

## CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### 3.1 Theoretical Framework

Based on the preceding review of the literature and the research question posed on the present study, it is proposed that the theoretical framework for this study is as follows:

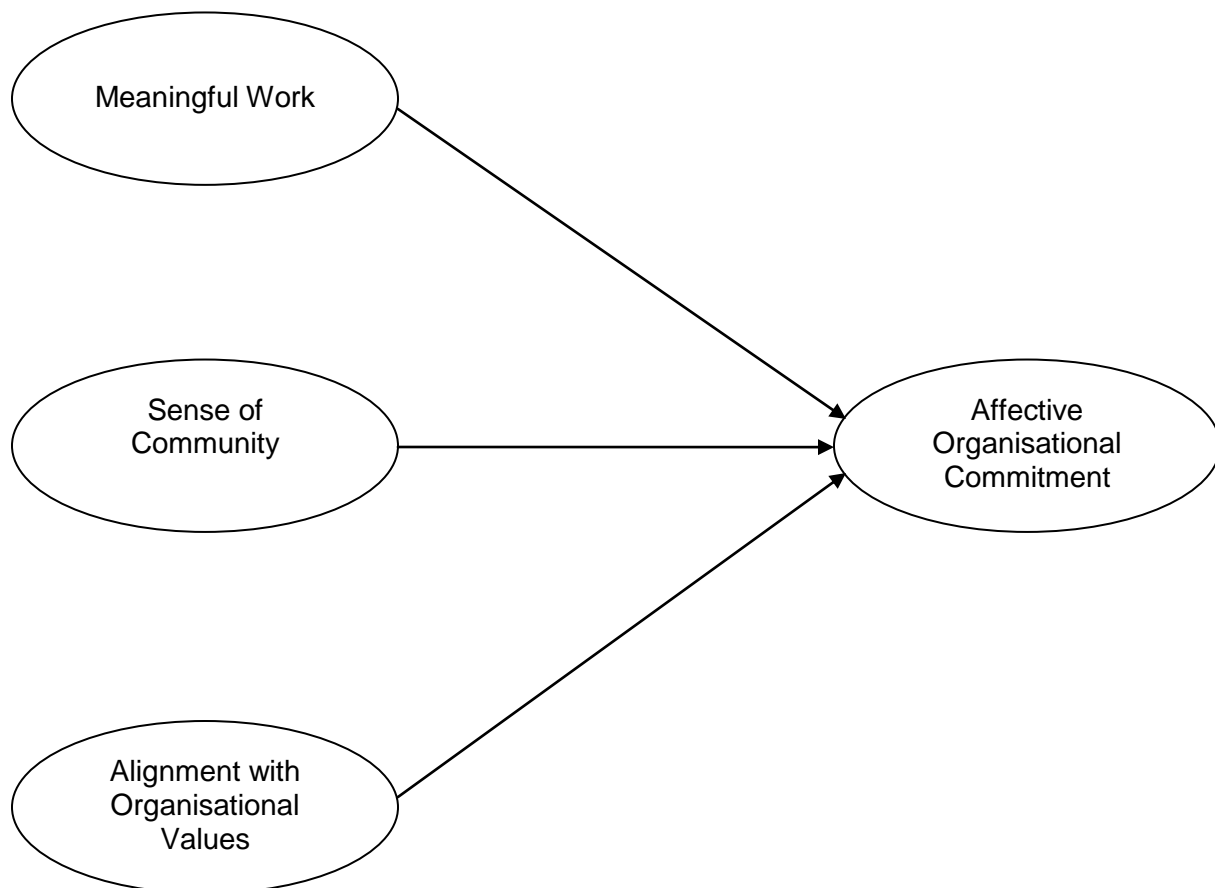
Figure 3.1: Proposed Theoretical Framework

#### Workplace Spirituality Dimensions

(Independent Variables)

#### Outcome Variable

(Dependent Variable)



### **3.2 Proposed Hypotheses**

Hence, based on the preceding literature review and the theoretical framework proposed in *Figure 3.1*, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H<sub>n1</sub> There is no relationship between meaningful work and affective commitment.

H<sub>a1</sub> There is a significant relationship between meaningful work and affective commitment.

H<sub>n2</sub> There is no relationship between sense of community and affective commitment.

H<sub>a2</sub> There is a significant relationship between sense of community and affective commitment.

H<sub>n3</sub> There is no relationship between alignment with organisational values and affective commitment.

H<sub>a3</sub> There is a significant relationship between alignment with organisational values and affective commitment.

