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Job Satisfaction as the Mediator Between a Learning Organization and Organizational Commitment Among Lecturers

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Abstract: The higher educational institution needs a group of dedicated and committed lecturers to endure the institution during these turbulent times. As the organizational commitment reflects the self-identification of an employee with the organization, it has far-reaching implications on multifarious aspects in the organization. This present study investigated whether job satisfaction could mediate the relationship between learning organization and organizational commitment. A total of 452 lecturers from Heilongjiang province in China participated in this study. Structural equation modelling showed that job satisfaction significantly mediated the relationship between the dimensions of learning organization and organization, specifically on the effect of continuous learning, connection, and strategic leadership. Job satisfaction is also found to be a stronger predictor of organizational commitment than learning organization. These findings are discussed thoroughly and recommended a holistic plan to be devised that could strengthen learning organization and job satisfaction of lecturers in various aspects of the organization.

Keywords: *Job satisfaction, learning organization, organizational commitment, continuous learning, higher education institution.*

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Introduction

Today, the higher education institution (HEI) faces unpredictable changes in the workforce and budget slashing have an impact on their operations and overall performance of the institutions. The new normal caused by the pandemic such as Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) and the financial crisis sparked the much intended but overdue revolution in the higher education landscape (Kandri, 2020; Lemoine et al., 2017). To compete in today's increasingly complicated and competitive world, HEI must embrace rapid technology growth by all means necessary. At the same time, as the number of higher education institutions in China grows, so does the demand for qualified professors (National Bureau of Statistics of China [NBS], 2019). Yet, recruiting and retaining the right talent is becoming increasingly difficult nowadays (Beijing Academy of Social Sciences, 2019).

Since China aspires to transform HEI into the hub that drives the development of the country, it is high time to examine the current level of learning organization of HEI. This is because investing in the continuous professional development (CPD) of the employees has often been touted as the key to boosting both the job satisfaction and organizational commitment of the employees (Pucciarelli & Kaplan, 2016). It is the only way forward for HEI to survive in today's VUCA landscape. However, while CPD is popular in many multinational companies, this is not the case with many Chinese organizations. Private organizations especially are more concerned with short-term profits and quick fixes rather than providing learning opportunities for their employees' benefits and long-term growth of the organization (Bai et al., 2017). The management failed to see the opportunity cost associated with the lack of training of their employees, such as a low level of organizational commitment and job satisfaction.

Literature Review

Importance of Organizational Commitment

Multiple studies on organizational commitment have validated the positive and substantial relationship between organizational commitment and perception of effectiveness (Tang et al., 2003), task performance (Francesco & Chen,

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2004), contextual performance (Pradhan & Pradhan, 2015), as well as organizational citizenship behaviours (OCBs) (Wang et al., 2018). A committed lecturer is also known to exhibit more discretionary pro-social behaviour, put in extra effort, and go the extra mile to improve the organization's efficiency as well as capable of motivating the students to learn in the classroom better (Yilmaz & Kilic, 2017). Simply put, a committed employee is often directly involved in various aspects of the organization (Ting, 2010) and exhibits a high level of engagement in implementing the ideal or plans of the organization (Batugal, 2019).

In fact, organizational commitment also mediates the impact of numerous vital variables, such as leadership and organizational learning, on the turnover intention of the lecturers (Li et al., 2017). Thus, for a long time, this variable has been heavily researched from various angles across different industries (WeiBo et al., 2010). On the flip side, low levels of organizational commitment among lecturers have serious repercussions on various aspects of HEI. They would invest less effort in their work and actively look for better opportunities in other institutions (Yu, 2013). Some of them would even take up secondary occupation, and their work ethics and dedication, as well as academic morals, suffered. This will undoubtedly have an impact on the quality of HEI and China's higher education in general. As a result, HEIs must constantly seek strategies to boost organizational commitment from their academics.

