findings from the study suggest that religiosity provides a context in which employees think of their job in spiritual terms, not just in secular terms. Work is rated as worship when it meets specified conditions and is guided by the Shari’a (religious laws) such as to be trustworthy, fair and accountable. This illustrates the core of Islam as a way of life where the ultimate goal for a Muslim, and why tasks should be done, is to get the blessing and pleasure of Allah. While there may be an expectation of a return of worldly benefits such as remuneration and promotion for work, the priority of these benefits may also depend on the objectives of the organisation and whether it is profit oriented or non-profit oriented.
In this study, non-Muslim interviewees (Chinese participants) gave no indication that religiosity plays a large role in their job. Nevertheless, deeply rooted in the Chinese culture is the belief in Confucianism (Cooke 2009), which may explain why the outlook of the Chinese employees on HRM practices and organisational behaviour was somewhat similar to that of the Malays. The Malaysian culture is deeply embedded in expected employee behaviour such as saving face, respect for others, a sense of group orientation and humility. These norms are also values that prevail in Confucianism, many of which are also compatible with Islamic values.

In this ‘closed’ department, there are six major divisions, each of which differs in job descriptions and the nature of the jobs. In some divisions, the skills and knowledge which employees had acquired during their tertiary education might not be applicable to their current jobs. In these cases, employees might feel frustrated if they believe that they cannot fully utilise their knowledge and skills to execute their current roles and tasks. However, as they are being paid every month, they may feel obliged to perform well, and because of their commitment to the organisation and to do whatever job they are assigned, they may strive to put every effort into accomplishing this to the best of their ability.

Another finding that was also supported by the social exchange theory and psychological contract that underpinned this study and the research conducted by Weng et al. (2010) is that an organisation needs to develop its human capital by providing jobs and experiences that allow employees to develop their professional abilities, knowledge and skills. In addition, career succession plans need to be developed and properly implemented to take into account the individual needs of employees, with a fair and transparent approach to enhance affective commitment and lessen dependence on continuance and normative commitment.
Career Growth and Job Satisfaction

In reference to job satisfaction, by utilising multiple regression analysis, interestingly only three elements of career growth were positively and significantly correlated to this: professional ability development was the strongest predictor of job satisfaction, followed by job rotation and promotion equity. The analysis revealed that the other three elements of career growth – career goal progress, remuneration growth, and promotion speed – were not significant in explaining the variance of job satisfaction. These results could be due to the sense of achievement an employee gains from acquiring new skills and knowledge, which enhances their identity with their chosen career (Weng & McElroy 2012) rather than being related to rewards or the means by which employees assess their career choice. These findings are discussed further under the elements of career growth.

Results of the quantitative analyses also showed that career growth had a greater direct effect on organisational commitment ($\beta=0.601$) than on job satisfaction ($\beta=0.521$). Employees in a ‘closed’ public sector organisation may feel somewhat complacent and not prepared to move out of this comfort zone into a new environment such as the private sector. Based on the interviews, employees prefer to stay because of attractive perks and benefits, and the opportunities for career development in the organisation, even when they are not happy with their current job in a particular division.

Organisational Commitment and Job Satisfaction

Based on the result of the quantitative analysis and the significant positive relationship found between job satisfaction and organisational commitment ($\beta=0.602$, $p=0.000$), it can be expected that as job satisfaction increases, there will be an increase in organisational commitment in this ‘closed’ government department. In this study, normative
organisational commitment showed the strongest positive relationship with job satisfaction (r=0.582, p<0.01), followed by affective organisational commitment (r=0.519, p<0.01) and continuance organisational commitment (r=0.393, p<0.01). In other words, a greater degree of job satisfaction was related to normative and affective commitment rather than to continuance commitment. This suggests that enhancement in job satisfaction is related to an employee’s emotional attachment and feeling of obligation to the department, which is influenced by the norms and values of the organisation. This finding is consistent with the research conducted by Top and Gider (2012) in a study of private and public hospital employees in Turkey, which reported that job satisfaction was related to normative and affective commitment rather than to continuance commitment.

A meta-analysis study conducted by Meyer et al. (2002) indicated that job satisfaction showed positively stronger relationships with affective and normative commitment rather than with continuance commitment. Furthermore, enhancement in job satisfaction, affective commitment and normative commitment contribute to improvement in employees’ job performance more than continuance commitment does. This may be because of job satisfaction that reflects to what extent employees like their job and is strongly related to emotional attachment and perceived obligation to the organisation which could bind them in ties of mutual obligation of benefit to both employees and employer (Rousseau 1998; 2004).

7.3 Career Growth Elements

7.3.1 Promotion Equity

In this study, promotion equity may be associated with distributive justice, which pertains to employees’ perceptions of fairness in the decision-making process and resource allocation (Saks 2006). The equity principle associated with distributive justice posits that rewards and appreciation are distributed in accordance with contributions, and in order to be
just or fair, the allocation of an outcome should be consistent with the set goals of a particular policy (Saks 2006). Past research has shown that distributive justice is strongly correlated with job satisfaction (Choi 2011) and pay satisfaction (McFarlin & Rice 1991; DeConinck & Stilwell 2004), which in turn can be said to be strong elements of organisational commitment (Colquitt et al. 2001) and are related not only to what employees themselves receive but also to what their colleagues receive.

Prior research has noted that a well-designed performance appraisal system may enhance employees’ perceptions of procedural justice (Bartol et al. 2001). In the interviews, the participants emphasised the importance of fair performance appraisal because this has an impact on the promotion of each employee as the past three years of assessments are referred to as part of the promotion assessment process. Fair appraisal practices and consistent standards across all divisions or branches of the organisation may help ensure that the right candidates are promoted, particularly where there are limited vacancies and opportunities for advancement.

The interviews revealed that promotion equity was one of the six elements of career growth that influenced organisational commitment and job satisfaction. Analysis of the survey data found that promotion equity was the strongest predictor of career growth elements in explaining the variance of organisational commitment. This interesting finding can be understood by taking into account other evidence from the interviews indicating that organisational politics and perceived favouritism in promotion and career growth hamper individual commitment. Perceptions of unfair treatment may have a strong impact on the level of organisational commitment, and need to be considered in discussions of career development plans. Employees also compared opportunities for promotion in the ‘closed’
department with those in ‘open’ government departments or common user schemes, where transfer and promotion opportunities are greater.

For the prediction of job satisfaction, the regression analysis demonstrated that promotion equity was the weakest predictor of job satisfaction compared to professional ability development and job rotation. The reason for this may be related to personal satisfaction and the initial reason for choosing to work as a government officer. Specifically, employees may feel content with the job, content with the organisation and grateful for what they have gained during their service such as opportunities for further study and exposure to various aspects of the department’s core business. Thus, if they are satisfied that their contributions are valued and reciprocated and they have opportunities for further study, self-development and professional development, they may regard the benefits gained from the department as a balanced system of exchange (Okurame 2012; Sonnenberg et al. 2011). A finding that emerged from the interviews was that if employees are happy they will stay even if they are not being promoted in the traditional sense, provided they are getting compensation of other kinds such as professional ability development and rewards for excellent performance.

Based on the interviews and survey results, as summarised in Table 7.2, participants indicated that consideration for promotion should give more weight to length of service (time-based, seniority) and performance (annual performance appraisal) than to department examinations (department examination efficiency), with the least weight put on extra-mural activities such as sporting activities and involvement in NGOs).
Table 7.2: Criteria and weightage for promotion

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria for promotion</th>
<th>Rank</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Length of service</td>
<td>Most important</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performance</td>
<td>Quite important</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Department examinations</td>
<td>Important</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extra-mural activities</td>
<td>Least important</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In particular the promotion process may need to increase consideration of senior service officers who have shown excellence performance rather than employees known personally to top level managers.

Performance appraisal is one of the criteria for promotion, and it is an important management practice to accurately assess employees’ efficiency in the workplace (Armstrong 2006). For this reason, non-aligned panels may need to be appointed to monitor the fairness and effectiveness of performance appraisal and how this can be standardised to be fair for all employees at every division across the organisation. An increase in the perceived fairness of the implementation of performance appraisal may contribute to a belief in the justice of promotion decisions. A survey conducted by Meyer and Smith (2000) in UK companies suggested that employees’ perception of fairness in the performance appraisal process influences their perceptions of justice in career development and correlates to positive organisational commitment.

