

CHAPTER 5 – CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Chapter Overview

The final chapter will first briefly discuss the research results, summarize the study major findings, discussion of research results, highlights limitation of the study and suggestion for future research, and the chapter ends with some implication as well as recommendations to the management of MCC.

5.1 Discussion of Research Results

Researchers such as Meyer et al., (1993) and Baugh and Roberts, (1994) reported that committed employees had high expectations of their performance and therefore performed better. In line with past researchers, H1 hypothesized a positive relationship between affective commitment and job performance. However, the results did not support this hypothesis. Given prior research findings, a nonsignificant relationship between affective commitment and performance is an unusual occurrence, however Somers and Birnbam (1998) also found there is no relationship between job performance and affective and normative organizational commitment. He further explained there is unclear reason why affective commitment is not related to job performance, perhaps there are boundary conditions to consider, with prior research suggesting occupational and organizational variables associated with status hierarchies (job and occupational level) as possible moderator variables (Somers and Birnbam, 1998)

The results of our finding could be attributed to several factors. First, our participants consist of government employees. Evidently, the nature of work in government agencies differs significantly from the private sector. Lio (1995) states “facing today’s difficult times, many public employees appreciate the relatively secure job situation associated with public employment and consider it a major reason for their organizational commitment” (p.241). Basically, government employees have higher levels of continuance commitment than other sectors (Perry, 1997; Meyer and Allen, 1997). Thus, it makes sense to assume that government servants’ especially lower level employees are geared towards continuance commitment rather than affective commitment. They value job security and prefer to remain in government institutions that provide such security. They remain with the organization because they have accumulated years of service in the federal government and a retirement that is not transferable; therefore commitments to their job have no bearing on job performance to the organization.

Next, self-efficacy was also found to not significantly influence job performance among employees in MCC. This nonsignificant finding was consistent with study by Judeh (2012) and Vancouver and Kendall's (2006) that found a weak effect of self-efficacy on performance. Research of Cornelius et al., (2010) also found no significant interaction between occupational self-efficacy and task performance. However it is inconsistent with many studies that suggested an existence of association between self-efficacy and measures of performance (Sheely, 1999; Locke et al., 1984).

A possible explanation for this finding, as a government servant, employees is protected with high job security. Most of employees are permanent employees, thus they might believe self-efficacy is not an important factor affecting their job performance, as long as they are able to fulfil basic requirements in performing their job tasks. Thus, even if they

do not perform, there is no fear of job insecurity in this sector. Basically, self-efficacy is not seen as a resource to compensate for the threat of job loss. (Cornelius et al., 2010)

Other possible explanation might be because of the nature of organizational structure in public sector which is high in hierarchical level. Past studies indicated that public sector is an organization with bureaucratic nature and rule bound (Bozement, 2000; Bozeman and Pandey, 2004; Denhardt, 2000). Thus all policies, rules and procedures regarding all aspects are highly rigid, clearly stated and well documented (Bozemen, 2000; Siddiquie, 2006). Although such well structured practices are considered good because it encourages transparency, fairness and agility of the public sector management, past researchers always associated such inflexibility at the job and organizational levels contributed to poor performance standard among public servants (Boselie, Dietz and Boon, 2005; Givan, 2005; Mwita, 2000).

This structure perhaps does not encourage employees to demonstrate self-efficacy because decision authority tends to be centralized since superiors treat it as solely their responsibility. All employees are expected to work obediently and follow instructions from their superior. Personal initiative by employees is not valued because employees especially at lower level positions are viewed as incapable of contributing to decision making. As a result, employees are likely to accept centralised power and dependence on superiors for directions (Panatik, 2010). Past research asserted that participation in decision making enhanced their self-efficacy (Cassar, 1999; Lunjew 1994), creates a feeling of self-worth (Keller and Dansereau, 1995). In our case, low opportunities to participate in decision making contributes to this finding whereas employees might perceived that following the supervisor's direction's is more important in their work, thus ignored the feelings of self-efficacy and self worth as employees feel that management

do not really consider them as importance in the operation of the organisation. This would bring negative outlook towards the supervisor and organisation, the employee would be less willing to perform extra miles if not required by their supervisor.