Job Satisfaction as the Antecedent of Organizational Commitment

Out of the many predictors, job satisfaction is commonly reported as one of the strongest attitudinal variables in predicting the level of organizational commitment of lecturers (Ashraf, 2020). Meilani and Hariandja (2019) suggested that lecturers with high levels of job satisfaction were more likely to feel engaged in their work, and this made them feel comfortable to continue working in the organization. Lecturers with a high level of job satisfaction are also known to work wholeheartedly in implementing the organization's plan and contributing towards the attainment of organizational goals and objectives (Erdogan & Cavli, 2019). This means that organizational commitment will slowly grow after an employee is satisfied with most of the aspects of the organization.

Ashraf (2020) found that job satisfaction not only fully mediated the relationship between compensation structure and organizational commitment, but, it also partially mediated the relationship between demographic factors and organizational commitment of lecturers. In fact, numerous other studies have proven that job satisfaction indeed plays a crucial role in strengthening the positive impact of job engagement, leadership, learning climate, organizational culture, organizational support, school climate, work-life balance on the organizational commitment of educators (Claudia, 2018; Fitriyana et al., 2016; Sakiru et al., 2018). At the same time, job satisfaction will weaken the impact of job insecurity on organizational commitment as well (Li et al., 2017). Thus, job satisfaction not only helps to enhance the positive impacts on many organizational behaviour variables on organizational commitment, but it is also capable of mitigating any adverse impact as well.

Kiplangat (2017) found that the failure in communication between management and the lecturers as well as the lack of coordination between them are the common factors that contribute to job dissatisfaction of the lecturers. When lecturers feel side-lined or being ignored by their management, they are more likely to engage in counterproductive behaviours. Leaders that utilize a fear approach to pursue organizational goals or punish the employees when the organization faces problems will further breed this dissatisfaction (Hijazi et al., 2017). This is actually quite common in many organizations with autocratic leadership, vertical management styles, and poor administrative systems (Sahito & Vaisanen, 2017).

Extensive numbers of studies have suggested designing a systematic organizational training for their employees; popularly referred to as Continuous Professional Development (CPD), as a way to strengthen the level of job satisfaction and organizational commitment of lecturers (Erdem et al., 2014). This is because organizational support and career development are imperative to ensure that the lecturers can cope with the high workload and rapid changes in the field of higher education (Gunawan et al., 2018). As a result, HEI is being challenged to become a learning organization by investing in the growth and development of its personnel on a continuous basis (Joo, 2010). A favourable working environment and positive learning culture in the organization are essential to nurturing job satisfaction and organizational commitment of the employees (Lewis-Wilson, 2019).

Learning Organization, Job Satisfaction, and Organizational Commitment

Learning organization is the pinnacle where the organization could continuously generate and gather new knowledge, and then relate and apply this new knowledge into improving its behaviour (Yang et al., 2004). A learning organization encourages the inflow and outflow of knowledge within and between organizations as it strengthens the empowering leadership in the organization (Naqshbandi & Tabche, 2018). This elevates the performance of the organization holistically, from the individual, team, and organizational as well as financial aspects that allow the organization to stand out from its competitors (Marquardt, 2019). Learning organization is also found to have impacts on various organizational outcomes such as creativity, innovation, employee engagement, knowledge transfer, and performance of the HEI are well documented across multiple studies (Hanaysha & Tahir, 2016).

Learning Organization Framework developed by Watkins and Marsick (1993) highlighted the aspects of an organization that has achieved this pinnacle of learning organization. It states that there are four important aspects that ought to be

focused on by the organization, which are individual level, team level, organization level, and global level. At an individual level, an organization needs to ensure that there are continuous learning opportunities for its employees. CPD expands the lecturer's self-efficacy and works engagement when they absorb new knowledge and skills in their functional area expertise (Song et al., 2018). This allows people to put up more effort in their task, manage their burden, and do it more successfully and efficiently. Thus, their level of job satisfaction will be elevated in this way (Li et al., 2017). This impact is even more prominent when the lecturer has a proactive personality that constantly seeks self-growth.

