Psychological Empowerment and Organisational Commitment among Academic Staff of Public Universities in Malaysia

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Abstract: The study examined the level of the Three-Component Model of organisational commitment (TCM) and its relationship with psychological empowerment. The sample was selected through a three-stage cluster random sampling among academic staff from three public universities in Malaysia. Cross-sectional survey research questionnaires were used as instruments of data collection. All variables under study have met the testing standard of reliability, validity and normality. SPSS version 22 was used to analyse the data obtained from 225 respondents of the study. Descriptive statistics were used to analyse the levels of organisational commitment, and inferential statistical techniques such as Pearson Product Moment Correlation and Multiple Regression were used to examine the relationship between organisational commitment and psychological empowerment. The levels of organisational commitment of respondents were reported to be generally moderate but variations exist across its three different components namely the affective commitment, continuance commitment and normative commitment. The results of Pearson's correlation indicated a significant and positive relationships between all these three components of organisational commitment and overall organisational commitment with overall psychological empowerment and its four-dimensional components. The strongest relationship was identified between overall organizational commitment and psychological empowerment's dimension of impact. The multiple regression analyses indicated that more than 20% of the variance in the overall scores of organizational commitments could be predicted by the overall psychological empowerment and its four-dimensional components. In addition, the multiple regression analyses indicated that the two strongest predictors of organisational commitment were the dimension of meaning and impact. Overall, the study has provided evidence of a significant relationship between excellent empowerment practices with organisational commitment among the academic staff in public universities in Malaysia. The study has its implications towards enhancement of policies and administration in higher education in Malaysia.

Keywords: Academic Staff, Organisational Commitment, Psychological Empowerment

1. Background of the Study

Organisational commitment is a concept that has been greatly recognised as one of the most crucial factors that influences the success of many organisations (Meyer and Allen, 1993). For almost forty years, many studies have discovered that the organisational commitment is significantly related to various factors and outcomes in the organisation (Choong, Tan, Keh, Lim and Tan, 2012). As stated by Gellatly, Hunter, Currie and Irving (2009), employee's commitment is an organisation's essential

resource that has a sustainable competitive advantage. In fact, Armstrong (2008) has argued that organisational commitment plays a crucial part in Human Resource Management in which a highly committed employee has a strong desire to remain as a member of the organisation, accept its values and are ready to perform greater effort for the organisation. In addition, research done by Hasan et al. (2019) have found that having employees with a high amount of organizational commitment is important to make sure that the workflow is successful, and the overall organizational performance is at high and satisfactory level. Thus, it is undeniably that a committed employee is one of most crucial assets of an organisation. Although extensive changes exist in the economic and social system of the world and the new definitions that have been presented in respect to the relations between the individuals and the organisation, the concept of commitment is still the main subject discussed in many management articles and studies. Considering the changes affecting the organisations in the 21st century in various aspects of globalization, information technology, cross-border networking, Meyer and Allen (1997) have indicated three reasons of why organisational commitment is important in an organization:

- Organisations are not disappearing, and they are becoming leaner and this requires greater flexibility from their employees. Since organisations have fewer managers, which means less supervision, thus employees need to be responsible for their actions. Therefore, this needs higher organisational commitment of employees.
- Organisations that outsource their work depend on the quality of temporary workers, and possibly these workers may not have the type of commitment that the permanent workers have. Thus, the commitment of these workers is important to maintain the quality of organisation's performance.
- Developing commitment is a natural process of being part of the group and organisations that do not take advantage of this response will encourage alienation that is bad for the organisation.

Many past studies have been conducted to discover the concept of organisational commitment in order to examine the validity of the different measures of organisational commitment (example, Allen and Meyer, 1996; Mowday, Porter, and Steers, 1982), and to identify the relationship between organisational commitment and its antecedents and outcomes (example, Allen and Meyer, 1990). Although there have been many definitions and measures of organisational commitment (examples, Meyer and Allen, 1984, 1991; Porter, Steers, Mowday, and Boulian, 1974; Becker, 1960), nevertheless the three components model (TCM) of organisational commitment by Meyer and Allen (1991) has been one of the most important frameworks for studies in organisational commitment in the past decade. Based on the three-component model (TCM) of organisational commitment that consists of affective commitment, continuance commitment and normative commitment, commitment is regarded as a psychological state that portrays the relationship between employee with the organisation, and this relationship influences employee's decision to continue or discontinue their membership in the organisation (Meyer and Allen, 1991). Meyer and Allen (1991) in specific have defined organisational commitment as a concept reflected in three specific extensive aspects, namely affective commitment, continuance commitment and normative commitment.

Numerous previous researches have indicated a variety of antecedents and outcomes of the organisational commitment (Mahanta, 2010). For instances, the job characteristics, organisational structure and environment, and personal characteristics are among the most common factors predicting organisational commitment (Huang and Hsiao, 2007). A study by Meyer, Stanley, Herskovits and Topolnytsky (2002) have also revealed a similar finding indicating that organisational commitment is associated with factors related to demographic and job characteristics, and organisation structural factors. In another study by Gellatly, Hunter, Currie, and Irving ((2009), it was revealed that a practice of Human Resource Management (HRM) that emphasises on these qualities of development-oriented, reward-oriented and stability oriented have significantly promoted a better commitment in the organisation.

Organisational commitment is important because a high level of affective commitment in particular is associated with a number of positive and expected consequences for the organisation and the workers. Furthermore, previous research also revealed that affective and normative commitment are positively related with factors such as job satisfaction, job involvement, organisational citizenship behaviour, and performance, but they are negatively related to factors such as intention to leave, and