Employee Commitment towards Organizational Change in Public University

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Abstract
Organizational change is an intricate process that requires the keen involvement and commitment of employees to ensure its success. Employee commitment to organizational change is influenced by a variety of factors in the case of public universities including motivation, leadership, and organizational culture in the change process. The objective of this study is to investigate the conceptual framework of employee commitment to organizational change at a Malaysian public university. This study employs quantitative methods. A questionnaire was distributed to lecturers and administrative employee at a Malaysia's public university in order to gather information. In order to speed up the process of change and provide better services for it, the organization will undoubtedly benefit from this study of factors that contribute to employee commitment during the change process, which reduces the role of work fear. This study contends that employee commitment should be maximized, particularly in a system based on standard operation procedures and current circumstances, such as management in local universities. This study provides recommendations for administrators at public universities who want to facilitate successful change initiatives. The study's findings have important implications for the development of effective change management strategies in public universities.
Keywords: Employee Commitment, Motivation, Leadership, Culture and Work Fear

Introduction
Change is unavoidable in business, particularly during uncertainty situation. Typically, changes are made only when something unfavorable occurs that necessitates immediate implementation. Despite being classified as successful, organizations still require attention in terms of organizational management adjustments. As a result, a company's ability to deal with change has a significant impact on its long-term performance and growth. Effective change management, on the other hand, is challenging, and employee commitment to

change is unsettling. At this juncture, it is essential to comprehend employee dedication and actionable measures. According to (Boulagouas et al., 2021), an important part of change is the extent to which employees who embrace change regard the change favorably.

In previous years, pandemic has posed a significant and unexpected challenge to Malaysian Higher Education Institutions (HEI), with the organizational structure frequently changing in response to the global pandemic (Sia & Adamu, 2021). As colleges and universities were required to close to prevent the spread of the virus, they ceased all face-to-face teaching and meetings, closed all buildings to physical access, and sent their student's home. Educational institutions, like other organizations, have made immediate changes based on the current situation in order to continue providing services. Many HEIs struggle to respond quickly to increasing and pandemic situations (Rafiqul & Talukdar, 2020). Moreover, HEI is a government body that follows the public sector's rule of thumb when it comes to management and administration, but in other areas, changes in standards of procedures (SOP) bring about new things into the organization. HEI must adopt and adapt to the situation as quickly as possible in order to meet the challenges and the increased demand posed by its stakeholders, who are more sophisticated than in the past. An important aspect of this is the employee's ability to accept change and demonstrate the utmost dedication to bringing the organization's vision and mission to fruition while also meeting the needs of its stakeholders. By studying the factors that contribute to employee commitment during the change process, the institution will be able to capitalize on the attributes to accelerate the change process and provide a better service to the movement and the nation. Previous research has emphasized the significance of motivation in driving employee commitment to change, but little is known about how motivational factors influence commitment in the context of public universities. Prior research has demonstrated the interdependence of employee commitment's primary variables (State, 2018; Qureshi, 2018; Insana & Johan, 2020). Most are concerned with keeping employees within an organization, but no research has been conducted to provide insights into the many factors that can affect employee commitment consistently during an outbreak with strict standard operating procedures. In addition, nothing can explain the direct impact of employee commitment on the frequency of change in the organization during times of transition. This study examines how work fear moderates the relationship between motivation, leadership, organizational culture, and employee commitment to change. Consequently, this study is likely to address this need. This study aims to determine the factors that contribute to employee commitment to change at public universities: the moderating role of work fear.

The purpose of this research is to: 1) to determine whether motivation, leadership, and organizational culture can contribute to employee commitment to change, 2) to investigate how work fear influences the relationship between motivation, leadership, organizational culture, and employee commitment to change, 3) to make recommendations for overcoming the obstacles to change that the institution faces. The main point of the study produces several research questions related to the problem statement, such as the factors that contribute to employee commitment in managing organizational change and the extent to which work fear moderates the association between motivation, leadership, organizational culture, and employee commitment to change. What action plans and effective tactics can be recommended to revitalize the university and make it a best practice in organizational change management? In general, this study assists institutions in improving their effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability by managing change effectively, particularly during uncertainty situation. The findings of this study can be used by the institution to encourage its employees'

commitment to navigating the change process smoothly. This is because the university operates in an environment that requires the organization to adapt to the needs and demands of its stakeholders. Some of the recommendations may be implemented by HEI to assist them in remaining sustainable in the face of global challenges. The study's findings have important implications for public university leaders who want to encourage employee commitment to change. Leaders can take steps to address these concerns and create a more supportive environment for change initiatives by understanding the role of work fear as a potential barrier to change.