At the team level, there is a need to create a favourable environment for collaboration and team learning. Professional collaboration occurs when educators work together in groups to enhance educational processes and outcomes (Duyar et al., 2013). It improves both work satisfaction and professional satisfaction of the educators (Torres, 2019). However, it must be noted that collaboration encompasses a broad range of activities ranging from discussion and sharing teaching experience to classroom visits and working on new ideas. Not all forms of collaborative activities enhance job satisfaction. Reeves et al. (2017) found that classroom visits strengthened job satisfaction but working on new ideas together had the opposite effect. This can be explained by the role of autonomy and self-efficacy of the educator that determines how the collaborative activities are being carried out. Brainstorming new ideas may seem to hinder each other's autonomy, and therefore, educators need to have a mutual understanding that all ideas suggested will not obstruct their current teaching practices.

At an organizational level, empowerment plays a critical role. Empowerment allows the employee to have better control over their work, and this further reinforces their self-efficacy and self-determination. Many educators felt that they require more autonomy, stronger influence on the operation, and be able to participate in critical decision making that have impacts on their work (Jiang et al., 2019). In the study by Fitriyana et al. (2016), it was found that job satisfaction did partially mediate the relationship between autonomy and organizational commitment of lecturers, where autonomy had a stronger influence than job satisfaction on organizational commitment. In return, dedicated lecturers would then spend more effort to learn and develop themselves. They are also more willing to contribute their expertise to the organization. In the Chinese education system, which is highly centralized with a lot of red tape and top-down approaches, empowerment will allow the employees to play a more active role in identifying better solutions to the issues at work.

Lastly, all these would be for naught if the leaders in the organization are not supportive of them. Thus, the global level highlights the significance of strategic leadership. Strategic leaders chart the direction and future path of the organization that prioritizes perpetual learning cycles within the organization through various policies, regulations, and technology adoption. They practice participative decision-making, design the key strategies to achieve organizational goals, and empower their employees to implement those (Azbari et al., 2015). A string team of leadership in the management team will clearly articulate the organization's aims and communicate the means for their employees to achieve them. They are the ones that decide how much of the organizational resources will be invested in the CPD of the employees. This is also shown in the study by Sakiru et al. (2018) that found job satisfaction completely mediated the relationship between leadership and organizational commitment. Employees are more likely to experience higher levels of job satisfaction and organizational commitment when their ideologies and views resonate with the leadership of their management. This is especially true when their leaders empower their employees and provide exposure through continuous training and courses.

Liu and Werblow (2019) added that leadership was not limited to the top leaders alone, as the leadership functioned in the management team and governing board also did influence the level of job satisfaction and organizational commitment of educators as well. The leadership function can involve financial, human resources, professional development, and instructional management issues. A mixed-method study by Tai et al. (2020) further extended the relationship between these three variables, where leadership had a stronger impact on the organizational trust that helps to build the organizational commitment of the lecturers as compared to job satisfaction. Mutual trust between the leaders and lecturers is also another prerequisite in building lecturers' commitment. Lecturers seek for leaders that care for them, frequently engage with them, and provide due recognition for their hard work (Alonderiene & Majauskaite, 2016).

In short, the job satisfaction of a lecturer has a complex network of relationships with learning organization and job satisfaction. While demographic aspects such as age, job position, and tenure status do have an influence on the lecturer's job satisfaction level, these are not the aspects that could be altered. However, management can provide better job security and support for lecturers to cope with their high workload and job stress before it deteriorates into burnout. Thus, if an HEI truly seeks to elevate job satisfaction and organizational commitment of the lecturers, the HEI needs to transform holistically across the individual, team, organizational and global level. This highlights the urgent need for HEI to advance into a learning organization.

From the multiple studies that have established the interaction effect between these three variables (Erdem et al., 2014), it is logical to postulate that job satisfaction could act as a mediator in the relationship between learning organization and organizational commitment. After all, job satisfaction does act as a mediator in many other relationships on organizational commitment. However, there has not been a study, to the best of the author's knowledge, which examines

these three constructs together in the same study for lecturers. In particular, there is a gap in addressing how the different aspects of the learning organization and job satisfaction have impacts on the organizational commitment of lecturers.

The importance of job satisfaction in mediating the relationship between learning organization and organizational commitment is also missing. Mediating variables can play a critical role in strengthening the relationship between different dimensions of the learning organization and organizational commitment. Understanding the nature of relationships would be a help to curb the issue of low organizational commitment among lecturers. This present study responds to the urgent need to explore how both learning organization and job satisfaction contribute towards the organizational commitment of the lecturers. Specifically, three research questions are being addressed in this study.

