

## Determinant of Organizational Commitment among Women Employees in Malaysia

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### Abstract

Women involvement in the job market is increasing yearly. The scenario corroborates the government aspiration to have a more prominent women participation in the country's job market. However, women's multiple-role such as being a mother and a wife, among others, proved to be a hindrance to their career commitment. This study aims to determine the contributing factors to women organizational commitment. A total of 202 women working in the private and government sectors in Malaysia, participated in this study. The findings reveal that women are committed to their organization if they have a strong moral support from their family, friends and supervisors, in addition to attractive remunerations. The study findings are anticipated to facilitate the provision of a conducive and supportive working environment, particularly for the women employees by the policy maker and the management.

**Keywords:** Organizational commitment, perceived organizational support, social support & organizational rewards

### 1.0 Introduction

The women's role in the country development is becoming more prominent. Nowadays, women are not only the backbone of their family but play various roles in other facets of life. In Malaysia, men outnumber women at 60:40 in overall labor force gender ratio. At the managerial level, the ratio of men to women stands at 70:30 (Bernama, 2016, November 20). Furthermore, the government aims to have 30 percent of the decision-maker among women employees, in both the government and private sectors by the year 2020. The policy to reduce gender imbalance and recognize women's contributions was introduced in 2011. As at June 2016, only 11.5% top corporate sector decision-makers were women (The Star Online, 2016). The government, under the Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development, has allocated MYR 2.26 billion for the development and operational cost in its effort to encourage women participation in the workforce and entrepreneurship.

Endorsing the government strong support towards women participation in the workforce, this present study aims to identify the decisive factors of women's work commitment. Organization commitment refers to an employee's loyalty and responsibility towards an

organization (Modway, Steers, & Porter, 1982). The higher one's commitment towards the organization, the more productive and content one will be, thus, one will not leave the organization. Human resource is the most valuable asset of an organization and deemed as the organization's competitive edge. Generally, women opted to retire from working either to focus on their family or if their company practiced injustice. If this scenario persists, it would be the country lost as competent women employees are considered a valuable asset that capable of contributing towards the country prosperity and growth. In addition, by embracing workplace diversity, the companies tend to have a higher market share and make better decision making. Furthermore, it is evidenced that highly educated women outnumbered their male counterpart. This phenomenon is apparent in the higher institution of learning; there are more female students compared to male students. The government acknowledges women competency through the initiation of 1 Malaysia Support for Housewife. The program is meant to encourage women to join the workforce by offering them the necessary skills and training. Similarly, Talent Crop established the Women Career Comeback program, especially for female professional to rejoin the work market based on their professional qualification.

The aforementioned discourse motivates this study to examine the determining factors of women commitment towards the organization. The determining factors are examined from three perspectives: perceived organizational support, perceived social support, and a reasonable remuneration package and other benefits. According to social exchange theory, organizational commitment arises due to positive work experiences perceived from an organization, social support, and fair organizational rewards system, among others (Colquitt, Scott, Rodell, Long et. al., 2013). The findings of this study will benefit the government, particularly the policymaker, in the matters pertaining to women employees' commitment. The employers may also utilize the findings as guidelines to create a better working environment for their employees.

## **2.0 Literature**

### **2.3 Perceived Organizational Support (POS)**

Perceived organizational support refers to the degree to which employees believe that the organization acknowledges their contribution or effort as well as cares about their well-being (Eisenberger, Stinglhamber, Vandenberghe, Sucharski, & Rhoades, 2002). The employees perceived their organization as supportive when the supervisors show compassion, included the staff in decision making, and treat the team fairly (Robbins & Judge, 2017). Organizational support is essential to ensure that employees are inspired, committed, and attached to the firm's goals and objectives. The employees' perception towards organizational support influences their positive or negative feelings towards their organizations.

An organization support is evidenced through its appreciation towards the employees' hard work and well-being. Mohamed and Ali (2016) studied the importance of organizational support on 53.2 percent female employees and 46.8 percent male employees of a private telecommunication company. Their finding reveals that the organizational support has a positive and significant effect on the respondents' commitment, regardless of gender. Another similar study substantiated the finding. Erickson & Roloff (2008) suggest that the higher the organizational support in terms of encouragement and care the higher the employees' commitment. In a nutshell, the employees of both genders are more committed towards the organization if they received a strong support from their peer and superior. The relationship between these elements is described clearly through Maslow's hierarchy of

needs theory in which the third level explained the social relationship that encourages the employees to strive for the best in their work.

