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A REVIEW ON ANTECEDENTS OF ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT AMONG GEN Y

Khairunnisa Abdul Aziz (a)*, Rabeatul Husna Abdull Rahman (b), Halimah Mohd Yusof (c)
*Corresponding author

(a) Azman Hashim International Business School, Universiti Teknologi Malaysia, Skudai, Malaysia,
Ciknyssa@gmail.com
(b) School of Human Resource and Psychology, Universiti Teknologi Malaysia, Skudai, Malaysia,
rabeatulhusna@utm.my
(c) School of Human Resource and Psychology, Universiti Teknologi Malaysia, Skudai, Malaysia,
halimahmy@utm.my

Abstract

Gen Y employees were found to have the lowest level of organizational commitment compared to older generations. It is an issue that organizations cannot afford to overlook as it leads to various withdrawal behaviors such as turnover intention, absenteeism and burnout. Numerous studies have examined the relationship between organizational commitment and its antecedents. Therefore, this article reviewed twenty studies conducted in the past ten years on organizational commitment among Gen Y. The principal concern of this study is to review and to evaluate the antecedents of organizational commitment among Gen Y. This review reveals that Gen Y's organizational commitment is influenced by various factors. These factors can be categorized into personal characteristics, job characteristics, work experience, role-states, job satisfaction, and motivation. Among the various antecedents, personal characteristics emerges as the most researched area, while role-states and job satisfaction are the least being studied. This review also reports the variations in terms of organizational commitment dimension measurement, the context of the research setting and the relationship between the constructs. Then, this review provides general guideline for researchers to study Gen Y's organizational commitment which can also assist the practitioners in generating and developing better retention strategies that could help meet the contemporary needs of Gen Y employees.

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Keywords: Gen Y, factors, organizational commitment, affective commitment, continuance commitment, normative commitment.

1. Introduction

In recent years, Gen Y who are also known as Millennials and GenMe (Cogin, 2012; Tissen, Deprez, Burgers, & Van Montfort, 2010; Twenge, Campbell, Hoffman, & Lance, 2010), have been the main focus of many worldwide research undertakings (Papavasileiou & Lyons, 2015). According to Howe and Strauss (1991), each generation's values, personalities and attitudes are shaped by the generation's experience of life events. This indicates that Gen Y employees may have different needs and demands, characteristics and attitudes in comparison with other generations (Chen & Choi, 2008; Lub, Bijvank, Bal, Blomme, & Schalk, 2012; Solnet, Kralj, & Kandampully, 2012; Twenge et al., 2010) as they go through different life experiences.

One of the differences across generations is Gen Y workforce have been the least committed to stay with the same organization (Goh, 2012; Islam, Cheong, Yusuf, & Desa, 2011). Over the past 20 years, organizational commitment is one of the most frequently studied organizational behaviors. Organizational commitment refers to the employee's emotional dependence on organization (Porter, Steers, Mowday, & Boulian, 1974). Initially, it was conceptualized as a unidimensional construct, but it is now known to be multidimensional in nature (Carriere & Bourque, 2009).

Meyer and Allen (1991) defined commitment as psychological state that exemplifies employees' relationship with their organization and it influences their decisions whether to stay in or to leave the organization. These researchers developed a multidimensional model of organizational commitment namely affective commitment, continuance commitment, and normative commitment. The affective commitment takes into account the matter of employee's emotional attachment, identification, and the extent of involvement in the organization. On the other hand, continuance commitment refers to the commitment to stay in the organization due to the investment involved between employees and the organization, while normative component refers to the employee's sense of obligation to stay in the organization.

2. Problem Statement

Organizations cannot afford to overlook the issue of organizational commitment among Gen Y because retaining this young generation workforce has appeared to be one of the challenges faced by organizations today. Gen Y employees were found to have the lowest level of organizational commitment compared to older generations (Brunetto, Farr-Wharton, & Shacklock, 2012; Goh, 2012; Islam, Cheong, Yusuf, & Desa, 2011; Lub et al., 2012; Nelson, 2012; Solnet et al., 2012). There are widespread literatures that relate organizational commitment to various organizational outcomes such as turnover, as well as other withdrawal behaviors including turnover intention, absenteeism, burnout, and decreased organizational performance (Francesco & Chen, 2004; Meyer, Stanley, Herscovitch & Topolnytsky, 2002; Muthuveloo, & Che Rose, 2005). As there are generational differences exist, this might lead to different influences on organizational commitment. Hence, there is a need to review and to identify the antecedents of organizational commitment especially among Gen Y workforce.