7.3.2 Professional Ability Development

The combined results of the interviews and the survey indicated that professional ability development was among the strongest elements of career growth, following promotion equity, to positively impact on organisational commitment. In a similar way, professional ability development was found to be the strongest element of career growth that influenced job satisfaction. This is in line with the findings of prior studies, which suggest that
employees who perceive they have skills and abilities to perform their jobs tend to feel more committed to the organisation and interested in performing tasks assigned (Chew & Chan 2008; Juhdi et al. 2013).

This finding in this ‘closed’ government department may be explained by a number of different factors. Generally, the small number of vacancies compared to the large number of candidates means that a strategy for focusing on professional ability development for career advancement is important. Additionally, according to the interview results, professional ability development plays an important role in career path planning, especially for employees who are high achievers and strive to be future top level managers in the organisation. Their credibility and expertise help them to demonstrate their capabilities and to execute assigned tasks efficiently. This may benefit not only the employees themselves but also their employer. A survey conducted by Allen et al. (2003) in US firms indicated that positive growth opportunities that include knowledge and skills contribute to positive organisational commitment and job satisfaction. This finding is in line with a survey conducted by Judge et al. (2010) in US companies which suggested that efforts to enhance knowledge, skills and abilities through upgrading education qualification and training can increase employees’ value to the organisation. Similarly to these interview results, other researchers have argued that satisfaction and commitment are associated with self-enrichment and career enrichment, a good support system, mutual expectations between employee and employer (Tsui et al. 1997), an unwritten psychological contract (Miao 2013) and clearly defined roles. The provision of professional ability development might therefore be perceived by employees as a signal that the organisation engages in social exchange, and so would induce positive reciprocity by employees strengthening their emotional attachment and obligations to the organisation (Miao 2013; Bartlett 2001).
The findings of the interviews also suggested that satisfied and committed employees tend to take advantage of available opportunities such as training and further study to upgrade their knowledge and skills, which escalate their professional ability and at the same time prepare them to be an asset to the department. Once they acquire enough knowledge of the core business, their enthusiasm and self-confidence may also increase in performing assigned tasks and further heighten their emotional commitment and feelings of obligation to the employer (Miao 2013). Opportunities to learn more about the core business and gain new skills, such as the use of firearms and physical training, which are more readily available to employees in this ‘closed’ government department than in other Malaysian public sector departments, could be additional skills that increase self-discipline and health and fitness for better job performance.

Several studies on organisational commitment have suggested that an employer’s ability to provide relevant and effective professional ability development has a marked effect on organisational commitment (Chew & Chan 2008; Gould-Williams 2010; Juhdi et al. 2013) and thus organisations may need to identify suitable training and professional development for employees (Anvari et al. 2010). The ability to provide effective training is subject to organisational constraints such as time, personnel, budget, training facilities, equipment and the attitude of superiors (Chew & Chan 2008). These restrictions can affect the level of training available and consequently the organisational commitment. Training and career development had a significant positive association with organisational commitment, which is consistent with the results of other studies (Juhdi et al. 2013; Chew & Chan 2008; Gould-Williams 2010) and specifically in the public sector (Gould-Williams 2007). From the employee’s point of view, professional ability development is a symbol of the employer’s commitment to their employees and is likely to result in improved productivity for the organisation. In the case of this ‘closed’ government agency, increasing the collection of
government revenue and an improved delivery system could result from the commitment and efforts of employees to utilise their knowledge and skills in dealing with the department’s clients.

In the interviews, participants suggested that the organisation should provide suitable training to make employees qualified, expert, skilful and knowledgeable in performing their tasks. Training and courses offered could focus on professional development and also personal development, which may be of benefit to both employees and the employer. To ensure the effectiveness of the specific training that relates to the core business, managers could evaluate their applicability to the relevant tasks. While opportunities are given to employees for further study at local or overseas universities to improve their formal education qualifications, perhaps there should be fewer limitations or conditions such as age (not to exceed 45 years) that may discourage others from pursuing higher education levels.

Expert officers need to be developed over the long term in a programmed development process, as shown in Figure 7.2. The first phase (one to ten years of service) is the exploration and mastering stage, the second phase (10 to 15 years of service) is the specialisation stage and the final phase produces an expert officer with specialisation in the department’s core businesses. The end product would be a versatile employee not only expert in a specific area of the department’s business but also knowledgeable about and familiar with all the organisation matters.
With contemporary globalisation, the world is becoming increasingly smaller. If the department expertise is not up to date with changes of the global business environment, it could be manipulated by criminals resulting in the potential for a huge loss of national revenue.

The role of the department as the largest revenue collector for the Malaysian government could not be sustained if it had only low-skilled officers. Effective professional ability development aimed at producing expert officers is essential for the organisation to execute its role successfully. Among the benefits that can be derived from expert officers are that decisions on department core business can be made more precise, clear and transparent, and the department can become more effective in enforcement of and compliance with the Acts and departmental regulations. These measures may help to secure revenue collection and contribute to improve the delivery system, resulting in the realisation of the vision and mission of the organisation.
7.3.3 Job Rotation

The findings of this study strongly suggested that job rotation may lead to job satisfaction and organisational commitment, with behavioural outcomes indirectly occasioned by employees’ acquisition of knowledge, skills and experience. Social exchange theory posits that the more you gain, the more you want to give back (Sweeney & McFarleen 2004). When employees are grateful for the knowledge and skills they have gained during their service, they might enthusiastically reciprocate by committing to extra effort for the organisation.

In a large organisation with 10,000 to 15,000 employees such as this ‘closed’ government agency, job rotation has the potential to benefit both employee and employer because it can provide practical on-the-job training in all aspects of department core business. A well implemented job rotation plan that systematically transfers officers from one division to another equips them with a broad range of knowledge and capabilities and, by doing so, can hasten their development to senior officer status.

Job rotation is also regarded as a method of job design that not only allows employees to learn job skills from placement in different divisions but also eliminates employee fatigue caused by tedious job assignments. By systematically changing job assignments, the challenge of each new assignment can re-energise employee enthusiasm and improve morale, both of which can bring about an increase in output. In other studies, employees have been known to request a transfer to a new area when they get bored with their current job and wish to pursue new challenges or if they are not on good terms with their superior or colleagues and think the best solution is to change to another unit (Jaturanonda et al. 2006; Kalleberg et al. 2006).

To improve performance efficiency, an organisation could employ job rotation including assessment of individual employees’ competencies prior to their next rotation, with
a focus on the quality of the learning rather than the duration of placement. This could involve individual rotation plans in accordance with an employee’s learning capability and adjustment time. Important factors that should be taken into account when determining the frequency of rotation are the employee’s learning ability and job familiarity, seniority in current work place, and readiness and willingness to be rotated (Jaturanonda et al. 2006).

In countries that have a high focus on employee integrity, such as Japan and Singapore, job rotation has long been employed (Boehm 2007). The Japanese tax administration agency has a well-established job rotation system which has proved to be highly successful in terms of both corruption reduction and higher revenue collection. A survey conducted by Jaturanonda et al. (2006) in Thailand public and private organisations also reported that organisations adopt job rotation to prevent employees from using job advantages for personal interest, abusing power, disclosing confidential information to outsiders and other forms of malpractice and corruption. In this ‘closed’ government agency, job rotation may help reduce the opportunity to conspire with syndicates or violate the law. If officers are on duty in a ‘hot spot’ for long periods they come to know and interact closely with regular clients, and this could reduce their ability to be impartial in their duties. In conclusion, when considering the effectiveness of job rotation, it is necessary to take into account not only the number of divisions an employee has been attached to but also and perhaps more importantly, the quality of the enhanced knowledge, skills and work experience able to be acquired.

Involvement of superiors in supporting subordinates’ learning could be helpful in ensuring the effectiveness of job rotation and monitoring the selected duration of attachments which could be varied accordingly within agreed minimum and maximum parameters. Exposure to the core business of the department by means of a well-implemented job rotation
system may provide career growth opportunities and advancement for employees of a ‘closed’ government agency.

While job rotation provides a wide knowledge and skills base, it may have additional benefits such as helping to prevent the formation of interdependencies and ‘cosy’ relationships between department enforcement officers and clients.

