



Faculty of Cognitive Sciences and Human Development

**RELATIONSHIPS OF PAY SATISFACTION AND CAREER  
DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITY WITH ORGANIZATIONAL  
COMMITMENT AMONG EMPLOYEES OF CONSTRUCTION  
COMPANIES**

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OPPORTUNITY WITH ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT AMONG EMPLOYEES  
OF CONSTRUCTION COMPANIES**

**MOHD AZMIR BIN MUSTAFA**

**A research paper submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of  
Master of Science (Human Resource Development)**

**Faculty of Cognitive Science and Human Development  
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*In Loving Memory*

*Allahyarham Haji Mustafa Ibrahim*

*... a father who taught me to be a man ...*

## *Special Dedication*

*When I came back from Manchester in February 2008 and met my mother and Along (Mohd Azman Mustafa), it just came to my mind that I wanted to achieve 'something' for them. Something is missing!*

*Back in my house, I have a wife with a PhD Degree and four growing kids whom I always motivate to go to school and achieve good results. These solidified my intention to pursue my study at a higher degree and Alhamdulillah after two years, this thesis is the results of hardworking and determination!*

*I would like to dedicate this thesis first and foremost to my mother, Hajjah Noriah Ismail, to my wife Dr Muna Sabri, my 4 children Mohammad Soffian, Deana Sarah, Mohammad Salman and Deana Sophiya, my brother Mohd Azman Mustafa and my parents in-law, Haji Sabri Mahmud and Hajjah Aishah Hashim. These are the people who have inspired me to obtain my masters.*

*To my kids, Papa did it! Now, I'm waiting for your turn to make me and mama the proud parents!*

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**Figure 1.1**    **Research Framework**

## ABSTRACT

Various researchers have analyzed the relationship of pay satisfaction and organizational commitment. However, little is known about the relationship of these constructs among the employees working various industries in Malaysia. The present study examined the level of pay satisfaction, career development opportunity and career development opportunity as well as the effect of the two earlier constructs on commitment of the workers towards their organization. The study utilizes a survey approach employing a set of standardized questionnaires consisting of the three areas that were being studied, the 14-item pay satisfaction questionnaire, the 4-item career development opportunity questionnaire and the 15-item organizational commitment questionnaire. The sample comprises of 109 respondents from 10 construction companies within Kuching Division in Sarawak. Data was analyzed using SPSS software ver 17.0, employing Pearson correlation and multiple regression. The results show that the level of pay satisfaction, career development and organizational commitment among the employees of construction companies are high. Correlation studies revealed that pay satisfaction and career development opportunity are positively correlated with organizational commitment. Multiple regressions show that the presence of pay satisfaction has rendered the relationship between career development opportunity and organizational commitment as less significant, which indicate the importance of money has superseded the desire for continuous development among these workers. Implication of the studies to the employers is for the improvement of certain areas within the pay raise and pay structure to improve the level of pay satisfaction among workers. The employers should also promote the career development opportunity within the organization which requires consistent attention to ensure employees in the construction set up can be committed to an organization for mutual benefits.

## ABSTRAK

Ramai penyelidik telah menganalisa hubungan di antara kepuasan terhadap gaji dan komitmen kepada organisasi. Walaubagaimanapun, tidak banyak yang diketahui mengenai hubungan tersebut di kalangan pekerja yang bekerja di pelbagai industri di Malaysia. Kajian ini mengenalpasti tahap kepuasan terhadap gaji, peluang untuk perkembangan kerjaya dan juga komitmen terhadap organisasi dalam industri pembinaan. Kajian ini juga menyelidiki kesan kepuasan terhadap gaji dan peluang untuk perkembangan kerjaya ke atas komitmen para pekerja terhadap organisasi masing-masing. Kajian ini dilakukan melalui pendekatan survei dengan menggunakan set borang soalselidik yang mengandungi ketiga-tiga aspek yang dikaji. Aspek-aspek ini ialah set soalselidik 14 item bagi kepuasan terhadap gaji, set soalselidik 4 item bagi peluang perkembangan kerjaya dan set soalselidik 15 item bagi komitmen terhadap organisasi. Sampel kajian terdiri daripada 109 orang responden dari 10 syarikat pembinaan di Bahagian Kuching, Sarawak. Data yang diperolehi dianalisa melalui perisian SPSS versi 17.0, menggunakan kaedah korelasi Pearson dan 'multiple regression'. Keputusan menunjukkan bahawa tahap kepuasan terhadap gaji, peluang perkembangan kerjaya serta komitmen terhadap organisasi di kalangan para pekerja di syarikat pembinaan adalah tinggi. Kajian korelasi mendedahkan bahawa kepuasan terhadap gaji dan peluang perkembangan kerjaya mempunyai hubungan positif dengan komitmen terhadap organisasi. Walau bagaimanapun, ujian regresi menunjukkan bahawa kepuasan terhadap gaji mengurangkan signifikan hubungan di antara peluang perkembangan kerjaya dan komitmen terhadap organisasi. Pemerhatian ini menunjukkan kepentingan faktor wang telah mengatasi keinginan untuk perkembangan kerjaya yang berterusan di kalangan pekerja-pekerja ini. Implikasi kajian ini terhadap para majikan ialah untuk meningkatkan tahap kepuasan terhadap gaji melalui penambahbaikan struktur dan skala gaji serta sistem kenaikan gaji. Para majikan juga perlu menggalakkan perkembangan kerjaya di dalam organisasi yang memerlukan perhatian yang berterusan bagi memastikan agar para pekerja di dalam sektor pembinaan mempunyai komitmen terhadap organisasi untuk kepentingan bersama.

