

FACTORS AFFECTING ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT AMONG LECTURERS IN HIGHER EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION IN MALAYSIA

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Abstract

A study was conducted to determine MARA Professional Colleges lecturers' perception on organizational commitment. The study builds on social exchange theory and organizational model to identify the factors influencing the organizational commitment of these lecturers. The study analyzes whether or not there is a significant relationship between job satisfaction, job involvement, perceived organizational support and organizational commitment among lecturers in MARA Professional Colleges. Data were collected via questionnaires from 132 lecturers of three different MARA Professional Colleges. The study utilizes correlation and regression statistics to analyze the data. The findings of the survey show there is a significant relationship between job satisfaction ($r=0.307$), job involvement ($r=0.536$) and perceived organizational support ($r=0.489$). Job involvement contributed the most which is 28.8%, followed by perceived organizational support 23.9% and job satisfaction contributed 9.4% towards organizational commitment among MARA Professional College lectures. The study focuses on MARA Professional Colleges and concentrates only on the organizational commitment among academicians. The results suggest an improvement of social change by increasing job involvement, perceived organizational support and job satisfaction is an efficient way of obtaining highly committed human resource. The results of the study have valuable implications for policy makers in MARA Higher Education Division, college administrators and educators.

Keywords: Organizational Commitment, Job Satisfaction, Job Involvement, Perceived Organizational Support

INTRODUCTION

Committed human resources are organization's greatest assets. In order to ensure excellent and experienced academic staff always attached with the educational institutions. Committed employee should receive superior attention. Moreover, when committed lecturer quits, the college will be burden with high cost and implications for the education system. Committed and quality lecturer will take with them their teaching skills and experience.

Meyer and Allen (1993) have recognized that organizational commitment as a leading factor impacting the level of achievement in many organizations. A lot of studies have been conducted on the relationship of organizational commitment either towards job satisfaction, job involvement or perceived organizational support only. However, only few have been carried out on the collaboration of these three factors towards the organizational commitment. Besides, there is very little research done to identify factors that impact organizational commitment among academics (Chang & Choi, 2007; Chen et al., 2007; Freund, 2005; Obeng & Ugboro, 2003).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Organizational commitment is as "a strong belief in and acceptance of the organization's goals and values; a willingness to exert considerable effort on behalf of the organization; and a strong desire to maintain membership in the organization" (Mowday, R.T., Steers, R.M., & Porter, L.W. (1979). The concept of organizational commitment has been conceptualized from various perspectives. In this current study, the concept of organizational commitment will be discussed from the behavioral approach and psychological approach. From the behavioral approach, organizational commitment has been studied from the output of rewards/ contribution exchange processes between employers and employees (Morris & Sherman, 1981). On the other hand, the psychological approach looks at organizational commitment from the view of the attachment or identification of employees with the organization at which they work.

The model of Meyer and Allen (1997) used in this current study proposed a three-component model of organizational commitment according to the nature of the bond that exists between an employee and employer as below:

1. Affective commitment is employee's emotional attachment to, identification with and involvement in the organization (Meyer et.al., 1993; Shore and Tetrick, 1991; Romzek, 1990)
2. Continuance commitment that is based on the costs that the employee links with leaving the organization or on a perceived lack of alternative employment opportunities.(Buitendach and De Witte, 2005;Reichers, 1985; Murray, Gregoire, & Downey,1991)

3. Normative commitment that involves the employee's feelings of obligation to stay with the organization.(Meyer & Allen, 1991; Wiener and Gechman, 1977; Roussenu, 1995)

Job satisfaction is one of the most regularly measured organizational variables and frequently referred to as an employee's global attitudinal or affective response to their job. Mankjee et al. (2006) explained that job satisfaction was basically the way individuals thought and felt about their multifaceted work experience. Loui (1995) examined the relationship between job satisfaction and organizational commitment among 109 workers and reported that there are positive relationship between organizational commitment and job satisfaction. Another study by Coleman & Cooper (1997) explained that job satisfaction was positively related to both affective and normative commitment. A study by Rajendran and Raduan (2005) also showed the same result that is job satisfaction has a positive influence on affective and normative commitment

Mathieu and Zajac (1990) define job involvement as a belief descriptive of an employee's relationship with the present job. Joiner and Bakalis (2006) suggested that job involvement describes how interested, enmeshed, and engrossed the worker is in the goals, culture, and tasks of a given organization. A study by Uygur and Kilic (2009) involving employees working in the central Organization of the Ministry of Health revealed that there is a positive correlation between organizational commitment and job involvements.