### **3.3 Data Collection Procedure**

The target sample population was part-time MBA students attending evening classes at City Campus, University of Malaya, all of whom were currently working and held full-time job positions, which is consistent with the sample delivered by Milliman *et al.* (2003).

A total number of 200 questionnaires were distributed for this study and the respondents were from companies that were located in the Klang Valley, representing a variety of industries. The researcher delivered the questionnaires in person before the start of the evening classes and the questionnaires were returned directly to the researcher either during the break or after several evening classes have ended. The cover letters were attached together with the questionnaires explaining the objective of the research and encouraged the students to participate in the study.

The total of 137 questionnaires were collected and returned, and 5 questionnaires were unusable and excluded due to either missing values or incomplete answers. Hence, the total usable questionnaires were 132 which resulted in a response rate of 66%. The period taken to complete the data collection activity was approximately two weeks.

### 3.4 Sampling Design

A non-probabilistic sampling method, specifically convenience sampling was used in drawing samples for the purpose of this study.

The sample of 132 respondents included 56 males (42.4%) and 76 females (57.6%), as shown in *Table 3.1*. The range of ages of the respondents is mainly from 21 to 30 years (56.8%), with a mean of 25.0 years and standard deviation of 6.48. Of the 132 respondents, 39 (29.5%) are Malays, whereas Chinese and Indians are 50 (37.9%) and 26 (19.7%) respectively. A minority of the respondents are Eurasians and Melanau, whose representations in the sample was 17 (12.9%), and was categorised as “Others”.

Table 3.1: Demographic Profiles of the Respondents, Mean and Standard Deviation

Characteristic	Categories	Frequency	Percentage	Mean	Standard Deviation
Gender	Male	56	42.4		
	Female	76	57.6		
Ethnicity	Malay	39	29.5		
	Chinese	50	37.9		
	Indian	26	19.7		
	Others	17	12.9		

Age	21 - 30 years old	75	56.8	25.0	6.48
	31 - 40 years old	50	37.9		
	41 - 50 years old	5	3.8		
	51 - 60 years old	2	1.5		
Marital Status	Single	67	50.8		
	Married	61	46.2		
	Divorced / Separated	4	3.0		
Religion	Islam	54	40.9		
	Buddhist	38	28.8		
	Hindu	19	14.4		
	Sikh	1	0.8		
	Christian	16	12.1		
	Others	4	3.0		
Education Level	Professional Qualification	4	3.0		
	Bachelor's Degree	96	72.7		
	Master's Degree	32	24.2		
Occupation	Upper Management	1	0.8		
	Middle Management	31	23.5		
	First-Line Management	48	36.4		
	Administrative / Support Staff	37	28.0		
	Self-employed / Own Business	4	3.0		
	Professional	11	8.3		

Years of Working in Your Current Organisation	Below 1 year	12	9.1	2.27	7.30
	1 - 5 years	81	61.4		
	6 - 10 years	33	25.0		
	11 - 15 years	4	3.0		
	Above 16 years	2	1.5		
Current Industry Sector	Retail	9	6.8		
	Manufacturing	29	22.0		
	Services	54	40.9		
	Building / Construction	14	10.6		
	Government Sector	14	10.6		
	Healthcare	6	4.5		
	Others	6	4.5		
Organisation Type	For Profit Organisation	113	85.6		
	Non-Profit Organisation	19	14.4		

Since the target sample is part-time MBA students holding full-time jobs, the education level of the respondents is high with 96 (72.7%) holding bachelors while 32 (24.2%) with additional postgraduate degrees. Only four (3%) respondents have professional qualifications. About third quarter of the respondents are Muslims and Buddhists with 54 (40.9%) and 38 (28.8%) respectively while the rest are Hindus (14.4%), Christians

(12.1%) and Sikh (0.8%). Only four (3%) respondents were categorised as “Others” as having no affiliation with any religion.

The respondents were mostly employed in the following three categories: 48 (36.4%) respondents were in First-line Management category (assistant managers, supervisors and team leaders); 37 (28%) in Administrative / Support Staff category (executives, clerks and non-executive staffs); and 31 (23.5%) in Middle Management category (General Manager, Regional Manager and Manager). The rest were professionals (8.3%) and entrepreneurs (3%). Moreover, the respondents work in a wide range of the following industry sectors: 40.9% in the services sector; 22% in the manufacturing sector; 10.6% in the building / construction sector; 10.6% in the government sector; 6.8% in the retail sector; 4.5% in the healthcare sector; and 4.5% was categorised as “Others” where the respondents were employed in industries such as automobile, wholesale and supply chain, information technology and telecommunication. The mean of organisational tenure of the respondents is 2.27 years and standard deviation of 7.30.