## **CHAPTER 1**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.0 Introduction**

Since the inception of organizational science, pay has been identified as a form of reward that motivates employees' performance (Edington & Shultz, 2008). Pay satisfaction has then becoming one of the most researched areas in human resource development as its effects on employees' behaviour as well as the organizational outcomes were becoming more apparent (Currall, Towler, Judge & Kohn, 2005). Previous research has demonstrated that pay satisfaction is a multi-dimensional construct, where pay design is one of the layers that make up its dimension (Heneman & Schwab, 1985).

An ideal pay design may lead to job satisfaction and reduce employees' turnover rates within an organization. There are two main elements in the pay design which are the pay level and pay structure. With most of the private sectors' firms spending as much as 40% and 80%, respectively, on wages and salaries, it is vital for these companies that their employees are satisfied with the pay level offered since this may affect key outcomes such as job satisfaction, turnover, absenteeism, work stoppages and employee performance (Motowidlo, 1983). Satisfied employees also tend to engage in

organizational citizenship behavior which is altruistic in nature that exceeds the formal requirements of the job. Realizing the importance of pay design on organizational performance, numerous amount of research has been devoted to predicting and explaining pay design and the factors that governing it. A consistent finding in the literature is that there is a positive relationship between pay levels and organizational commitment. A properly designed pay systems may induce positive attitudinal and behavioral outcomes, especially job commitment. For example, if an organization determines the level of structure and the level of pay based on proper rules, this may motivate employees to improve their commitment with the organization (Barmby, 2002; Chang, 2006).

The level and structure of pay design will be more efficient and effective if they are consistent with the organization's strategies and goals. The policy makers in an organization must have a clear idea of the goals, types and elements of pay systems if they aim to attract, retain and motivate competent employees to sustain and maintain organizational competitiveness in a global economy (Ismail, 2006; Milkovich & Newman, 2007).

As the pay design in most organizations is being determined by the top management, it is important for the managers to realize the factors that may

have significant impact on job commitment within the organization. In the scenario of a construction company, job commitment among the workers which may lead to low turn-over rate of employees, will ensure the continuous supply of quality and skilled workers with good track records. These groups of workers would be an asset to the company as their contributions' significantly determine the credibility and achievement of a construction company in delivering quality products and services within the targeted time and budget (Ahmad & Abu Bakar, 2003; Ibrahim, Roy & Ahmed, 2010).

It is common in traditional HRD research to test linear relationship between pay design and organizational commitment. Application of a linear function suggests that incremental increases in pay level will be matched by proportional increases in employee satisfaction and eventually leads to enhanced job commitment (Heneman, Porter, Greenberger & Strasser, 1997). In this study, the emphasis will be given to investigate the level of pay satisfaction and organizational commitment among workers working in construction companies and the relationship of these two elements in the current construction settings.

Looking at the construction industries in Malaysia, one can see that there is a big gap in the supply of skilled and experienced workers and the

construction industries are also facing with the problems in retaining the workers within the organizations (Abdul Aziz, Jaafar, Enshassi & Mohamed Salleh, 2008). This study will offer an insight into the extend of workers retention problems in construction companies as assessed from their level of commitment towards their organization as well as identifying the factors that lead to their intention to leave. Another aspect that will be investigated in the study is the career development opportunity offered to employees in construction companies in Malaysia and its effect on their organizational commitment. The outcome of this study would give further knowledge in understanding the relationship between pay design and organizational commitment.

