

## **JOB SATISFACTION AND ORGANISATIONAL COMMITMENT: THE EFFECT OF GENDER**

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### **Abstract**

The purpose of this paper is to examine the effect of gender on employees' perception of job satisfaction and organisational commitment. Gender plays an important role in creating individual attitudes pertaining to the workplace and in interpreting the meaning of these attitudes. Survey data was gathered from 112 employees in Labuan. Regression results showed that both male and female employees in Labuan have the same level of perception of job satisfaction and organisational commitment. Implications and recommendations were also discussed.

### **Introduction**

The presence or absence of numerous attributes, originating internally from within the employing organisation, influences an individual worker's attitudes concerning his/her job and his/her commitment to his/her organisation (Herzberg, 1966; Steers, 1977). Job satisfaction and organisational commitment are related, but distinguishable, attitudes. Job satisfaction is associated with the affective response to the immediate work environment, while organisational commitment is more stable and enduring (Norris and Niebuhr, 1983).

Job satisfaction has become one of the most favourite areas of research particularly in today's world where corporate institutions are concerned

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over its impact to the overall performance of the company. Cranny *et al.* (1992) indicated that more than 5,000 studies of job satisfaction have been published. As a matter of fact, employee satisfaction has become one of the main corporate objectives in recent years. Organisations cannot reach competitive levels of quality, either at a product level or a customer service level, if their personnel do not feel satisfied or do not identify with the company (Stewart, 1996). In the other hand, motivated and committed staff can be a determining factor in the success of an organisation. Smith (1992) stated that job satisfaction can lead to cost reduction by reducing absences, task errors, and turnover. Both management theorists and practitioners are concerned with methods for improving job satisfaction because greater job satisfaction equates to both a better quality of life and better physical health, and thus potentially greater performance and productivity (Cranny *et al.*, 1992). Since, work is an important aspect of people's lives and most people spend a large part of their working lives at work, an understanding of the factors involved in job satisfaction is crucial to improving employees' performance and productivity.

In addition, there are many theories concerning the causal relationship between motives, behaviour and proceeds. For example, job satisfaction can be seen as a result of a behavioural cycle; it can be seen as a cause of behaviour; or it can be seen as part of a regulation system in which the evaluation of results leads to decisions concerning whether or not changes are to be made (Falkenburg and Schyns, 2007). Some definitions involve a differentiated approach in which job satisfaction is seen as consisting of satisfaction with different aspects of the job and the work situation. In this approach, job satisfaction is assessed by totalling the satisfaction reported for many different aspects of the job and the work condition. Such an assessment gives an accurate picture of the employees' total job satisfaction (Falkenburg and Schyns, 2007).

Organisational commitment is vital to preserve and attract well-qualified talent pool in any organisation. Organisational commitment has gained prominence in management discourse since it plays an essential role in the goal achievement, innovation and stability of an organisation. It improves trust between employees, managers, owners, units and other concerned parties of any organisation. Therefore, it fosters better superior-subordinate relationships and improves organisational climate. Stronger and more generalised commitment may enhance organisational



development, growth and survival (Awamleh, 1996). As a result, organisational commitment in has become a major pre-occupation throughout many countries. This has led to a considerable increase in the development of public policies and programs aimed at addressing the problem as well as many empirical studies of such (Joolideh and Yeshodhara, 2009).

Over the years, the increasing interest in the area added to the lack of consensus on the definition of organisational commitment. In the past, many definitions of organisational commitment have been described and investigated. Some of these definitions concern different dimensions of organisational commitment (Falkenburg and Schyns, 2007). As Meyer and Allen (1991) outline, commitment consists of three dimensions, namely, affective, normative and continuance commitment. According to them, affective organisational commitment is defined as the relative strength of an individual's identification with and commitment to an organisation. Cohen (1992) also reported that the concept of "organisational commitment" has gained increasing attention primarily because of the negative relationship between absenteeism, employee turnover and commitment. Greater organisational commitment has been linked to low rates of absenteeism and also better job performance. Because of its relationships to these important outcomes, organisational commitment has become one of the most thoroughly investigated topics in the organisational literature (Sikorska, 2005). The most commonly cited definition of organisational commitment is that of Mowday *et al.* (1982). They defined it as the relative strength of an individual's identification with and involvement in a particular organisation.

