

# ***THE INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF BUSINESS & MANAGEMENT***

## **Trust and Organizational Citizenship Behavior of Staffs at a Public University in Malaysia**

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### **Abstract:**

*This article provides an insight for relational study between trust and organizational citizenship behavior of the staffs at a public university in Kota Kinabalu, Sabah, Malaysia. A total number of 200 respondents involved in the study, and 160 of them are usable and valid for analyses. The research of the study conducted in quantitative method by using survey questionnaire as the main instrument for data collection, and analyzed by using SPSS software. The sample of research was sampled using stratified sampling technique. Findings suggested that there is a significant relationship between trust and organizational citizenship behavior.*

**Keywords:** Trust, Organizational Citizenship Behavior

### **1. Introduction**

Written by Covey (2006), 'Trust is one thing that changes everything and it is the one that which every organization has to manage and develop well'. With trust, it enables employees to perform their task and realizing the provided goals linked to strategic vision and mission of the organization. Trust is also seen as the key factor by Covey that guarantees smooth communication, and binds interpersonal relationship of workers at workplace, the relationship that is referred as social capital by Coleman (1998), and Lin (2001).

A public university in Kota Kinabalu, Sabah was selected as the location and organization for the research purpose, in identifying the relationship between trust and organizational citizenship behavior (OCB). Non-academic staffs were taken as the sample of the study, based on their job description that is more ad-hoc basis, and working ventures with different staffs from various departments from time to time. Hence, the sample of non-academic staffs would be meaningful to this study.

The main research question proposed here is 'Is there a significant relationship between trust and organizational commitment?' The research objective is to examine the relationship between trust and organizational commitment.

The definition of trust by Moorman, Zaltman and Deshpande (1992) is 'a willingness to rely on exchange partner in whom he has confidence with'. The definitions evolves two approaches as one is viewed as a belief, confidence, and expectation about an exchange partner's trust that results from the partner's expertise, reliability, and intentionality (Anderson and Weitz (1990); Blau (1964, Dwyer and Oh (1987); Pruitt (1981); Rotter (1967); Schurr and Ozanne (1985)). The other one approach of trust is viewed as a behavioral intention that reflects a reliance on a partner and involves vulnerability and uncertainty on the part of the trustor (Coleman, 1990; Deutsch, 1962; Giffin, 1967; Schlenker, Helm & Tedeschi 1973; and Zand, 1972).

### **2. Literature Review**

Low trust organization poses crisis of organizational performance. Organizational citizenship is seen as a mindset that reflects desire, need, and obligation in maintaining membership in an organization (Meyer and Allen, 1991), in order to do so, staffs would need to prolong the trust (Mowday 1982, Reichers, 1985; Salancik, 1997; Scholl 1981; and Staw, 1977).

Apart from the notion that the study on the trust level is crucial for the success of any organization, it is also linked to the fact that the university's main responsibility is to produce human capital. University is the place for not only spreading knowledge but also acts as the place of knowledge dissemination. In relation to this aspiration, the active role of non-academic staff in UMS is highly anticipated. Any effort in exploring the study of performance of university staff particularly the non-academic staff is highly welcome. The university is entrusted by society to produce future generation of resilient human capital with first class mentality. They are the future

leaders. They are the end-result of good academic system. Through university, the transformation of ordinary citizen to extra-ordinary citizen among youngsters takes place.

### 2.1. Trust

It is the belief or confidence in a person or organization's integrity, fairness and reliability as defined by Lypnack and Stamps (1997). The study on trust has evolved around five key dimensions; they are competence, openness, integrity, consistency and loyalty. The level of trust among non-academic staff focused on the context of their perception or feeling towards their supervisors as well as to the organization. Trust acts as an independent variable in the research. In the past, most of the studies talked about the five key dimensions of trust. Those key dimensions are competence, openness, integrity, consistency and loyalty.

### 2.2. Organizational Citizenship Behavior

Organizational citizenship behavior is defined as a discretionary behavior that is not part of an employee's formal job requirement (Robbins, 2001) and not recognized by reward system (Organ, 1988) but that nevertheless promotes the effective functioning of the organization. Despite of not being rewarded, employees maintain their OCB. OCB is a tool that can be used to measure employees performance. Organ (1990) described five categories of OCB: (1) Conscientiousness means that employees carry out in-role behaviors (i.e., individual task performance) well beyond the minimum required levels; (2) Altruism implies that they give help to others; (3) Civic virtue suggests that employees responsibly participate in the political life of the organization; (4) Sportsmanship indicates that people do not complain, but have positive attitudes; and (5) Courtesy means that they treat others with respect. From the manager's perspective, OCB represents extra-role employee efforts that increase organizational effectiveness and efficiency. Examples of extra-role behaviors constitute OCB could include: helping orient new employees even though it is not required; attending meetings that are not mandatory, but are considered important; or helping co-workers who have been absent from work. In a study done by Bolino (2002), they cited a previous research that indicates trust as an antecedent, rather than a consequence, of OCB (Konovsky & Pugh, 1994). Thus, it clearly shows that the increase in trust will result in OCB among the staff. In relation to this, OCB will be the dependent variable. The five organizational dimensions will include altruism, courtesy, conscientiousness, sportsmanship, and civic virtue. They become the bases for the measuring scales. In the literature review, the researchers discuss further the role of OCB in the creation of social capital as being studied by Bolino et al (2002).