Firstly, what is the current level of the learning organization, job satisfaction, and organization? Secondly, does job satisfaction mediate the relationship between learning organization and organizational commitment? Thirdly, what are the relationships among the seven dimensions of learning organization (continuous learning, inquiry and dialogue, collaboration and team learning, systems, empowerment, connection, and strategic leadership) and the three dimensions of organizational commitment (affective, continuance, and normative)? It is predicted that organizational commitment would be influenced by job satisfaction and learning organization, while job satisfaction, in turn, would be influenced by learning organization.

Methodology

Research Design

The researchers utilized a cross-sectional survey design. In this study, the researchers seek to determine beliefs and perceptions of respondents on organizational commitment, learning organization and job satisfaction among faculty members of randomly selected higher education institution in Henan province, China. According to Creswell and Guetterman (2019), a cross-sectional survey design is suitable when the researchers collect data at one point in time and has the advantage of measuring current attitudes or practices of people.

Participants

There are a total of 23 provinces in China. This study would focus only on the lecturers working in Heilongjiang province, the province that has one of the highest numbers of lecturers and HEI. There are a total of 108 449 lecturers working across the 134 regular HEI in the province (Ministry of Education, 2019). In this study, a total of 452 lecturers from eight different HEI took part. This study adopted the Chinese version of the instrument as this would allow the lecturers to better comprehend the items. The instrument, online questionnaires are sent to the participants through selected platforms approved by the respective HEI after permissions have been granted by them. The lecturers are provided around two weeks to complete the online questionnaire.

Instrument

Three variables measure in this study: learning organization, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment. Learning organization was measured using 21-items adopted from the shortened version of Dimensions of the Learning Organization Questionnaire (DLOQ) developed by Yang et al. (2004). Both the long and shortened version measures how the organization promotes and applies the learning at the individual, team, organizational, and global level. The shortened version comprises of 21-items that can be divided into seven dimensions, continuous learning opportunities, inquiry and dialogue, collaboration and team learning, systems to capture and share learning, a collective vision, connection to the organization's environment, and strategic leadership for learning. It works on a 6-point response scale, anchored by 1 (almost never) and 6 (almost always). This study found sufficient reliability from the Cronbach's alpha coefficient ($\alpha = .978$). Both Akhtar et al. (2017) and Kim et al. (2017) also reported adequate reliability in every subscale. Examples of items are: "In my organization, people help each other learn", and "In my organization, leaders ensure that the organization's actions are consistent with its values".

Job satisfaction was measured using 36-items adopted from the Job Satisfaction Survey (JSS) developed by Spector (1997) ($\alpha = .954$). It measures the level of satisfaction of the employee with various aspects of their job with items such as "I like doing the things I do at work"; "Those who do well on the job stand a fair chance of being promoted"; and "I feel I am being paid a fair amount for the work I do". It works on a 6-point response scale, anchored by 1 (disagree very much) and 6 (agree very much).

Organizational commitment was measured using 24-items adopted from Three-Component Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ) that was developed by Meyer and Allen (1991) ($\alpha = .751$). It measures how much the employees agree with the numerous items that describe their feeling about the organization they are currently working with. The 24-items can be divided into three dimensions, affective commitment, continuance commitment, and normative commitment. Unlike the earlier two measures, it works on a 7-point response scale, anchored by 1 (strongly disagree) and 7 (strongly agree). Examples of items are: "I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career with this organization"; and "It would be very hard for me to leave my organization right now, even if I wanted to".

As stated by Podsakoff et al., (2012) when two or more scales are applied together, the issue of common method must be addressed. Hence, to reduce the common method biases, the researcher carefully examines each of the items and validate the items with three experts in the field.

Analyzing of Data

The data was analyzed with the aid of AMOS software. Structural equation modelling (SEM) using a bootstrapping approach with bias-corrected confidence interval was conducted. SEM is a multivariate statistical analysis technique that is used to analyse structural relationships (Hair et al., 2019). This method was employed because it was able to estimate the multiple and interrelated dependence, which were the dimensions of the learning organization and job satisfaction, in a single analysis. The fitness of the measurement model was assessed using CFI, TLI, RMSEA, and SRMR.

