

Antecedents of Organizational Commitment as Human Resource Strategy in a Developing Economy: Evidence from Electrical and Electronic Industry

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Abstract: This study aimed at determining the influences of perceived organization support and job satisfaction towards organizational commitment in a growing economy like Malaysia. Evidence was taken from Electrical and Electronic (E&E) organization in an industrial area KULIM, Malaysia. A total of 127 employees of Electrical and Electronic organization in KULIM responded to a well-structured questionnaire. After a thorough analysis of the data using version 19.0 of SPSS, the results showed that perceived organizational support and job satisfaction significantly influenced organizational commitment. This implies that organizational commitment is a critical success factor of an organization and is highly valued. Human resources are said to be the greatest asset of an organization, therefore commitment of internal customers of an organization should be seen as the organization's competitive advantage. To sustain that competitive advantage organizations need to constantly develop and improve on the relationship with their employees.

Key words: Perceived organizational support, job satisfaction organizational commitment, E&E, employees, KULIM

INTRODUCTION

Manufacturing remain the backbone of any economy despite the growing influence and contribution of service sector resulting from globalization (Manzuma *et al.*, 2016). The world is moving from manufacturing economy to knowledge based economy yet the contribution of production sector cannot be overestimated (Manzuma *et al.*, 2016). Electrical and Electronic (E&E) has become a leading light in manufacturing sector as a result of the penetrating influence of Information Communication Technology (ICT). Most developing economy invests heavily on E&E because of the potentialities and expected high rate of return.

In a country like Malaysia that aspired to be high income economy by 2020 will benefit from the expansion of proceeds from E&E. For example, electrical and electronic (E&E) has been adjourned as a great contributor to Malaysia's economy. In 2009, it accounted for 6 percent of Malaysia's Gross National Income (GNI), creating 522,000 jobs and 41% of Malaysia's total exports. However, E&E sector faces significant challenges in maintaining growth in the face of stiff competition from China, Taiwan, Singapore and other Asian countries (Economic Transformation Program in 2011). Over the last 10 years, E&E's share of Malaysian exports has

declined. Furthermore, Malaysia's focus in E&E has traditionally been on assembly of products which is often referred to as the lower value-added part of the industry while countries like Taiwan, South Korea and Singapore have captured the higher value-added activities in Research and Development (R&D) design and manufacturing.

E&E in Malaysia can be regarded as small and medium scale enterprises owing largely to the downstream sector activities like assembling. Using management perspectives of the large scale production industries to determine relationship quality of internal customers can be ambiguous (Abdullateef *et al.*, 2015). The relationships are different because they have fewer resources, smaller communication systems and slim growth opportunities. However, previous researches revealed the relationship between organization commitment and other constructs in employee/employer relationship in large firms to be positive (Abdullateef *et al.*, 2015). Organizational commitment has received a lot of attention in research work environment. It has been measured and conceptualized in different ways but still remains a challenging construct in management and marketing parlance (Lok and Crawford, 2001). The relationship between perceived organizational support and job satisfaction as independent variables and organizational commitment as a dependent variable in electrical and

electronics firms has not been given much attention in research (Lok and Crawford, 2001). Therefore, this study tends to fill this void by contributing to knowledge through empirical evidences from E&E in Malaysia.

Constructs discussion: This study looked at job satisfaction and perceived organizational support as IVs while organizational commitment is the focus of the DV.

Job satisfaction: Job satisfaction could be defined in a variety of ways as reflected in motivational theories in terms of intrinsic, extrinsic and general satisfaction. Intrinsic refers to actual research performed and experiencing self-actualization and feelings of accomplishment such as freedom in job and task-identity. Meanwhile, extrinsic could be in a form of rewards given to individuals by organization. Job satisfaction is measured by several approaches and determined by certain indicators. Some authors measure job satisfaction based on facets that cover both tangible and intangible aspects such as pay, benefits, supervision organizational practices, promotion, research conditions and relationships with co-workers.