In organization researchers, the social exchange theory (Blau, 1964), and the concept of perceived organizational support (POS) have been applied to explain the psychological process underlying the employee attitudes and behaviors (Settoon, Bennett & Liden, 1996; Wayne et al., 2002). Exchanges between an employee and employing organization are called POS. Review of POS literature uses social exchange theory interpretation of organizational commitment to explain how an employee's commitment to an organization is influenced by the organization's commitment to employee (Jackson et al., 2004). Many researchers have investigated the effects of POS on important work outcomes such as affective commitment and turnover intention (Eisenberger et al., 1986; Eisenberger et al., 1990; Settoon et al., 1996; Wayne et al., 1997).

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Educational institution is considered as a service industry playing key role in developing smart, well educated with first class mentality human capital required in vision 2020. Therefore, the main player is academicians who are responsible to produce future human capital needed by the nation. As per Atan (2007), academic staffs that are committed to improve teaching and learning methods, strengthening research and innovation are the main factor in order to turn Malaysia into leading education hub.

Majlis Amanah Rakyat (MARA) through Bahagian Pendidikan Tinggi (BPT) has taken many steps to strengthen its education sector in order to support Malaysia into a leading education hub. Since, committed human resources are organization's greatest assets, therefore identifying factors that help to foster organizational commitment among MARA lecturers is important. Moreover, when committed lecturer quits, MARA will be burden with high cost and implications for the education system. Committed and quality lecturer will take with them their teaching skills and experiences.

Due to this, there is a desire to conduct a study focussing on factors that will influence organizational commitment among lecturers in MARA Professional Colleges. This study will investigate whether or not job satisfaction, job involvement and perceived organizational influence organizational commitment among MARA lecturers.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between job satisfaction, job involvement, and perceived organizational support towards organizational commitment among academicians. It is hoped that the findings of the study will provide empirical evidences in the aspects of factor impacting organizational commitment among academics and fulfil the research gap due to lack of studies conducted among academicians on organizational commitment. At the same time, the findings from this research will be useful to policy makers in MARA Higher Education Division and college administrator in order to maximize the capacity and capability of its lecturers by increasing their level of commitment.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The current study is thus conducted to address the following research questions:

1. Does job satisfaction contribute towards organizational commitment (Affective, continuance and normative)
2. Does job involvement contribute towards organizational commitment (Affective, continuance and normative)
3. Does perceived organizational support contribute towards organizational commitment (Affective, continuance and normative)

METHODOLOGY

This study was carried out through a survey method using questionnaires as the main instrument. The sample consists of respondents among lecturers from three MARA Professional Colleges.

The conceptual framework for this current study is suggested in Figure 1. This framework was imitative from earlier theories on antecedents and consequences of organizational commitment such as social exchange theory (Blau, 1964) and model of organisational commitment by Meyer & Allen (1997). The concept of exchange says that individual becomes attached to the organization in return for gains provided by the organization.

This conceptual framework explains that organizational commitment among academics is influenced by job satisfaction, job involvement and perceived organizational support .The dependent variable in this research is organizational commitment. Organizational commitment can be defined through the strength of employee's identification with, and involvement, in a particular organization. The independent variables are job satisfaction, job involvement, and perceived organizational support.