This study found that all the variables had the values of skewness and kurtosis that fell within the range of ± 1 . In diagnosing multivariate outliers, Mahalanobis D^2 was computed. This was then compared to a chi-square distribution of the similar degrees of freedom and the result shows no outliers in the data. Furthermore, each variable did display normally distributed data. This indicated that all the dimensions were considered normally distributed (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019). This study also affirmed that the predictive power of each independent variable in the final model was not affected by multicollinearity.

Results

Before the structural model could be carried out, the measurement model of each variable was examined. Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was conducted, and it yielded seven learning organization indices and three indices of organizational commitment. All three variables were examined as first-order models. All these fit indexes of job satisfaction and organizational commitment were within the recommended threshold value, as shown in Table 1. Zero-order correlations analyses were conducted and found that all the dimensions of the learning organization, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment are significant. This indicates that it is possible to conduct path analysis using maximum likelihood estimation to determine the role of job satisfaction as a mediator in the relationship between learning organization and organizational commitment.

Table 1. Fit Indexes of the Learning Organization, Organizational Commitment, and Job Satisfaction

Variable	χ^2/df	CFI	AGFI	IFI	TLI	RMSEA
Learning organization (LO)	2.20	.95	.90	.95	.94	.052
Organizational commitment (OC)	2.22	.96	.90	.96	.95	.052
Job satisfaction (JS)	3.67	.99	.98	.99	.97	.077

Structural equation model using bootstrapping approach with a biased-corrected confidence interval was applied. Bootstrapping provided the general representation of sampling distribution in the indirect effects and thus was able to estimate the magnitude of these indirect effects through a confidence interval. In this study, the 95% confidence interval corresponding to the 2.5th and 97.5th percentiles in the distribution, from lowest to highest rank-ordered estimates.

The bootstrap samples of 5000 were chosen as they could provide a reasonable estimate without taxing too much on the computer, and bias-corrected confidence intervals were adopted as they provided a better estimate than the simpler percentile method (Hayes & Scharkow, 2013). By default, the null hypothesis assumed that there was no significant indirect effect in the relationship. When the zero did not fall within the lower and upper bounds of the 95% confidence interval, the indirect effect was statistically significant from zero, which provided sufficient evidence to reject the null hypothesis.

Table 2 depicted the mediation and coefficient of the dimensions of learning organization in a direct model and mediation model. In the direct model of the dimensions of learning organization and job satisfaction, there were statistically significant positive effects of continuous learning, connection, and strategic leadership on organizational commitment. At the same time, since zeroes also did not fall within the lower and upper bounds of the 95% confidence interval in these three dimensions of the learning organization, the indirect effects of continuous learning, connection, and strategic leadership on organizational commitment were also statistically significant.

Table 2. Mediation and Coefficient of the variables of Learning indirect Organization Model and Mediation Model

Hypothesized path	Direct model	Mediation model		Lower bound	Upper bound	Mediation
		Direct	Indirect			
CL → OC	.141**	.030	.057	0.019	0.134	Partial
ID → OC	-.002	.011	-.027	-0.085	0.003	No
CT → OC	.038	.010	.007	-0.021	0.051	No
SS → OC	.012	.001	-.001	-0.042	0.042	No
EP → OC	.011	.001	.023	0.000	0.063	No
CO → OC	.136**	.036	.059	0.027	0.115	Partial
SL → OC	.175**	.064	.048	0.012	0.120	Partial

**Results are significant at p < .01

Hence, it could be concluded that job satisfaction played the role of partial mediator in the relationship between continuous learning, connection, strategic leadership, and organizational commitment instead. This meant that the effect of continuous learning, connection, and strategic leadership on organizational commitment had been reduced after controlling for job satisfaction. Likewise, this indicated that when there was a high level of continuous learning, connection, and strategic leadership occurring in the HEI, lecturers with a higher level of job satisfaction would have a higher level of organizational commitment when compared to lecturers with a lower level of job satisfaction.

