

Comparative Analysis of Organizational Commitment Among Sports Graduates in the Public and Private Sector

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the disparities in perceived organizational commitment among sports graduates employed in Malaysia's public and private sectors. The problem of turnover is a widespread global phenomenon resulting from employee dissatisfaction with the organization and lack of commitment. The issue of employee commitment in both public and private sector organizations is frequently discussed and deliberated upon. Thus, this study investigates the disparities in perceived organizational commitment among sports graduates employed in Malaysia's public and private sectors. 370 sports graduates participated in the survey. The data was collected through the administered questionnaire consisting of 22 items divided into three domains: affective, continuance, and normative commitment. Statistical analysis was performed using an independent sample t-test. The findings demonstrate a significant difference in affective commitment, continuance commitment and normative commitment based on working sector as the p -value < 0.05 . Sports graduates in the public sector demonstrated higher levels of commitment across all domains compared to their private sector counterparts. The implications of this study are beneficial for both public and private sectors as they gain a comprehensive understanding of employees' organizational commitment. Future research is expected to investigate other control variables, such as working experience. A longitudinal study also may be applicable in ensuring a comprehensive perception of employees.

Keywords: *Organizational Commitment, Turnover, Working Sector, Sports Graduates*

INTRODUCTION

Organizational commitment refers to the study of employees' loyalty and emotional attachment to an organization, encompassing their intrinsic values and external factors such as organizational culture and work environment (Ismail, 2012). Typically, the consistency of employees' commitment is assessed by their beliefs and values regarding the organization. It can also be seen as individuals' willingness to contribute to their organization. Employees' commitment in the workplace can significantly impact how well an organization operates, its effectiveness, and efficiency (Ahmad et al., 2023). When employees have confidence and trust in their employers, their commitment to staying with the company tends to be stronger and more robust (Ahad et al., 2021). Organizational commitment involves an individual's feelings, perceptions, and values, fostering dedication and reinforcing loyalty (Meyer & Allen, 1997). It entails embracing the goals and values of the organization, making contributions and efforts towards its success, and desiring to remain in the same workplace (Amalina et al., 2017). Meyer and Allen (1997), identified three psychological states that constitute organizational commitment: affective commitment, continuance commitment, and normative commitment. Organizational commitment is a critical and vital aspect that determines the effectiveness of organizational management. It significantly influences individuals and organizations, serving as a cornerstone of an organization's existence. Commitment to the organization indicates an individual's dedication, high values, trust, work involvement, and unwavering loyalty to the organization they represent (Rameshkumar, 2020). Understanding organizational commitment is particularly important for managers in human resource management, as shared commitment towards achieving core objectives fosters a drive for excellence (Ahmad et al., 2023). Various factors contribute to employees' commitment such as the reputation of leaders which play a significant role, as leaders who exhibit integrity, respect, trust, and dignity inspire ongoing commitment from those they influence (Lumpkin & Achen, 2018). Additionally, relationships among colleagues, work stress, and motivation also influence employees' commitment to the organization (Nordin & Hassan, 2019). The role of mental toughness is crucial in managing and mitigating personal stress. Individuals with a high level of mental toughness not only enhance their own performance but also significantly contribute to organizational success (Lamat et al., 2016).

In recent times, organizational commitment issues have become a persistent global concern, manifesting in challenges such as high turnover rates, technological advancements, and employee attitudes toward work. Among these problems, turnover intention has emerged as one of utmost significance, encompassing both voluntary and involuntary departures of employees from their current positions due to various reasons related to working conditions or personal preferences (Hee & Ann, 2019). The aggregate global turnover rate in 2019 was 27.9%, a substantial rise from 23.7% in 2015, spanning across various industries, including services, healthcare, manufacturing, and government sectors. The evidently sharp increase of resignations over a brief period of time became a grounds for concern among employers. High employee turnover incurs significant costs for organizations and has detrimental impacts, such as lowering employee morale and influencing other individuals to quit their employment. Moreover, according to Ooi and Teoh (2021), if an employee chooses to leave the company, it may result in increased expenses and a decline in the organization's competitive edge. The organization compelled employees to incur expenses related to courses, training, and other onboarding activities (Sintiong & Morshidi, 2015). To illustrate the severity of the turnover issue in Malaysia, the Department of Statistics Malaysia (DOSM) reported that in 2020, nearly 100,000 Malaysians lost their jobs due to pandemic-related difficulties. This data reinforces the critical nature of the employee turnover problem, posing a substantial concern for companies nationwide.