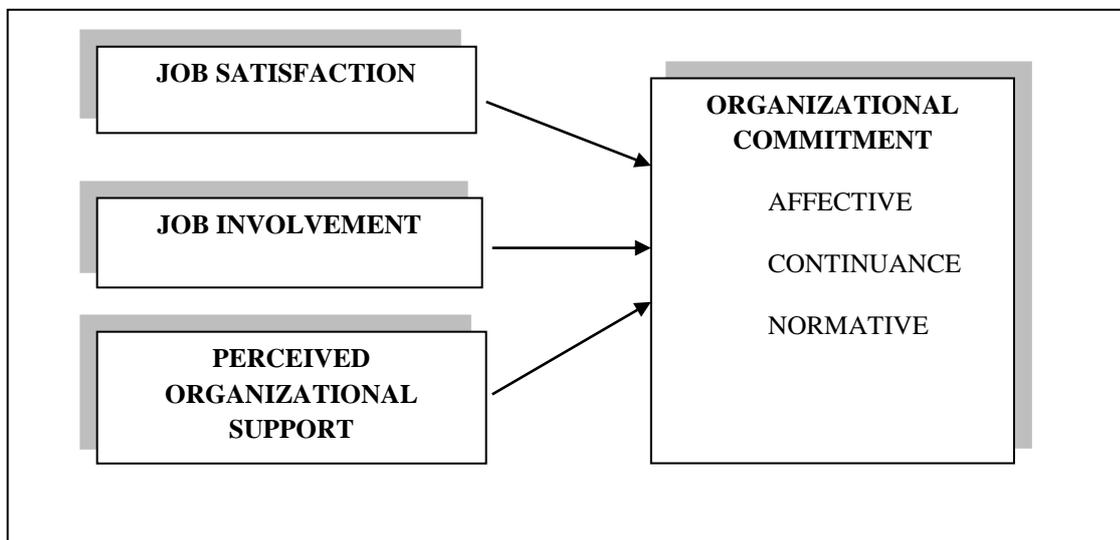


Figure 1: Research Conceptual Framework

The questionnaires consist of five parts to measure the studied elements, where the independent variables are job satisfaction (Spector, 1997), job involvement (Kanugo, 1982) and perceived organizational support (Eisenberger et al., 1986). The dependent variable was organizational commitment with three subscales that are affective, continuance and normative commitment.

The method used to measure job satisfaction in this current study is Job Satisfaction Survey (JSS) (Spector, 1997). No modification was made on the current questionnaires. The survey uses a faceted approach to the measurement of satisfaction in terms of specific identifiable characteristics related to the job (Luthans, 1998). It measures nine aspects of an employee's satisfaction: Pay, Promotion, Supervision, Fringe Benefits, Contingent Rewards (performance based rewards), Operating Procedures (required rules and procedures), Coworkers, Nature of Work, and Communication (Spector, 1997). The JSS consist of 36 items, and there are 4 items for each facet.

To measure the job involvement, 10 items from the Job Involvement Questionnaire (JIQ) developed by Kanugo (1982) is used. However, modification was made by the current researcher due to a reliability test. Therefore, in the current study only 9 items were used. Perceived organizational support is measured using Survey of Perceived Organizational Support adapted from Eisenberger et al., (1986). Modifications were made by the researchers in terms of rewording the construct in order to fit with a particular sample. The shorter version which consists of 8 items was used in the current study. Organizational commitment survey developed by Meyer and Allen (1997) was used. Modifications were also done by the researchers in terms of the construct in order to fit with a particular sample. It identifies 24 items that can be broken into 3 subscales based on the definition of organizational commitment that is affective commitment, continuance commitment and normative commitment. A likert scale format with 7 choices per item is used ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree".

A pilot study was carried out to revise the questionnaires and for item analysis. The validity and reliability of the questionnaires were measured. The internal consistencies of scale were assessed through computing Cronbach's Alpha. The components of factor affecting organizational commitment show the reliability value ranging from 0.6 to 0.9. Implication from these values indicates that all of the items used for each component in the questionnaire have a high and consistent reliability values.

FINDINGS

i) **The relationship between job satisfaction, job involvement, perceived organizational support and organizational commitment (Affective, continuance and normative).**

Correlations were calculated to determine to what extent job satisfaction, job involvement and perceived organizational support correlated with organizational commitment. As can be seen in Table 1, significant positive correlations ($p < .05$) were formed for all three variables. Correlations ranged from 0.307 for job satisfaction, 0.489 for perceived organizational support to 0.536 for job involvement.

Table 1: Analysis of Pearson Correlation-Zero Order

	Job Satisfaction	Job Involvement	Perceived Organizational Support
Organizational Commitment	0.307 (132) P=0.00	0.536 (132) P=0.00	0.489 (132) P=0.00
Job Satisfaction	1.000 (0) P=0.00	0.150 (132) P=0.087	0.512 (132) P=0.00

Job Involvement	0.150 (132) P=0.087	1.000 (0) P=0.00	0.422 (132) P=0.00
Perceived Organizational Support	0.512 (132) P=0.00	0.422 (132) P=0.00	1.000 (0) P=

