The Impact of Organizational Commitment among Executives in Retail Industry, Klang Valley (Malaysia)

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Abstract- *The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship of job satisfaction, organizational empowerment and trust, career advancement opportunities and moderating effect of gender on organizational commitment. Five broadly hypothesized relationships were tested in a field of study among executives and non-executives serving in retail industry within Klang Valley, Malaysia. Out of 2500 questionnaires posted out to the selected retail outlets within Klang Valley, Malaysia, 983 completed questionnaires were returned of which only 961 were usable (39% return rate) which was considered a very good respond especially in the survey method research. Those retails and respondents that selected in this research paper were the executives and non-executives that engaged their services in multiple branches within Klang Valley, Malaysia. By and large, the results from hierarchical regression and Manova analysis provided moderate support for the hypotheses. The result of the study showed a positive relationship between organizational commitment with job satisfaction, organizational empowerment & trust, and organizational justice. It also showed that there was a significant relationship between the employees' personal attributes such as gender. The overall result showed that, the higher the organizational commitment level that employees possessed the better performance will be delineated towards their organization.*

INTRODUCTION

The advent of globalization and technological innovation has given rise to the need for organizations to be efficient and at the same time produce value added outputs. Through employees, organizations can garner competitive advantage. Committed employees take pride in organizational membership, believe in the goals and values of the organization, and therefore, exhibit higher levels of performance and productivity (Steinhaus & Perry, 1996). Because low morale and productivity are costly for organizations, it is important for organizations to determine what affect organizational commitment and to nurture it.

Satisfaction with the job as a significant contributor to organizational commitment has been well documented (for instance, Flynn & Solomon, 1985; Testa, 2001). Hence, today's managers find it hard to ignore the issue of job satisfaction. This is because employees who are satisfied with their jobs are more likely to be committed to the employing organization. These workers, in turn, are more likely to exert extra effort and make positive contributions to the organization, all of which helps to enhance effectiveness and success. Although there are number of studies on the predictors of organizational commitment using Malaysian subjects have been reported (for instance, Lian, 1998; Abdullah, 2001), very few have focused on the relationship between job satisfaction and commitment (Hai, 1994). Hence, the first objective of the study is to examine whether job satisfaction, organizational empowerment and trust and career advancement opportunities have a positive effect on employees' commitment to the organization. Concurrently, the second aim of this study is to explore the role of gender as a moderator in the relationship between job satisfaction and organizational commitment.

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LITERATURE REVIEW

Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction involves the satisfaction that being derived from engaged in work. It is an attitude or an end feeling that the employees' experience after completed a task. From the literature review, employees who are happy with their job contribute in a more positive way toward organization. Locke (1976) defined job satisfaction as the pleasurable emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job as achieving or facilitating the achievement of one's job values.

According to Yoong (1997), job satisfaction can be derived through individuals themselves. Individuals must first determine their needs and wants and then rank them in terms of importance. In line to that, Stanley (2001) mentioned that employees with high levels of job satisfaction are positive about their workplace. Every manager should work diligently to increase job satisfaction.

Because, high job satisfaction leads to high productivity, low absenteeism, low turnover, and low rates of major setbacks like heart disease and stroke. In addition, employees who are happy with their jobs contribute in a more positive way towards society however; low job satisfaction can turn an exciting career into a dreaded workplace.

Organizational Empowerment and Trust

Empowerment

According to Benson (1991) empowerment has been credited as a primary factor in the phenomenal success of businesses in Japan and other countries in Europe. Research shows that those organizations that empower their employees experience increased morale and productivity (Shannon, 1991). While there is recognition that empowerment will enable businesses to thrive in the fiercely competitive marketplace of the future, as mentioned by Bernstein (1992).

In the same vein, Byham (1992) further added that recognition of and respect for the employee adds to the feeling of empowerment. To fully utilize human capital, i.e. employees, Shera and Page (1995) advised managers to find ways to trust their workers in making decisions. Daley (1991) noted that leaders in empowering organizations are characterized by openness and receptivity to new ideas as well as by their caring and respectful attitude.