Last but not least, *Table 3.1* shows that the majority of the respondents work in for profit organisations with 113 (85.6%) while only 14.4% or nineteen of the respondents work in non-profit organisations.

### **3.5 Measurement Instruments and Scales**

The 6-page questionnaire consists of five parts: Part A comprise measurement of meaningful work (independent variable), Part B sense of community (independent variable), Part C alignment with organisational values (independent variable), and Part D affective commitment (dependent variable) respectively. Part E consists of the respondent's profile. Except for part E, all of the instruments were measured in interval scale.

#### **3.5.1 Meaningful work scale**

Meaningful work is measured using scales from Ashmos and Duchon (2000), which is later validated by Milliman *et al.* (2003). It contains 6-item measure such as "I experience joy in work", "My spirit is energised by work", "My work is connected to what I think is important in life", "I look forward to coming to work", "I see a connection between work and social good", "I understand what gives my work personal meaning"; using a 5-point Likert scale format with responses ranging from 1 (Strongly Agree), 2 (Agree), 3 (Neither Agree nor Disagree), 4 (Disagree) and 5 (Strongly Disagree), with lower scores indicating the greater experience of meaningful work.



### **3.5.2 Sense of community scale**

Seven items were developed by Milliman *et al.* (2003) to tap the dimension of sense of community, even though Ashmos and Duchon (2000) originally developed a scale that measures “conditions of community” which include items that assess more the enabling conditions of community. Therefore, the sense of community scale developed by Milliman *et al.* (2003) is used for the purpose of this study which focuses on the sense of community experienced by employees rather than enabling conditions or the outcomes of community.

However, one item were taken from Rego and Pina e Cunha (2008) to avoid misunderstandings, dubiousness and uncertainty. For example, instead of the item “Feel part of a community” selected from Milliman *et al.* (2003), it is being replaced with “I feel my colleagues promotes the creation of a spirit of community in my organisation” taken from Rego and Pina e Cunha (2008) to better fit the semantic content.

The sense of community scale is a 7-item measure with a 5-point Likert scale format (1 = Strongly Agree, 5 = Strongly Disagree) with lower scores indicating the greater sense of community at work.

### **3.5.3 Alignment with organisational values scale**

This scale consists of 8-item measurement scale derived from Ashmos and Duchon (2000) and validated by Milliman *et al.* (2003) to measure the alignment of one's personal values with organisational values. However, one item were removed and replaced to ensure clarity. For example, the item "This organisation has a conscience" (Ashmos and Duchon, 2000; Milliman *et al.*, 2003), where some respondents have asked or commented "What you mean by organisations having a conscience?" or "Only individuals have conscience". This is replaced by the statement "My organisation helps me to live in peace / harmony with myself" (Rego and Pina e Cunha, 2008).

Thus, the alignment with organisational values scale is an eight-item instrument scale incorporating a 5-point Likert scale format. The response choices are 1 (Strongly Agree) to 5 (Strongly Disagree), with lower scores indicating the greater the alignment of one's personal values with organisational values.

### **3.5.4 Affective commitment scale**

Even though the original instrument consists of 15 items adopted from Mowday *et al.* (1979) where six items were negatively phrased, a 6-item shortened version of the instrument using only positively worded items was used for this study to assess the employee's affective commitment towards his or her organisation, and validated by Milliman *et al.* (2003) on the study of workplace spirituality.

Moreover, the organisational commitment questionnaire, which was originally a 7-point Likert scale ranging from "strongly agree", "moderately agree", "slightly agree", "neither agree nor disagree", "slightly disagree", "moderately disagree", and "strongly disagree"; was modified in this study to a 5-point Likert scale response categories as follows: "1 = Strongly Agree", "2 = Agree", "3 = Neither Agree nor Disagree", "4 = Disagree", "5 = Strongly Disagree", with lower scores indicating "highly committed" employees.

### **3.6 Data Analysis Technique**

SPSS Version 16.0 for Windows was used to analyse the data and test the aforementioned hypotheses.

Preliminary data analyses in the form of several tables were performed to obtain the descriptive statistics on the demographic profile and the general characteristics of the respondents. The test for normality was also performed on the research variables to determine the assumption of normality. Furthermore, reliability test was carried out on all sets of variables to ensure the group of variables were reliable to form and measure as a construct.

Person's Correlation was created to determine the strength and direction of the linear relationship between two variables i.e. each of the three independent variables and the dependent variable as well as multiple regression to analyse the best prediction of how the dependent variable is influenced by several independent variables and to determine the strength of the influence.