Job satisfaction is the level to which an employee is satisfied with his current research. This depends on how many of his or her needs and wants are satisfied (Awang *et al.*, 2010). Job satisfaction is known as a construct with multi facets that includes the employee feelings about different job elements, intrinsic as well as extrinsic. It includes specific features of satisfaction with pay, benefits, supervision organizational practices, promotion, research conditions and relationships with co-workers. The focus will be on the five factors of job satisfaction which are pay, promotion, supervision, coworkers and nature of the research relationship with peers. These factors correspond with the feelings, like or dislike of their jobs, mentioned in the definition and are relevant to determining the level of commitment to an organization. Employees who feel satisfied with their job are more productive and are likely to stay with the organization (Mcneese, 1997).

The first dimension, pay can be considered as the amount of money that is paid to an employee for the research that he or she has done. According to Heery and Noon (2001) pay or remuneration is the “payment for research which can assume a number of different forms including a basic wage or salary, supplementary cash payments such as shift pay and overtime pay and benefits in kind”. Pay satisfaction refers to the employee’s attitude or how the employee thinks about the pay received. It will depend on the difference between the pay that they expect and pay that they actually acquire (Cobb, 2004). Satisfaction in terms of promotion is referred to the

employee’s satisfaction with fairness of company policy and administration on reassigning an employee to a higher-level job due to a particular reason (Cobb, 2004). Supervisor is “a front-line manager who is responsible for the supervision of employees” (Heery and Noon, 2001). The job scope for a supervisor is to assign research to the employees fairly, provide advice and feedback to the employees regarding their job performance & Evaluate employee’s performance on the job as well as fill in the appraisal form for them (Resheske, 2001). Satisfaction in terms of co-workers refers to the degree to which the employees like their colleagues in the company and how great is the relationship formed between them. Cobb (2004) defined co-workers satisfaction as the satisfaction level of the employees with their colleagues regarding research related interaction. Lastly, Rad and Yarmohammadian (2006) justified the need to investigate job satisfaction is exemplified in the seemingly observed relationship between the levels of job dissatisfaction, absenteeism, grievance expression, tardiness, low morale and high turnover. Job satisfaction is an immediate antecedent of intention to leave the workplace and turnover. Unsatisfied researchers will leave their jobs more than their satisfied colleagues. Furthermore, more satisfied employees have more innovative activities in continuous quality improvement and more participation in decision-making in organizations.

Perceived organizational support: The concept of Perceived Organizational Support (POS) has been developed by Eisenberger *et al.* (1986). It is related to how employees perceive their organizations. Any actions and human resource management practices taken by organization may affect employee’s perceptions of the organization’s commitment towards them. According to Eisenberger *et al.* (1986), the concept of POS refers to “employees develop global beliefs concerning the extent to which the organization values their contributions and cares about their well-being”. Through the process of making attributions as to the way the organization behaves, employees arrive at an evaluation about the degree to which they believe that the organization supports them, values their contribution and is concerned with their well-being. In other words, POS stands for employee’s beliefs about a certain degree of the organization’s commitment towards their employees.

The employees with high levels of POS belief that their organizations consider their well-beings, appreciates their contributions and will help them whenever problems arise. On the contrary, employees with low levels of POS perceive that their organizations ignore their best interests will possibly take advantage of them and replace them. Specifically, individuals evaluate the behavior of

organizational agents towards them and infer the general motive underlying that treatment with the categories that are considered important varying considerably between organizations and between persons.

Research shows perceived organizational support is positively related to the job satisfaction and to commitment (Eisenberger *et al.*, 1997). Feeling valued and cared about by an organization facilitates employee's trust that the employer will fulfill its exchange obligations by providing appropriate recognition and rewards, commensurate with employee behavior. Other research has addressed perceived organizational support as a construct distinguishable from other previously established concepts, such as perceived supervisor support (Kottke and Sharainski, 1988) perceived research group support (Self *et al.*, 2005) organizational commitment (Van *et al.*, 1999) and job satisfaction (Eisenberger *et al.*, 1997). The theoretical bases of organizational support rest on social exchange theory. Whatever it is helping older person is more likely to compensate. The researchers believe that social dialogue between researchers and employers is at research.

