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Perception of Employee on the Relationship between Internal Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and Organizational Affective Commitment

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Abstract

The five dimensions of internal CSR namely health and safety, work life balance, training and development, workplace diversity and compensation and benefit was used to measure the level of employee's emotional attachment towards the organization. There are a total of 220 sets of questionnaire being distributed to employees who work in Klang Valley regardless of their industry. However, there are only 156 set of questionnaire is usable for analysis. From the analysis, it represented that most of the respondents in this study are degree holder who fall under the age group of 21 to 30. Findings obtained indicated that compensation and benefit is the strongest predictor in affecting employees' perception on organizational affective commitment followed by health and safety and workplace diversity. On the other hand, work life balance and training and development were found to be not having any relationship with organizational affective commitment when other variable (health and safety, workplace diversity, compensation and benefit) is added into the model. Several practical suggestions are forwarded to help improve the study on organizational affective commitment in near future.

Keywords: Health and safety; work life balance; Training and development; Workplace diversity and compensation and benefit; and organizational affective commitment.

1. Introduction

As the competition in the business environment is increasing rapidly with the increase of educational level and influences of media in the populations, businessmen was gradually come out with a competitive strategy that able to differentiate their business with others and one of the popular way was involved in CSR activities (Rahim, Jalaludin and Tajuddin, 2011). Among all the stakeholders of a business organization, employees were perceived as the most valuable asset in an organization as it is one of the key people in identifying the success and failure of a business in future. According to the study of Longo and Mura (2011), knowledge and skills that embedded in individual employees can be classified as an intellectual property that a firm has and it could be the key driver of firms in sustaining its business. Findings from the study further indicated that employees will significantly contribute to the performance of an organization when their knowledge and skills is fully utilized. However, the level of employee's willingness in exerting a great effort to the organization and their intention to stay with the organization is often depends on the commitment of them to the organization (Kim, Leong and Lee, 2005and Tajuddin, 2011). Last but not least, from the study of Ali et al. (2010) and Keraita, Oloko and Elijah (2013), the framework was found to be incomplete as the studies only include health and safety, work life balance, training and workplace diversity as dimensions of internal CSR. Since the study of Brammer et al. (2005) had mentioned that reward as a dimension of internal CSR is positively related to organizational affective commitment; it should be included in the framework as well. Hence, in this study, it will be extending the framework of internal CSR used in the study of Ali et al. (2010) and Keraita et al. (2013) by including compensation and benefit as a dimension of internal CSR to further explore on the relationship between those internal CSR dimensions and affective commitment. Finally, this study will not be focused on only one industry as the expectation of employees in different industries will be varied.

The purpose of this research is to identify and analyse whether the dimensions of internal CSR (health and safety, work life balance, training and development, workplace diversity and compensation and benefits) will affect employee's

perception on organizational affective commitment. Due to the emerging concern on the issues of CSR in the business world nowadays, it had highlighted the importance of CSR to every stakeholder in an organization including internal employees. Since every organization needs the support of employees for long term sustainability, the well-being of employees should be put ahead of the external stakeholders because the productivity of employees will be increase if they are committed to the job. From the perspective of employers, results from the study will be able to provide a valuable insight for managers to better understand on the needs of employees and their expectations towards the organizations which will consequently lead them to develop a better strategy to establish a committed workplace.

2. Review of Literature

2.1 Organizational Commitment

Becker (1960),Shaw, and Delery and Abdulla (2003) refer commitment as a desirable quality or level of engagement that should be foster in employees.The researchers further stressed that past studies had extensively explored on organizational commitment as an indicator of the organizational effectiveness and result indicated that there is a positive relationship between it. As a result, high organizational commitment directly resulted in less absenteeism are bringing benefits to the organization since turnover can be costly to an organization.According to Meyer and Allen (1991) (as cited in Meyer et al., 2012) found that organizational commitment was further divided into three distinguished components which include affective commitment, continuance commitment and normative commitment. However, Wasti (2005)further argued that Meyer and Allen's three components of commitment were shown to be related but it is slightly different from each other. Wasti (2005) also reported that, it is actually a psychological state of employees on whether to continue or discontinue their membership in an organization. The consequences of all the components are ought to be the same but the nature of it is different.