*p<0.05

The correlation coefficient value gained from this analysis shows a solid relationship between the variables (Davies in Baharom, 2004). This results show that there is a relationship between job satisfaction, job involvement and perceived organizational support towards organizational commitment among MARA Professional Colleges lecturers.

ii) Contribution of job satisfaction, job involvement, perceived organizational support towards organizational commitment (Affective, continuance and normative)

The result from the correlation as shown in Table 1 fulfils the required conditions for regression analysis. The correlation analysis shows that the studied dependent variable does not have a high correlation. Tabachnik and Fidell (1996) in Pallant (2001) stated that regression analysis can only be done if the correlation value between studied enabler is < 0.7. Thus, the regression analysis can be carried out. Linear regression analysis was used to determine the contribution of the independent variable which is job satisfaction, job involvement and perceived organizational support towards organizational commitment among lecturers in MARA Professional College as stated in hypothesis below:

H1: There is significant contribution from job satisfaction towards organizational commitment (affective, continuance and normative commitment).

H2: There is significant contribution from job involvement towards organizational commitment (affective, continuance and normative commitment).

H3: There is significant contribution from perceived organizational support towards organizational commitment (affective, continuance and normative commitment).

Table 2 and 3 show the results of linear regression analysis for the influence of job satisfaction towards organizational commitment. The linear regression analysis shows that the independent enabler which is job satisfaction is the indicator with correlation ($\beta=0.346$, $t=3.679$ and $p=0.000$) ($p<0.05$) and the value of R^2 ($R^2=0.094$) contributes 9.4% towards organizational commitment among MARA Professional College lecturers. Thus H1 will be accepted.

Table 2: Analysis of Linear Regression between Job Satisfactions towards Organizational Commitment

Independent Variable	β	Beta (β)	t	Sig.-t	R ²	Contribution (%)
Job Satisfaction	0.346	0.307	3.679	0.000	0.094	9.4
Constant	2.926		7.035	0.000		
R				0.307a		
R squared				0.094		
Adjusted R squared				0.087		
Standard Error				0.671		

Table 3: Analysis of Variance

Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	6.098	1	6.098	13.533	.000 ^a
Residual	58.573	130	.451		
Total	64.670	131			

The contribution of job satisfaction towards organizational commitment among MARA Professional College lecturers forms the linear regression as below:

$$Y = 2.926 + 0.346X_1 + 0.671$$

Y= Organizational Commitment

X₁= Job Satisfaction

Constant 2.926

Standard Error 0.416

The result of linear regression analysis for the influence of job involvement towards organizational commitment is shown in Tables 4 and 5. The linear regression analysis shows that the independent enabler which is job involvement is the indicator with correlation ($\beta=0.419$, $t=7.246$ and $p=0.000$) ($p<0.05$) and the value of R² ($R^2=0.288$) contributes 28.8% towards organizational commitment among MARA Professional College lecturers. Thus H2 will be accepted.

Table 4: Analysis of Linear Regression between Job Involvements towards Organizational Commitment

Independent Variable	β	Beta (β)	t	Sig.-t	R ²	Contribution (%)
Job Involvement	0.419	0.536	7.246	0.000	0.288	28.8
Constant	2.604		10.066	0.000		
R				0.536a		
R squared				0.288		

Table 7: Analysis of Variance

Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	15.444	1	15.444	40.786	.000 ^a
Residual	49.226	130	.379		
Total	64.670	131			

The contribution of perceived organizational support towards organizational commitment among MARA Professional College lecturers forms the linear regression as below:

$$Y = 3.080 + 0.332X_1 + 0.615$$

Y= Organizational Commitment

X₁= Perceived Organizational Support

Constant 3.080

Standard Error 0.220

From the linear regression analysis can be concluded that job involvement contributed the most which is 28.8%, followed by perceived organizational support 23.9% and job satisfaction contributed 9.4% towards organizational commitment among lecturers in MARA Professional Colleges.

DISCUSSION & PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

Social exchange theory is the driving force that primarily influences employee organizational commitment specifically; job satisfaction, job involvement and perceived organizational support were identified as key drivers of organizational commitment.

In the current study, job involvement was found to have a strong positively linked with organizational commitment. Job involvement also was identified as a major contributor to organizational commitment among lecturers in MARA Professional Colleges. Research by Janis (1982) and Loui (1995) also support these findings. Literature review regarding job involvement provided evidence of job involvement as significant predictor of organizational commitment (Kanugo, 1982; Hafer & Martin, 2006; Wegge et al., 2007; Uygur & Kilic, 2009).