Organizational commitment: Organizations need commitment from their employees in order to reduce costs and improve performance, service and quality. It is very crucial to have employee involvement to the organization. Operational performance reflects the performance of internal operations of the company in terms of cost and waste reduction, quality improvement, delivery performance, flexibility and productivity improvement including cost saving, time saving and timeliness of service, productivity improvement and quality enhancement. Such commitment is enhanced pragmatically by building trust, teamwork and employee empowerment, methods that were often developed in the electrical and electronic (E&E) industry. Such organizations must invest in human resources and retain personnel in order to reach their objectives.

Organizational commitment is the strong belief and intention to identify with organizational value, devote to and stay with the organization to researcher's attitude, behavior and connection between individuals and the organization to indicate that organizational commitment is at the core of human resource management. It transforms traditional manpower management into the core of human resources. Organizational member's attitude or intentions particularly indicate the importance of employee's organizational commitment and intention to devote to and be loyal to the organization. Organizational commitment has also been defined as the belief of an employee in the goals and values of an organization and the aspiration to stay with that organization.

As defined by these Allen and Meyer (1990) the affective component of organizational commitment refers

to the employee's emotional attachment to, identification with and involvement in, the organization. Much of the research undertaken in the area of organizational commitment focuses on affective commitment. For example, the Brunetto and Farr-Wharton has reviewed a sizable literature and found that influence of affective commitment has been investigated in areas such as job satisfaction, communication, turnover, intent to leave and stress, perceived fairness and supportiveness of managers, perceived ability to be promoted and job performance. Studies have also been conducted under various contexts such as in nursing, citizen behaviors and commitment to a particular community. The continuance component refers to commitment based on the costs that the employee associates with leaving the organization. In a study by Meyer and Allen (1991) they defined continuance commitment as the desire to remain a member of the organization. An individual who is high in continuance commitment is motivated to participate. Continuance commitment and the Side-Bet Theory of Commitment were popularized by Becker. According to this theory, employees make certain investments or side-bets in their organization, for example, tenure towards pensions, promotions and research relationships. These investments are such costs which reduce the attractiveness of other employment opportunities.

Relationship between job satisfaction and organizational commitment: When employees are dissatisfied at research they are less committed and will look for other opportunities to quit. If opportunities are unavailable they may emotionally or mentally "withdraw" from the organization. Thus, organizational commitment and job satisfaction are important attitudes in assessing employee's intention to quit and the overall contribution of the employee to the organization. Many studies across different industries and geographical regions revealed strong correlations between organizational commitment with job satisfaction. Dirani's research demonstrated that organizational commitment is closely linked to the context in which employees are researching as employees were found to be strongly motivated and committed were involved in the process of setting, owning and implementing the organization's vision. Moreover, the supportiveness of leaders towards the employees had also contributed to positive outcome in terms of organizational commitment among employees.

Most of the studies, job satisfaction was found to be significantly with organizational commitment and organizational commitment is a mental state that reflects the necessity, the desire and the obligation or attachment of an employee to remain in an organization (Meyer and

Allen, as cited in Anton, 1991). It is found to be significantly with other aspects such as job involvement and turnover of employees and apparently job satisfaction. Lee and Mitchell explained that organizational commitment can be referred as a shared belief and acceptance of values among employees in an organization to go beyond the call of duty in order to enhance the organization's goals and maintain the relationship with the organization. As mentioned by Meyer and Allen organizational commitment is one of the factors that will affect employee's productivity and the organization's performance. Therefore, organizational commitment also plays an important role in an organization functions as equally to job satisfaction.