## Literature Review

### Gender Differences in Job Satisfaction

As a result of many decades of effort by researchers, there appears to be a high level of agreement among scholars on the meaning of the construct of job satisfaction. Typically job satisfaction is conceptualised as a general attitude toward an object, the job (Okpara, 2006). There are, of course, a few largely unimportant variations to the general construct. Wanous and Lawler (1972) discussed these differences. In general, therefore, job

satisfaction refers to a person's constructive poignant response to a particular job. It is an affective reaction to a job that results from the person's comparison of actual outcomes with those that are desired, anticipated or deserved. However, the results of the many studies concerning the relationship between job satisfaction and the sex of the employees have been contradictory (Oshagbemi, 2000). One common explanation for the different level of work satisfaction sometimes reported for men and women is that women have different expectations with regard to work (Campbell *et al.*, 1976). It was revealed that careers were of central importance to men but not as important to women (Kuhlen, 1963).

Research has suggested that men and women may use qualitatively different criteria in their assessment of work. From this perspective, job satisfaction is seen to be an emotional response resulting from the interaction of work rewards and work values. The greater the perceived congruence between rewards and values, the greater the job satisfaction; the greater the perceived discrepancy, the less the satisfaction. Centres and Bugental (1966) have reported other differences. Their research suggested that women placed more value on the social factors of a job than did men, and that men valued the opportunity for self-expression in their work more than did women. Schuler (1975) found that the females in his study valued the opportunities to work with pleasant employees more than males, whereas males regarded the opportunities to influence important decisions and direct the work of others as more important.

The inconsistency in the findings by various authors on the effect of gender on job satisfactions has been widely reported. For instance, Oshagbemi (2000) reported that there have been inconsistencies in findings concerning the relationship between gender and job satisfaction due to a variety of factors. Not only might males and females in the same organisations differ in job level, promotion prospects, pay and so on, they may differ in the extent to which the same job satisfies their needs. A job high on social satisfaction but low on skill utilisation and career prospects may result in higher job satisfaction for females than for males, whereas in occupations allowing little scope for social relationships, the differences in satisfaction might be in the opposite direction. Given the overall results from these studies, it is apparent that when other variables are taken into account, there is very little evidence to suggest that gender directly influences job satisfaction. There is no compelling reason to believe that



given equal education, employment and advancement opportunities, and an equal chance to apply their skills to appropriate challenges, women should be any less satisfied than men with their jobs.

Result from a study by Weaver (1977) also supports the hypothesis that gender and job satisfaction is unrelated when the effects of other variables are controlled. Findings from a report by Forgieonne and Peeters (1982) similarly suggest that other factors may be involved in the relationship between gender and job satisfaction, such as the number of dependants in a family and the level of management position held in the workplace. Al-Ajmi (2006) in his study conducted in Kuwait found that there was no significant relationship between genders and job satisfaction thus both men and women have the same level of job satisfaction. Linz (2003) however noted that gender differences did not emerge among the Russian employees participating in her survey. Generational differences were evident – older workers exhibited a higher level of job satisfaction than younger worker. However, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H<sub>1</sub>: Men and women have the same level of job satisfaction.

### **Gender Differences in Organisational Commitment**

There are varied empirical evidences on the differences in organisational commitment reported by many writers. One set of studies reports greater organisational commitment by men (Arana *et al.*, 1986; Baird *et al.*, 1998; Dodd-McCue and Wright, 1996; Kaldenberg *et al.*, 1995). However, in some of these studies, the bivariate results lose their significance once job-related factors are entered as controls (Arana *et al.*, 1986; Dodd-McCue and Wright, 1996). Nevertheless, there are studies that report greater organisational commitment by men, even after controlling for job-related factors (Kaldenberg *et al.*, 1995). Another set of studies, including a meta-analysis (Matthieu and Zajec, 1990), reports greater commitment by women, a finding consistent with several subsequent individual studies (Marsden *et al.*, 1993; Wahn, 1998). A third set of studies (Bielby and Bielby, 1989; Bruning and Snyder, 1983; Fry and Greenfeld, 1980; Koberg and Chusmir, 1989).

In a meta-analysis, Aven, Parker and McEvoy (1993) found that gender and commitment were unrelated. Moreover, it has been established that men and women experience similar levels of organisational



commitment (Marsden *et al.*, 1993). In addition, in their study on correctional officers, Savicki, Cooly and GJesvold (2003) have found that men and women did not differ on organisational commitment. In addition, Al-Ajmi (2006) also found that there was no significant relationship between genders and organisational commitment in his study. He concluded that men and women have the same level of organisational commitment. Finally, in a study of 772 business executives in Hong Kong, Ngo and Tsang (1998) have found that organisational commitment is not affected by gender. Thus, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H<sub>2</sub>: Men and women have the same level of organisational commitment.