### 2.3. Past Research Findings

Applebaum et al. (2004), Lypnack & Stamps (1997)	Trust as the belief or confidence in a person or organization's integrity, fairness and reliability
Bolino et. Al (2002)	Trust as an antecedent, rather than a consequence, of OCB
Connel & Ferrers (2003)	Trust in managers, or supervisors, will significantly predict higher commitment, OCB conscientiousness and lowered turnover intention. □ It has positive relationship with both trust and transformational leadership □ when employees going beyond their normal job requirements
Ryan (2001)	Show that there is the degree to which an employee endorses the protestant work ethics (PWE). He argued that the hard work dimension of PWE is positively and significantly related to both helping behaviors and civic virtue found in OCB. This implies that trust will strengthen OCB similar with the impact of employees work values towards OCB.

Table 1

## 3. Research Design

The study was conducted among non-academic staff of UMS main campus. Questionnaires are distributed through the Heads of Departments or the assigned officers. There are 870 registered non-academic staff in UMS main campus. For the purpose of this study, the researchers had divided DSCIU into four categories, namely Schools of Science Stream, School of Arts Stream, Chancellery and Registrar office, and other DSCIU. The stratified random sampling technique required only 154 respondents. A total of 200 questionnaires were distributed in which 160 were returned (response rate of 80%).

### 3.1. Trusts

In the study, the researchers will relate the meaning of trust as the belief or confidence in a person or organization's integrity, fairness and reliability as defined by Lypnack and Stamps (1997). The study on trust evolves around five dimensions; competence, openness, integrity, consistency and loyalty. The level of trust among non-academic staffs is focused in the context of their perception or feeling toward their supervisor and organization. For example:

- a) This organization treats people like me fairly and justly. (Integrity).
- b) Whenever this organization makes an important decision, I know it will be concerned about people like me. (Integrity).

- c) This organization can be relied on to keep its promises. (Consistency)
- d) I believe that this organization takes the opinions of people like me into account when making decisions. (Consistency)
- e) I feel very confident about this organization’s status. (Competence)
- f) This organization has the ability to accomplish what it says it will do. (Competence)
- g) I feel free to discuss job related problems and difficulties with my supervisor without fear that such discussions will either jeopardize my position or to be held against me later? (openness)
- h) Supervisors at times must make decisions which seem to be against the interests of subordinates. When this happens to me as a subordinate, I trust that my supervisor’s decision was justified by other considerations? (loyalty<sup>®</sup>)

The above measurement on scales of trust is adopted from Paine (2003) of the Institute for Public Relations. The other two questions are taken from Shelton (2005) who also measure employees’ trust in supervisor. The questions are as follows:

- i) I am confident about my ability to do my job. (competence)
- j) The way my supervisor interprets laws and regulations limits my authority to get my job done. (openness/loyalty)
- k) Trust is measured in Section B of the questionnaire.

All the questions involved are related to the five dimensions of trust, explicitly, competence, openness, integrity, consistency and loyalty. The measurement is adopted from Lypnack and Stamps (1997).

### 3.2. Organizational Citizenship Behavior

OCBs were measured with scales developed by Podsakoff et al. (1990) to operate the five dimensions of OCB identified by Organ (1988); They are conscientiousness, sportsmanship, courtesy, civic virtue, and altruism. Sample items for the five dimensions are:

- (1) Conscientiousness: “Believes in giving an honest day’s work for an honest day’s pay.”
- (2) Sportsmanship: “Consumes a lot of time complaining about trivial matters.”
- (3) Civic virtue: “Attend functions that are not required, but help the organization image.”
- (4) Courtesy: “Take steps to prevent problems with other workers.”
- (5) Altruism: “Willingly helps others who have work related problems.”

Section C measures OCB and the instrument is adopted from Ryan (2002) in measuring employees’ behaviors towards fellow workers and organization. Only 10 out of his 20-item scales are being used.

In addition to that, some of the questions are also taken from scales created by Podsakoff et al. (1990) and Organ (1988). The dimensions of OCB covered are conscientiousness, sportsmanship, courtesy, civic virtue, and altruism, and as well as questionnaire by Ryan (2002).