Literature Review

The study emphasizes the importance of organizational change during the pandemic transition period. Employee commitment is essential in change management. The emphasis is on variables that encourage employee involvement in the transition process.

Employee Commitment to Change

In accordance with a pandemic situation, time, individuals, environments, and organizations will be subject to transformations. Change (organizational changes) frequently causes unease among employees and can occasionally lead to conflict. These new pandemic situations inevitably force employees out of their comfort zone and into the unknown (Boulagouas et al., 2021). Therefore, when things do not appear favorable, change is required (Onyeneke & Abe, 2021). Currently, the COVID-19 pandemic may highlight the need for organizations to be responsive and adaptable to an environment that is constantly changing. Each organization, including HEI, is, however, unique in terms of the forces that drive them to change.

By managing employees' commitment to the change process, the organization gains an advantage in accelerating the change process, increasing the likelihood of achieving a better response throughout the entire process outcome, which results in the desired outcome in the end. Furthermore, studies on employee commitment have piqued the interest of many academics. Employee commitment has been studied from a variety of perspectives, including affective, continuous normative commitment (State, 2018; Qureshi, 2018) employee work commitment (Insana & Johan, 2020), high turnover, absenteeism, poor motivation, and underperformance. According to Mahmmud et al (2020), the majority of academic employees reported a high level of position ambiguity, and academic employee commitment to change is significant. According to Akintayo (2010), employee commitment is the extent to which an employee feels loyal to their employer. Despite varying definitions of employee commitment among academics, the vast majority concur that employee commitment to change is essential. Affective commitment (workers' emotions); continuous commitment (employees' perceptions of expenses); and normative commitment (employees' perceptions of responsibilities and promises) to the organization.

Motivation

The forces that drive individuals to perform work-related tasks with energy, enthusiasm, and persistence are referred to as motivation. It is a complex construct that is influenced by several factors such as leadership style, organizational culture, job design and employee engagement. Employees can be highly motivated by rewards and recognition because they provide tangible and intangible benefits that meet their needs and desires. Employees' extrinsic motivation, such as a desire for financial or material benefits, can be

satisfied by rewards, whereas intrinsic motivation, such as a desire for autonomy, competence, and relatedness, can be satisfied by recognition. Employee motivation is regarded as a key competitive advantage for many firms. According to Haryanto (2021), motivation enhances employee engagement, work pay, involvement, and decision making, which helps the organization achieve its goals and objectives. As a result, a study found a positive association between motivation and commitment at an engineering company in Dungun, Terengganu (Suffian & Zahari, 2016). As a result, employees come to consider non-monetary or economic value as a reward for their participation in the process. When a corporation has the correct basis for change (including shared goals, responsibilities, and acceptance of a payment system), there will be a reaction in systematic change implementation (Huang et al., 2019). Matloob et al (2021) discovered that financial and non-financial incentives, as well as employee commitment, are significant for employee motivation. On the one hand, high levels of motivation can help to alleviate the effects of workplace fear by giving employees the confidence and drive to embrace change and overcome their fears. Change may be viewed as an opportunity for growth and development by motivated employees rather than a threat to their job security. Additionally, a study conducted by Shaheen & Farooqi (2014) demonstrated that employee motivation had a considerable influence on employee commitment. This situation has an impact on employees' willingness to change. This situation implies that the higher the level of work motivation in an organization, the greater the likelihood of employee commitment.

Leadership

Leadership is the process of motivating others to work together to achieve common goals. Employee commitment is increased when leaders instils hope, trust, positive emotions, and confidence. Employee commitment and satisfaction with the organization are positively related to leadership style (PHAM THI et al., 2021). They discovered that leadership skills have a direct and greater influence on organizational commitment. In addition, when employees feel empowered, trusted, and appreciated for their performance, their organizational commitment increases, regardless of whether they work from home or in a flexible office. Typically, the leadership style of an organization influences employee commitment to the organization. Furthermore, Mwesigwa et al (2020) discovered that academic employee age, length of service, job level, leadership style, and job satisfaction all have an impact on organizational commitment in Ugandan public institutions. These elements are expected to influence employee commitment to the organization.