The structural model was analyzed where the non-significant paths are deleted using specification search in the AMOS 7 software. Figure 1 shows the final empirical model with standardized regression weights. The model results indicated a good fit, χ^2/df (19, N = 235) = 52.901, p < .001, CFI = .983, TLI = .950, RMSEA = .087 and SRMR = .031. From the bootstrapping approach with a biased-corrected confidence interval, this study identified job satisfaction as a partial mediator in the relationship between learning organization and organizational commitment. Specifically, job satisfaction mediated the impact of continuous learning, connection and strategic leadership on organizational commitment.

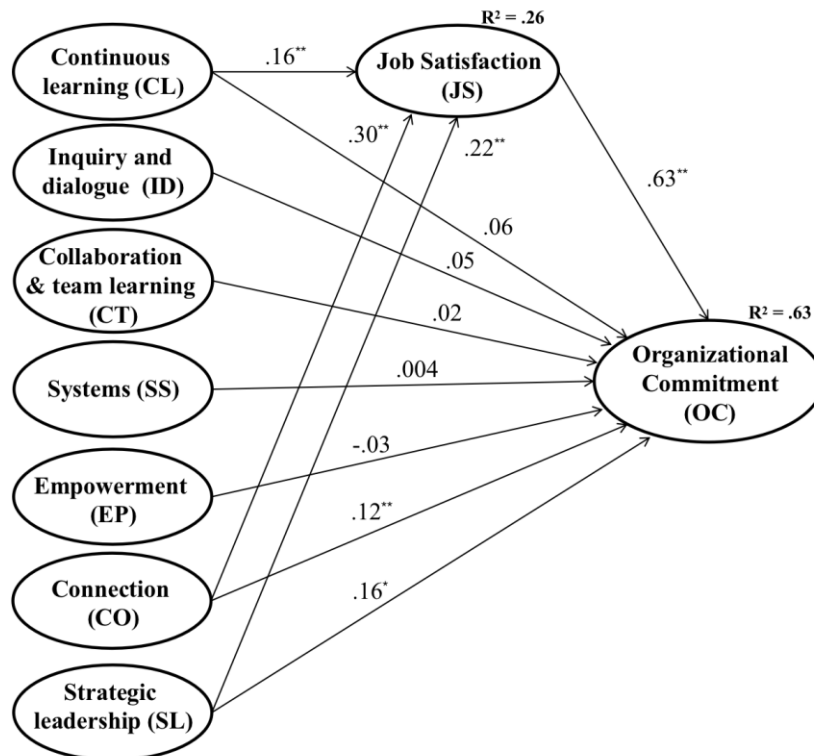


Figure 1. Path Analysis for Learning Organization, Job Satisfaction, and Organizational Commitment

Note: All the values indicated are standardized regression weights, where only those significant ones are reported.

Table 3 displayed the regression weights for the paths in the mediated model. This study found that learning organization accounted for 26% of the total variation in job satisfaction. Both learning organization and job satisfaction together

accounted for 63% variance for organizational commitment. This meant that every unit of standard deviation increase in learning organization led to a 0.26 standard deviation increase in job satisfaction while every unit of standard deviation increase in the learning organization and job satisfaction would be followed by 0.63 standard deviation increase in organizational commitment.

Table 3. Regression Weights for the Paths in the Mediated Model

Regression weights			B	SE	CR	β
Continuous learning (CL)	→	OC	.023	.014	1.63	0.06
Inquiry and dialogue (ID)	→	OC	.024	.014	1.74	0.05
Collaboration and team learning (CT)	→	OC	.006	.010	0.61	0.02
Systems (SS)	→	OC	.002	.011	0.14	0.00
Empowerment (EP)	→	OC	-.011	.010	-1.09	-0.03
Connection (CO)	→	OC	.040	.015	2.63	0.12**
Strategic leadership (SL)	→	OC	.073	.025	2.89	0.16**
Continuous learning (CL)	→	JS	.066	.019	3.43	0.16**
Connection (CO)	→	JS	.102	.022	4.73	0.30**
Strategic leadership (SL)	→	JS	.103	.026	4.04	0.22**
Job satisfaction (JS)	→	OC	.643	.192	3.35	0.63**

**Results are significant at $p < .01$

Discussion

Mediating Role of Job Satisfaction

This current study revealed the paramount role of Job satisfaction as the mediator on the relationship between learning organization and Organizational commitment. This expanded the role of Job satisfaction as the mediator as found in other studies (Claudia, 2018; Fitriyana et al., 2016; Sakiru et al., 2018). The close and strong correlations between job satisfaction and organizational commitment had shown that these two concepts, while conceptually different, did share many similarities in the antecedents. After all, an employee who was highly satisfied with overall aspects of the job did not have any reason to leave such a good organization. Leaving would only mean that the employee was losing out on the learning opportunities for themselves.