### 3.3. Sample

The study was conducted among non-academic staff of UMS main campus. Questionnaires are distributed through the Heads of Departments or the assigned officers.

There is 870 registered non-academic staff in UMS main campus. For the purpose of this study, the researchers had divided DSCIU into four categories, namely Schools of Science Stream, School of Arts Stream, Chancellery and Registrar office, and others. The stratified random sampling technique required only 154 respondents.

a)	Total Number of Non-Academic Staff	870
b)	UMSKAL – Labuan Offshore Campus * including Security Division & JPP	157 (proportionate)
c)	Total (no. of questionnaires to be distributed)	713
d)	Staff not reachable * outstation, on leave, off, transferred, etc.	100 (estimation)
e)	Total Number Reachable	613
f)	Stratified Random Sampling Science Field: School of Medicine School of Science and Technology School of Food and Nutrition Literature Field: School of Education and Social Development School of Social Science School of Business and Economics Chancellery and Registrar Department : • Chancellery • Registrar office Other DSCIU :	DSCIU is divided into four groups. Thus, the total number of reachable respondents is to be divided by 4.

	Academic Service Division Borneo Marine Research Institutes staff of other DSCIU	
g)	Total of units to be analyzed (minimum)	154 non-academic staff

Table 2: A total of 200 questionnaires were distributed in which 160 were returned (response rate of 80%).

#### 4. Research Findings

To test the hypothesis, three tables in the regression analysis namely model summary, ANOVA and coefficients, are decisive. In model summary table, the value of R (correlation coefficient) and R square (multiple coefficient of determination) are used to explain the relationship of predicted variable and dependent variable.

In ANOVA table, the F value and statistical significance are used to support the finding from the model summary table. The t-statistics, in the coefficients table, is also used to test the hypothesis. The range of rejection of the hypothesis is  $-1.96 < z < +1.96$  at (5% significance). If the t-value lies within the range between -1.96 and +1.96, the hypothesis will be rejected and the null hypothesis will be accepted. One needs to refer to the standardized coefficients  $\beta$  and statistical significance in the output table. The result suggested that:

There is a significant relationship between trust and organizational citizenship behavior.

Trust explains 27.1% of the variance (R square) in organizational citizenship behaviors which is highly significant as indicated by the F-value of 58.691. Trust significantly predicts organizational citizenship behaviors;  $F(1,158) = 58.691, p < .05$ . The t-value (7.661) significantly lies outside the z, therefore, H3 is accepted and this study has proven that trust has a significant relation with organizational citizenship behaviors ( $\beta = 0.520, t = 7.661, p < 0.05$ ).

#### 5. Discussion

First, the demographics analysis shows whether there is a balance or imbalance distribution of staff in DSCIU. Based on the SPSS result, there are some areas of concern that the management can do something in order to ensure the realization of becoming an innovative university in near future. Being innovative, it needs to have a good mix number of representative in each area. One of the examples is to get more administrative staff to further their study through part time courses in UMS. Some sort of studying aids for its staff to continue their study should be worked out.

Second, the management could use the result of the descriptive statistics of variable as a reference to further increase staff positive perception towards the organization. In average, the staff is only slightly agreed on what have been provided by the university to them. This is depicted by the mean level of 4.97 under variable trust. In relation to that, staff commitment and citizenship behavior are only moderate with the mean of 5.08 and 5.32 respectively. From the frequency tables, the management could get the idea on the number of staff scoring highest, modest or lowest mean of all the three main variables. This information can be the benchmark for future planning.

Third, through this research, the management could see the importance of building up trust among the staff. Trust acts as a foundation or antecedent for greater commitment and towards the realization of citizenship behavior. Trust scores highest percentage of correlation coefficient as the independent variable in both cases in which trust is tested with OC (65%), and OCB as mediated by OC (61%). This result should alert the management by taking more efforts in increasing staff awareness of having trust towards organization.

Bijlsma and Bunt (2003) stated in their study that in response to changes in the social structure of societies, economic exchange relations and organizational forms, attention to trust as characteristic of social relations that promotes co-operation and extra-role behaviours in a wide array of social processes has been growing in the past decades. Their statement is in line with the researcher finding on the relationship of trust, OC and OCB.

Fourth, one of the reasons why working experience is rejected is due to the imbalance average of years of working in UMS and number of years working in previous organization. Another reason is that even though some of the non-academic staff had working experience prior to joining UMS, yet they need to get familiar with the work culture. This is supported by various authors such as Mowday et al. (1982), Reichers (1985), Salancik (1977), Scholl (1981), and Staw (1977). It is concluded that working experience has not been considered fairly by the management for grade or job promotion.