Third hypothesis predicted that job characteristics are positively related to job performance was confirmed by regression analysis. Job Characteristics was found to have significant effect on employees' job performance. The findings of the significant positive effect of job characteristics on job performance are consistent with the previous research (George and Zhou, 2001; Tierney and Farmer, 2002; Humprey et al., 2007; Holman et al., 2009; Indartono, 2010).

A possible explanation to our research finding on the significant relationship between job characteristics and job performance is perhaps the greater the job autonomy, content variety, and the importance of the job an employee perceived, the more likely it was that an employee would feel satisfy at work and thus will demonstrate high level of job performance. Indeed, when employees find their work meaningful and interesting, they would be enthusiastic and happy to immerse themselves in their work and persevere to complete even the most difficult assignment (Ng and Tay, 2010).

H4 was also not supported in this study and contradicted findings of past researchers such as the work (Schaufeli et al., 2006; Bakker and Demerouti, 2008). The finding indicates work engagement not related to job performance. A possible explanation to our research finding is relates to the natures of job done by lower level employees in MCC which mostly are routine job. Thus even though employees are engaged with their job, they might feel that the job are not interesting and not challenging enough, thus don't lead to performance.

Beside routine job, the nature of job demands expected to be accomplish by employees also might contribute to this insignificant finding. Job demand includes workload demands, emotional demands, conflict between competing demands, and, possibly, role ambiguity demands. Highly job demand expected from employees will lead to job stress and anxiety (Vermeulan and Mustard, 2000; Vahtera, Kivimaki, Pennti and Theorell, 2000). Thus, even though employees are engage with their job, in the circumstances of high job demand expected from them, they might tend to just performing the job without considering the efficiency of the job being done.

According to Bakker (2009), there are circumstances where engaged employees sometimes show below average or poor performance. This is due to the effect of daily changes in work engagement within persons that can be causally related to daily changes in performance. In other words, working conditions may vary from day to day (Butler, Grzywacz, Bass and Linney, 2005), and determine our daily mood (Zohar, Tzischinski and Epstein, 2003). Every working day, employees are exposed to a certain amount of job demands that will be match-up with daily job resources. On a busy and stressful workday, employees may be confronted with high workload at once, in the same time experiencing low job resources as well, since there is hardly time to mobilize resources in the work environment. In contrast, on a workday with more job resources, employees may feel engaged and start the creative process of doing their job. (Bakker, 2009)

Thus, for further understand work engagement and performance link in our context, future research could examine daily changes in work engagement by using dairy research. An important advantage of diary research is that it relies less on retrospective

recall than regular surveys, since the questions relate to individuals' perceptions and feelings on a certain day (Bakker, 2009)

Next, the study found a positive relationship between OCB and job performance. This results is aligned with the findings of past research which indicated that OCB has a significant relationship with job performance (MacKinzie et al., 1991; Nikolaou and Robertson, 2001; Tutu, 2011). As a form of job behaviour that goes beyond task performance, OCB is expected to be affected by employees' effort. In this study, correlation analysis also indicates that OCB is the strongest predictor to employees' performance and this is also in line with previous research which reveals supervisors often include OCB in their assessment of job performance (Organ, 1977; Rotundo and Sackett, 2002).

Finally, OCB was also found to only partially mediate the effect of job characteristics on job performance. This shows that jobs with motivational characteristics may lead to higher helping behaviour and subsequently stimulate employee's job performance. This finding lends support to the belief that when a job is enriched with motivational aspects such as autonomy, variety, and significance, an employee feels more satisfied, which in turn promotes OCB and finally contribute to higher performance among employees. This result is consistent with past researches (Lee and Allen, 2002).

5.2 Summary and Conclusion

It can be concluded that this study contributes to job characteristics and OCB literature by providing evidence in context of public sectors in Malaysia. The findings of the study have marked several impacts. Some are in line with the results of previous studies and

some findings are contradicted with previous research. The research findings indicated the unique results where among four job attitudinal construct tested in this study, only job characteristics and OCB are significantly related to job performance among employees. This finding shows that factors identified in past studies namely as affective commitment, job self-efficacy and work engagement are not relevant in this study due to different in nature of job design and work done by lower level employees.

Research also revealed that job characteristics and OCB is important variables in predicting the job performance that can benefit public sector organizations. OCB also found to mediates the relationship between job characteristics and job performance among employees in MCC. Therefore, priority should be given to both job design and OCB that will encourage employees to be more willing to achieve the organizational goals even though they exceed their formal duties and responsibilities.

