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Examining the Effects of Employee Empowerment, Teamwork, and Employee Training on Organizational Commitment

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Abstract

Building organizational commitment among employees is one of the important factors for ensuring organizational effectiveness. This is because committed employees can lead to favourable organizational outcomes. Based on the review of literature, it is observed that there are limited data on organizational commitment in education sector. Therefore, this study aims to examine the effects of three factors namely employee empowerment, teamwork, and employee training on organizational commitment in Malaysian higher education context. To fulfil the stated objective, the data were collected using an online survey from 242 employees at the public universities in northern Malaysia. The collected data were analysed on SPSS and structural equation modelling (SEM). The findings indicated that employee empowerment has a significant positive effect on organizational commitment. The effect of teamwork on organizational commitment was also found to be positive and statistically significant. Finally, the findings confirmed that employee training has a significant positive effect on organizational commitment. These findings are expected to provide beneficial suggestions for the management in higher education sector to improve organizational commitment among their employees by focusing on employee empowerment, training, and teamwork.

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1. Introduction

The rapidly increasing competition in various markets has urged organizations to focus on their employee and ensure their commitment at workplace. Organizational commitment is considered as one of the foremost important goals of any organization in order to maintain its existence and survival. According to Locke and Latham (1990), highly committed and loyal employees are very important in order to achieve organisational goals. This is because

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employees with higher degree of commitment toward the organization are perceived to be more productive, harmonious, have better loyalty towards their work, and possess higher responsibility and job satisfaction (Karim & Rehman, 2012). Moreover, employees with strong organisational commitment are likely to develop emotional attachment to their organisations and feel happy with greater aspirations to make meaningful contributions. Sahoo, Behera, and Tripathy (2010) demonstrated that an employee who is committed to his or her job and career has less intention to take leave or quit, tend to feel satisfied about the job, and has higher intrinsic motivation.

In the current and dynamic business environments, various organizations make significant sacrifice to ensure organizational commitment and job satisfaction among their employees for the purpose of maintaining them and improving their productivity. Organizational commitment has been widely accepted to be advantageous for both the organization and its employees as it can reinforce the feelings of belongingness, security of the job, career development, improved compensation, and higher intrinsic rewards (Azeem & Akhtar, 2014). The key benefits to the organization include improved employee tenure, minimum degree of turnover, low cost of training, higher job satisfaction, attainment of organizational objectives, and optimum product and services quality (Mowday, Porter, & Steers, 1982). Additionally, employees with greater level organisational commitments are likely to recommend others to their organization and become part of its members (Sahoo et al., 2010). All of these benefits have made organizational commitment worthy of attention.

In past literature, it is obvious that a number of researchers studied organizational commitment and found that it can be affected by different factors such as employee empowerment and teamwork. Employee empowerment is mostly understood by sharing knowledge, improving intellectual capability, and autonomy during decision making (Karim & Rehman, 2012). Wellins, Byham, and Wilson (1991) established that an organization which provides higher levels of empowerment to its employees would have better strengths to ensure its long term survival and face any challenges. Similarly, Rochon (2014) regarded teamwork as a key success factor for employee performance and described it as a group of employees who work together in order to achieve a certain goal. In other words, teamwork is a collaborative and shared activity that is directed towards accomplishing desired objectives. Previous literature also indicated that organizational commitment can be influenced by employee training. Training was defined as systematic process that aims to help employees enhance their knowledge and skills, and develop positive behaviour through learning experience that is expected to help employees achieve greater performance (Buckley & Caple, 2009). According to Jun, Cai, and Shin (2006), training provides various benefits to employees in terms of widening their knowledge, skills, and abilities, becoming more efficient team members, and improving career development.

This study aims to examine the effects of employee empowerment, teamwork, and employee training on organizational commitment in Malaysian higher education sector. This is because the education industry in the country is considered as one of the key sectors for driving the nation toward achieving its goals in the upcoming years. Moreover, by looking at the literature review on this topic, it shows that the majority of past studies were conducted in western countries and only few scholars focused on higher education industry in Malaysia. Therefore, this study aims to make a significant contribution with regard to the link between the stated variables. It also aims to provide beneficial suggestions to the management in higher educational institutions based on its findings. The next sections start with literature review, methodology, findings, and then discussion and conclusion are presented.

2. Literature review

2.1 Organizational commitment

Organizational commitment was defined in the literature as “the relative strength of an individual’s identification with and involvement in a particular organization and can be characterized by a strong belief in and acceptance of the organization’s goals and values, willingness to exert considerable effort on behalf of the organization and a strong desire to maintain membership of the organization” (Mowday et al., 1982, p. 27). Organizational commitment reflects the loyalty of an employee towards his or her organization (Ghorbanhosseini, 2012). It was also described by Meyer and Allen (1997) as the degree of attachment to an organisation and is characterized by valuing the shared benefits held between an employee and his or her organisation. Moreover, Rae (2013) thought about organizational commitment as a desire to maintain the affiliation with an organisation and is reflected through the willingness to exert high level of effort to achieve organisational goals.

Overall, organizational commitment can be defined as the degree to which an employee develops a feeling of

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