A working paper prepared by Boehm (2007) on anti-corruption strategies in the Colombian public sector suggested that job rotation is the best method to combat corruption, especially when law enforcement agencies are involved. Besides social awareness and responsibility campaigns, job rotation could also serve as a mechanism for the prevention of corruption. Officers employed by law enforcement agencies are perceived to be more susceptible to corruption and abuse of power than are employees in other walks of life, thus top management in these organisations needs to make genuine efforts to counter this possibility (Noblet et al. 2009).
**Duration of Job Rotation**

The ‘closed’ government agency has various large and quite distinct divisions, and could benefit from adopting a job rotation system that more systematically transfers officers between divisions. This would enable officers to acquire a broad range of knowledge, skills and experience related to the core business of the department. A relevant and fully implemented training scheme that includes job rotation could impact positively on the career development of officers, particularly in the early stages of service as it is the mastering stage where they are eager to learn and be exposed to the organisation core business. The ‘closed’ government agency could devise a rolling 5-to-10-year career development plan for employees that includes approximately how long they would be attached to each division.

The department could reform the present system of job rotation so that it is more responsive to the needs and expectations of the employees, most notably those with a ‘hot job’ or located in a ‘hot spot’. A ‘hot job’ involves a vulnerable position of authority where a person has important responsibilities and is faced with the ever-present possibility of malpractice accusations. A ‘hot spot’ is a vulnerable workplace area where problems are most likely to arise. Specifically, central human resource management could employ mechanisms such as e-placement, where all the information related to every employee is kept in a database to monitor employee placement, and job rotation, particularly in workplaces where the risk of corruption is high. A monitoring system of this nature could track details of placements, attachments and workplace performance to maximise the efficiency and effectiveness of job rotation and the prospects of its potential for development being realised.

The length of time that department officers are attached to particular units or divisions may need to be reviewed from time to time in order to determine system effectiveness. With regard to the minimum and maximum periods an employee should be attached to a division
before being considered for job rotation, the study findings suggest that employees would prefer a minimum of three years and a maximum of five years.

The knowledge and skills acquired by employees during each divisional attachment may benefit from being evaluated by their managers periodically. With careful observation managers should be able to identify if an employee needed more time to acquire specific sets of knowledge and suggest an extension of the placement if necessary.

After employees have been attached to a number of divisions and have had approximately ten years in service, they could be considered for fast-tracking as specialists in the area of their interest and excellence. This process may increase their commitment and job satisfaction, particularly if their accomplishments receive some tangible recognition and appreciation by the department. Those who are not selected for fast-tracking could be considered for other forms of recognition such as annual rewards for excellent performance and opportunities for ongoing training and lifelong learning.

7.3.4 Promotion Speed

The analysis of the interviews identified that promotion speed was an important element of career growth and influenced organisational commitment and job satisfaction. Further investigation of the sub-construct using regression analysis revealed that promotion speed significantly and positively impacted on organisational commitment but not on job satisfaction. The reason for this may be related to why people choose to work in this department. Employees may compare their promotion with that of others in different departments who are being promoted faster or slower (Kumazawa 2010), and if they perceive that their promotion speed is not ‘on par’ with others, their commitment to the organisation may decrease as they may blame this on the employer. On the other hand, when employees perceive that their promotion speed is above that of others, their commitment can increase.
When public sector employees are satisfied and enjoy doing their jobs, with the perks and benefits provided, they may not bother about comparison to offers of promotion and competitive salaries in the private sector (Ayob 2004).

In this ‘closed’ government agency, a time-based promotion system is employed where an employee needs to wait for his or her turn to be promoted to a senior position after approximately seven years of service. As Dick and Metcalf (2001) in their study among UK police suggested, an organisation may have an organisational culture that emphasises commitment to the profession itself as well as supporting hierarchical rank and status. They found a higher level of commitment in officers with more than 20 years’ service than in those with between six and 19 years of service. However, this may be because those with a lower career commitment leave an organisation earlier. Throughout their working life, from the beginning to the advanced career stage, career growth may be adequate compensation for long serving employees for their level of performance, endurance and perseverance (Mitchell et al. 2001).

Regular promotion to senior roles in accordance with performance and length of service could be a dimension of career growth which may impact on organisational commitment. The results from the interviews indicated that the impact of promotion speed could be associated with employees comparing their positions with those of others in more ‘open’ scheme public sector departments.

The main reasons given for participants preferring to work in the government sector were the secure nature of the job and convenient normal working hours. However, this did not mean that the participants were not also concerned about their career development. As suggested by the interview participants, there are only a few reasons for employees being promoted early, and these are mainly excellent performance and a more advanced education
level than others. Previous research that has mostly focused on the private rather than the public sector (Rosseau 1998; Weng et al. 2010; Juhdi et al. 2013) has suggested that it is essential for organisations to continuously revise promotion practices to assist them in achieving their mission and sustaining the satisfaction and commitment of employees.

7.3.5 Remuneration Growth

Results from the interviews and the survey suggested that remuneration growth did not have an important effect on job satisfaction and organisational commitment in this organisation. There are several possible explanations for this result. In Malaysian government departments, a salary increment or remuneration growth normally comes in tandem with promotion. Other than the standard annual increments based on satisfactory performance, a promotion is necessary for an increase in salary. This may be unique to the public service, where remuneration is closely tied to position and an advance in grade level automatically increases the salary.

An alternative explanation is that a promotion may be viewed as a change to a higher status, which may be valued as much as or more than a salary increase. Employees might value promotion because, in a ‘chain of command department’, the higher the position, the greater the authority and power. This differs from the findings of a study conducted among private employees in China by Weng and McElroy (2012), where an increase in remuneration was perceived as a change in status similar to a promotion. As described earlier, the majority of employees in the Malaysian public sector are Malay rather than from the other local ethnic groups, and this may help to explain why this result in this study differs from previous research. Chinese employees may give greater weight to financial incentives than the Malays in this study do, particularly those who work in the Malaysian public sector.
The initial motivation for most employees to work in this ‘closed’ public service department was the nature of the job, including normal office hours, perks and job security, which were considered attractive enough to encourage them to stay in the organisation. Thus, the Malaysian saying ‘money is not everything’ might be relevant in this context. Other elements of career growth such as professional ability development, promotion equity, job rotation and promotion speed were also relevant to a growth in organisational commitment and job satisfaction. Compared to the Malaysian public sector, the Malaysian private sector offers incentives such as performance-based bonuses and shares to reward employees’ contributions, and therefore employees there may aim for remuneration growth in preference to the other elements of career growth identified as important to employees in this ‘closed’ government department.

7.3.6 Career Goal Progress

The participants in this study tended to prefer jobs that were related to their qualifications and interests. This may be an advantage for employers as they can utilise employees’ specialist knowledge and skills to help the organisation to achieve its mission. As mentioned by Weng et al. (2010) and Hom et al. (2009), career goal progress is the satisfaction of a higher order need where employees experience affinity with the organisation and gain career development when executing jobs connected to their career goals.

In contrast to the findings of earlier research (Weng et al. 2010; Weng & McElroy 2012), the multiple regression analysis revealed that career goal progress did not have a significant impact on organisational commitment and job satisfaction. This seemingly contradictory result may be due to the department’s selection and recruitment processes, which are not restricted to a few specific educational discipline backgrounds as is the case in
other government departments. The ‘closed’ government agency provides courses and training to all new staff members on every aspect of departmental core business.

During recession times in 1998, in order to enable more graduates to join the public sector, the Malaysian government reduced restrictions on the area of academic background as a requirement for recruitment. A number of interview participants mentioned that they had joined the department because they had to satisfy their education contract bond with the government, which stipulated that they had to serve in the public sector for a specific number of years. For these reasons, employees with pure science qualifications were recruited as department officers, and thus may not have been able to apply what they had learned in their specialist tertiary education in their current work roles.

The broad areas of the core business of the organisation could be explored and learned by newly recruited officers through formal training and courses provided by either the department training academy or the local training unit as well as on the job experience. This is different from other Malaysian government departments such as the National Accountant Department or the Department of Health, which target recruitment of new staff based on qualifications related to accountancy or medicine, respectively.