Management should be aware that employee commitment is dependent on factors other than monetary rewards, such as developmental interventions. This suggests that increased involvement and support for training would increase employee commitment and also positively impact the application of information and systems that comprise the intervention content. This is especially important to speed developmental change processes in times of transition and rapid growth. Yet, multiple studies have shown that superiors are not always supportive of training efforts (Lok and Crawford, 2001).

Relationship between, perceived organizational support and organizational commitment: An employee who believes that their organization values and appreciates them associates this as respect for their status within that organization. This status is likely to increase organizational commitment levels because it enhances their social identity according to the tenets of social identity theory. Several empirical studies have indicated that employees display more commitment to their organizations when they believe that their organizations are committed to them (Malik *et al.*, 2010). Employees exposed to more training opportunities are likely to exhibit higher levels of affective commitment (Meyer and Allen, 1991). Levels of organizational commitment resulting from perceived organizational support appear to be mediated by job level. Specifically, employee perceptions of support from the organization are likely to be formed in reaction to instances such as illness, mistakes, superior performance, fair salary and the extent to which employees hold meaning and interest toward their current job (Eisenberger *et al.*, 1986). A positive influence of POS has been marked in previous research by increasing employee's expectancy that the organization will reward greater employee effort toward meeting organizational goals (Benkhoff, 1997).

Additionally, positive POS influences have resulted in employees being more likely to incorporate

organizational membership into their self-identity; thereby, developing a positive emotional bond (affective commitment) to the organization. The end result of these positive levels of POS influence is strengthening of employee's effort-outcome expectancy as well as increased levels of affective attachment to the organization (Benkhoff, 1997). These characteristics result in greater efforts to fulfill the organization's goals because employees are more likely to expect that greater efforts toward meeting the organization's goals will be rewarded (Eisenberger *et al.*, 1986).

Relationship between, perceived organizational support, job satisfaction and organizational commitment: Based on a relatively large number of empirical studies, the researcher found that perceived organizational support from supervisors and coworkers have been found to be a researching condition that improves job satisfaction and organizational commitment that in turn reduces dissatisfaction intention (House, 1981). Generally speaking, researchers who received care from their social network in the workplace experienced more satisfaction and commitment within their organizations and wanted to stay longer than those who felt lonely. On the one hand, several dissatisfaction studies (Rycraft, 1994) focusing on the effect of workplace social support (e.g., supervisors and coworkers) and non-workplace social support (e.g., family and friends) on turnover intention have been conducted in individualistic cultural contexts with few studies (Brough and Frame, 2004) however, investigating these effects in collectivistic cultural contexts. The literature indicated that only coworker (Rensberg *et al.*, 1999) and supervisor support could reduce dissatisfaction intention (Bernatovicz, 1997) indirectly through job satisfaction and organizational commitment.

In spite of this the researcher argued that perceived organizational support is a process of social interaction and communication within a social network that relies on a different kind of relationship such as social relationship, family relationship and workplace relationship. Accordingly, in societies in which people have strong social ties with family and friends as in collectivist culture, non-workplace related factors (e.g., family and friends, kinship responsibilities, etc.) may also affect job satisfaction and research related outcomes of employees (Mobley, 1977). Consequently, the researcher posits that perceived support from supervisors, coworkers and family and friends is positively related to job satisfaction. In addition, the researcher expects that job satisfaction will be positively related to organizational commitment.

Conceptualization of framework and hypotheses: The direction for this research was conceptualized in a schematic diagram to illustrate the idea and proposed

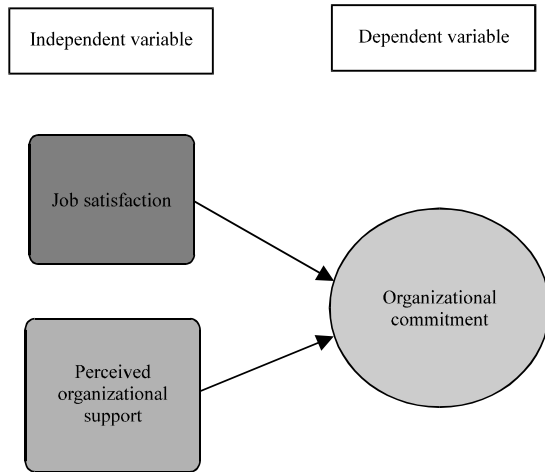


Fig. 1: Research framework

relationships among the variables according to theories. Also, the hypothesis proposed between each IV and DV is itemized.