The majority of the previous researches agree that POS has a positive relationship with organizational commitment. The employees are more committed to their organization when they received organizational support, such as emotional support, moral support, and other tangible aid from the organization (Armeli, Eisenberger, Fasolo, & Lynch, 1998). The employees performed well when their organizations show concern over their welfare (Shore and Wayne, 1993). Women employees tend to be more emotional and sensitive compared to their male counterparts. Some organizations are inflexible in letting their employees taking some time off to care for their children such as taking them to the clinics or attending to their sick children. A study found that a strict productivity-oriented organization failure in addressing their employees' well-being will cause their employees seeking employment elsewhere (Allen, 2001). The overlapping responsibilities often placed the working women in a dilemma; having to juggle constantly between life and career balance. The higher the conflict between work and family, the lower the work commitment of an employee. In other words, the better the organisational support, the higher the commitment of the employees due to their trust and gratitude towards the employer (Casimir, Ng, Wang, and Ooi, 2014). Therefore, the following hypothesis is formulated:

H1: POS is positively related to organizational commitment.

## **2.2 The Relationship between Perceived Social Support (PSS) and Organisational Commitment**

Social support in this study refers to the encouragement, assistance, support, help, and a network of interconnections with other human beings such as family and friends (Harvey, 2014; Lambert, Minor, Wells & Hogan, 2016). Outside the workplace, the individual primary support comes from family and friends (Adams, King, & King, 1996). The women multiple roles that encompass a wife and a mother, among others, add to the challenge of work commitment. Work commitment is essentially crucial and influential towards the element of success, performance, productivity, and attendance, which are the deciding factors of an organization accomplishment. An unsubstantiated and shallow perspective lead to men employees receiving a better moral support compared to women employees. Consequently, male employees were deemed more committed to their work than their female counterparts (Ramadoss & Rajadhyaksha, 2012). This circumstance suggests that social support is critical as it influences the employees' work commitment, regardless of gender.

The lack of family support also affects women organizational commitment and career. Women employees sometimes have to rely on their family assistance in caring for their children when they are required to attend courses or work outstation. In addition, heavy workload is a challenge for women employees as they bear numerous responsibilities towards their family as well. Nowadays, the growing number of dual career couples also led to a family-work conflict (Hill, Yang, Hawkins & Ferris, 2004). Valk and Srinivasan (2011) emphasise the importance of social support from peers, which enable women employees to attain a well-balanced career and family life, thus, enhancing their work commitment. The work-family conflict has a major influence on the behaviour and well-being of the employees as well as an impact on their work commitment (Allen, Herst, Bruck, & Sutton, 2000; Greenhaus, Collins, & Shaw, 2003). The better the support received from family and friends, the higher the organisational commitment will be. Therefore, this study proposes the following hypothesis:

H2: Social support is positively related to organizational commitment

### 2.3 The relationship between organizational reward and organizational commitment

A reward is generally defined as something given or received in return for a deed; while commitment refers to the state of being dedicated to doing something responsibly. In an organizational context, rewards for the employees are based on the grade of service, expertise, seniority, and length of service (Azman et al., 2014). According to Robbin and Judge (2017), there are two categories of rewards received or awarded—extrinsic and intrinsic. An extrinsic reward comprises organizational factors such as wages, bonuses, allowances, promotions, affiliation with peers and superiors, physical environment, and the organization's policies. The intrinsic reward, also known as the motivating factor, is manifested in the form of acknowledgement, appreciation, and opportunities for self-development. These types of reward promote the individual positive attitudes and encourage productivity.

A study by Bustamam, Teng, and Abdullah (2014) suggest that an individual satisfied with the rewards unceasingly displayed a high level of commitment, which in turn improved the organisation performance. Evidently, this indicates a positive association between reward and work commitment. Another study proposes that rewards could enhance the organization's productivity; an effective reward system encourages employees' commitment (Nazir, Shafi, Qun, Nazir, & Tran, 2016). The analysis findings of this study reveal that reward is an influential factor in women employees' higher percentage compared to working environment, despite both factors having a positive and significant relationship (Azman et al., 2014;). Accordingly, the result emphasizes the element of reward in work commitment among women employees, which suggested that reward is one of the important and influential factors in augmenting women work commitment. Several earlier studies suggest that the effectiveness of an organization is manifested through a number of components such as organizational commitment. Accordingly, better rewards system is indispensable to ensure the employees, particularly the women, render the maximum level of organizational commitment. Therefore, this study proposes the following hypothesis:

H3: An organizational reward is positively related to organizational commitment.