Organizational Culture

Good relationships between coworkers and employees are closely related to employee dedication. The organizational culture, which determines employee behavior, can affect employee commitment positively or negatively. Organizational culture influences employee loyalty. The development of an organizational culture (ethics of teamwork, communication, training, and reward recognition) will build a sense of belonging and employee loyalty to the company (Ramdhani et al., 2019). Numerous studies have found a connection between organizational culture and commitment (Marchalina et al., 2018). Individual learning can be integrated into organizational learning by influencing a company's ability to learn, communicate information, and make decisions. As a result, the greater the corporate accomplishment, the better organizational cultural values align with employees' beliefs and

values. Thereby, the greater the fit between organizational cultural values and employees' beliefs and values, the greater the commitment.

Work Fear

Workplace anxiety is defined as an employee's anxiety, stress, or worry about their job or work environment. Job insecurity, bullying or harassment, conflict with colleagues or supervisors, performance pressure, or negative feedback are all factors that can contribute to it. Fear is a negative emotion that is frequently associated with emotional instability and avoidance behavior (Fiskars Group, 2020). Previously, most of the research focused on workplace fear involving the environment, specifically COVID-19 among healthcare workers. According to Gasparro et al (2020), healthcare workers are more susceptible to infection due to their close contact with sick patients (COVID-19). Furthermore, the Fear of COVID-19 Scale demonstrates that it is an effective psychometric tool for assessing and reducing individuals' fear of COVID-19 (Ahorsu et al., 2020). However, job fear is so severe that it can affect employees' willingness to change, particularly to comply with ever-changing workplace SOPs. Furthermore, several previous studies have investigated the potential link between job fear and employee commitment at work. Workers who are more concerned about the possibility of being harmed by an uncertain work environment will perceive their job prospects as more uncertain than those who are less concerned, because if they become insecure, they will be unable to work for an extended period of time due to an emergency. This, however, suggests that work fear influences employee commitment.

Change Tool

There are change tools that can be utilized to facilitate the change process. Kurt Lewin, a renowned social psychologist, developed a model (unfreezing, movement, and refreezing) for organizational development that highlights the role of leadership and the contributions of employees (Hussain et al., 2018). At the point of unfreezing, organizations evaluate their internal and external environments to determine whether a problem has prompted them to change. It is crucial to determine whether the members of the organization are prepared for the next phase. Moving stage refers to the stage at which the change process is carried out after the change drivers have been identified and the members of the organization have accepted the change. This is a delicate stage that must be carefully managed if the organization member is to be led and brought into the new environment. Finally, refreezing necessitates the development of new organizational rules, culture, and values. Here, the company will improve its new profile with the assistance of both employees and management. At this stage, continuous improvement is used to accomplish new goals and objectives designed to accommodate a changing environment. According to Mahmmud et al (2019), in their study, there established a Three-Component Model of Change Commitment, comprising of "normative (obligation-based), continuation (cost-based), and affective (feelings-based) attachments change initiatives". It has subsequently become the mainstream model for understanding change commitment, with the development of organizational commitment units.

Additionally, the employee's constructive emotional attachment to the firm is known as affective commitment, whereas continuation commitment is driven by a variety of considerations, ranging from the financial costs of money and benefits to the social costs of relationships and reputation. Employee commitment exists when proper leadership styles and demographic features are applied, and the employee feels required to repay the

organization's value guarantees to him/her. The association between leadership style (transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire) and employee commitment is commonly utilized to determine the impact of variables (Abasilim et al., 2019).

The Framework

Figure 1 shows the conceptual framework for this study. This study employs and modifies a few variables to identify the factors that influence employee commitment to change in the workplace. The independent variables (motivation, leadership, organizational culture) that influence the dependent variable (employee commitment) and the moderating role of work fear.
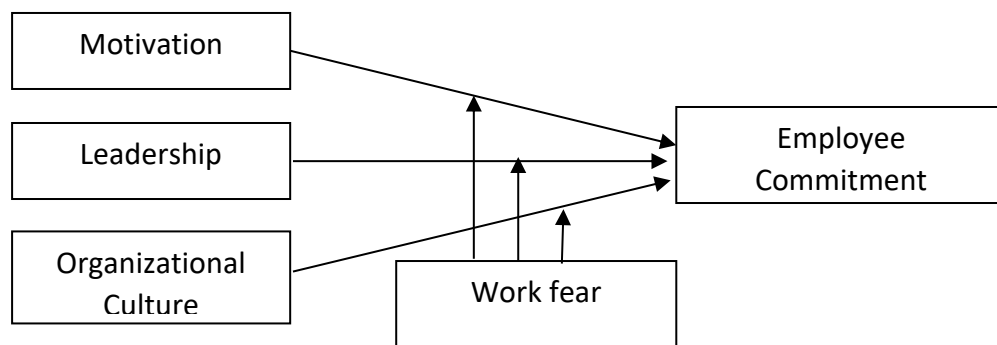