5.3 Limitation of the Study and Suggestion for Future Research

The present study has a number of limitations. First, this research employed convenience sampling to accomplish the research objectives. For future research, random sampling is recommended to increase the generalizability of the finding of the research.

Second, the sample size used in the present study was comprised of the administrative support personnel in a public sector organization ranging from mixed job level from grade 17 to 38 and from grade 41 to 54 for Kumpulan Pengurusan and Profesional. As there may be possibility that different level of employees may be influenced by different factors, future replication attempts should be conducted using specialize job scope and job level to ensure an accurate results.

Third, the results are based on peer rating instead of supervisor's rating. This is due to low response rates of supervisor rating at initial attempts. Therefore, it is suggested that future research to employ supervisor rating method as it would give clear and better assessment on employees performance level and to avoid possible common-source bias.

Forth, because all research constructs were adapted from past researchers that have proven high in reliability and validity, and been tested thoroughly and was tested in Malaysian context, thus factor analysis was not performed for these construct. However, due to some of the results are not significant and contradicted with past researchers, future research should consider performing factor analysis.

Fifth, given the cross-sectional nature of the study and correlational data used, the true direction and the causal paths cannot be determined definitely. Therefore, it is suggested that future research to employ longitudinal or experimental method that would give deeper insight regarding the subject focus of the study and to know the causality of the variables under study.

5.4 Managerial Implications and Recommendations

This study has some important implications for management practices. As noted earlier, job characteristics are the most important variable that contributes to employees' performance. Thus, top management should carefully design the job to make it interesting and meaningful to employees such as autonomy, variety, and importance of jobs. For example, in effort to improve job variety, managers could execute job enrichment, job enlargement, and challenges in the job. Managers could also empowering employees through sufficient autonomy in work which would enhance employees fullest

creativity and talents, make them happier with their work, which in turn may increase their commitment to the department (Mohd Zain and Khairul Anwar, 2000).

Second implications, this study found that job characteristics have both direct and indirect effects on influencing employees to engage in job performance. As job characteristics also lead to the display of OCB, managers need to ensure employees work on tasks that are meaningful because when employees enjoy their jobs, they will exhibit OCB or work beyond their formal job requirement, which in turn will increase their job performance's level.

Third implications, since most of the variables in this study such as affective commitment, job self efficacy and work engagement are to great extent related to perception of whether job characteristics are meaningful or routine, managers may also support employees in changing their mindsets about their jobs. This is because personality traits and cognitive styles may influence employees to perceiving higher or lower levels of meaningful work. For example, perceptions of job autonomy have long been linked to employee attitudes and behavior (Terry and Jimmieson, 1999; Theorell, 2003).

Moreover, it is crucial to encourage behaviour that goes beyond the role description and contributes significantly in the public sector organizations. Furthermore, OCB is correlated with job satisfaction, job commitment, job involvement and other important behaviours that ensure organisation sustainability. Therefore, it is strongly recommended to adopt and support the environment and the conditions that will enhance both extrinsic

and intrinsic satisfaction as well as OCBI and OCBO as they are found to be highly correlated. Therefore, it is necessary for public sector employees to adopt and encourage OCBs so as to generate a better working environment and to enhance work performance.

5.5 Conclusion

This study is considered to be important both to employer and the employee especially in public sector. In view of rapidly changing of service quality demand, public service organization must allocate greater effort to enhance their capabilities and service quality. In doing so, it must not be forgotten that the success and competing power of the organization depend on committed, highly motivated, satisfied and innovative human resources. Thus, employers should promote their employees by improving work attitudinal behaviours such as job characteristics by providing clear job description and job variety which lead to higher motivation and promotes OCB at their workplace to enhance job performance.

Other approach based on management styles and well treated employees to develop a positive attitude towards supervision and the organization or vice versa also involving more employees in decision making process, providing better working condition, provide flexible working hours and paying fairly, encouraging employees to use their own skills and abilities, help them to have a sense of self-pride, a sense of competence and a sense of self confidence that would increases employees job satisfaction and motivation at work. In conclusion, both employee and employer should cooperate to generate a working condition that they will work in a happy, motivated and productive atmosphere to reach the shared goals and job performance outcome.