In this ‘closed’ department, every employee is subject to transfer between divisions regardless of their previous educational background and cannot stay put in one specialist division. For instance, those with tertiary qualifications in law would still be transferred on rotation to the audit division, to perform auditing tasks rather than legal work. Based on the interviews, employees believed that they can become high achievers and pursue their career development regardless of their initial educational background and expertise.
7.4 Contributions of the Study

This study makes a number of contributions to human resource management research, particularly in the public sector. It contributes new knowledge in relation to employees’ experiences of career growth and the influences of those experiences on commitment in a ‘closed’ government department. The following sections elaborate on the theoretical contributions, the methodological contributions and the practical implications of this research.

7.4.1 Theoretical Contributions

This exploration of social exchange theory and psychological contracts theory in a Malaysian context may contribute to the current body of knowledge. Although many studies based on these theories have been conducted in Western countries such as the UK, the US and Australia (Blau 1964; Rousseau 1989; Tremblay et al. 2010; Xerri & Brunetto 2013), and a few in non-Western countries including China and Japan (Takeuchi et al. 2009; Weng et al. 2010; Weng & McElroy 2012) there remain questions as to what extent the knowledge principles proposed by these may be applicable in another non-Western countries such as Malaysia. Local influences such as culture, religion and government policy need to be considered when undertaking a study of HRM and government employees in a developing country (Branine & Pollard 2010). In the Malaysian context this involves a multiracial, Muslim majority within a democratic country and these characteristics may impact on the nature of the relationship between career growth, organisational commitment and job satisfaction. The Islamic beliefs that people should be treated as equals with similar rights to knowledge and rewards and that work is a form of worship may also influence employees’ perceptions, organisational commitment and job satisfaction. In addition, there is a political impact on the government sector as the public pay the taxes used to pay government employees’ salaries. The public sector delivery system should be scrutinised and evaluated by
the public who receive the services. Although Malaysia is a multi-ethnic society there was less diversity within this ‘closed’ government agency, and information regarding the composition of this particular workforce has been included in order to clarify this point. Furthermore, the fact that the majority of the Malaysian public sector employees are Malays and Muslim, with their distinctive norms and values, who choose to work in the government sector rather than the private sector may also influence their perception of career growth, organisational commitment and job satisfaction. The results of this study were generally in line with social exchange and psychological contracts theory. In other words, perceived mutually beneficial arrangements between individual employees and employer have important impacts on work attitudes such as job satisfaction and organisational commitment (Rosen et al. 2013).

Another potential significant contribution of this research is that it tests the applicability of Western notions concerning the relationships between selected HRM practices such as career growth and organisational behavioural outcomes in the public sector in an non-Western country. The present study shows that remuneration growth and career goal progress are not as important as professional ability development and promotion equity in determining the level of organisational commitment and job satisfaction in this Malaysian ‘closed’ public sector department. Previous studies (Weng et al. 2010; Weng & McElroy 2012) conducted in private sector companies and with different cultural, religious and political backgrounds have identified remuneration growth and career goal progress as significant in explaining levels of organisational commitment and job satisfaction.

Furthermore, the development of a model of the career growth dimensions – promotion equity, professional ability development, promotion speed, job rotation, career goal progress and remuneration growth – that influence organisational commitment in a
‘closed’ government department may add to the current body of knowledge about HRM in the public sector in general, as well as in Malaysia. Applying Western and modern concepts and measures proved to be imperative as this study focused on commitment and satisfaction in a Malaysian ‘closed’ government department. Testing the correlation between these variables in different industries and work environments is very important in identifying which practices may be suitable for implementation in a different context. This could be tested in other professions, and cross-company comparisons are also recommended for future research to determine more general applicability in the Malaysian context (Dirani & Kuchinke 2011). In addition, exploring and comparing any differences between domestic, regional, and international settings would also be of interest in further studies.

7.4.2 Methodological Contributions

This study advances previous research on HRM practices, organisational commitment and job satisfaction that have relied, almost exclusively, on quantitative methods of analysis. Onwuegbuzie et al. (2009) argued that future research needed to move, however slightly, away from strictly positivist research and incorporate interpretivist methods that pay serious attention to the subjective ways in which employees experience organisations. To date, much of the prominent research in organisational commitment and job satisfaction has been conducted from a positivist point of view (Weng et al. 2010; Weng & McElroy 2012; Juhdi et al. 2013).

A key contribution of this study is the combination of methods used to address the research questions rather than relying on a single method. The integration of interview and survey data has enabled a clear identification and in-depth exploration of the factors of career growth that strengthened organisational commitment and job satisfaction in a ‘closed’ government department. As the purpose of the qualitative component was to explore the
complexities of employees’ experiences at work, no attempt is made to claim the representativeness of that sample to other types of organisations or to generalise those findings to the population at large. However, as shown in Chapter 5, noteworthy patterns of similarities and differences among interviewees’ responses provided valuable data that permitted the elucidation of processes. The results of the interviews were further explored by the survey and supported by the quantitative approach, which strengthened the overall results.

7.4.3 Practical and Managerial Implications

It is clear that, in contemporary Malaysia, societal as well as organisational cues are relevant in stimulating organisational commitment. The results of this research could have important implications for HRM practitioners. The expectation is that a better understanding of such relationships and the potential effectiveness of career growth can help managers to understand how employees become committed and satisfied at work. A critical role of managers in any organisation is to provide an environment that boosts the performance potential of individual employees. Where there are formal succession plans and clear career growth for individual employees, and these are fairly and properly implemented in the organisation, this can increase employee satisfaction and commitment, and lead to higher levels of performance as well as lower levels of turnover.

The focus on career growth factors in this study of organisational commitment and job satisfaction in a Malaysian ‘closed’ government agency adds to the understanding of employee perceptions and behaviour and consequently provides policy makers with a basis for improving HRM practices. Career growth may be a valuable way for employers to establish and maintain organisational commitment after a difficult period in an organisation’s history such as restructuring (Weng et al. 2010). This may also be the case when an organisation’s image has been tarnished by charges of corruption, as happened in this
‘closed’ department and was reported as having had an impact on individual commitment, particularly for the women interviewed. While charges of corruption may at first appear to be particularly shocking given corrupt practices are at odds with Islamic work values, and these are taken very seriously, this does not necessarily indicate that corruption has occurred, rather it may demonstrate monitoring and reporting of irregular activities that need to be investigated and resolved. As indicated in the findings of Noblet et al. (2009), civil officers who work for law enforcement agencies may be perceived to be more susceptible to corruption and abuse of power than those who work in other non-law enforcement agencies. However corruption takes place not only by public officials but also by those in a position of trust in private enterprises or non-profit organizations, and what is seen as government corruption may also involve a private sector entity”.

Based on the findings of this study, career growth could be among the factors that help develop commitment and combat corruption in an organisation, in addition to individual efforts based on self-restraint. From an Islamic perspective, self-restraint is an absolute prerequisite for a successful fight against corruption. The restraint comes from within through a moral renovation and developing a firm belief in transcendent accountability, stresses character building through practicing moral virtues and shunning vices (Iqbal & Lewis 2014). Western approaches may be viewed as having a focus on governance and the design of appropriate systems and institutions that gear information and incentives toward minimizing opportunities and enticement for corruption, specifically emphasising constraints external to the individual (Iqbal & Lewis 2014).

In practical terms, government, employers, employees and stakeholders may all benefit from the outcomes of this study. Previous researchers in public administration and human resource management (Matthews & Shulman 2005; Llorens & Battaglio 2010) have
emphasised the urgent need for more empirical studies in public sector organisations. This study focuses on the relationships between several important organisational factors and their impacts on job satisfaction and organisational commitment in a public sector organisation. According to Rousseau (1998, 2001), organisations are continuously searching for effective strategies to enhance job satisfaction and organisational commitment.

Multiple efforts by Malaysian public service organisations to improve working conditions and service delivery have been only moderately successful (Juhdi et al. 2013). No previous published empirical research appears to have investigated career growth and its effects on job satisfaction and organisational commitment at the organisational level in Malaysia, especially in a ‘closed’ government department. The findings could be replicated in other ‘closed’ departments whether public or private sector which carried similar characteristics and structure. The findings of this study could provide important insights for policy makers and top level management responsible for organising and managing the public sector in Malaysia, as well as for scholars and practitioners elsewhere interested in the development of sustainable public service organisations.