Several investigators stress importance of participative decision-making and empowerment, with increase employee self-efficacy (Conger & Kanugo, 1988), job satisfaction (Spector, 1986), and task motivation (Thomas & Velthouse, 1990). Empowerment occurs when employees are given the opportunity to control their work environment and influence decisions that affect them and their organization.

Organizational Trust

Colbert and Kwon (2000) noted that trust competence is highly influenced by organization member's view of the consultant's capacity to understand their organization and to take into account its unique attributes and concerns.

Ironically, at a time when trust is most needed for successful organizational transformation, the changes resulting from restructuring have diminished trust within the work setting. According to Laschinger, Labatt, Finegan and Wilk (2011) nurses, the largest group of health-care providers in hospitals, have been particularly hard hit by recent downsizing. It is quite possible that their mistrust of the system could potentially threaten the quality of patient care.

According to Laschinger et al., (2011) high levels of organizational trust are needed to accomplish change, yet paradoxically, the change itself may destroy trust and threaten organizational effectiveness. As continue trend of downsizing, employee trust and morale are eroded as workloads increase and job insecurity escalates. In such low trust organizations, behaviors such as high absenteeism, prolonged breaks, limited learning, low accountability, reactionary thinking, and low creativity are predictably common (Laschinger et al., 2001).

Career Advancement Opportunities

Painter (1994) conducted a study of job satisfaction and the result show that the extrinsic rewards of salary, career advancement and organizational trust were the most significant predictors of overall job satisfaction. While, Gaines (1994) wrote an article on career advancement and job satisfaction. He

found that one approach to keep employees dedicated and productive when traditional rewards cannot be given is to help employees take charge of their career advancement or development and job satisfaction. This can be done by helping employees assess their skills, determining what they like and dislike about their job and identify areas they would like to develop or change. This type of process encourages people to probe deeply into motivates them and what would make their work more satisfying.

Organizational Commitment

Colbert and Kwon (2000) mentioned as organizations recognize the competitive advantage that can be gained through human resources, research on organizational commitment has gained its importance. To determine factors that related to organizational commitment may be useful on several levels and its importance has increased dramatically when the right factors determined. Mathieu and Zajac (1990) found that organizational commitment to be strongly related to the intention to leave one's job and to the intention to search for job alternatives. They also found a positive relationship between organizational commitment and lateness as well as organizational commitment and turnover. Thus, with a better understanding of the behavior and a better knowledge of the antecedents of organizational commitment will enable organizations to manage these withdrawal behaviors.

Simultaneously, research done by Porter, Steers, Mowday and Boulin (1974) developed one commonly used definition of organization commitment. In their definition, three factors of organizational commitment were identified: a strong belief in and acceptance of the organization, and a strong desire to remain in the organization. A fifteen-item organizational commitment questionnaire (OCQ) was developed to measure organizational commitment based on this definition. Besides Porter et. al, Allen and Meyer (1990) did their studies and separated organizational commitment into three components: affective, continuance and normative. The affective component refers to the employee's emotional attachment to, identification with and involvement in the organization. The continuance component refers commitment based on the costs that the employee associates with leaving the organization. The normative component refers to the employees feeling of obligation to remain with the organization. From their studies, Allen and Meyer (1990) developed a twenty-four-item scale to measure the three components of organizational commitment.

Gender As a Moderator

Chusmir (1986) argued that for men, satisfaction with job circumstances, often lead to higher organizational commitment. For women, favorable job situations may be outweighed by the effects of unfavorable family circumstances. Chusmir (1986) explained that workers, who are satisfied with their jobs, find their work meaningful, can use their skills fully, and are likely to be strongly committed to the organization. Using Chusmir's (1986) explanation, it seems plausible that the effect of job satisfaction on commitment among female employees would be lower than male employees. This is because women's feelings of satisfaction with the job would be outweighing by the feelings of satisfaction with one's family. An unsupportive family creates tension and consequently reduces the women's satisfaction with the job situation.