## Methodology

A random sample of employees from various industries in Labuan was selected. The sample mainly comes from the financial services sector. In addition, samples are also obtained from oil and gas, information technology and telecommunication sectors. Respondents from other sectors include education and hospitality industry were also sought to provide wide dispersion of sampling variety. Of the 130 questionnaires distributed, 112 were returned, for a response rate of 86.2%. The job satisfaction instrument used in this study is adopted from the Hackman and Oldham (1974) scale. This scale consists of 15 items. A seven-point response scale was employed, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). Organisational commitment was assessed using a 15-item measure developed by Mowday, Porter, Steers and Boulian, (1974). Respondents were asked to indicate their agreement or disagreement regarding each item on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Regression analysis is applied to analyze the relationship between a single dependent variable and several independent variables.



## Data Analysis and Findings

### Demographic Profile

As depicted in Table 1, 48% of the respondents are male and the balances are female. More than 70% of the respondents are single with the age ranges between 20 to 29 years old. 76.8% of the respondents are degree holders with a majority of work experience between one to ten years.

**Table 1. Demographic Profile of the Respondents**

Demographic	Criteria	Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	54	48.2
	Female	58	51.8
Age (years old)	Between 20 and 29	66	58.9
	Between 30 and 39	40	35.7
	Between 40 and 49	4	3.6
	50 and over	2	1.8
Marital Status	Single	79	70.5
	Married	33	29.5
Education Level	Secondary School	11	9.8
	Certificate	2	1.8
	Diploma	12	10.7
	Bachelor's Degree	86	76.8
	Master's Degree	1	.9
Annual Income	Below RM12K	15	13.4
	Between RM12K - RM50K	69	61.6
	Between RM51K - RM100K	26	23.2
	Between RM101K - RM150K	1	.9
	Above RM200K	1	.9
Experience	Less than 1 year	9	8.0
	1 to 5 years	46	41.1
	6 to 10 years	43	38.4
	11 to 15 years	9	8.0
	16 to 20 years	2	1.8
	More than 20 years	3	2.7
Position	Clerical/Support staff	48	42.9
	Executive	45	40.2
	Managerial	19	17.0

Table 1. (Continued)

Demographic	Criteria	Frequency	Percent
Industry	Financial services	54	48.2
	Oil and gas	6	5.4
	Telecommunication	4	3.6
	Information technology	7	6.2
	Others	41	36.6

More than half of the total respondents (61.6%) earn RM50,000 and below per annum (Table 1). 42.9%, 40.2% and 17% of the respondents are the clerical/ support staff, executive and managers respectively. More than 48% of the respondents are from the financial and services industries such as trust companies, banks, insurance and insurance-related companies and audit firms. Other respondents are from the oil and gas (5.4%), telecommunication (3.6%), information technology (6.2%) and other sectors like education, hotel, logistics and shop assistance (cumulatively 36.6%).

#### Reliability Analysis

The reliability of scale indicates that the study is free from random error. Internal consistency is measured in this research using Cronbach's coefficient alpha, ( $\alpha$ ). The statistic provides an indication of the average correlation among all of the items that make up the scale. Values range from 0 to 1 with higher values indication greater reliability. Table 2 indicates the result of analysis of the Cronbach's alpha scale for Job Satisfaction and Organisational Commitment where its value is more than 0.7. This indicates that the survey instrument (questionnaire) can be a reliable tool to measure the two constructs consistently. Moreover, all of the measures of constructs had been used in past studies, and have thus been validated.

Table 2. Reliability Analysis

Variable	No. of Item	Item Deleted	Alpha
Job satisfaction	15	-	0.890
Organisational commitment	15	-	0.780





***Means, Standard Deviation, and Correlation Coefficients***

Table 3 shows the means, standard deviation, and correlation coefficients of the independent variable 'gender' and dependent variables 'job satisfaction and organisational commitment' amongst the sample. The independent variable and dependent variables are correlated ( $r = -0.183$  and  $-0.189$  respectively). Gender is not significantly correlated with job satisfaction. However, there is a significant negative correlation between gender and organisational commitment at 95% confidence level. Both job satisfaction and organisational commitment is significantly correlated (negative correlation) with  $r = 0.575$  at 90% confidence level. Although the size of the correlation between independent and dependent variables is not strong, such a result in management is important.