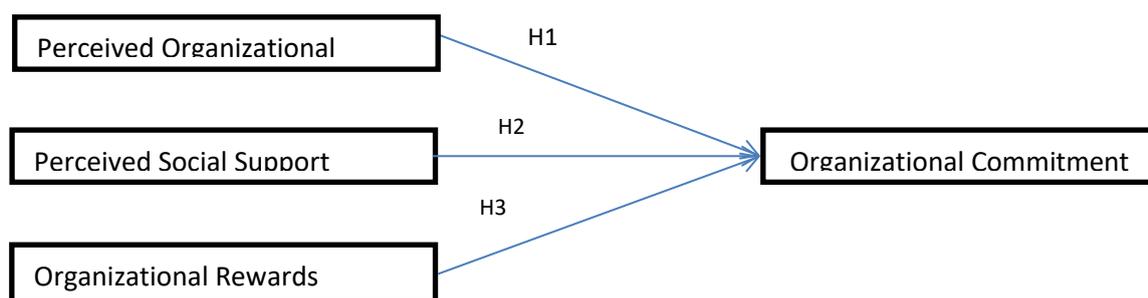


Figure 1: Theoretical Framework

## 3.0 Methodology

### 3.1 Sample

Data were collected among women employees in Malaysia. A total of 202 questionnaires were returned and deemed usable. Most of the respondents aged between 31 and 35 years (28.7 percent) and the majority of respondents have more than five years of working experience (59.4 percent). More than half of the respondents were married (63.9 percent). In

terms of educational level, 42.6 percent possessed a Bachelor Degree. Most of the participants of this study are from the educational field (34.2 percent). The majority of them earned an income between MYR 3001 and MYR 4500 (26.2 percent).

### 3.2 Measures

The questionnaire was adapted from the previous research. The measurement of six items for organizational commitment was modified from Cook and Wall (1980). Participants were asked to rate their POS on five items adapted from Eisenberg et al. (2002). Four items on organizational rewards and PSS were adapted from Ladd and Henry (2000). All of the responses were recorded using a five-point scale (1-strongly disagree, 5-strongly agree).

### 4.0 Data Analysis and Findings

Data were analyzed using the Partial Least Squares (PLS) path modeling approach to Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) version 3.0 and SPSS 22 was used to compute the frequencies and percentage of the respondents' profile.

#### 4.1 Assessment of the measurement model

The internal consistency, indicator reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity were performed to ensure the validity and reliability of the data. As shown in Table 1, the internal consistency or composite reliability of each construct is above the recommended threshold value of 0.70, which ranges from 0.779 to 0.976. One item for organizational rewards and three items for organizational commitment were dropped due to low loadings (less than 0.7). In terms of convergent validity, the average variance extracted (AVE) is used to measure the variance captured by the indicators relative to measurement error and it should be greater than 0.50. The result of the analysis shows all constructs have an AVE ranging from 0.544 to 0.889, which indicates an adequate convergent validity.

Discriminant validity refers to the degree to which one construct differs from the others. It can be assessed by using two measures: i) cross loading, and ii) Fornell Larcker's (1981) criterion. Table 2 and Table 3 reveal that all measurement items fulfilled the requirement of discriminant validity, cross loading, and Fornell Larcker's (1981) criterion. Table 2 depicts that the loadings of the indicators are higher on their respective construct compared to other constructs. Whilst Table 3 shows that all square roots of AVE exceeded the off-diagonal elements in their corresponding rows and columns.

Table 1:

#### *Internal Consistency, Indicator Reliability, and Convergent Validity*

| Construct / Items                             | Loading      | Composite reliability (CR) | Average variance extracted (AVE) |
|---|--------------|----------------------------|----------------------------------|
| <b>Perceived Organizational Support (POS)</b> |              | 0.976                      | 0.889                            |
| POS_1   | <b>0.916</b> |                            |                                  |
| POS_2   | <b>0.957</b> |                            |                                  |
| POS_3   | <b>0.917</b> |                            |                                  |
| POS_4   | <b>0.960</b> |                            |                                  |
| POS_5   | <b>0.964</b> |                            |                                  |
| <b>Perceived Social Support (PSS)</b>         |              | 0.882                      | 0.652                            |
| PSS_1   | <b>0.731</b> |                            |                                  |
| PSS_2   | <b>0.802</b> |                            |                                  |

|                                       |              |       |       |
|---------------------------------------|--------------|-------|-------|
| PSS_3                                 | <b>0.831</b> |       |       |
| PSS_4                                 | <b>0.860</b> |       |       |
| <b>Organizational Rewards</b>         |              | 0.884 | 0.718 |
| R1                                    | <b>0.867</b> |       |       |
| R2                                    | <b>0.806</b> |       |       |
| R3                                    | <b>0.867</b> |       |       |
| <b>Organizational Commitment (OC)</b> |              | 0.779 | 0.544 |
| OC_2                                  | <b>0.748</b> |       |       |
| OC_4                                  | <b>0.609</b> |       |       |
| O5_5                                  | <b>0.837</b> |       |       |

Table 2:

*Discriminant Validity: Cross Loadings*

| Construct                                     | POS          | PSS          | Rewards      | OC           |
|---|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| <b>Perceived Organizational Support (POS)</b> |              |              |              |              |
| POS_1   | <b>0.916</b> | 0.613        | 0.503        | 0.495        |
| POS_2   | <b>0.957</b> | 0.599        | 0.544        | 0.516        |
| POS_3   | <b>0.917</b> | 0.608        | 0.504        | 0.500        |
| POS_4   | <b>0.960</b> | 0.601        | 0.525        | 0.502        |
| POS_5   | <b>0.964</b> | 0.593        | 0.530        | 0.508        |
| <b>Perceived Social Support (PSS)</b>         |              |              |              |              |
| PSS_1   | 0.364        | <b>0.731</b> | 0.358        | 0.401        |
| PSS_2   | 0.442        | <b>0.802</b> | 0.483        | 0.494        |
| PSS_3   | 0.623        | <b>0.831</b> | 0.473        | 0.503        |
| PSS_4   | 0.605        | <b>0.860</b> | 0.468        | 0.537        |
| <b>Rewards</b>                                |              |              |              |              |
| R1  | 0.446        | 0.416        | <b>0.867</b> | 0.547        |
| R2  | 0.501        | 0.462        | <b>0.806</b> | 0.563        |
| R3  | 0.457        | 0.530        | <b>0.867</b> | 0.565        |
| <b>Organizational Commitment (OC)</b>         |              |              |              |              |
| OC_2  | 0.508        | 0.580        | 0.563        | <b>0.748</b> |
| OC_4  | 0.415        | 0.421        | 0.489        | <b>0.609</b> |
| O5_5  | 0.200        | 0.280        | 0.389        | <b>0.837</b> |

Table 3:

*Discriminant Validity: Fornell-Larcker criterion*

| CONSTRUC T     | POS          | PSS          | Rewards      | OC           |
|----------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| <b>POS</b>     | <b>0.943</b> |              |              |              |
| <b>PSS</b>     | 0.639        | <b>0.807</b> |              |              |
| <b>Rewards</b> | 0.553        | 0.555        | <b>0.847</b> |              |
| <b>OC</b>      | 0.535        | 0.603        | 0.660        | <b>0.738</b> |

Diagonals (in bold) represent the square root of AVE while the other entries represent the correlations

## 4.2 Assessment of Structural Model

The results of the three hypotheses are presented in Table 4. The  $R^2$  value is 0.522, suggesting that 52.2 percent of the variance in organizational commitment can be explained by perceived organizational support, perceived social support, and rewards. All of the hypotheses are found to be significant and supported. The most significant predictor of organizational commitment among women employees is the rewards ( $\beta = 0.439$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), followed by perceived social support ( $\beta = 0.292$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), and perceived organizational support ( $\beta = 0.105$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ).

Table 4:  
Hypotheses and Results

| Hypothesis | Relationship   | Path Coefficient | t Values | P values | Supported |
|------------|--|------------------|----------|----------|-----------|
| H1         | Perceived Organizational Support → Organizational Commitment | 0.105            | 3.150    | 0.03     | Yes       |
| H2         | Perceived Social Support → Organizational Commitment         | 0.292            | 8.748    | 0.03     | Yes       |
| H3         | Organizational Rewards → Organizational Commitment           | 0.439            | 15.920   | 0.02     | Yes       |
| $R^2$      | <b>0.522</b>   |                  |          |          |           |

## 5.0 Discussion and Conclusion

The objective of this study is to determine the influencing factors of organizational commitment among women employees in Malaysia. An investigation of these factors is imperative since the government advocates women participation in the workforce. Malaysia is the only country who set a target and policy of a minimum percentage of 30 percent women participation at the decision-making level in both the public and corporate sectors. As expected, the results of this study discovered that perceived organizational support, perceived social support, and attractive organizational rewards positively associated with women employees' organizational commitment. The higher one's commitment towards the organization, the more productive and content one will be. These findings corroborated the previous research, such as Mohamed and Ali (2016), Erickson & Roloff (2008), Bustamam, Teng, and Abdullah (2014), and Eisenberger et al. (2002).

## 6.1 Implications

This study contributes in extending the current knowledge base on the determinant of organizational commitment especially among women employees. The study is useful to assist policy makers, managers, executives, researchers, and students to better understand the relationship between perceived organizational support, perceived social support, organizational rewards and organizational commitment. The results of this study reveal that organizational reward is the most influential factor of women employees' organizational commitment. The better the organizational rewards system in terms of salary, benefit, bonus, other allowances, promotions, and other motivating factors, the higher the commitment will be. Therefore, it is vital for every organization to ensure that they applied a nondiscriminatory rewards system to all employees regardless of gender. In addition, women employees'

require the support of family, friends, and the management to be more committed to the organization.

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