De Vaus and McAllister (1991) argued job characteristics such as control; autonomy, promotion, and security are equally important to men and women and have a positive relationship with job satisfaction. Since the jobs in which women are typically employed have fewer of these features, women tend to be less satisfied than men. Furthermore, women tend to be victims of various forms of discrimination (Northcraft & Gutek, 1993) and sex-role stereotyping (Ngo & Tsang, 1998), all of which may have reduced women's satisfaction in the job situation. Therefore, using the job model, it can be suggested that the relationship between job satisfaction and organizational commitment would be stronger for men than women.

METHODOLOGY

Research Model and Hyphotheses

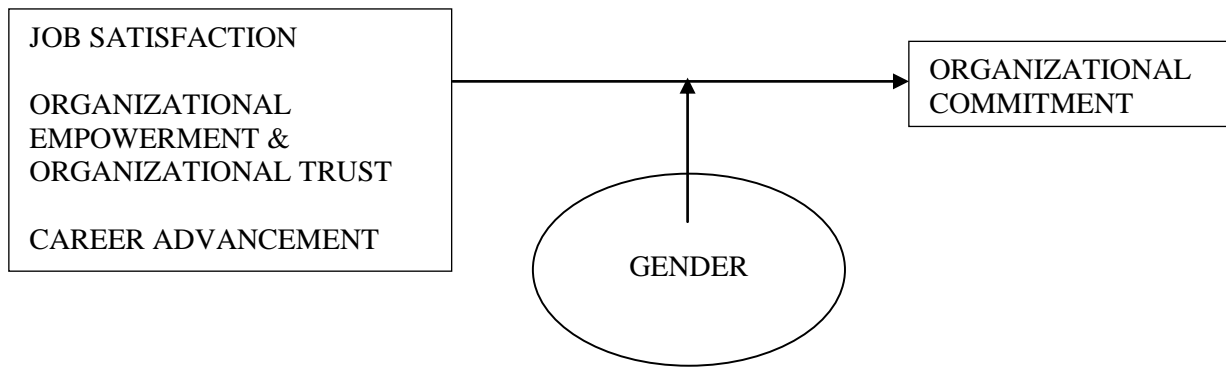Based on the review of literature, the framework proposed for this study is as follows:

Figure 1. Research model

Accordingly, the hypotheses posited for this study are:

H₁: There will be a positive relationship between job satisfaction and organizational commitment.

H₂: There will be a positive relationship between organizational empowerment and organizational commitment.

H₃: There will be a positive relationship between organizational trust and organizational commitment.

H₄: There will be a positive relationship between career advancement opportunities and organizational commitment.

H₅: The relationship between job satisfaction, organizational empowerment, trust and career advancement opportunities facets and organizational commitment will be moderated by gender.

Sample and Procedure

Participants in the study consisted of executives and non-executive employees attached to retail industry located in Klang Valley, Malaysia. A total of 2500 questionnaires were sent out to the human resource managers of the 100 companies. The selection of these retails was based on the simple random sampling method. A total of 25 questionnaires were assigned to each manager with instructions that the questionnaires should be distributed as follows: 5 senior executives, 10 executives, and 10 non-executives. Respondents were given two weeks to answer the questionnaires. A total of 983 responses were obtained representing a response rate of about 39%.

In terms of position, 39.5% were senior executives, 30% were executives, and the remaining 28% were non-executives. For gender, 41.4% of the respondents were males with the remaining 58.6% being females. Majority (72%) of the sample were single. In terms of ethnicity, the sample consisted of Chinese (82%), Malays (13.5%), and others (4.5%). Regarding education, a majority (62%) had certificates qualifications. In terms of salary, majority (73%) of the sample had a monthly income of RM$2200 or less. The mean age, job tenure and organizational tenure of the sample were 28.15 years, 6.55 years and 8.99 years respectively.

Measurement

The predictor variable used in this study is job satisfaction, organizational empowerment, organizational trust and career advancement opportunities. Job satisfaction was measured using the Job Descriptive Index (JDI) developed by Smith, Kendall, and Hulin (1969). For organizational empowerment, the self-constructed questionnaire was used to measure the four empowerment as described by Kanter (1968) which are; access to opportunity; information; support; and resources. Items were derived from Kanter's original ethnographic study of work empowerment, while for organizational trust; the interpersonal trust at work scale was used. This scale include 12-item instrument consisted of four subscales that would measure faith in the intentions of and confidence in actions of peers and managers which is adopted from Kanter (1968). For career advancement opportunities, the most common approach for measuring career advancement opportunities is the use of rating scales. To measure advancement opportunities, researcher had adapted the questionnaires developed by Narvan (1992).

