

Quality of Work Life, Organizational Commitment and Self-Efficacy at Malaysian Government-Linked Companies: A Pilot Study

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Abstract: This paper is a pilot study that emphasizes on the quality of work life and organizational commitment in one of the government-linked companies in Malaysia. The objective of this paper is to analyse the reliability of the instruments which are quality of work life, organizational commitment and self-efficacy. Self-efficacy has been chosen to be the moderating variable because it is one of the crucial constructs for gaining and understanding human cognition, action, motivation and emotion. To explain further, quality of work life is essential for organizations to continually attract and retain employees; while organizational commitment acts as a pivotal element in determining the success of the organization which can be divided into three (3) components that are affective, continuance and normative. These three components have been conceptualized into one of the most quoted and presiding model which is Mayer and Allen's three-component model of organizational commitment. In recent situation, employees have become less committed to their organization and this is now an increasing trend from year to year in Malaysian private sectors, marking it as one of the most common fretted upon issues in working environment nowadays. In addition to this, it is found that employees have visibly shown less interest and lesser commitment to their organization which has become a widespread phenomenon in private working sectors within Malaysia. The sample for this study consists of 33 employees that are currently working at one of the government-linked company in Kuala Lumpur. The respondents were conveniently selected, and the data was gathered through the distribution of questionnaires which was later run by Statistical Package in Social Sciences Software (SPSS) version 25 for further analysis. The results of the study showed that the Cronbach's value results were proven to be reliable and valid as they were above 0.70.

Keywords: Quality of Work Life, Organizational Commitment, Self-Efficacy, Pilot Study

Introduction

Organizational commitment is a factor that has been undermined and deemed as insignificant when brought to discussion in the society regarding commitment at a workplace. As a contrary, it is a key element in every success of an organization (Walter, 2017). The significance of organizational commitment is prominent in Meyer and Allen, (1991) which has become one of the most quoted models. The model itself is titled as Meyer and Allen's three-component model of organizational commitment in which the three components stated are; affective, continuance and normative commitment. According to Meyer and Herscovitch (2001), commitment is unique and it could be categorized into different types. To put it differently, each one of these components of organizational commitment will contribute to the likelihood of the employees to stay with the organization, yet the idea of every individual's mentality differs where some might need to stay committed with the organization for some reasons that relates to the three components as mentioned before. In other words, employees that show affective commitment will stay in the organization voluntarily as their job is viewed as rewarding and leads them to enjoy working on a routine basis. Meanwhile, employees with continuance commitment will stay in a company to fulfill their needs to a desired lifestyle as the salary earned enables them to access their desires such owning a comfortable home or other simple luxuries and wants in life. Lastly, employees under normative commitment will stay in the company having considered the beneficial and intangible factors such as work training and mentoring sessions that is provided while working with the company.

According to Muindi and K'obonyo, (2015), quality of work life is very crucial for organizations to continually attract and retain employees. Quality of work life can be best described as a multidimensional construct, which includes job security, better reward system, higher pay, opportunity for growth, participative groups and increased organizational productivity (Varghese & Jayan, 2013). Moreover, quality of work life is a widespread and comprehensive program that increases the satisfaction of employees, enhances their working environment and helps them in the management and changes. It can be said that, lack of awareness on quality of work life in an organization leads to demotivated employees who are no longer committed to their organizations. Initially, there were seven dimensions under quality of work life as an independent variable which are adequate and fair compensation, opportunity for continued growth and security, constitutionalism, social integration, social relevance of work life, work and the total of life space, safe and healthy working environment and opportunity for developing and using human capacity. However, with periodic events, the study on dimension quality of work life changed based on the situations and the environment by that time. As for this study, after being adopted and adapted based on the suitability, the dimensions that were used to test the relationship between quality of work life and organizational commitment are; growth and development, participation, supervision, pay and benefits, social integration and employee well-being. Quality of work life is designed to create a workplace that enhances employee well-being (Kannaiah & Sasikumar, 2014). With that being said, employees will feel confident and will be able to grow if the organization considers their well-being and make efforts to care for its employees in a more consistent manner. Letoane (2013) once stated in his studies that a complete state of well-being is a part of quality of work life which refers to the physical and psychological factors of an individual in any working field environment.