Nordin and Hassan (2019), have found that the workforce in government organizations express satisfaction with their careers, as they find their work enjoyable and fulfilling, leading to increased commitment and self-esteem. Conversely, private sector workers in Japan often experience stress due to heavy workloads and the pressure to meet monthly targets, which can negatively impact their commitment to the organization (Chaudhuri & Oba, 2016). Top et al. (2015) conducted a study in Turkey and observed a difference in affective commitment between government and private hospital workers. However, Hansen and Kjeldsen (2018), contradict these results, as they found no significant difference in affective commitment between public and private sector workers. While some studies imply higher affective commitment among public sector personnel, there are varying inconsistencies among the findings across

different contexts and countries. Factors such as job satisfaction, workload, and cultural influences can contribute to the variations in affective commitment observed between the public and private sectors. It is essential to note that not all previous studies yield the same conclusions regarding continuous commitment based on working sectors. A prior study by Genevičiūtė-Janonienė (2013), for instance, shows that employees in both sectors in Lithuania display similar levels of continuance commitment. This similarity arises from the perception that leaving the company would result in personal loss, creating a reluctance to quit. Markovits et al. (2010) also reported a distinction in normative commitment between employees in the public and private sectors, with public sector employees exhibiting higher levels of affective commitment. As extrinsic and intrinsic satisfaction increases, public sector employees are more prone to develop a more outstanding normative commitment to their organization than private sector employees.

Nevertheless, employees play a vital role in organizations to enhance productivity through their commitment and efforts. The level of employee commitment in public and private sector organizations has been a topic of on-going debate and research. Prior studies, like those by Barrows and Wesson (2001), and Culverson (2002), have explored the factors influencing employee commitment. For instance, Roslan and Nik Rosnah (2008), highlighted issues of inadequate commitment and incompetence among some personnel of the public sector in Malaysia. On the other hand, the private sector faces challenges whereby employees lack commitment due to the absence of career guarantees, unlike the public sector, which offers job security and benefits (Jain & Kumar, 2017). Given these concerns, it is essential to conduct comprehensive studies on employee commitment in both sectors, particularly in light of the Ninth Malaysia Plan, which emphasizes the significance of a competent public workforce and the necessity to harness private sector innovation and management efficiency. Although previous research has explored variations in organizational commitment between the government and private sectors, a notable research gap exists regarding the perceptions of organizational commitment among sports graduates in the workplace. This gap necessitates a focused examination to address the lack of research in the field of sports graduates. Consequently, this study aims to investigate disparities in organizational commitment as perceived by sports graduates employed in both public and private sectors in Malaysia.

METHODOLOGY

This research employs a quantitative survey design to examine the differences in organizational commitment among employees working in the public and private sectors in Malaysia.

Participants

The employees refer to sports graduates from UiTM based on their respective working sectors. The researcher obtained sample information from the University Transformation Division of UiTM and selected the sample through stratified random sampling. Using stratified random selection minimized potential biases, ensuring a more representative portrayal of the population in the study findings. A total of 370 sports graduates participated as respondents with 261 working in the private sector and 109 in the public sector.

Instrumentation

Besides, a total of 22 items from the Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ) were adapted from Meyer and Allen (1991). All the items were based on five-likert scale format ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Prior to the pilot study conducted, 30 respondents participated in a pilot study to evaluate the instrument's reliability. The item analysis conducted during the pilot study shows a good Cronbach's Alpha coefficient for the instrument used in this research as it is above 0.7 (Hair et al., 2003). The Cronbach Alpha values for the study variables in the pilot study data are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Cronbach Alpha Reliability Values of Pilot Study

	Sub Construct	Number of items	Cronbach Alpha
Organizational Commitment	Affective	5	0.877
	Continuance	3	0.761
	Normative	5	0.867

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

An independent sample t-test analysis was performed to examine variations in organizational commitment and its respective dimensions among UiTM sports graduates according to their working sectors. The outcomes of this analysis are presented in the table provided below:

Table 2. Results of Independent Sample T-test Analysis

Organization Commitment	Working Sector	<i>n</i>	Mean	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>Df</i>	<i>P</i> - Value	Cohen's <i>d</i>
Affective	Public	109	3.88	0.539	-4.365	303.088	0.001	0.458
	Private	261	3.56	0.828				
Continuance	Public	109	3.86	0.693	-2.958	368	0.003	0.340
	Private	261	3.60	0.830				
Normative	Public	109	3.91	0.649	-5.044	260.041	0.001	0.545
	Private	261	3.50	0.842				

The independent sample t-test outcomes for organizational commitment among UiTM sports graduates in the public sector are presented in Table 2. The analysis results indicate that the *p*-value for the independent sample t-test is less than the significance level $\alpha = 0.05$ ($p < 0.05$). This signifies a notable disparity in organizational commitment among UiTM sports graduates based on their working sectors, specifically affective, continuance and normative commitment. It also shows the mean scores for the affective, continuance, and normative commitment indicate higher levels in the public sector compared to the private sector.