The criterion variable used is organizational commitment was measured by the Organizational Commitment Questionnaire by (Mowday, Steers & Porter, 1979). Responses to the 15 items (for example, "I am willing to put in a great deal of effort beyond that normally expected in order to help this organization be successful") were captured on a 5-point scale (1= strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree). Six items were negatively phrased and had to be reverse-coded for analysis. Results were then summed and divided by 15 to arrive at a summary indicator of an employee's organizational commitment. Higher mean scores are indicative of greater organizational commitment.

As can be seen from Table 1, the Cronbach's alpha values for the dependent and independent variables were found to be above 0.7 (Nunnally, 1978). These results indicate that the measurements used in this study are statistically reliable.

Table 1. Reliability coefficients for the main variables

Variables	Total number of items	Cronbach Alpha
Job Satisfaction	18	0.7651
Organizational Empowerment	16	0.7853
Organizational Trust	12	0.7615
Career Advancement Opportunities	20	0.8323
Organizational Commitment	15	0.8761

RESULTS

Table 2 presents the means and standard deviations of the study variables.

Table 2. Means and standard deviations of the study variables

Variables	Mean	Standard Deviation
Job Satisfaction	1.2873	0.8695
Organizational Empowerment	1.5783	0.9168
Organizational Trust	1.7897	0.8765
Career Advancement Opportunities	1.8332	0.7591
Organizational Commitment	3.6158	0.6520

As can be observed from Table 2, the mean value for each of the five facets of independent variables varies from as low as 1.28 to as high as 1.83 for the sample involved. The standard deviation for these facets ranges from 0.75 to 0.92. Organizational commitment, on the other hand, had a mean value of 3.62 with a standard deviation of 0.65.

While following table depicts the Pearson's correlation coefficients of the study variables.

Table 3. Correlation coefficients for the main variables

	Organizational Commitment	Job Satisfaction	Organizational Empowerment	Organizational Trust	Career Advancement Opportunities
Org. Commitment	1.000				
Job Satisfaction	0.381[**]	1.000			
Organizational Empowerment	0.435[**]	0.687[**]	1.000		
Organizational Trust	0.476[**]	0.386[**]	0.438[**]	1.000	
$#Career Advancement Opportunities	0.419[**]	0.353[**]	0.453[**]	0.562[**]	1.000

** $p < 0.01$

By and large, all the independent variables had significant correlations ($p < 0.01$) with organizational commitment. As can be seen in Table 3, the correlation coefficients for the variables under investigation were relatively high ranging from 0.381 to 0.687.

The five hypotheses of this study were tested using hierarchical regression analysis (Cohen & Cohen, 1975). Based on this method, the four main variables were entered in the first step, followed by the moderating variable in the second step. In the third step, the interaction terms were entered. Table 4. depicts the results of the regression analysis for the dependent variable.

Table 4. Results of hierarchical regression analysis

Independent Variable	Std Beta Step 1	Std Beta Step 2	Std Beta Step 3
Model Variables			
Job Satisfaction	0.287**	0.237*	0.775**
Organizational Empowerment	0.376**	0.382**	0.357**
Organizational Trust	-0.006	-0.054	-0.253*
Career Advancement Opportunities	0.180	0.187*	0.088
Moderating Variable		-0.236**	-1.484**
Gender			
Interaction Terms			
JS*Gender			-0.658**
OE*Gender			0.182
OT*Gender			0.381
CAO*Gender			1.257**
R^2	0.551	0.630	0.729
Adj R^2	0.568	0.593	0.716
R^2 Change	0.583	0.042	0.134
Sig. F Change	0.000	0.005	0.000
Durbin Watson	2.083		

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$

It was discovered that the model variables together with the moderating variable of gender could jointly explain 63% of the variation in organizational commitment. A closer look at the individual variables showed that job satisfaction (β =0.237, $p < 0.01$), organizational empowerment (β =0.382, $p < 0.01$), career advancement opportunities (β =0.187, $p < 0.05$) were found to have a significant and positive effect on organizational commitment. The regression coefficient for gender was found to be significant ($\beta = -0.236$, $p < 0.01$).