7.5 Limitations of the Study and Implications for Future Research

This study has several limitations. First, from the evidence of these particular findings, it is not possible to generalise to other organisations because the data set was not representative of the general population. However, the research reveals interesting findings that could be explored further in other contexts, and elements of career growth that may be tested in other ‘closed’ government departments and other ‘closed’ private department elsewhere.

Secondly, the context of a ‘closed’ government department may restrict the applicability of the research findings. The findings of the study may not be easily
extrapolated to the private sector or ‘open’ government agencies where occupational groups and industry characteristics may be different.

Thirdly, a large proportion of the participants in this study were of Malay and Muslim background rather than from other ethnic and religious groups, which may have skewed some of the findings. This makes it difficult to identify whether there may be any distinctive differences in perspectives between ethnic and religious groups in the Malaysian public sector. For future research, there may be a need to examine cultural, ethnic and religious differences where there is great diversity in the organisation. For instance, the role of religious beliefs, such as Islamic values, on organisational commitment and job satisfaction.

Even though, in recent statistics on gender inequality published by the World Economic Forum (WEF) reported Malaysia lagging behind all but two Southeast Asian countries, Cambodia and Myanmar, in gender equality, with Malaysia ranked 102 out of 136 countries (Leong, 2013). However this report does not comment on or differentiate between gender equity and employment in the public sector compared to the private sector. Future research could explore demographic effects such as gender and marital status issues in this type of study.

Fourthly, this study is cross sectional. Future research could involve a longitudinal study to evaluate the effectiveness and impact on organisational commitment and job satisfaction before and after individual experiences of factors related to career growth.

Finally, this study did not examine the overall relationship between career growth, job satisfaction and organisational commitment. It is advocated that future research should be conducted to investigate such relationship to advance our understanding on the mediating role of job satisfaction on the relationship between career growth and organisational commitment. For future research, other methods such as SEM or partial least square, which may be suitable
in different contexts, could be used in new sets of data to further understand the structure of the variables. This study only focuses on the impacts of slow career growth on organisational commitment and job satisfaction, it is desired to see future research broaden this relationship to organisational citizenship behaviour (OCB) and impacts on organisational performance.

Previous research in a private sector context indicated the relationships exist between HR practices and systems and job satisfaction and organisational commitment, such as aspects of selection and recruitment and improving organisational performance (Bowen & Ostroff 2004; Clarke & Hill 2012; Gong et al. 2009; Guest & Conway 2011; Takeuchi et al. 2009). Although, due to time constraints, this study had a focus on aspects of career growth it is possible that other HR practices may also need to be adapted to operate effectively in a ‘closed’ government department.

There is no expectation at this stage that the correlations observed in this organisational context could be generalised to these, further research in future studies is required to explore these matters. Despite these limitations, findings from the current investigation provide useful information that could be applied in everyday work situations as well as contributing to knowledge of HRM practices in organisations.

7.6 Overall Perspective of Human Resource Management in the Malaysian Public Sector

There is growing research indicating that HRM practices contribute to organisational success and that employees who have favourable perceptions of workplace practices also tend to have relatively positive job satisfaction and organisational commitment (Gong et al. 2009; Nishii et al. 2008; Takeuchi et al. 2007; Takeuchi et al. 2009; White & Bryson 2013). The findings of this study suggest that HRM practices in the Malaysian civil service are playing an increasingly important role in developing employees’ capabilities, knowledge, skills and
well-being, which impact on levels of organisational commitment and job satisfaction. While appropriate career planning, which includes access to training and development, needs to be organised to continuously improve knowledge and skills (Amin et al. 2014), the perception of fair promotion opportunities also has a great effect on employee motivation, commitment and satisfaction (Danish & Usman 2010). The HRM function is evolving fast and human resource activities are progressively being aligned and integrated with an organisation’s overall strategy (Macky & Boxall 2007; Marchington & Grugulis 2000).

The study describes how culture, religion, technology and politics can play important roles in contributing to performance effectiveness in the Malaysian public sector. Due to the influence of previous British colonisation, many Malaysian organisational practices, particularly in the government and civil service, still reflect UK practices, although after Independence the Malaysian government also emulated Japanese and Korean working cultures that emphasise diligence and self-discipline to further enhance performance (Siddiquee 2007). Furthermore, important Islamic values which emphasise the need for trustworthiness, self-discipline, motivation and accountability have also been influential, given that the majority of Malaysian public sector employees are Muslim. Thus, if management practice and employee responses are consistent with these positive values, it can be expected that the Malaysian civil service workforce will be highly motivated and self-disciplined and will contribute to high performance delivery systems.

It appears that organisations that implement good HRM practices related to career growth are likely to be successful. This success can enable them to provide additional training and development and promotion opportunities that motivate and enable employees to do their best. As such, good HRM practices are likely to yield benefits and capture the potential gains for both individual employees and the employer.
When most of employees’ feedback is that they are committed and satisfied, then HRM practices in the Malaysian public sector can be deemed to be successful (Gibb 2001). This does not mean that the Malaysian public sector approach is perfect however it is going in the right direction, with continuous adjustments and modifications of policies and practices to suit the current local context needed from time to time to maximise productivity and improve the quality of delivery service. People are increasingly searching for employment which is meaningful, interesting, flexible, provides continuous learning platforms and offers a sense of accomplishment (Chalofsky & Krishna 2009; Rayton & Yalabik 2014), even though individual employees may value and aim for different things (Kinnie et al. 2005; Rayton & Yalabik 2014). HRM practices can be perceived by employees as indicating a personal commitment to them by the organisation and this is then reciprocated through positive attitudes, perceived as drivers of discretionary behaviour or choices of effort (Kinnie et al. 2005).

In terms of evidence, it is difficult to identify at this stage to what extent HRM policies and practices lead to enhanced organisational performance. However, these findings suggest that employees’ perceptions about the organisation’s policies and practices could influence their job satisfaction, motivation and commitment to the organisation. The effective implementation of the HRM practices in an organisation should be perceived as effective by both employees and employer. When this is the case, it is likely to determine the impact on relevant outcomes such as organisational commitment and job satisfaction (Guest & Conway 2011).

Previous research has revealed that low organisational commitment and lack of satisfaction may lead to high staff turnover; however, in this ‘closed’ government department employees choose to stay even when they are not satisfied and lack commitment. This may
be because they believe it could be too late for them to search for new career prospects outside the ‘closed’ government department, or because of the attractive nature of the job and perks provided in the public sector. Even though only a few participants expressed a low level of personal commitment and saw low levels of commitment in others, still the impact of this negativity may affect team performance and ultimately the achievements of the organisation. Most participants, however, said they liked working in the organisation and liked their job and offered positive suggestions for improvement. It is important to create a positive environment where employees are continuously learning and progressing, and are motivated to perform their jobs, as this may influence how they deliver services to clients (Barton et al. 2011). By improving HRM practices such as the slow career growth factors identified in this study, the Malaysian public sector may be able to enhance employees’ satisfaction and commitment and improve organisational effectiveness.

7.7 Conclusion

This study was designed to explore the nature of the relationship between career growth and both organisational commitment and job satisfaction in a ‘closed’ government department. The findings revealed a common basis by which employees determine their level of commitment according to how they perceive themselves as having been treated by the organisation. Specifically, if employees perceive their organisation as valuing their contributions, caring about their well-being and treating them fairly, a significant level of organisational commitment and job satisfaction could be expected.

Career growth elements such as promotion equity, professional ability development, promotion speed and job rotation need to be focused on to increase organisational commitment, whereas professional ability development, job rotation and promotion equity need to be considered as ways of improving job satisfaction in this public sector organisation.
Career growth is a vital factor in creating a sense of belonging, commitment and satisfaction for employees. Thus, this study reinforces the idea that if employees can achieve their personal work goals and are recognised and rewarded by the organisation for doing so, they are likely to feel connected and committed to accomplish the goals of the organisation.

The results of this research provide strong evidence that career growth needs to be well managed before public sector employers can expect employees to reciprocate with high levels of commitment and excellent performance. Even though alternative positions in the private sector may be available with higher financial rewards, Malaysian ‘closed’ government department employees may remain satisfied with their jobs and committed to the department if opportunities for promotion, job security, perks, training and flexible work arrangements continue to be available.