Along with other studies that had shown that job satisfaction acted as a mediator on the impacts of other crucial variables such as job engagement and leadership, this study reinforced the dire need for management to identify ways to boost the job satisfaction of lecturers (Li et al., 2017; Sakiru et al., 2018). Therefore, job satisfaction was paramount not only to enhance organizational commitment of lecturers, it could buffer the impact of learning organization as well. This meant that job satisfaction could either strengthen or weaken the impact of learning organization on organizational commitment of lecturers. HEI should also pay close attention to the aspects that affect the job satisfaction of lecturers.

Learning Organization and Job Satisfaction as Predictors of Organizational Commitment

Firstly, this study had provided empirical evidence on the extent of each construct in the Learning organization in explaining organizational commitment. It supported the notion that CPD was indeed, one of the vital ingredients to boost job satisfaction and organizational commitment of educators. This was in line with the numerous studies that emphasized the pivotal role of leadership in elevating organizational commitment (Ismail et al., 2020) and job satisfaction (Azbari et al., 2015). Finding from Saari and Rashid (2013) stated a multinational company always provide with latest knowledge in the field and equipped with proper classroom, have a train coach, systematic curriculum for their trainees. However, this contradicted the findings of Hanaysha and Tahir (2016), which discovered that training and empowerment influenced organizational commitment of professors in Malaysian HEI. This could be attributed to the Chinese culture that values obedience and revered their leaders with heavenly nature (Ma & Tsui, 2015).

This call upon the management needs to invest and allocate sufficient resources for the continuous learning to take place in the HEI that goes beyond merely establishing a Training and Development resource centre. There is a need for systematic learning infrastructure and mechanisms that allow the employees to perpetually generate and capture new knowledge as well as applying them to transform the organization. HEI should have an efficient knowledge management system where the employees can tap into and contribute their specialized knowledge. Other facilities that can promote learning activities are having a proper meeting room, discussion section, bulletin and newsletter (Azmeem & Kassim, 2019).

While CPD is definitely crucial, this study had shed light on how the different aspects in the organization were also equally essential to ensure that there is a continuous learning taking place within the organization. It revealed that learning at individual level, team level, organizational level and global level had a different type of impact on both job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Align with the Learning organization framework, learning at individual level was

imperative but there must be learning occurring at the team level and organizational level as well, especially in connection and strategic leadership.

Secondly, the significant impact of connection highlights the need for availability of rich communication channels in HEI in order to facilitate the flow of information and allow the employees to provide suggestions for improvement (Friedman & Kass-Shraibman, 2017). This prevents a silo mentality where there is no exchange of knowledge between lecturers or even different departments. Successful adoption of technology and effective tools by each lecturer would provide them with a more diverse space for learning and collaborating with others. They can use technology to identify new tools, approaches and methods for teaching as well as consulting internal sources of expertise in that field.

Third, the necessity of strategic leadership is that all leaders in higher education must support learning and constantly alter their work practices to reflect changes in the environment. They need to take a stand for what is the most plausible solution, willing to take risks, adopt the disruptive technologies and pursue new market segments (Trevitt et al., 2017). In view of the current pandemic, they need to take this opportunity to re-define digital learning and engagement in the higher education landscape (Hockley et al., 2020). This would be crucial for long term growth of the HEI as online learning is expecting to dominate in the future. HEI that effectively integrates both face-to-face and online learning would distinguish themselves from the competitors. They need to facilitate the learning process of their subordinates and emphasize the importance and purpose of continuous learning. Leaders that are capable of articulating their vision to motivate and influence the lecturers towards achieving them are more likely to push forward their agenda with lower academic resistance. Ability of these leaders to recognize and reward behaviours that facilitate learning will hasten the integration of learning culture in the organization (Gentle & Clifton, 2017).