In the study of Bakan et al. (2011) and Culpepper (2011), both evidenced that affective commitment was the most important forms of commitment in an organization because the success of an organization is often related to the employee's willingness to contribute while the level of willingness is significantly affected by their emotional attachment to the organization.This finding somehow linked with Meyer and Allen definition on affective commitment which was referred to the individual emotional attachment to the organization in where it directly lead the members to achieve desirable goal.This is further supported byJaros (2007), the researcher agreed affectivecommitment is often ties with the feelings of employees towards the organization. Having positive feelings employees' performance tends to result inpositive outcomes. The researcher further represented that sense of belongingswill affect the mind set of individual in work and thus become primary forces tomotivate employees to contribute more to the growth of the organization. Theargument was consistent with the study of Cohen (2007) as the researcher stressedthat affective commitment is significantly affected by individual's experience inwork and those positive outcomes was viewed as a kind of exchange thatemployees give to the organization. Moreover, Newman, Thanacoody andHui (2011), concluded that there is a significant connection between organizational affective commitment and employee turnover intention.

2.2 Internal Corporate Social Reporting Dimension

Trace back to the evolution of CSR, it is actually begin in the year of 1930s. However, it only started to draw the attention of academia in 1950s. Based on the study of Carroll (1999), it can be noticed that CSR in 1950s was viewed as an obligation that business need to follow and slowly in the next decade, it turns into action of the business in contribute back to the society. In addition, in the decade of 70s, CSR had thus being perceived as strategy for long run profit maximization. In 1980s, Carroll and Shabana (2010) further emphasized CSR as type of driving forces which encourage ethical culture to be built in an organization. Nevertheless, when comes to 1990s, there is not much other specific definition of CSR developed. The researchers in this decade tends to use CSR as a based to establish other relevant themes such as stakeholders theory, business ethics theory, corporate citizenship or Corporate Social Performance (CSP) rather than continue to come out with new definition for the term CSR (Carroll, 1999).

Due to the impact of globalization, CSR had significant influence on businessenvironment, it had triggered the level of competition in the market and everyorganization tends to achieve competitive advantage which can be recognized bypeople around the world. CSR which previously widely concerned bymultinational organizations, are now extend to small and medium enterprise, partnerships as well as sole proprietor (Kucukusta et al., 2013). According to Wiigand Kolstad (2010), CSR was defined as an activity that intersect between corporate and government activity and responsibility. It is suggested thatorganizations should take into consideration their responsibility to the communityas a whole besides concerning on the economics prospect.

The study of Carroll (1979) was dividing CSR into four main categories which comprise of economic, legal, ethical and discretionary responsibilities. Since the main objective of a business is to maximize shareholders wealth, it is a need for organization to produce goods or services that are able to generate positive income. In addition, members in the society will expect the organization to actethically which might be beyond the legal requirement (Hamid and Atan 2011). Lee, Seo and Sharma, 2013 have argued that from the firm's internal perspective, CSR can help to improve commitment of

employees which consequently link to the increase of employee's productivity while from the external perspective, CSR can help to improve their brand image which will subsequently resulted in better customer's loyalty or satisfaction.

However, in order for organization to get the maximum benefits resulted from their effort in CSR activities, it is important for its stakeholders to aware and recognize the effort of the organization as it would be pointless if everyone is not aware that the organization is doing something for the welfare of its members (Costa and Menichini, 2013). As employee is one of the stakeholders in the business of an organization, companies should implement CSR activities internally besides concerning on the external CSR activities. Although in the study of Brammer et al. (2005) argued that external CSR activities have significant implications on employees, it only helped to increase the sense of pride of individual working with the organization and there is still lack of forces to move employees further. According to the study of Alshbiel and Al-Awawdeh (2011), there is no doubt that external CSR can help to increase the level of employee's engagement in an organization. However, in order for the organization to continue growing, what the organization need is not merely on the employees willingness to stay but their intelligence and capability to cope with changes. The researcher further stressed that effective internal CSR activities will have a great impact on motivation and thus an effective way in encouragement of employee's self-enrichment. Further, the recent research conducted by Keraita et al. (2013), are moving towards including more variables that are possible related to internal CSR such as safety, work life balance, training and workplace diversity to measure the relationship of it to organizational commitment.