Nevertheless, the negative coefficient indicates that the commitment of male employees is higher compared to those of female employees (since females were coded as 1 whilst males were coded as 0). These results provided support for the first, second, fourth, fifth and sixth hypotheses (H_1, H_2, H_4, and H_5) of the study. Since organizational trust had no significant effect on organizational commitment, the third hypothesis (H_3) was rejected. On examining the specific interaction terms, gender was found to moderate the relationship between job satisfaction and organizational commitment for female employees but not for male employees. Conversely, gender was found to moderate the relationship between career advancement opportunities and organizational commitment for male but not for female employees.

Moderating Effects of Gender

To show the moderating effect between gender and each facet of independent variable more clearly, graphs were drawn. To draw the graphs, the facets were first recoded into three categories ie: Low, Medium and High by dividing the respondents into three approximately equal group using percentile (0 – 33% = Low, 33.1 – 66% = Medium and 66.1 – 100% = High). The results of the significant interactions are presented in Figure 2.1 and 3.1 respectively.

When the moderating term was finally entered, the incremental variance in organizational commitment of 12.4% was found to be significant ($p<0.01$). In other words, gender did moderate the relationship between job satisfaction and organizational commitment. This result provided partial support for the final hypotheses (H_5) of the study. Specifically, only the moderating effects between

gender and satisfaction with pay and gender with satisfaction with co-workers were significant at p<0.01.
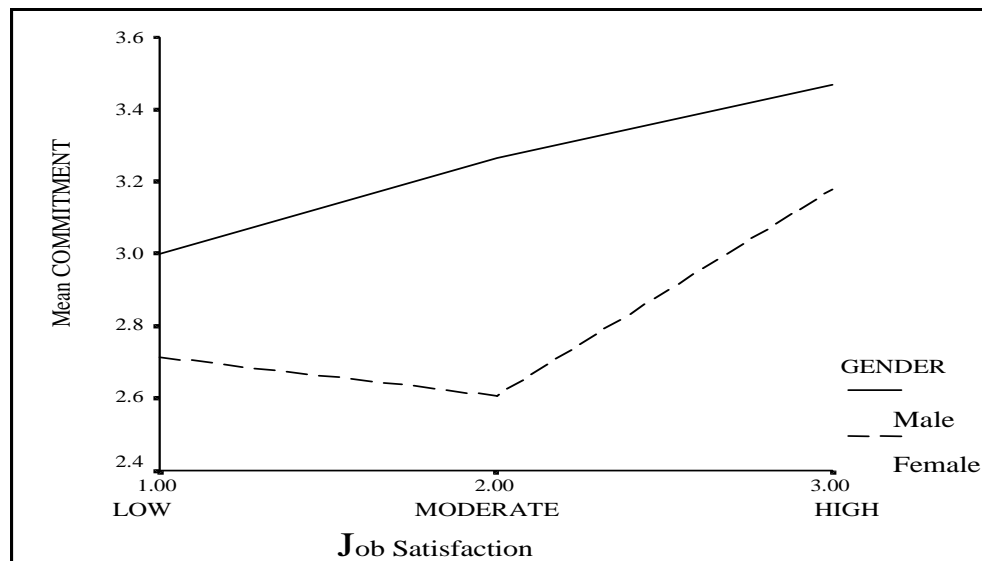