The results of this research highlight the disparities in affective commitment among sports graduates based on working sectors, particularly public organizations. These differences can be attributed to these organizations' recruitment and selection processes. Rahmad and Idris (2010), emphasized the transparent selection process for public employees, ensuring integrity and qualifications align with the offered positions. According to Ericsson et al. (2018), employers seeking candidates with core values that match the organization's culture can effectively identify individuals who will adapt well. Du Preez and Bendixen (2015), and Lages (2012), support the notion that proper recruitment and selection practices lead to employee loyalty. Furthermore, the researchers contend that favourable career development opportunities, such as promotions and rewards, in the public sector play a significant role in fostering strong emotional attachment and loyalty among employees. This sentiment aligns with prior study by Chin et al. (2017), which found that federal public servants in Sabah have expressed satisfaction with the organization's robust promotion system. Ericsson (2018) supports the aforementioned statement, positing that employees demonstrate loyalty when presented with career development prospects, have supportive employers, receive fair treatment, are rewarded for their hard work, and when the organization emphasizes a balance between the professional and personal aspects of their careers.

In terms of continuous commitment among sports graduates based on working sectors, the findings denote a significant difference, particularly public organizations. The mean score for continuous commitment is notably higher in the public sector compared to the private sector. This difference may be ascribed to the intense competition for limited job vacancies in the public sector. Employees are aware of

the potential losses they may incur if they work in government agencies. Conversely, those in the private sector have more flexibility to seek alternative employment should they leave their current organization. As a result, the continuous commitment of employees working in the public sector far surpasses that of the workforce in the private sector. Halimah (2001), suggests that the unemployment rate has increased due to the rising number of layoffs in the private sector. This unfortunate circumstance has led many employees to seek employment opportunities in the public sector, which has intensified the competition for such positions. The researcher also posits that the higher level of continuous commitment among employees in the public sector is influenced by their self-perception regarding long-term career security, including the assurance of a pension and reduced susceptibility to dismissal due to economic factors. Previous research conducted by Sharifuddin and Abdullah (2020), supports this notion, highlighting the significance of pension facilities in influencing public employees' career choices. They perceive pension provisions as key for safeguarding their future during retirement. Moreover, a prior study by Agarwal and Sajid (2017), aligns with the present findings, establishing a difference in continuous commitment between public and private sector employees, with public sector employees exhibiting higher levels of continuous commitment. In a similar vein, Kumari and Priya (2017), observe a higher level of continuous commitment among public sector employees in the Indian banking industry compared to their private sector counterparts. This disparity can be attributed to the more stringent work expectations and associated pressures private sector employees face in meeting these goals.

Finally, this study's findings indicate a significant difference in normative commitment among sports graduates based on working sectors, particularly towards public sector organizations, as evidenced by a higher mean score compared to the private sector. Human resource management practices foster a sense of responsibility and self-loyalty towards companies (Ahmad et al., 2022). Public sector organizations appear to have implemented effective human resource management practices which have a significant impact on influencing their employees' commitment. This viewpoint finds support in the work of Yahya et al. (2009), who emphasize that high employee commitment and job satisfaction foster a sense of responsibility and loyalty, making it difficult for employees to willingly leave the organization, thus facilitating easy workforce retention. Additionally, Ozolina-Ozola (2014), and Long et al. (2012), affirm that human resource management practices impact employee motivation and commitment, ultimately reducing turnover rates due to the benefits provided by employers. The study's findings align with previous research on normative commitment conducted by Kumari and Priya (2017), Mittal and Mittal (2015), and Muthukumaran (2017), in the context of public and private bank employees. These studies reveal substantial discrepancies in normative commitment between workers in public and private banks. Public bank employees display a stronger sense of obligation and voluntary dedication to their organizations than their private bank equivalents. Similarly, Genevičiūtė-Janonienė (2013) reports a significant difference in normative commitment between employees in the public and private sectors in Lithuania, with private sector employees expressing a higher willingness to stay and remain loyal to their organizations.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the study highlights significant differences in organizational commitment among sports graduates across public and private sectors. Notably, graduates working in the public sector possess stronger desires and a greater sense of responsibility towards their respective organizations rather than private sector. This suggests that the nature of the sector in which sports graduates are employed plays a crucial role in shaping their commitment to their organizations. Sports graduates entering the workforce should recognize the differences in organizational culture and values between the public and private sectors. Being aware of these distinctions can help them align their expectations and adapt their behaviors accordingly. Besides, employers also need to take an initiative to offer opportunities for skill enhancement and professional growth in retaining talented sports graduates within the organization. As a result, future studies are recommended to conduct longitudinal study to measure the employees' perceptions related to organizational commitment. They could also explore organizational commitment from other perspective such as working experience. Hence, organizational commitment is seen as an investment for the organization to achieve organizational goals.

AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTION

Mohamad Firdaus Bin Ahmad conducted the study, drafted the manuscript, and Nur Syazwani Zulaikha Binti Safwan was responsible for study design, analysis, and data collection. Both authors have meticulously reviewed and approved the final manuscript.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

This study has no conflicts of interest with any agency or organization that could potentially impact the findings or interpretation. Furthermore, there were no financial resources allocated to support this project.

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