2.3 Health and Safety

Flin, Mearns, O'Connor, Bryden (2000), argued that safety system in an organization, work pressure, risk and procedure or rules are the important dimensions in safety. According to Hoivik, Tharaldsen, Baste and Moen (2009), it was represented that health, safety and environment are the essential issues that need to be highlighted by the management. This has supported by Papadopoulos, Georgiadou, Papazoglou and Michaliou (2010), it has argued that in some of the heavy industry, workers or employees are encourage to take precautions during working hours as they are required to be exposed to hazardous working environment every day and this will significantly affect the health of them. In advance, the situation will be worsening when there is lack of protective equipment. The researchers stressed that working environment is one of the most important criteria in health and safety issues as it is often related to living conditions and physical stressor. According to Neal, Griffin and Hart (2000), the researchers defined safety climate as self-report of compliance with safety regulations, procedures as well as participation in safety related activities within an organization and it demonstrated management commitment to safety will result in a committed workforce.

2.4 Work Life Balance

According to Parkes and Langford (2008), work life balance was defined as the extent to which an individual able to meet their work and family commitments and other non-work responsibilities whereas Smith and Gardner (2007), define work life balance as the conflict between work and home life. They have found that some of the organizations which promote work life balance initiatives in workplace are giving their employees flexible working hours or offering employee's the opportunity to join company's sports club to show their care towards employees. White, Hill, McGovern, Mills and Smeaton (2003), the researchers indicated that work life balance has been a popular topic in British as the culture of long working hours had a major impact on influencing the relationship between members in a family. This argument was in consistent with Stier, Epstein and Braun (2012) that working hours, presence of child and work characteristics have significant effect on the perception of conflict at individual level while child care availability, maternity leave and emergency leave will be able to reduce the sense of conflict in both gender at a macro level.

2.5 Training and Development

According to Ayodeji, Michael, Tunde and Mariam (2011), the researchers viewed training as a systematic approach to human resource learning and development. Due to globalization, training are used as a way to gain competitive advantage in the business environment by securing workplace commitment. This was supported by the study of Klein (2001) as the researcher demonstrates training as a way of employer expressing its commitment to employees. Additionally, Weng and McElroy (2012) specified most of the employees work in an organization because they perceived that the organization will be able to help them in developing their career in work by offering career growth opportunities to employees. As a result, many of the organizations are using training and development programs or even provide financial assistance for employees to further their study as a way to clarify their expectations towards employees besides helping individual to build their career in work.

2.6 Workplace Diversity

Magoshi and Chang (2009), diversity was defined as the differences between individuals in terms of their nationality, ethnicity, gender, age as well as those with or without mental difficulties. The researchers represented that in order to maintain a supportive atmosphere, it is vital for the management to have a proper diversity management. According to Slater etal. (2008), it is argued that diversity is a part of organizational culture and proper diversity management can be a source of competitive advantage for an organization. In the study, the researchers highlighted that diversity will be able

to provide a different perspective into the strategies development process which enable managers to oversee the needs of customers or employees from different demographic groups and thus stimulate them in developing creative decisions alternatives. Lee et al. (2013), viewed workplace diversity as part of the CSR activities in an organization. From their discussions, it indicated that as CSR is concerned on the contribution of the company back to the community, promoting diversity in workplace was classified as favourable since it can reduce the issues of discrimination in work

2.7 Compensation and Benefits

Sial et al. (2011), compensation was defined as a financial return that an organization gives to its employees. From the perspective of employee, this kind of return will have a direct effect on their economic boost and can be a type of motivation for them to work with the organizations due to their basic needs are fulfilled. Williams, McDaniel and Nguyen (2006), further argued compensation can be in cash payments such as salary or non-cash payment suchas benefits. It is concluded that compensation are directlyassociated with job satisfaction. Based on the research conducted by Tenhiala and Lount (2013), the researchers specified that compensation is closely related to the human resource practices of an organization. The researchers suggested that the implementation of pay system in an organization can have significant impact on the emotions of employees in a workplace which will lead to their outcomes in work.