Figure 2. Graph for interaction between gender and job satisfaction

As can be seen in Figure 2, the change in the levels of commitment for male employees is constant. For female employees, however, the change shows a decreasing trend for those who have low to moderate satisfaction with their job and increases for those whose satisfaction with their jobs range from moderate to high levels.
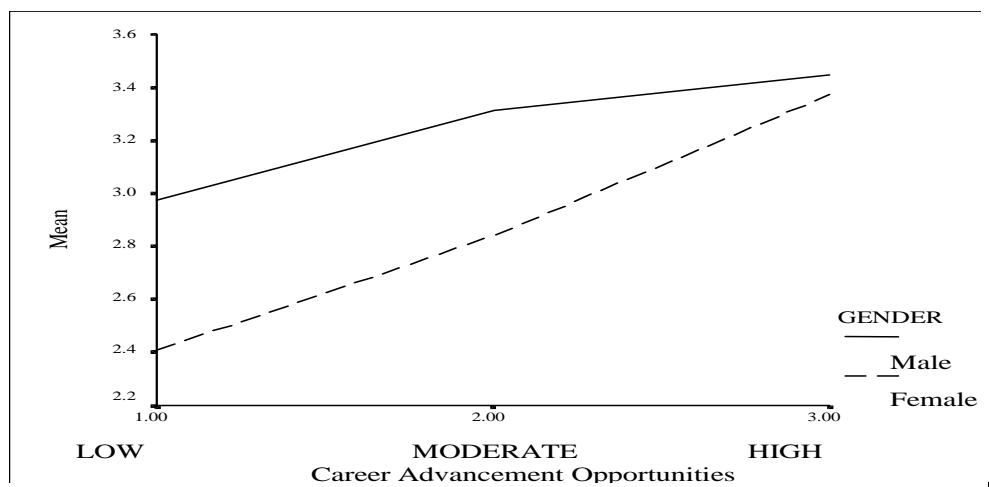

Figure 3. Graph for interaction between gender and career advancement opportunities

Figure 3. shows the interaction between gender and career advancement opportunities. As seen from this table, the change in the levels of commitment for female employees is constant. Male employees display increasing level of commitment for those with low to moderate satisfaction career advancement opportunities. For those having moderate to high levels of satisfaction with career advancement opportunities, there was no significant change in the commitment level.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The purpose of the current study was to determine the above variables within the Malaysian context. The results obtained in this study showed that job satisfaction, organizational empowerment and career advancement opportunities are important controllable determinant of employees' commitment to the organization. This result is consistent with those of previous researchers (for instance, Angle & Perry, 1983; Testa, 2001). The data suggests that job satisfaction, organizational empowerment and career advancement opportunities in this study, constitute a positive factor in influencing

organizational commitment. Loscocco (1989) argued that given a society in which most people have to work in order to support themselves, it is reasonable to consider the economic function of work as more basic than any additional functions it might serve.

It is plausible that when employees judged the organization to be fair and supportive in their treatment particularly with regards to the availability and frequency of career advancement opportunities, positive feelings of well-being will be created, which is likely to stimulate them to reciprocate by increasing their loyalty to the organization. The findings obtained from this research seem to suggest that managers need to ensure the satisfaction of their employees at work. Employers concerned with developing high levels of employee commitment need to focus their attention on providing ample empowerment, trust and career advancement opportunities, and favorable work environment that can foster positive perceptions.

The provision of satisfying job and career advancement opportunities will be able to fulfill employees' basic needs to live comfortably without much worry about their career after working hour which in turn will make the work life balance to be materialized. Sufficient empowerment and trust can act as a catalyst in enabling the employee to attain his/her personal goals and satisfy his/her higher-level needs. In this regard, managers need to be judgmental in their performance evaluation exercises on what sort of empowerment and trust to be placed on their employees.

In line to the above-mentioned, the findings from this research demonstrated that gender did moderate the relationship between job satisfaction facet and organizational commitment consistent with those of earlier researchers (De Vaus and McAllister,1991). Specifically, the relationship between job satisfaction and organizational commitment was found to vary among female workers. It is possible that the women in this sample were holding lower level positions whereby opportunities for promotion, empowerment and trust level were rather limited. Lacking of these job features among the female workers is most likely to reduce their job satisfaction levels, which in turn, may decrease their commitment towards the organization. As empowerment and career advancement opportunities increase, the commitment of female employees increases.

Conversely, the relationship between career advancement opportunities and organizational commitment was found to vary among male workers. When career advancement opportunities are positively viewed by the male workers, the male employees may devote their time and effort in serving their organization better.

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