3. Research Questions

Organizational commitment among Gen Y could be influenced by various factors. Therefore, the following question is raised: i) what are the most researched and the least researched factors influencing organizational commitment among Gen Y workforce? Since the existing studies were conducted across different sectors and countries, some researchers examined unidimensional construct, while the others preferred to study multidimensional construct of organizational commitment. Hence, another question to be answered is ii) are there any variations in the findings of the existing studies?

4. Purpose of the Study

Previous studies have reviewed the relationships between organizational commitment and its antecedents (Mathieu & Zajac, 1990; Mowday, Porter, & Steers, 1982). However, this present study intends to focus specifically on Gen Y workforce. The principal concern of this study is to review the antecedents of organizational commitment among Gen Y. Specifically, this study aims to identify the most researched and the least researched factors influencing organizational commitment among Gen Y workforce. In addition, this study aims to examine the findings in terms of organizational commitment dimension measurement, the context of the research setting (i.e., sector and countries) involved in the past studies and the relationship between the constructs.

5. Research Methods

A literature search was carried out by the researchers in the field of Organizational Behavior (OB), Work and Organizational Psychology, Human Resource Management (HRM), and Management. The reviewed articles used in this study were published from 2006 to 2016. In order to identify past studies with Gen Y and organizational commitment as the main interests, the researchers used scholarly internet search engine, known as Google Scholar, and several online databases including Emerald, Wiley, and Science Direct to retrieve the articles. In terms of search keyword, besides "Gen Y", the researchers also included "Millennial", "New generation", "Echo Boomer", and "Young generation." Since the number of studies on Gen Y's organizational commitment were limited, unpublished and published dissertations were also considered in this study. The literature search yielded 20 studies.

6. Findings

Based on the systematic literature search, the researchers sorted out the findings into two tables. Table 01 shows the summaries of literature review of the past studies. Meanwhile, Table 02 presents the categories of antecedents of organizational commitment.

6.1. Antecedents of Organizational Commitment

Table 01 represents the summaries of literature review on the antecedents of organizational commitment among Gen Y in the past ten years. The referred articles in this present study were published from 2006 to 2016.

Table 01. Summaries of literature review

Reference	Independent Variable	Measure	Sector	Country	Results			
					OC	AC	CC	NC
1.Remo (2006)	Reciprocal norm Culture belief	NC	Education	Canada				+ +
2.Yang, Ping, & Lau (2008)	Need for growth Need for existence Perceived organizational politics Job characteristics	OC	Manufac-turing	China	+ + - +			
3.Cennamo & Gardner (2008)	*P-O Fit* Status Extrinsic Intrinsic Altruism Freedom Social	AC	Various sector	New Zealand		 + + 0 0 0 0		
4. Evangelista (2009)	Work life Balance	OC	Informa-tion technology	Philip-pines	0			
5. London (2009)	Intrinsic factors Extrinsic factors	OC	Education	US	+ +			
6. Bissola & Imperatori (2010)	e-HRM systems	AC	Various sector	Italy		-		
7. Brunetto et al. (2012)	Perceptions of well-being Supervisor-nurse communication relationship Training and Development	AC	Healthcare	Australia		+ + +		
8. Lim (2014)	Personality traits Employee involvement Leader interpersonal communication skill Trust in management	AC CC NC	Various sector	Malaysia		+ + + +	+ + + +	+ 0 0 +
9. Rajput, Marwah, Balli, & Gupta (2012)	Work life Balance	OC	Informa-tion technology	India	0			
10. De Stefano (2012)	Work centrality Communication	AC	Various sector	Canada		+ +		
11.Khanolkar (2013)	Employer branding	OC	Various sector	India	+			

Study	Variables	Type	Sector	Country				
12. Silva, Dutra, Veloso, Fischer, & Trevisan, (2015)	Work environment Perception of leadership	AC	Various sector	Brazil		+ 0		
13. Ling & Yuen (2014)	Age, education level, tenure, Marital status, gender	OC	Various sector	Malaysia	/ 0			
14. Nkomo (2014)	*Work values* Intrinsic Extrinsic Altruistic Prestige *Motivation* Intrinsic Extrinsic Internal Self-motivation External Self-motivation Goal internalization	AC CC NC	Various sector	South Africa	+	+ 0 + + 0 0 0 + +	+ 0 + 0 0 0 0 0 +	+ 0 + + + 0 0 0 +
15. Yi (2014)	Gender, Education Distributive Justice Procedural Justice Work-life balance Job Satisfaction	OC	Manufacturing	Malaysia	/ + + + +			
16. Wanjugu (2015)	Work life balance Relationship Technology support	OC	Public organiza-tion	Africa	+ + +			
17. Wang (2015)	Identity alignment Confusion value Family expectation Career interest alignment Financial cost Social cost Perceived lack of skill	AC CC NC	Family owned business	China		+ +	+ + +	+ 0
18. Daee (2016)	Personal Value	AC CC NC	Various sector	US		+	+	+
19. Filiana (2016)	*Extrinsic Job satisfaction* Pay and fringe benefit Procedure and policies *Intrinsic Job*	AC CC CC	Various sector	Indonesia		+ 	0	+