As the study is based on a sample of Malaysian public sector employees, it contributes to the HRM literature by extending the empirical evidence of the effects of HRM practices to this non-Western context. The findings of the current study provide additional support for the positive effects of career growth on the organisational commitment and job satisfaction of public sector employees. Although culture and religion may have an influence on the relationships between HRM practices and public sector employees’ attitudes and behaviour, employees’ perceptions of management practices also play a role. Thus, it is important to keep in mind that HRM practices in other countries and private sectors settings may not be necessarily be the best choice for Malaysian public sector organisations due to the different management contexts and values.
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APPENDIX A: Interview Questions

Topic: The Impact of Slow Career Growth on Organizational Commitment and Job Satisfaction: A Study of a ‘Closed’ Government Agency in Malaysia

Section A: Career Growth, Job Satisfaction and Organizational Commitment

Brief definitions on Career growth, OC and JS to the interviewee...

Q1) Overall are you satisfied with your job as a customs officer? Why?
1a) In reference to job satisfaction, do you think that the department’s career growth is sufficient? Why?
1b) What are other things that should be implemented to increase job satisfaction?
1c) Do you think that you have been adequately rewarded for your contributions? How?
1d) It seems that you’re satisfied (or not satisfied) with your job, do you think you will still be doing the same job in five years’ time?

Q2) Does your department give support for your career growth?
If yes, could you explain what are the types of support have been given by your department?
2a) Do you think that career growth is important factors for your satisfaction and commitment? Why? How?
2b) How does your career growth change during your service in this department?
   (Has it improved?)
2c) Could you please explain difficulty or problem in career growth in this department? (If any)
2d) Since you were recruited as customs officer, how many times have you been promoted, and for how long have you been in each position? Why
2e) Do you anticipate internal promotion opportunities in the near future? If yes (no), why you are needed to be considered for the promotion? Why not? (e.g. seniority, performance etc)
Could you please tell me what are the major criteria that being used for promotion in RMCD?

Q3) In general, what would you say about your level of organizational commitment now?

3a) Which factors of career growth most influence organizational commitment? (career goal progress, professional ability development, promotion speed, remuneration growth and promotion equity). Why?

3b) What else do you think can increase your commitment to the organization?

3c) How would you change or improve career growth policy in your department, if you could?

Q4) Why did you choose to work in this department?

Section B: Background of the Respondent

Socio Demographic Factors

1) Gender:
   - Male
   - Female

2) Age:
   - 24 or younger
   - 25-34
   - 35-44
   - 45-54
   - 55 or older

3) Marital status:
   - Single
   - Married
   - Divorced/Separated/Widowed

4) The highest academic qualification while first joining service:
   - Lower than diploma
   - Diploma
   - Bachelors
   - Masters
   - PhD

5) The highest academic qualification at present:
   - Lower than diploma
   - Diploma
   - Bachelors
6) Division:

- Compliance Management
- Customs
- Enforcement
- Internal Taxes
- Technical Services
- Others

7) Number of divisions you have worked in this department:

- 1-3
- 4-6
- 7-9
- 10 or more

8) Grade:

- W17-W36
- W41-W54

9) Years of Service:

- Less than 3 years
- 3-10
- 11-18
- 19-26
- 27 or more

10) Number of years in this current position:

- Less than 3 years
- 3-10
- 11-18
- 19-26
- 27 or more
College of Business
School of Management

INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH PROJECT

Project Title: The Impact of Slow Career Growth on Organizational Commitment and Job Satisfaction: A Study of a ‘Closed’ Government Agency in Malaysia

Dear Participant,

You are invited to participate in a face to face interview as part of a PhD research project being conducted through RMIT University. Please read this sheet carefully and be confident that you understand its contents before deciding whether to participate. If you have any questions about the project, please ask the investigator or her supervisors identified above.

Who is involved in this research project? Why is it being conducted?

This research is being conducted as part of a PhD research project in Management. The project has been approved by the RMIT Business College Human Ethics Advisory Network (Approval No. 1000343).

Why are invitation, plain language statement and consent form e-statement and consent form attached?

Our target respondents are customs officers from various levels and responsibilities. In references to the criteria we are inviting customs officers from Management and Professional Group (Levels 54-41) and Support Group (Levels 17-36) with 3 years working experiences and currently employed by the department to participate in this research. Your email address is obtained through the list of directories that readily available on the official website of the department.

What is the project about? What are the questions being addressed?

The study intends to look for evidence of relationships and the role of career growth on organizational commitment and job satisfaction among customs officers in the Malaysian public sector. This study aims to better understand the processes as well as employee’s experiences with the process in affecting their level of organizational commitment and job satisfaction. questions being addressed mostly regards to experiences in your job satisfaction, your commitment to organization, and the human resource practise such as career growth in your department. This study expects about 40 participants.

If I agree to participate, what will I be required to do?

All participants are warmly invited to participate in an interview which conducted approximately from February to March 2012. Respondents who give their consent will be contacted for setting the date, time and place for the interview. If you are agreed to participate, you will be required to answer questions with regards to your experiences in your job, your commitment with organization, and the human resource practise such as career growth in your department. Should you need to see some of the questions before the interview, please don’t hesitate to email kuazizah.kudaud@rmit.edu.au for a sample copy of the questions. It is expected that the interview will take approximately 30 minutes.
What are the benefits associated with participation?

Although there is no direct benefit to you from taking part in this study, it is hoped that your input will provide significant information regarding the factors that may or may not have an effect on employee’s level of job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Specifically, your input will provide a good guideline for the researcher future study recommendations.

What will happen to the information I provide?

If you agree to participate in this study, your privacy will be protected in a number of ways. With your permission, I will audiotape and take notes during the interview. The recording is to accurately record the information you provide, and will be utilised for transcription purposes only.

All identifying information such as telephone number and email address, along with all data collected during the interview, will be treated confidentially and will be accessible to the researcher and supervisors only.

Following completion of the data analysis, any identifying information collected during the interview will be removed or replaced with non-identifying alphanumeric codes or pseudonyms.

The research data and audio recording will be retained securely for a minimum of 5 years after publication at the School of Management, RMIT University, Australia before being destroyed.

At the conclusion of the research, a summary of the results and associated reports will be made available should you request for it (only a summary of your interview). The study will also be reported in a thesis to be submitted for Ms. Ku Azizah’s PhD degree, and if appropriate, in papers for presentation at conferences or for publication in scientific journals.

What are my rights as a participant?

Participation in this research is completely voluntary. Whether or not you decide to participate, your decision will not disadvantage you in any way. Only people who give their informed consent will be included in the research. Although you give informed consent to participate, you may still withdraw from the research at any time without giving a reason. You have the right to have any questions answered at any time, and request that audio recording be terminated at any stage during the interview.

Whom should I contact if I have any questions?

Please read this Information Statement and be sure you understand its contents before you consent to participate. If there is anything you do not understand, or you have questions, please contact the researcher at kuazizah.kudaud@rmit.edu.au or rmit212@gmail.com or by telephoning +61430972840. If you choose to participate in this project, please print and keep a copy of this Information Statement and Consent Form.
Complaints about this research

Should you have concerns about your rights as a participant in this research, or you have a complaint about the manner in which the research is conducted, complaints are to be directed to Professor Roslyn Russell, Chair of Business College Human Ethics Advisory Network (BCHEAN), College of Business, RMIT, GPO Box 2476V, Melbourne, 3001. The telephone number is + (61 3) 9925 5596 or email address: bchean@rmit.edu.au. Details of the complaints procedure are available from http://www.rmit.edu.au/browse;ID=2jqrnb7hnpyo

Thank you for considering this invitation.