Finally, the strong impact of job satisfaction on organizational commitment means that Human Resource Department needs to design the nature of lecturer's job in a way that allow them to apply their diverse skill sets to perform their job through their preferred choice of method. This is vital since the impact of the pandemic has caused the nature of work of lecturers evolved at a rapid pace without any preparation (Drumm & Jong, 2020). Despite the usage of digital platforms for content management in higher education have been there for quite a while, its usage for content delivery is definitely something new for most lecturers that are used to face-to-face teaching approach. Management can provide better workplace flexibility for lecturers to decide on when, where and how to perform their job (Starner, 2020). Mansor and Rashid (2013) stated it is important for employees to make a connection between work, leaning, and well-being. Furthermore, Rashid et al. (2009) and Mansor and Rashid (2013) stated that career development interventions could benefit personal growth, learning and work-life balance among faculty members. This was coherent with the job enrichment approach advocated in Herzberg's Two-factor theory.

In addition to that, contingent reward and communication also matters a lot in cultivating the ideal affective commitment and normative commitment of the lecturers. Lecturers actually valued appreciation and recognition as well as good communication within the HEI more so than the pay and promotion. Timely recognition on their efforts makes them aware that they are on the right track and the diversity in communication channel allows lecturers to collaborate and provide the necessary feedback to improve their job performance.

Conclusion

As disruption occurs throughout the higher education landscape across the world, HEI can no longer afford to delay the learning process within the HEI itself. It is a sink or swim situation as the enrolment of students and budget shrinks. This study has demonstrated that both learning organization and job satisfaction are paramount to retain the talented lecturers and nurture a group of dedicated employees to sail through these turbulent times.

The Learning Organization Framework has demonstrated the interconnections of the learning process at the different levels within the organization in order to elevate lecturers' organizational commitment and job satisfaction. It is imperative that new knowledge is consistently being generated, captured and circulated in the HEI, and ultimately applied to advance the HEI. This study has also compiled the whole list of benefits brought forward when the HEI becomes a learning organization.

At the same time, this study has shed light on the importance of job satisfaction of lecturers that should not be neglected as well. Acting as a mediator in the impact of learning organization on organization, the role of job satisfaction in HEI is indispensable as it also could act as a buffer for various other variables. Successful organizations are the ones that are able to harness the maximum potential of their employees through learning and fulfilling the job satisfaction of their employees.

Recommendation

In view of the decreasing affordability for higher education, travel ban on international students, looming anxiety of unemployment rate in China, HEI needs to re-strategize and re-prioritize. HEI ought to devise a long-term plan that goes beyond their immediate response to the current situation. Basically, this means that HEI must become a learning organization where there is continuous learning and transformation. Furthermore, the management of HEI only needs to devise a holistic plan to strengthen job satisfaction in various aspects.

Future study could consider emulating this study with other variables to design a better intervention. Unlike job satisfaction and organizational commitment, research on learning organization remains relatively new. There are still quite a limited number of theories and models available to explain learning organization, especially in the field of higher education. It is highly possible that a better model which reflects learning organization in HEI could be developed to provide a better understanding on how HEI can function as a learning organization. A mix-method approach may unearth other logical reasoning behind the influence of learning organization and job satisfaction of lecturers. Hopefully, this would also convince more HEI to invest into measures that enhance learning organization.

Limitation

This study has provided insight on the nature of the relationship between learning organization, job satisfaction and organizational commitment. There are several other areas that could be considered for future research. Since this is an exploratory study, the causal nature of this relationship could be clarified through replication of this study in experimental design. Nathaniel et al., (2016) suggested that stronger evidence on the impact of learning organization on job satisfaction and organizational commitment could also be derived from longitudinal design as job satisfaction and organizational commitment of lecturer could fluctuate across the year.

Authorship Contribution Statement

Wang: Conceptualization, design, data acquisition, data analysis/interpretation, writing. Rashid: Data analysis, editing/reviewing, supervision.

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