**Table 3. Mean, Standard Deviation, and Correlation Coefficients**

Variables	Mean	Std. Deviation	Gender	Organisational Commitment
Gender				
Organisational commitment	3.2696	.35122	-.189*	
Job satisfaction	4.9762	.93842	-.183	.575**

**Relationship between Job Satisfaction, Organisational Commitment and Gender**

Hypothesis 1 proposed that men and women have the same level of job satisfaction. Meanwhile, men and women have the same level of organisational commitment is proposed in Hypothesis 2. Regression analysis was performed and result infers that both Job Satisfaction and Organisational Commitment had a strong positive and highly insignificant influence on Gender ( $\beta = 0.338; 0.273$ ).  $R^2$  for this relationship is 0.044, denotes that 4.4% of the variance in Gender was explained by the two independent variables. Job Satisfaction and Organisational Commitment have  $p$ -value = 0.338; 0.273. Both  $p$ -values  $> 0.05$  suggesting support for H1 and H2 i.e. gender of employees (male or female) do have the same level of Job Satisfaction and Organisational Commitment (refer Table 4).

**Table 4. The Effects of Job Satisfaction and Organisational Commitment on Gender**

Variable	Dependent = Gender		
	Standardized Beta	Sig.	Result
Job Satisfaction	-.110	0.338	Not Significant
Organisational Commitment	-.126	0.273	Not Significant
R <sup>2</sup>		0.044	
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>		0.026	
F Value		2.509	
Anova Sig.		0.086	

### Conclusion and Recommendation

The results of data analysis showed that the employee's gender has no significant effect on her/his perception of **job satisfaction**. Both men and women have the same level of job satisfaction. Finding in this study is consistent with other researches such as Al-Ajmi (2006); Linz (2003); Weaver (1977). One common explanation for the different level of work satisfaction reported in some studies for men and women is that women have different expectations with regard to work than men (Campbell, Converse, and Rogers, 1976). An employee has higher or lower levels of job satisfaction because they have lower or higher expectations and greater or less ability to satisfy them. From this perspective, job satisfaction is seen to be an emotional response resulting from the interaction of work rewards and work values. The greater the perceived congruence between rewards and values, the greater the job satisfaction; the greater the perceived discrepancy, the less the satisfaction (Oshagbemi, 2000).

Job satisfaction is, therefore, seen by some people to be a function of what is expected and what is received. Thus if one expects little and gets little, one will be satisfied. At the same time, if one expects a lot and gets a lot, one will be satisfied. However, if one expects a lot and gets little, one will be unsatisfied. The basic argument is that although women receive less from their jobs than men do, they have lower expectations and hence feel just as satisfied as men (Kinman, 1998). In the current study, employees satisfied with their job for the reason that it provides them with the opportunity to both communicate with their supervisor and to receive



recognition and feedback from co-workers about performance on the job. They are also able to act independently of the supervisor in performing job function. While performing the job, they are able to get the opportunity to work on many interesting projects. Thus, employees' job satisfaction influences day-to-day company success.

Further investigation of the study confirmed that men and women have the same level of **organisational commitment**. Current finding is contrary to research done by Arana *et al.*, (1986); Baird *et al.*, (1998); Dodd-McCue and Wright, (1996); Kaldenberg *et al.*, (1995). Organisational commitment is highly valuable. Studies have highlighted that commitment has a great impact on the successful performance of an organisation. This is because a highly committed employee will identify with the goals and values of the organisation, has a stronger desire to belong to the organisation and is willing to display greater organisational citizenship behaviour i.e., a willingness to go over and beyond their required job duties. In this study, it was bring into being that employees are willing to put in a great deal of effort beyond that normally expected in order to help the organisation to be successful. They find that their values and the organisation's values are very similar and proud to tell others that they are part of the organization as they would accept almost any type of job assignment in order to keep working for this organisation.

All things considered, based on the result of this study, it can be concluded that both male and female employees in Labuan have the same level of job satisfaction and organisational commitment. Employers normally expect that people with higher levels of job satisfaction will have higher levels of organisational commitment. If employees are highly satisfied with their work, co-workers, pay, and supervision and derive high level of overall job satisfaction with their jobs they are more likely to be committed to the organisation than if they are not satisfied (Warsi, Fatima and Sahibzada, 2009).

The focus on these two key concepts cannot be over stated because job satisfaction and commitment are primary determinants of employee turnover, performance, and productivity (Opkara, 2004). Committed and satisfied employees are normally high performers that contribute towards organisational productivity (Samad, 2007). Therefore, employers must take into consideration all of the possible factors that may contribute to increasing the job satisfaction and commitment of employees.

Organisations can rely on the demographic characteristics of employees such as gender to understand employees' commitment to organisation but it would not provide an exhaustive indication to accurately designing any policy or incentive in relation to employees for adoption.

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