## **1.1 Research Background**

Many researches in HRD reported that one of the key factors which strongly influence the pay system design of an organization is the organizational culture itself, such as collectivism or individualism (Adams, 1963 & 1965; Aryee, 1999). Collectivism is regarded as the norm and standard that emphasizes on large power distance which involved a more hierarchical structure and centralized decision-making that focuses more on group interests, loyalty, co-operation and harmony. Individualism is

viewed as the value and standard that focuses on individual achievement and low power distance which is less hierarchical and decentralized decision-making (Farh, Dobbin & Cheng, 1991; Hofstede, 1991). In an organization that upheld the collective culture, the design of the pay systems is hierarchical in nature.

In contrast, under the individualistic culture, an organization has the tendency to design egalitarian and de-layered pay systems, i.e. wage compression and broadband system (Henderson, 2007; Milkovich & Newman, 2007). Thus, these socio-cultural differentiations heavily affect the rules for designing pay systems in organizations. In countries that uphold a collective culture such as Japan, China and Malaysia, fair pay is perceived as equality where rewards are provided based on tenure, seniority and/or needs regardless of the individual's contribution (Aryee, 1999). Conversely, under an individualistic culture, such as the United States of America, fair pay is regarded as equity where rewards are given based on individual merits (Gomez-Mejia, Welbourne & Wiseman, 2000; Giacobbello, Miller & Victor, 1998).

In Malaysia, compensation policies and procedures for public sector employees are designed, administered and monitored by a central government agency, the Public Service Department (PSD). The pay

allocation rules are designed based on internal equity variables, such as qualifications, training, job categories and the ability to pay. These rules have affected the distributions of pay level and structure in the public sector, thus standardized it across the country. In private organizations, specifically the construction companies, designing of pay systems is largely govern by the companies' board of directors and strongly influenced by the current economic climate as well as the financial status of the companies.

Construction industry in Malaysia has started to develop ever since independence, albeit a slow pace in the beginning due to the then economic state of the country (Ibrahim, Roy, Ahmed & Imtiaz, 2010). Generally, the Malaysian construction industry can be divided into two areas, mainly the general construction which involved the residential, non residential and those relating to civil engineering construction. The other segment of the industry deals with special trades works such as metal works, plumbing, sewerage, sanitary, carpentry and glass works. Both aspects of the construction determine the domestic performance of Malaysian economy, especially when Malaysia is on the verge of industrialization. This industry also plays an important role in national employment and has been supporting workers of all trades for their livelihood, which has been estimated to be approximately 8 percent of the total workforce in Malaysia (Malaysian Economic Report, 2004). Although the involvement of

construction industry in Malaysia is undeniable a tangible factor affecting the country's development as well as its socioeconomic effect on the local population, very little research has been carried out by researchers and practitioners on the issues pertaining to the local construction (Ibrahim, Roy, Ahmed & Imtiaz, 2010). The major players in the industry are not conducting Research & Development (R&D) activities and as it is common for the academic institutions in the country to be involved in such activities, close working relationship between these two sectors would definitely be of mutual benefit to both parties, specifically and to the whole nation, generally. One of the key areas that have significant bearing to the success of the construction industry in Malaysia is the human resources. Better understanding of the problem faced by the construction's human resource management and development would enable the industry to devise strategic planning in order to overcome the issues and at the same time boost the current strength to a higher level.

In the scenario where the turn-over rate of construction workers is high, it is imperative to determine whether pay level and pay structure do play a role in enhancing job commitment among this group (Lingard & Lin, 2004). Until now, research on the working attitudes among construction workers and the dynamic of employments in construction industries are still lacking. Although the relationship between pay design which eventually leads to pay

satisfaction and organizational commitment has been established in other organizations, to my best knowledge, no such study has been carried out within the construction industries in Malaysia.

Construction workers can be found on almost all construction sites performing a wide range of tasks from the very easy to the potentially hazardous. They can be found at building, highway, and heavy construction sites; residential and commercial sites; tunnel and shaft excavations; and demolition sites. Many of the jobs they perform require accuracy, training and experience. Other jobs require little skill and can be learned in a short amount of time. While most construction workers specialize in a type of construction, such as highway or tunnel construction, some are generalists who perform many different tasks during all stages of construction. Construction workers, who work in underground construction, such as in tunnels, or in demolition are more likely to specialize in only those areas. Most construction workers learn on the job, but formal apprenticeship programs provide the most thorough preparation. However, in order for any sorts of training to be efficiently given to these workers, they are required to demonstrate certain level of commitment to their jobs as well as to their organization. High employment turn-over rate in construction industries in Malaysia indicates the difficulties and to a certain extent, the non-feasibility of offering formal training or apprenticeship to the construction workers as

part of their career development opportunity (Ahmad & Abu Bakar, 2003; Abdul Aziz & Jaafar, 2008).