Self-efficacy was chosen as a moderating variable because self-efficacy is one of the most important constructs for gaining an understanding of human cognition, action, motivation, and emotion (Sari, 2016). According to Agarwal and Mishra (2016), in a workplace, employees who possess a high level of self-efficacy are more likely to exert greater effort even in troublesome circumstances and subsequently produce progressively positive results. Besides that, Agarwal and Mishra (2016) also stated that employees who are highly committed seem to perform better in their organizations, thus it is essential to study that includes various factors which predict and explain organizational commitment. In correlation to that, self-efficacy is believed to influence performance in a wide range of life, including the workplace (Agarwal & Mishra, 2016). Employee with high self-efficacy would get more motivated and will be extra committed towards the organization. For this reason, according to Sari (2016), perceived self-efficacy would impact on determining the level of commitment of an individual.

Government-linked companies (GLCs) are companies that have primary commercial objective and in which the Malaysian Government has a direct controlling stake in major decisions, such as appointment of management positions, contract awards, strategy, restructuring and financing, acquisition and divestment (Khazanah, 2018) In conjunction to that, there are more than 100 government-linked companies in Malaysia with different sectors which cover the economic activities, including those in infrastructure, telecommunication, agriculture and finance. Indeed, government-linked companies play a prominent role in the operation of every commercial concern in Malaysia (Nur Nadiah, Nik Herda, Jamaliah, & Md Mahmudul, 2016). In this paper, one of the GLC was chosen to conduct the pilot study in order to measure the reliability of instrument items.

Based on one survey conducted by Insurance Giant in 2017, Malaysian employees are overworked and stressed which led to an unhealthy lifestyle that later resulted in high risk health problems and loss of productivity. According to Hashim, Bhatti, Akram, Akram, and Bhatti (2016), stress affects an individual in a negative manner and this subsequently affects the organization as well. The repercussion of this is the damaging impact it leaves on organization commitment. In Swathi and Reddy (2015) study, they stated that stress is associated with quality of work life. It is undeniable that stress has become a part of human's life and every human reacts to stress in different ways. Also, from another study by Saodah and Fameza (2016), it is found that work-related stress can have a greater impact on organizational commitment and consequently, on organizational performance and success. Therefore, employees are found to be no longer committed to their organization and this trend increases from a year to another in Malaysian private sector until it becomes a crucial issue nowadays (Fatin Delaila & Ummi Naiemeh, 2016).

Apparently, stress and self-efficacy also are firmly related. Murphy (2015) stated in his study that self-efficacy is necessary in assessing demand from the environment, especially at the workplace. This personal belief was stated in Lazarus and Folkman's model of stress which means that the way each individual reacts or responds to a situation differs from the expectation or intention set by an organization. For instance, a set of tasks given to employees should be taken as a challenge by the individuals to grow and learn. However, employees are aware of their level of competencies and confidence in handling those tasks, thus, it becomes a rather stressful or threatening situation for them than to be taken as a challenge. In accordance to that, individuals that has eminent self-efficacy and capability are known to be able to withstand tough situation and are able to motivate themselves to perform well and stay committed in the organization (Cherian & Jacob, 2013). The issue on employees in the private sectors in Malaysia is now less commit to their organization is more widespread (Ping, Xin, Yen, Sy, & Ting, 2017).

To diminish this issue, for starters, organization must take initiative to provide employees with a great quality of work life practice so that the employees will feel motivated and continue to stay committed to the organization as employees rely heavily on their productivity level and the organization's approach (Lee & Chen, 2013).

Basically, there are three theories that have been used in this study. The first theory is organizational commitment theory. This theory is meant for the dependent variable. Employees are said to be committed to the organization when their goals are consistent with those of the organization, when they are willing to exert effort on behalf of the organization, and when they desire to maintain their connection with the organization. Unsurprisingly, organizational commitment has been shown to be a key antecedent of other important attitudes and behaviours, including those related to performance turnover (Kessler, 2013). Meyer and Allen (1991) developed their three-component model which names affective commitment, continuance commitment and normative commitment, respectively, to distinguish among these three forms, or components, of commitment. Because they are characterized by different mind-sets, Meyer and Allen (1991) argued that the three components of commitment would develop in different ways and have different implications for job behaviour.