The research framework: Based on the literature review, the theoretical framework is proposed as shown in Fig. 1. Perceived Organizational Support (POS) and Job Satisfaction (JS) are independent variables and Organizational Commitment (OC) is dependent variable. The conceptual model was developed to answer the research questions.

Development of hypotheses: Based on the arguments from constructs discussion above and evidences from previous researches, the following hypotheses were proposed:

- H₁: job Satisfaction (JS) has a positive relationship with Organizational Commitment (OC) in Electrical and Electronic (E&E) of organizations
- H₂: job Satisfaction (JS) has a positive and significant relationship with Organizational Commitment (OC) in Electrical and Electronic (E&E) of organizations
- H₃: perceived Organizational Support (POS) has a positive relationship with Organizational Commitment (OC) in Electrical and Electronic (E&E) of organizations

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study made use of quantitative primary data by distributing carefully prepared questionnaire on the study sample. A total of 196 questionnaires were personally administered on staffers of electrical and electronics

Table 1: Demographic summary of the respondents

Variables	Percentage
Age	
16-24	1
25-34	50
35-44	44
45-54	6
Gender	
Female	20
Male	80
Education level	
Secondary	5
Diploma	14
Degree	58
Post graduate	23
Marital stats	
Single	20
Married	80
Job position	
Administrative/clerical	8
Technician	9
Executive/senior exec	52
Assistant manager	6
Manager/senior manager	25
Salary	
<1000	0
1,000-3,000	23
3,000-5,000	17
5,000-10,000	51
10,000 and above	9
N of years worked with current employer	
<1	10
1-5	43
6-10	27
11-15	20
>15	0
Number of employees in organization	
<100	87
100-300	2
301-700	0
>700	10

industry in Kulim, Malaysia. Non-probability convenient sampling was used to save time and cost. At the end of the exercise, 127 usable questionnaires were returned. This gave 64% response rate and accepted for a quantitative research (Sekeran, 2003). After data screening and thorough preliminary checks, Vision 19.0 of SPSS Software was used to analysis the data.

Demographic statistics: This give indebt background checks of the respondents in terms of gender, age, educational level, status at research, years of experience, income and marital status. This demographic statistics enables the researcher to evaluate the response accordingly (Table 1). The demographic summary of the respondents. As shown on the table above, male responders represented 80% while female responders were 20%. Most of the respondents (50%) were aged between 25 and 34 years old, 44% of the respondents were between 35 and 44 years old, 6% of the respondents were between 45 and 54 years old and 1% of the

respondents were between 16 and 24 years old. Majority of the respondents were married and single in a percentage of 80 and 20%, respectively.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Descriptive statistics: The main characteristics of the data are quantitatively described in the descriptive statistics. In the descriptive statistics, summaries about the sample population responses are provided. The mean, median, mode, minimum, maximum and standard deviation in relation to the independent and dependent variables are presented in Table 2.

The descriptive statistics show that the average respondent is satisfied with their job and that they are committed to their organization. All the means are between 3 and 4 whereby it indicates that respondents generally are neutral and agree with the question in the questionnaires. Variability can be examined by the value of the standard deviation column, the smaller standard deviation value the more concentrated the data around the mean. From the table perceived organizational support 0.65, job satisfaction 0.37 and organizational commitment 0.56. Based on the result, the standard deviation for all variables is relatively small which further indicates that a great deal of similarity between data point.