Yours sincerely,

Ku Azizah Ku Daud
School of Management
RMIT University
Australia
Phone: +61430972840
Email: kuazizah.kudaud@rmit.edu.au or rmit212@gmail.com

Supervisors:
Rosalie Holian, PhD  Jiaying Zhang PhD
Research Supervisor, Acc. Professor Research Supervisor
School of Management  RMIT University
rosalie.holian@rmit.edu.au  jiaying.zhang@rmit.edu.au
Tel: + (61 3) 99255943  Tel: + (61 3) 9925 1649

3. Research with adults who are Incapable of giving informed consent

Where research is being planned which involves “procedures” (not legally defined - but likely to be any medical procedure including blood-taking):
Prescribed Consent Form for Persons Participating In Research Projects Involving Interviews, Questionnaires, Focus Groups or Disclosure of Personal Information

COLLEGE OF
School of Management

SCHOOL/CENTRE OF

Name of Participant:

Project Title: The Impact of Slow Career Growth on Organizational Commitment and Job Satisfaction: A Study of a ‘Closed’ Government Agency in Malaysia

Name(s) of Investigators: (1) Ku Azizah Ku Daud
Phone: +61430972840

(2) Phone: +60193801095

1. I have received a statement explaining the interview/questionnaire involved in this project.

2. I consent to participate in the above project, the particulars of which - including details of the interviews or questionnaires - have been explained to me.

I authorize the investigator or his or her assistant to interview me or administer a questionnaire.

I give my permission to be audio taped: ☐ Yes ☐ No

I give my permission for my name or identity to be used: ☐ Yes ☐ No

6. I acknowledge that:

Having read the Plain Language Statement, I agree to the general purpose, methods and demands of the study.

I have been informed that I am free to withdraw from the project at any time and to withdraw any unprocessed data previously supplied.

The project is for the purpose of research and/or teaching. It may not be of direct benefit to me.

The privacy of the information I provide will be safeguarded. However should information of a private nature need to be disclosed for moral, clinical or legal reasons, I will be given an opportunity to negotiate the terms of this disclosure.

If I participate in a focus group I understand that whilst all participants will be asked to keep the conversation confidential, the researcher cannot guarantee that other participants will do this.

The security of the research data is assured during and after completion of the study. The data collected during the study may be published, and a report of the project outcomes will be provided to____________(researcher to specify).

Any information which may be used to identify me will not be used unless I have given my permission (see point 5).
Participant’s Consent

Name: ____________________________ Date: __________________________

(Participant)

Name: ____________________________ Date: __________________________

(Witness to signature)

Where participant is under 18 years of age:

I consent to the participation of ____________________________ in the above project.

Signature: (1) ____________________________ (2) ____________________________ Date: __________________________

(Signatures of parents or guardians)

Name: ____________________________ Date: __________________________

(Witness to signature)

Participants should be given a photocopy of this consent form after it has been signed.

This project has been approved by the Business College’s Human Research Ethics Committee, Approval No. xxxxx, date. Should you have concerns about your rights as a participant in this research, or you have a complaint about the manner in which the research is conducted, complaints are to be directed to Professor Roslyn Russell, Chair of Business College Human Ethics Advisory Network (BCHEAN), College of Business, RMIT, GPO Box 2476V, Melbourne, 3001. The telephone number is +(61 3) 9925 5596 or email address: bchean@rmit.edu.au. Details of the complaints procedure are available from http://www.rmit.edu.au/browse;ID=2jqrnb7hnpyo
APPENDIX C: Survey Questionnaire

School of Management, Building 80, Level 9
RMIT University, 427-433 Swanston Street
Melbourne VIC 3000
Office: +61(03)-99251694
Mobile: +614-30972840/ +6019-3801095
E-mail: kuazizah.kudaud@rmit.edu.au

The Impact of Slow Career Growth on Organizational Commitment and Job Satisfaction: A Study of a ‘Closed’ Government Agency in Malaysia

I am a PhD student from the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology University and seeking some greater insight into the career growth in this ‘closed’ government agency. There are few important things of which to take note:

This Questionnaire is meant for uniformed officers working in any divisions at the present grade 17 ~ 54.
It is expected that the survey will take approximately 10-15 minutes to be completed.
There will be no right or wrong answers and your honest opinion in answering this questionnaire is highly appreciated.
You are given the option to be anonymous and all your answers will remain completely confidential.

This study adheres to the ethical procedures and requirements of the RMIT University. The collection of data will be treats in a very confidential way and only will be used for this research. If you have any further queries concerning your participation in this questionnaire, please contact the researcher by using the address, telephone number or email as written above or email her supervisors.

Thank you very much for your time and support!
Ku Azizah Ku Daud

Supervisors:
Associate Professor Rosalie Holian (rosalie.holian@rmit.edu.au)
Dr Jiaying Zhang (jiaying.zhang@rmit.edu.au)
SURVEY
Title: The Impact of Slow Career Growth on Organizational Commitment and Job Satisfaction: A Study of a ‘Closed’ Government Agency in Malaysia

Section 1

Section 1A: Career Growth

Instruction: Please indicate the extent of your agreement with the following statements on a 5 points scale. Please mark with an (X) on the scale column.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Uncertain</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
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Career Goal Progress

Q Statement 1 2 3 4 5
1 My present job sets the foundation for the realization of my career goals
2 My present job provides me with good opportunities to realize my career goals
3 My present job is relevant to my career goals

Professional Ability Development

Q Statement 1 2 3 4 5
4 My present job encourages me to continuously gain new job-related skills
5 My present job encourages me to continuously gain new job-related knowledge
6 My present job encourages me to accumulate richer work experiences

Promotion Speed

Q Statement 1 2 3 4 5
7 My promotion speed in the present organization is fast
8 The probability of being promoted in my present organization is high
9 Compared with my colleagues, I am being promoted faster
### Remuneration Growth

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q</th>
<th>Statement</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>My salary is growing quickly in my present organization</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>In this organization, the possibility of my current salary being increased is large</td>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Compared with my colleagues, my salary has grown more quickly</td>
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### Promotion Equity

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<th>5</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>I can count on my organization to have fair policies in internal promotion</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Where I work, the organization’s rules and regulations are very fair</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>The procedures my organization uses to make decisions on promotion are fair</td>
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### Job Rotation

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<th>Q</th>
<th>Statement</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Job rotation broadens my knowledge and skill in various fields throughout the organization</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>I believe job rotation is an excellent system in this organization</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Overall, I like job rotation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Section 1B: Organizational Commitment

**Instruction:** Please indicate the extent of your agreement with the following statements on a 5 points scale. Please mark with an (X) on the scale column.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Uncertain</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
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</table>

#### Affective Commitment

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Q</th>
<th>Statement</th>
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<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</table>
with this organization.

20 I really feel as if this organization’s problems are my problems

21 This organization has a great deal of personal meaning for me.

Continuance Commitment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q</th>
<th>Statement</th>
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<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>It would be very hard for me to leave my organization right now, even if I wanted to.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Too much of my life would be disrupted if I decided/wanted to leave my organization now.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>I feel that I have merely limited options to consider leaving this organization.</td>
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</table>

Normative Commitment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q</th>
<th>Statement</th>
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<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Even if it were to my advantage, I do not feel it would be right to leave my organization now.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>I would not leave my organization right now because I have a sense of obligation to the people in it.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>This organization deserves my loyalty.</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Section 1C: Job Satisfaction

Instruction: Please rate how satisfied or dissatisfied you are with your current job in the department on a 5 points scale. Please mark with an (X) on the scale column.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Dissatisfied</th>
<th>Dissatisfied</th>
<th>Uncertain</th>
<th>Satisfied</th>
<th>Strongly Satisfied</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
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Job Satisfaction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q</th>
<th>Statement</th>
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<th>3</th>
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<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>All in all I am satisfied with my job in this department</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>In general, I like working here</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>All things considered, I am satisfied with my current job</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Section 2:

31) What should be the minimum years before being considered for job rotation?

Please tick the box where appropriate.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>6 months</th>
<th>1 years</th>
<th>2 years</th>
<th>3 years</th>
<th>4 years</th>
<th>5 years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

32) What should be the maximum years before being considered for job rotation?

Please tick the box where appropriate.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>6 months</th>
<th>1 years</th>
<th>2 years</th>
<th>3 years</th>
<th>4 years</th>
<th>5 years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

33) What is the best weightage should be considered for promotion criteria?

Please rank 1 to 4 respectively, 4 is the most important criteria and 1 is the least important.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Length of service (e.g. Time based, Seniority)</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Department examinations (Examination efficiency i.e. PTK)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extra mural activity (Join the NGO associations e.g. Labour Union, PEWAKAS)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performance (Annual Performance Appraisal i.e. SKT)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Section 3:

Please tick the box where appropriate.