Career development opportunity is one of the elements in career development practices which, in turn, placed under the scope of perceived organizational support. Huselid (1995) suggested that progressive HR practices that embrace career-related practices could improve knowledge, skills and the abilities of an organization's current and potential employees, and enhance the retention of quality employees. The availability of career development opportunities illustrates the willingness and effort of the organization to cherish employees. Generally, organizations that provide relevant quantity and quality development schemes are signaling to employees their likeliness to develop a cadre of skillful employees to grow together with the business. It would indeed be interesting to examine if career development opportunity will have any effect on the organizational commitment relationship as well as the nature of this effect. The outcomes of this proposed study would undoubtedly enhance the knowledge of employees' retention, specifically among construction workers.

## **1.2 Statement of Problems**

Two salient ongoing organizational issues faced by managers are undoubtedly eliciting the commitment of employees and staff retention. For organizations, the high cost of recruitment and selection (Pfeffer, 1998), the lag and productivity loss during the assimilation period (Davies, 2001), the likely loss of business opportunity (McCallum, 1988; Walker, 2001), poor customer relationship (Clarke, 2001; Messmer, 2000), and hidden cost of loss productivity (Das, 2002) have subsequently highlighted the importance of retaining committed employees as an aspect of survival for organizations. In response to these potential problems, many forward-thinking organizations are striving to create a positive organizational climate in an attempt to retain valuable employees through various human resource management and development initiatives. Some of these practices include ensuring that there is a good fit between the individual employees' values and the organization's values in the recruitment and selection phase (Van Vianen, 2000), providing equitable remuneration that reflects performance (Boyd and Salamin, 2001; Parker and Wright, 2000), recognizing efforts and contributions made by individuals (Davies, 2001), providing employees with sufficiently challenging and interesting work (Kraut and Korman, 1999), and providing opportunities for training and career development (Wetland, 2003). These efforts are aimed at improving human resource

(HR) practices and workplace relations and, consequently, organizational performance via the shaping of employees' attitudes and behaviors (Whitener, 2001).

Pay design is a crucial issue of compensation system where it emphasizes on an employer design the level and structure of pay to rewarding employees who work in the similar and/or different job groups (Henderson, 2007). Previous research on pay system have been emphasized much on the internal characteristics of pay design. At this stage many scholars were involved in discussing the concept, type, approach and significance of pay levels and structures in organizations. The reciprocal relationship between pay design issues, work attitude and behavior is less emphasized (Chang & Kleiner, 2002; Milkovich & Newman, 2007). Further research in this area reveals that pay systems that are properly designed may positively induce positive attitudinal and behavioral outcomes, especially job commitment. Henemen *et al.* (1997) showed that a properly implemented pay level was a major determinant of pay satisfaction, which in turn may lead to job satisfaction. Job satisfaction can enhance organizational commitment and reduce an employee's intention to leave a firm (Murphy and Gorchels, 1996). As job satisfaction has been shown to positively correlate with pay level, it is apparent that these two factors may play the governing role in organizational commitment. Other studies found that those businesses that

do not offer attractive career development programs can lose good workers to competitors offering job opportunities (Rita and Kirschenbaum, 1999).

It is generally accepted that the pay level of workers in construction companies is relatively higher than their counterparts in other sectors such as in the consultant companies and government departments. This is due to their nature of work which requires these workers to work on sites and outside the normal office hours to meet the targeted date of completion. However, recently we have been bombarded with the news of our local construction workers, from certificate level right to the professionally qualified engineers, quantity surveyors and other personnel, are migrating overseas for better opportunities and experiences (Darus, Hasan, Omar, Saruwono, Mohamad & Abdul Salam, 2008). High mobility rate among construction workers suggests the antithesis of organizational commitment. Other studies found that those businesses that do not offer attractive career development programs can lose good workers to competitors offering job opportunities (Rita and Kirschenbaum, 1999). Based upon this discussion, the following hypotheses were developed and tested:

H1: There is a significant relationship between pay satisfaction and organizational commitment among workers of construction companies