Since job involvement is a strong predictor of organizational commitment, Higher Educational Division and college administrator must take action to increase job involvement of the lecturers. The multidimensional model of job involvement by Yoshimura (1996), suggests that the individual variable which affect the job involvement can be divided into individual personality and organizational variables. Individual personality such as locus of control, growth needs, working values, way of being socialized, career stage and successful job experience whereas for organizational variables are like participation in decision making, job type and human resource management (Yoshimura, 1996). Therefore, people who are very involved in their job will not feel the need to leave the organization. Thus, by increasing

the degree of employees' self-esteem will enrich job involvement and may lead to higher commitment.

Job satisfaction is said to have direct impact on organizational commitment even though it is not a strong predictor. It reflects that when the level of job satisfaction increases, the level of organizational commitment also increases slightly. Therefore, this factor should be increased to improve an employee's commitment to an organization. Findings from the current study in relation to facets of job satisfaction revealed that most of the lecturers are satisfied with the nature of work and least satisfied with operating condition and promotion. Results from the current study is consistent with the study conducted by Clay-Warner et al.,(2005) on organizational justice and job satisfaction. Procedural justice and the level of fairness in the methods by which rewards were distributed among employees by the organization directly impacted an employee's level of satisfaction. Therefore, it is recommended that the institution's rules, policies and procedures should be fair and equitable According to McFarlin and Sweeney (1992), the fairness of an institution's procedures defines the institution's capacity to treat its employees fairly. Thus, if employees see the procedures as fair, they are likely to view the organization positively, which in turn would motivate them to remain committed to their respective institutions. Therefore, higher authorities in MARA Higher Education Division should make an intensive effort to improve procedures and reward distributions at MARA Professional Colleges.

Since most of the lecturers are satisfied with the nature of work, the current jobs should be enriched so as to make them more interesting, challenging, and motivating. Furthermore, most research indicated that the presence of certain core job dimensions such as autonomy (Dunham et al., 1994), job challenge (Meyer et al., 1997), variety (Steers, 1977) and positive feedback (Hutchison & Garstka, 1996) direct to greater commitment. As a result, it is recommended that MARA Higher Education Division should give more autonomy to teachers such as giving them more freedom to choose text books, determine the teaching methodology, set grading and evaluation criteria for their courses and also be given some discretion in scheduling their classes. Besides autonomy, current jobs can be enriched by adding variety to their work like giving a right balance between teaching and research. Presently, conducting research in their respective areas of specialization is not a requirement for lecturers in MARA Professional Colleges. If there is a right blend of teaching and research, the lecturers will not only have a greater variety of work to do but will also get a chance to upgrade their skills and abilities.

The present study shows a moderately significant relationship between perceived organizational support and organizational commitment. In line with the current studies, Tek (2009) found evidence that perceived organizational support has a direct influence on organizational commitment based on research amongst 134 academicians in four private universities in Malaysia. Several studies have provided evidence that perceived organizational support plays a critical role in enhancing organizational commitment (Eisenberger et al., 1986; Mottaz, 1988; Vancouver et al., 1994). As perceived organizational support is related to organizational commitment, organizations should find ways to promote higher perceived organizational support employees. Hence, the organizations should always recognize the academician's contributions and care for their well being in order to achieve

the organization's mission so that the academicians can deliver high quality teaching and support Malaysia into a leading education hub.

Job satisfaction, job involvement and perceived organizational support have been identified as significant factors that influence organizational commitment among academicians. Director of each MARA Professional Colleges may use this useful information as an opportunity to create committed team of lecturers. This is because lecturers are part of an influential force that plays a key role in the success of students which at the end shows the success of the institution.

CONCLUSION

From the above discussion, it is clear that fostering commitment among faculty members has important implications for educational institutions. Therefore, highly committed lecturers would make a positive contribution to their respective institutions and may lead to increase the effectiveness of the educational institutions. Thus, institutions which seek to retain their lecturers by building strong organizational commitment are in a better position to reap the benefits of a more dedicated, motivated, and reliable teaching staff.

In total, this study contributes to the limited body of knowledge underlying the formation of organizational commitment among academicians through the perspectives of social exchange theory. Besides, it justifies the importance of creating organizational commitment among academicians in order to turn Malaysia into a leading educational hub.

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