Figure 1: The Framework

Methodology

This study investigates the factors that influence employee commitment to change. The study employs a quantitative approach. Besides, this research is quantitatively analyzed using the Statistical Package for Science and Social (SPSS) software. The total population for this study is at a public university in Malaysia. The respondents work at a Malaysian public university. There are employees working there as of the year, which also serves as the sampling frame for this study. Sampling table, the sample size recommends for this study according to Sekaran table (Sekaran and Bougie, 2013). The figure enough to represent the entire population (Sekaran and Bougie, 2013).

A questionnaire is a tool used to collect data for this study. It is distributed online through Google forms. It is a 6-section self-administered questionnaire. Section A: respondent demographic information such as age, gender, marital status, level of education, salary, and current position in the institutions. Each question has a multiple-choice format. Sections B-F used a five-point Likert Scale, with responses ranging from 1-Strongly disagree; 2-Disagree; 3-Neutral; 4-Agree; and 5-Strongly Agree. Section B: the motivational aspect of respondents that leads to commitment to organizational change. It consists of questions about how and why motivation can increase employee commitment to change. Section C: the goal is to gather information on leadership skills and investigate how it affects employee commitment to the change process. It is one of the variables that previous studies have emphasized because the research also aims to determine the relationship between leadership and change commitment. Section D: aim to collect questions about the culture embedded in public universities. It consists of questions about how organizational culture affects employee commitment to change. Section E: the questions are designed to ascertain whether the perceived benefit factor influences employees' commitment to change. Section F: questions base on the Ahorsu et al (2020) scales assessing the work fear.

This study employs an online survey (questionnaire) via a series of self-administered questionnaires. The respondents will be random from a population of employees at a public university. Following completion, the researcher will collect the data for analysis.

For the main study, a pilot test is used to determine whether the instrument (questionnaire) is reliable and valid for this study. Following the completion of the coding process and the completion of the questionnaire, SPSS will apply to analyses the descriptive statistics, Cronbach's Alpha, frequency, reliability analysis, and regression analysis to answer the study questions. Cronbach's alpha is a reliability coefficient that determines how closely the study's elements are related. The purpose of frequency analysis is to identify demographic profiles that may influence respondents' commitment to change. To conduct descriptive analysis, determine the mean for each component and identify the most important factors (variables) that contribute to employee commitment. The responses are measured on a 5-point Likert Scale. In the context of this study, a score below the mean would indicate room for improvement. On the work fear scale, the higher the score above the average, the greater the fear. Following this, use crosstab analysis to determine the relationships between the factors. There are plans for more research to examine the relationship between the meaning of each measure and a selection of demographic factors. This study uses a multiple regression approach. The objective is to determine whether motivation, leadership, and culture are related to employee commitment by examining the relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variables.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study is to evaluate whether motivation, leadership, and organizational culture can contribute to employee commitment to change and to examine the extent to which work fear moderates the relationship between motivation, leadership, and culture and employee commitment to change. Furthermore, the study sought to determine whether referring to these aspects helped employees better understand the necessity, urgency, and rewards of change, or vice versa. One of the most difficult challenges during this time period has been securing employee commitment for managing change during a pandemic, locating an appropriate and simple method for implementing changes to online work, and fostering flexibility in the digital age workplace. In addition, the study's findings will consider how commitment to the process of change contributes to the success of the change process, especially in pandemic and endemic conditions. In addition, the scope of this investigation should be broadened to include more government agencies and departments. To improve the overall performance and delivery system in the public sector, it is essential to comprehend the factors that contribute to the dedication of the public university sector. This will have a ripple effect on the public's satisfaction with the services provided by government bodies and agencies. This study offers practical recommendations for organizational leaders seeking to develop effective change management strategies that contribute to the advancement of knowledge in this important area by identifying the specific motivational factors that drive employee commitment to change in a public university context.

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Authors' Contribution
All authors contributed to the writing and gave input to help produce this manuscript.

Conflict of Interest Declaration
We certify that this article is the author's and co-authors' original work for submission to HRMARS journals.

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