Therefore, an approach has to be taken seriously by the management to revise the fair consideration of previous working experience in promotion exercise. This will definitely create citizenship behaviors. In this case, the management should understand fully when to apply the Bottom-Up approach and when to use the Top-Down approach. To build good administration, the management has to listen on what the employees want the organization to be. In other words, let the employees speak, and the management needs to listen attentively. To create a good human resource, the management has to use the Top-Down approach.

Finally, the management should not be misled with the result of rejecting the moderating effect of rewards. The SPSS output of Income level shows that 139 of the 160 respondents are those staff receiving salary below RM 2,000. In relation to this, the demographics result of 112 respondents is below 30 years old and 100 are still singles. They might have influence on the decision to see rewards as not an important factor. Further to that is the side-bets theory (Becker, 1960) which see money as not as great as time and effort spent in an organization.

Three major conclusions can be drawn up. First, there are direct relationship between those variables as proven by the simple and multiple regression analysis. As far as mediating variable is concerned, organizational commitment plays dual role as dependent and independent variables. In both roles, it produces high impact on organizational performance when relates to trust and OCB.

There is distant relationship between trust and OCB. This is held true because OCB is the consequence of trust. There are other controlling factors that will push trust to citizenship behaviors conscientiousness. OC as the intervening variable is one of the factors leading to strong relationship between trust and OCB.

Second, the discussion also found that even though both moderating variables of working experience and rewards have negative relationship, but in reality, the effect is reverse. The sampling design of respondents and the increase in the number of respondents could alter the result of hypotheses involved. As mentioned in the discussion section, management must apply the Top-Down approach. The management needs to reward the employees accordingly and fairly. The notion is that these experienced employees have brought in the added value of skills and knowledge that they earned from previous employment for the benefit of the organization.

Third, based on the two preceding paragraphs and the descriptive statistics analysis, the researchers concluded his research by saying that the level of trust among the non-academic staff is low. Since the mean score of average trust is only 4.97 which mean in average all the non-academic staff neither agreed nor disagreed with what the management or organization is doing. The number of those who moderately and strongly agree is only 24 respondents. Even though there are 51 respondents who slightly agreed, they still have the option not to fully agree with what the management or organization is doing. The mean for average organizational commitment is also used for mediating factor for trust scored 5.3 only. It is shown that the number of respondents who have moderate and strong commitment is only 64 people. Thus, this means that the remaining two-third of the respondents is influenced by two possibilities; they have no trust on management or that they just do not care what is happening in the organization.

In this case, the researchers firmly believe that the second possibility is the reason for the low level of trust among non-academic staff. This is supported by the fact that 113 of the respondents are support staff. There is a tendency that most of them are feeling complacent with their work and any change in the management level will not affect them directly or indirectly. This conclusion should be looked at thoroughly and immediate measures such as arranging awareness campaigns on integrity and quality should be put more emphasis among the non-academic staff at support level. The Management also has to come up with a plan on encouraging them to take lifelong learning for career development. The necessary assistance for them to pay their tuition fees as suggested previously need to be reconsidered and implemented by the management for those who are doing their Master Degree. This should also be extended to those who want to take their first degree.

The important fact to note down by the management is with regard to the majority of respondents who are members of KEKAUMAS. This association represents the support staff group has good relationship with the national labor union. Moreover, almost all of them are involved in the service management of the university such as the university bus drivers, the technical and maintenance staff, and laboratory staff. Their roles are very crucial in ensuring the smooth operation of the teaching and learning process. For those involved in office management, some degree of empowerment should also be practiced. They should be given opportunity to head some important tasks or responsibilities established in the respected DSCIU.

For better improvement of this study, some suggestions in future research should be considered. The findings might be more interesting if there is bigger random sampling involved. In other word, employees from every DSCIU are included in the research. The second suggestion is to identify the best scale of measurement to represent rewards. The use of income level might be wrongly interpreted if there is unequal participation of various respondents from different level of income. The third suggestion is in relation with working experience. Future research should concentrate on either using years of works in other organization or in the current organization only as the moderating variable/item. Finally, future study should include co-workers as one of the moderating factors. Co-workers constitute teamwork. They are able to spur commitment among themselves. Thus, this leads to the creation of citizenship behavior. In any organization, good teamwork is the foundation of a successful organization.

In conclusion, the decision to use UMS as the case study on the relationship of trust, organizational commitment and organizational citizenship behaviors is timely after its 15 years of existence in Sabah. It should emerge as one of the role models for excellent organizational behavior. Thus, all efforts to strengthen its management of human resource are highly anticipated. This research paper should become a good reference for the management in this era of globalization to learn about its current strength on human resource especially among the non-academics staff.

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