The next theory that proposed by the researchers is quality work life theory which is for the independent variable. This theory has been conceptualized by Walton in 1975 (Diraviam, 2016) which comprises of eight dimensions spanning from adequate and fair compensation to the advancement capacities of the employee. To Walton, employees' perception of these dimensions at their workplace mirrors their quality of work life. These dimensions are adequate and fair compensation, safe and healthy environment, development of human capacities, growth and security, social integrative constitutionalism, the total life space and social relevance. As noted, employees are said to encounter a better quality of work life if the work environment satisfies these eight dimensions (Diraviam, 2016). Quality of work life has its roots in the theories of Maslow, Herzberg and McGregor. The needs for fulfilment as that of Abraham Maslow's motivational theory of needs hierarchy is comparable with those of the factors of quality of work life. Basic needs like monetary benefits come first, following with good working conditions. Following that is, career planning, growth and development of human capabilities to satisfy. Maslow's esteem needs are comparable with opportunity to use and develop human capabilities. Lastly, challenging work is advocated by Walton to satisfy self-actualization for the need to be in hierarchy.

As it has been mentioned at the beginning, the main moderating variable is self-efficacy. With regard to that, as proposed by researchers, social cognitive theory was developed by Bandura in 1986 relating closely to self-efficacy as an embodiment of a moderating variable, explaining one of the most influential theories of human and development correlation. This theory defines human behaviour in terms of a triadic, dynamic and reciprocal interaction of the environment, personal factors, and behaviour. People tend to observe others, compare then behave and get influence by others or by internal dispositions (Bandura, 1999). Based on social cognitive theory, there are two expectations concerning behaviour that people hold. The first principal identifies with the desires concerning one's ability to perform a particular behaviour, for example self-efficacy (Leong & Rasli, 2014). The second principal embrace the expected outcomes of the particular behaviour. By using this theory, researcher would like to stress on self-efficacy which been proposed as a moderating variable. Self-efficacy can be defined as a person's capability to exert certain behaviour or personality to attain success or reach a specific goal. Some of the few past research conducted by Coelho, Antloga, Maia, and Takaki (2016), stated that quality of work life practices could promote self-efficacy and increase the employee's resilience which could possibly get the individuals to commit in the organization.

According to Zeb and Nawaz (2016), self-efficacy and organizational commitment have been identified by the researchers as related where the role of self-efficacy in changing employees' motivation is more critical and decisive in the performance of employees.

Method

This study is a correlational research of the relationship between variables that need to be examined. The researcher investigated the relationship between the quality of work life and organizational commitment among employees at one of the government-linked companies in Malaysia. The population for this study is among the employees from various departments in the organization. Unit of analysis for this study is thirty-three employees that worked in the organization, who were among the executive level. A set of questionnaires which has been adapted and adopted from previous questionnaires which consist of 4 sections; A- Demographic Background, B - Organizational Commitment, C - Quality of Work Life and D - Self-Efficacy, was distributed to the related employees. The data were then gathered over a period of one month and it was collected by using google form survey which the researcher decided to cascade through online medium which are whatsapp application and email which be assisted by the human resource staff representative.

Twenty-four items of organizational commitment which fall under affective, normative and continuance commitment respectively were adopted from (Allen & Meyer, 1990). Researcher assigned the organizational commitment as the dependent variable for this study. In section C, thirty-one items were adopted on quality of work life which is for the independent variable consists from growth and development, participation, supervision, pay and benefits, social integration and employee well-being as dimensions. Not least of all, thirteen items were adopted for self-efficacy as the moderating variable based on (Coelho et al., 2016). Likert scale was applied as one of the most fundamental and frequently used psychometric tools in educational and social sciences research (Joshi, Kale, Chandel, & Pal, 2015). 5-point Likert scales which are strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree and strongly agree were proposed to answer the items provided by the researcher. The data were analyzed by using the Statistical Package in Social Sciences Software (SPSS) version 25.

Findings

Data were collected from thirty-three (33) employees from one of the government-linked companies in Malaysia. The employees were among the executive and non-executive levels which consist of 81.8% were female while another 18.2% were among male employees. A test was reliable when it can be used by several different researchers under stable conditions, with consistent results and the results not varying.