Correlation analysis: To know whether there is a correlation between the variables and the level of the linear relationship between the variables, the Pearson R correlation coefficient was examined. The correlation analysis can lead to greater understanding of your data. To test the hypotheses the p-value was computed. The p-value measures the support given by the sample for the null hypothesis. Accepting or rejecting the null hypothesis relies on the p-value whether it is smaller than or equal to the significance level. In this case the level of significance is .05. In Table 3 the correlation values are presented.

The result of relationship between POS and OC is 0.331 or 33.1%, accordingly to Bernatovicz (1997) represent a moderate relationship and the result of relationship between JS and OC is 0.697 or 69.7% which indicate a strong relationship between the variables. Job Satisfaction (JS) has higher relationship and correlated with Organizational Commitment (OC). Hence, job satisfaction was found to be significant with organizational commitment and organizational commitment is a mental state that reflects the necessity, the desire and the obligation or attachment of an employee to remain in an organization (Meyer and Allen, 1991).

Table 2: Descriptive statistics

Variables	No. of measures	Min.	Max.	Mean	Median	Mode	STD
Organizational commitment	8	2.13	4.50	3.45	3.50	3.63	0.56
Perceived organizational support	8	2.00	5.00	3.85	4.00	4.00	0.65
Job satisfaction	16	2.56	4.44	3.42	3.38	3.56	0.37

Table 3: Results of relationship between POS and OC

Variables	Perceived organizational support (IV)	Job satisfaction (IV)	Organizational commitment (DV)
Independent variable			
Perceived Organizational Support (POS)	1	0.362**	0.331**
Independent variable			
Job Satisfaction (JS)	0.362**	1	0.697**
Dependent variable			
Organizational Commitment (OC)	0.331**	0.697**	1

Table 4: Standard coefficient for job satisfaction

Independent variables	Dependent variable
Job satisfaction	0.664**
Perceived organizational commitment	0.090**
R ²	0.493
Adjusted R ²	0.485
F-change	60.247

Regression analysis: To test the hypotheses using SPSS, multiple regressions was used. This method was selected as the orders in which independent variables are entered into the regression equation were known and were based on logical or theoretical considerations (Kamarul, 2001) (Table 4).

Standard coefficient for job satisfaction is 0.090 and perceived organizational commitment 0.664. The R² is the proportion of variance in dependent variable which could be predicted from the independent variable which is 0.493 or 49.3%. The adjusted R² value indicates 0.485 or 48.5% where it the value to estimate the R² for the population. The f-value from the study indicates 60.247. The p-value associated with the F-value is very small <0.01. Therefore, it implies that independent variable reliably predicted the dependent variable. If the p-value is <0.01 that indicates there is a significant positive relationship between the independent variable and dependent variables. The independent variable, job satisfaction has higher value of $\beta = 0.664$ compare to perceived organizational support $\beta = 0.090$ which mean the higher the job satisfaction the higher the correlation with dependent variable organizational commitment.

CONCLUSION

From the regression analysis above, all the three hypotheses are supported. p-value for job satisfaction

$p = 0.000$ which is <0.01 and significant. Therefore, Job Satisfaction has a positive relationship with organization commitment but p -value for Perceived Organizational Support (POS) $p = 0.191$ which is >0.01 and is not significant to Organization Commitment. Therefore, it only supported the hypothesis that POS has positive relationship with OC but not a significant relationship. The tested hypotheses only show there is a significantly positive relationship between job satisfaction and organizational commitment.

The results supported all the three hypotheses but as common with social sciences research, some limitation could hinder the generalization of this study. The sample population, the context of the study, data collection procedure, methodology and limited number of predictive variables used in the study should be taken into consideration before generalizing the result.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Future researchers should look into some of these limitations with the view to accommodate them in their future studies. The recommendation include alternative sampling method instead of convenient probability using other methods of analysis like variance or co-variance based, employing more variables such as research environment, leadership style. The study could also be replicated in other sectors both private and public to compare the efficacy of the results.

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