In this study, social exchange theory (SET) will be used to explain the relationship between the independent variables and dependent variable. According to Settoon, Bennett, &Liden (1996), SET was generally based on the principle that one's received benefits from a party and thus contributes back by given positive outcomes. The researchers further stressed that SET is often related to work behavior and this was in consistent with the argument in the study of Cropanzano& Mitchell (2005). In addition, in the research of Price &Collett (2012), it is suggested such theory is able to explain how individual committed to an organization from social and economic perspective.

3. Methodology

In this research, quantitative research method is used in identifying the variables that would affect employee's affective commitment towards an organization. The objective of this research method is to focus on the numerical descriptions of the variables and the relationship between the independent and dependent variables will be illustrating (Tewksbury, 2009). Additionally, descriptive research is conducted to identify the major factors that have implications on employee's commitment to the organization by counting the frequency of particular response among the survey group (Neville, 2007). This is to ensure that biased is less likely to occur in the randomly selected population and thus a more accurate and reliable result can be obtained.

This study is using questionnaire to collect data from respondents, pilot test was carried out to examine the reliability of the instrument before distributing the final questionnaire. There are a total of 220 questionnaires being distributed to those who worked in Klang Valley regardless of their industry, of which 189 were returned for a response rate of 85.91%. However, there are only 156 sets of questionnaire or 82.54% were usable for analysis. After collecting all the data, SPSS computation software was used to obtain the result and output of the study.Selected sample include those who are currently working in public listed companies (PLC) regardless of their age limit, gender, ethnicity and industry working experience and duration of service because the questions is concerned on finding out what are the factors that affect employees' perception on organizational affective commitment from the perspective of internal CSR. There are two sampling techniques can be used in this study which are probability sampling technique and non-probability sampling technique.The objective is to test their potential influence on organizational affective commitment

The equation of multiple regressions has the following form:

$$Y = a + b1x1 + b\,2x2 + b3x3 \ldots\ldots + bmxm$$

Equation:

$$AC = a + b1HS + b2WLB + b3TD + b4WD + b5CB \; ; \text{where}$$

HS = Health and Safety ,WLB = Work Life Balance ,TD = Training and Development,

WD = Workplace Diversity,CB = Compensation and Benefits,AC = Affective Commitment

The model is basically adopted from the above theoretical model developed by Keraita et al. (2013) with the combination of the framework developed by Purang (2011). From the review of theoretical framework, it gives an idea on how to extent the conceptual framework for this study. Further, this framework is developed based on the research objectives and research questions of this study.

4. Results and Discussion

Health and Safety found to havepositive relationship with organizational affective commitment (OAC). The findings is supporting on the discussion of earlier researchers as it indicated that management commitment and dedication to the perspective of health and safety such as providing safety training and counselling services that support employee's sense

of well-being in an organization will be able to increase the engagement of employees towards it (Micheal et al., 2005; Mearns et al., 2010). On the other hand, Hoivik et al. (2009) and McCaughey, DelliFraine, McGhan and Bruning (2013) who stated that rate of injuries and illness in workplace which closely linked with individual living conditions will be contributing to employee's job dissatisfaction and thus reduce their commitment to the organization is consistent with the findings in the present study as well. The output shows the overall model is significant ($p<0.009$), with Adj R^2 of 0.384.

As for WLB, result obtained from Pearson Correlation represented that there is a significant positive relationship with OAC (Smith and Gardner, 2007; Ali et al., 2010; Keraita et al., 2013). However, in Pearson test, it only included two variables in testing the relationship and assumed that if the organization only adopts work life balance practices. Therefore, when comes to multiple regression, work life balance had lost its positive significant relationship with the dependent variable if compare with other variables (HS, TD, WD, CB). In the present study, the direction of association for WLB dimension was found to be different from the discussions in the research of Ali et al. (2010) and Keraita et al. (2013) due to past researchers do not include compensation and benefits in measuring the perception of employees towards organizational affective commitment. When more variables are included into the model, findings indicated that work life balance was negatively associated with organizational affective commitment. This finding was in contrast with the discussion of Smith and Gardner (2007); Ali et al. (2010) as past studies were all represented that appropriate work life balance programmed developed by management will be able to reduce the stress level of individual employee and thus increase their level of engagement to the organization. Unexpectedly, WLB and OAC are found with low correlation 0.248 and have insignificant regression coefficient at ($p>0.05$).