34) Gender:

Male [ ] Female [ ]

35) Age:

24 or younger [ ]

25-29 [ ]

30-34 [ ]

35-39 [ ]

40-44 [ ]

45-49 [ ]

50-54 [ ]
55-59  

36)  Marital status:  
- Single  
- Married  
- Divorced/Separated/Widowed

37)  What was the highest academic qualification when you first joined the RMCD?  
- Lower than diploma  
- Diploma  
- Bachelors  
- Masters or PhD

38)  What is your current academic qualification at present?  
- Lower than diploma  
- Diploma  
- Bachelors  
- Masters or PhD

39)  Division:  
- A  
- B  
- C  
- D  
- E  
- F

40)  Number of divisions you have worked in this department:  
- 1-3  
- 4-6  
- 7-9  
- 10 or more

41)  Grade:  
- Level 17-36  
- Level 41-54

42)  Year of Service:  
- Less than 3 years  
- 3 - 10  
- 11 - 18  
- 19-26  
- 27 or more

43)  Number of years in this current position:  
- Less than 3 years  
- 3 - 10  
- 11 - 18  
- 19-26  
- 27 or more

Thank you very much for your time to complete this survey. I really appreciate it.
INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH PROJECT

Project Title: The Impact of Slow Career Growth on Organizational Commitment and Job Satisfaction: A Study of a ‘Closed’ Government Agency in Malaysia

PhD Researcher:
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Rosalie Holian, PhD   Jiaying Zhang, PhD
Research Supervisor, Assoc. Professor   Research Supervisor
School of Management   School of Management,
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Tel: + (61 3) 99255943   Tel: + (61 3) 9925 1649

Dear Participant,

You are invited to participate in a research project being conducted through the RMIT University and the (name of the department has been removed for the purpose of confidentiality). Please read this sheet carefully and be confident that you understand its
contents before deciding whether to participate. If you have any questions about the project, please ask investigator or her supervisors.

Who is involved in this research project? Why is it being conducted?
This is a RMIT research project being undertaken by Ku Azizah Ku Daud as a part of her Doctor of Philosophy (Management) degree requirement. The researcher is also serving for the department and is on leave to undertake the PhD degree. She is under the supervision of Assoc. Prof Rosalie Holian and Dr Jiaying Zhang from RMIT University. As part of PhD study the research plan for this project has been approved by the RMIT Business College Human Ethics Advisory Network and the department.

Why have you been approached?
The study intends to look at the role of career growth on organizational commitment and job satisfaction among officers of a ‘closed’ government agency in the Malaysian. This study aims to better understand how employee’s experience with the process is affecting organizational commitment and job satisfaction.
We are approaching customs officers from various levels and responsibilities with 3 years working experience and Grade between 54-17 from this department to participate in this research.
Information of respondents are obtained through the list of directories that readily available on the department official website.

What is the project about? What are the questions being addressed?
The questions being addressed mostly regard an experiences job satisfaction, your organizational commitment, and the human resource practices such as career growth.

Previous research in public administration and human resource management have emphasised the urgent need for more empirical study in public sector organizations. This study focuses on the relationships between several important organisational factors and their impacts on satisfaction and commitment in public sector organisations.
This study will focus on several branches of the department i.e. Putrajaya (headquarters), Kuala Lumpur (capital city), Perak (suburb) and Kuala Lumpur International Airport (airport). A total of 2,135 uniformed officers in those four different working environments are chosen so that the outcomes may reflect a broad range of responsibilities.

If I agree to participate, what will I be required to do?
The survey consists of a set of questionnaires which will take approximately 20 minutes to complete. The questions cover job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and career growth. You will also be asked for some demographic details.
What are the possible risks or disadvantages?
Some of the research questions may make you uncomfortable or upset. You are free to decline to answer any questions you don't wish to, or to stop the survey at any time and return to it some other time. If you are concerned about your responses or if you find participation in the survey distressing, you should contact investigator as soon as possible. Investigator will discuss your concerns with you confidentially and suggest appropriate follow-up, if necessary. Participation in this research is completely voluntary and confidential. You may withdraw your participation at any time without prejudice; there will be no penalty to you or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

What are the benefits associated with participation?
Although there is no direct benefit to you from taking part in this study, it is hoped that your input will provide significant information regarding the career growth factors that may or may not have an effect on employee’s level of job satisfaction and organizational commitment particularly in Malaysia context.

What will happen to the information I provide?
In terms of the privacy of participants, the researcher will assign pseudonyms or non-identifying alphanumeric codes to each of the respondents as well as avoid including any identifying information in the account of the respondent. Any reports will not disclose individual data or respondents’ identity in published reports (e.g. results will be pooled).

We assume that you have given consent by your completion and return of the survey questionnaires.

Your privacy and confidentiality will be strictly maintained in such a manner that you will not be identified in the thesis report or any publication. Any information that you provide can be disclosed only if (1) it is to protect you or others from harm, (2) a court order is produced, or (3) you provide the researchers with written permission.

The data will be retained for five years upon completion of the project after which time paper records will be shredded and placed in a security recycle bin and electronic data will be deleted/destroyed in a secure manner. All hard data will be kept in a locked cabinet and soft data in a password protected computer in the office of the researcher at the RMIT University. Only the investigator and her supervisors will have access to the data.

What are my rights as a participant?
The right to withdraw from participation at any time
The right to have any unprocessed data withdrawn and destroyed, provided it can be reliably identified, and provided that so doing does not increase the risk for the participant.
The right to have any questions answered at any time.

Whom should I contact if I have any questions?
In the first instance, please contact the PhD researcher. You may also contact her supervisors directly.
What other issues should I be aware of before deciding whether to participate?
There are no other issues that you should be aware of before deciding to participate.

Yours sincerely,

Ku Azizah Ku Daud
PhD degree Student

If you have any complaints about the conduct of this research project, please contact the Chair, RMIT Business College Human Ethics Advisory Network, GPO Box 2476V, Melbourne, 3001, telephone +61 3 9925 5596, email bcchein@rmit.edu.au
APPENDIX E: Ethics Approval

RMIT UNIVERSITY

Business College Human Ethics Advisory Network (BCHEAN)
Building 108, Level 11
239 Bourke Street
Melbourne VIC 3000
Tel. +61 3 9925 5555
Fax +61 3 9925 5624

Notice of Project Amendment Approval

Date: 4 December 2012
GPO Box 2476V Melbourne VIC 3001
Australia

Project Number: 1000343

Project Title: The Role of Career Growth on Organizational Commitment and Job Satisfaction: A Study of A Malaysian Public Sector

Risk Classification: Low Risk
Principal Investigator: Miss Ku Azizah Ku Daud
Other Investigators: Associate Professor Rosalie Holian, Dr Jiaying Zhang

Project Approved: from: 26 October 2011 to: 19 July 2014

Project Amendment Approved: from: 29 November 2012

Amendment Details: Conduct survey

Terms of approval:

1. Responsibilities of the principal investigator

It is the responsibility of the principal investigator to ensure that all other investigators and staff on a project are aware of the terms of approval and to ensure that the project is conducted as approved by BCHEAN. Approval is only valid while the investigator holds a position at RMIT University.

2. Amendments

Approval must be sought from BCHEAN to amend any aspect of a project including approved documents. To apply for an amendment submit a request for amendment form to the BCHEAN secretary. This form is available on the Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) website. Amendments must not be implemented without first gaining approval from BCHEAN.
3. **Adverse events**

You should notify BCHEAN immediately of any serious or unexpected adverse effects on participants or unforeseen events affecting the ethical acceptability of the project.

4. **Participant Information and Consent Form (PICF)**

The PICF must be distributed to all research participants, where relevant, and the consent form is to be retained and stored by the investigator. The PICF must contain the RMIT University logo and a complaints clause including the above project number.

5. **Annual reports**

Continued approval of this project is dependent on the submission of an annual report.

6. **Final report**

A final report must be provided at the conclusion of the project. BCHEAN must be notified if the project is discontinued before the expected date of completion.

7. **Monitoring**

Projects may be subject to an audit or any other form of monitoring by BCHEAN at any time.

B. **Retention and storage of data**

The investigator is responsible for the storage and retention of original data pertaining to a project for a minimum period of five years.

Regards,

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EOz

Professor Roslyn Russell
Chairperson
RMIT BCHEAN