Salkind (2014) had stated that reliability is most often reflected in the value of the correlation coefficient. Cronbach's alpha is one of the most commonly used of reliability coefficients which is based on the average correlation of items within a test if the items were standardized (Coakes, 2013). Taber (2018) mentioned that Cronbach's alpha is a statistic commonly quoted by the authors to demonstrate tests and scales that have been constructed or adopted for research projects are fit to purpose. Cronbach's alpha is a reliability coefficient that indicates how well the items in a set are positively correlated to one another. Cronbach's alpha is computed in terms of the average intercorrelations among the items measuring the concept. The closer Cronbach's alpha is to one, the higher the internal consistency reliability (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016).

Table 1.1 illustrates the instruments of reliability for pilot test data. The Cronbach's alpha values for dependent variable were affective commitment .858, continuance commitment .871 and normative commitment .862 with 8 items respectively. In the meantime, the

Cronbach’s alpha value for independent variable which is quality work life with 6 dimensions which consists of growth and development recorded a value of reading .908 with 6 items, participation .879 with 5 items, supervision .945 with 5 items, pay and benefits .913 with 5 items, social integration .927 with 5 items and employee well-being .956 with 5 items. In the final analysis, for the moderating variable, which is self-efficacy, the Cronbach’s alpha recorded a value of .942 with 13 items altogether.

The scores of Cronbach’s alpha for pilot test at one of the government-linked companies provided a rule of thumb to identify the internal consistency of the items in the scale which items that have Cronbach’s alpha above 0.90 can be considered as excellent, items ranging from 0.80 to 0.89 could be assumed as good while 0.70 to 0.79 was acceptable. Other than that, items that had Cronbach’s alpha ranging 0.60 to 0.69 was considered as questionable, and 0.50 to 0.59 was poor. The items which had Cronbach’s alpha below than 0.50, it was considered as unacceptable. For this pilot study, the values of Cronbach’s alpha for this research were reliable and valid as above 0.70.

Table 1: Instrument Reliability for Pilot Test Data

Variables	No. of Items	Cronbach’s Alpha
Dependent Variable		
Affective Commitment	8	.858
Continuance Commitment	8	.871
Normative Commitment	8	.862
Independent Variable		
Growth and Development	6	.908
Participation	5	.879
Supervision	5	.945
Pay and Benefits	5	.913
Social Integration	5	.927
Employee Well-Being	5	.956
Moderating Variable		
Self-Efficacy	13	.942

Discussion and Conclusion

This research was set out to identify the relationship between quality of work life and organizational commitment among employees in one of the government-linked companies in Malaysia, and self-efficacy as a moderator. The researcher assigned a few dimensions under the quality of work life as the independent variable which are growth and development, participation, supervision, pay and benefits, social integration and employee well-being. There were five dimensions that was used by Normala (2010) in her study under the quality of work life as some independent variables which are participation, social integration, growth and development, supervision, pay and benefits.

The findings of the paper have provided answers to one of the main requirements which is reliability test. Since this study was conducted by the researchers based on Normala’s study, the researcher decided to add one more variable under the independent variables, which is employee well-being and self-efficacy as moderating variable. Employee well-being is one of the crucial dimensions under quality of work life. Quality of work life is designed to create a workplace that enhances employee well-being (Kannaiah & Sasikumar, 2014).

As explained and analyzed throughout this research, it can be said that it is very important to ensure that an organization has good practice in quality of work life in order to achieve overall success for the organization. By doing so, it encourages employees to be more committed toward their organization. Besides that, the top management of the organization can contribute to improve quality of work life by giving employees chance to participate and make their own independent decisions to make them feel inclusive and appreciated as the organization's valuable asset. The cronbach's alpha values were proven to be reliable in this pilot study as they were above 0.70. This is supported by a study conducted by Batvandi and Ghazavi (2017), where the reliability of instruments for quality of work life and organizational commitment was 0.83 and 0.86 respectively. The result is consistent with findings of past studies by Taeporamaysamai and Saksamrit (2019) which found the cronbach's alpha value for quality of work life is .940 and the organizational commitment value is .875. Therefore, the instrument was suitable to measure the employees' conceptions of organizational commitment.

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