Present study does not indicate that TD can secure employees when other variables are added into the model and this was aligned with the study of Keraita, Oloko and Elijah (2013). This could be due to most of the respondents in this study are just within their organization for less than 5 years and high qualification (degree) can be one of the reasons that makes employees feel that training programmed is not that important for them. Hence, the findings is opposite with Ahmad et al. (2011) which indicated that training is culture inherited in an organization in order to secure its employees. Brum (2007) further stated that employee will have a sense of debt to the organization when the training programmed is able to help them in work and this could be a critical success factors for organization to growth due to its ability to retain employees. TD and OAC are found with correlation of 0.368 and have insignificant regression coefficient at ($p>0.05$).

As expected for WD, result demonstrated that there is a significant positive relationship with OAC. The findings was consistent with the study of Magoshi and Chang (2009) and Ashikali and Groeneveld (2013) as the researchers argued that diversity will have positive effect on commitment. This study had confirmed that when diversity practices adopted in an organization is supportive, it will improve the emotional attachment of employee towards the organization due to issues of discrimination resulted from diverse background is minimized. Ashikali and Groeneveld (2013) added that diversity management will be able to promote openness in workplace and thus retain its employee. This implied that if organizations want to improve the level of commitment among employees to the organization, proper diversity management need to be done to ensure that the workplace is free from diversity discrimination (Peng et al., 2009). WD variable have a positive and significant regression coefficient at ($p<0.05$).

Result obtained in this study by indicated that there is a positive relationship between CB with OAC. It extended the discussion of past researchers by highlighting that if manager fairly reward his or her subordinates when they do their job well, the psychology contact of the employee will be fulfilled and this will thus able to increase their commitment to the organization (Sial et al., 2011). This finding is consistent with Hassan (2002) whereby they demonstrated that pay level can be a kind of tools employee used to compare among each other and this will significantly affect their perception on organizational justice. In other words, when employees satisfied with their pay level, they will perceive that the organization had treated them fairly and hence increase their commitment to the organization.

In this study, the internal CSR practices namely health and safety, work life balance, training and development and workplace diversity is represented on the social resource while compensation and benefits is represented on economic resource. Result indicated that health and safety, workplace diversity and compensation and benefits are having significant relationship with organizational affective commitment. This implied that social exchange theory which consists of social and economic resources is the most suitable paradigm for explaining the relationship between internal CSR and work attitude especially employee's perception on organizational affective commitment. This was aligned with the study of Settoon et al. (1996) and Ali et al. (2010) as the researchers adopted the same theory in explaining the association between internal CSR dimension with employees' work attitude too.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

This study supports similar conclusion made by previous researchers. As a result of increasing education level and power of media in current era, public awareness towards the issues of CSR is on the rise. Training programmed which previously perceived as one of the most important variables in affecting the engagement of employees towards the organization was not the most influential factors in creating a desired workplace anymore. Due to the changes in the

macro-environment which lead to changes in lifestyle, people nowadays are having more commitment to their family. This phenomenon had thus contributed to the changes in their expectation towards work. They are now more concerned on the monetary rewards received rather than the non-monetary benefits provided by employer. Further, in order to retain talent and build a strong committed workforce within the organization in this competitive business environment, it is important for managers to create a sense of belongings among employees by denoted their concern to the aspect of health and safety policy of the organization, facilities that support work life balance of employees, training programmed for employee's career development and the issues of diversity discrimination in workplace besides giving attractive pay. Nonetheless, all the CSR practices should be matched with the demographic trend of employees in the organization to ensure that the most desired outcomes are achieved. Although findings of this study are similar with findings from prior studies, the researcher would like to expand the sample and carry out time series analysis for future research.

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