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	Satisfaction					0	+	0
	Job supervision and responsibility							
	Nature of work							
	Recognition					+	-	0
						+		
						+	+	
							+	+
						0	0	
20. Orlow-ski, Murphy & Severt (2016)	Task Conflict	OC	Food and beverage	US	-			
	Process conflict				-			
	Relationship conflict				0			

Organizational Commitment (OC); Affective Commitment (AC); Continuance Commitment (CC); Normative Commitment (NC); Significance difference (/); positively significant (+); negatively significant (-); No significant (0)

In the earliest study, Remo (2006) examined how cultural beliefs and reciprocity norms influence normative commitment in education sector. The result showed that both cultural beliefs and reciprocity norms have a significant influence on normative commitment. Yang et al. (2008) investigated the influence of individual factors (i.e., need for growth, need for existence and perception of organizational politics) and an organizational factor (i.e., job characteristics) on organizational commitment. The study concluded that both individual and organizational factors (except for perceived organizational politics which was partly supported) have a significant influence on organizational commitment.

On the other hand, Cennamo and Gardner (2008) predicted that person organizational fit (P-O fit) could be related to affective commitment. The study partly supported the hypotheses as the researchers found that only employees with high P-O fit for status and extrinsic values were generally more committed, while other work values did not have any significant influence on affective commitment. Evangelista (2009) and Rajput et al. (2012) conducted a similar study but in a different research setting. Evangelista (2009) conducted the study in the Philippines whereas Rajput et al. (2012) concentrated on India and the researchers attempted to investigate whether work-life balance relates to organizational commitment in information technology (IT) firms. However, both studies reported that there was no significant relationship between the variables.

An investigation looking at the impact of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation on organizational commitment among Gen Y students in the United States was carried out by London (2009). The study revealed that extrinsic and intrinsic motivation factors have an impact on organizational commitment. Moreover, the study indicated that the respondents who received intrinsic rewards reported higher levels of organizational commitment compared to those who obtained extrinsic rewards. In another study, Bissola and Imperatori (2010) focused on the relationship between e-HRM systems and affective commitment in ten various sectors in Italy. The finding revealed that e-HRM system has a significant influence on affective commitment.

Other than that, Brunetto et al. (2012) investigated whether affective commitment influences perceptions of well-being, training and development satisfaction, and supervisor-nurse communication relationship among nurses in Australia. They found that all three variables have a significant influence on affective commitment. Meanwhile, Lim (2014) scrutinized the relationship of personal factor (personality

traits) and organizational factors (employee involvement, leader interpersonal communication skills and trust in management) with organizational commitment (affective, continuance and normative) among non-managerial employees from various sectors in Malaysia. Significant relationships were observed in most variables except for the relationships of employee involvement and leader interpersonal communication skill with normative commitment which were found to be insignificant.

A study on the relationship of communication satisfaction and work centrality with affective commitment was conducted by De Stefano (2012) who focused on three different sectors which are marketing and media, banking and education sector. A significant relationship of communication satisfaction and work centrality with affective commitment was reported. Then, Khanolkar (2013) investigated the influence of employer branding on commitment in various industries in India and the study indicated that commitment is predicted by employer branding. Meanwhile, Silva et al. (2015) explored the relationship of work environment and perception of leadership with affective commitment. The finding revealed that work environment significantly and positively relates to affective commitment; however, perception of leadership did not significantly relate to affective commitment. On the other hand, Ling and Yuen (2014) attempted to identify the significant differences between demographic factors (age, gender, education level, tenure, and marital status) and organizational commitment. The results showed that there were significant differences between three demographic factors (i.e., age group, level of educational and organizational tenure) and organizational commitment.

In another study, Nkomo (2014) examined the relationship of work values and sources of motivation with affective, continuance and normative commitment in various sectors in Sri Lanka. Most of work value dimensions showed a positive significant relationship with all three dimensions of commitment except for extrinsic and prestige work values. There was no significant relationship between extrinsic work value and affective commitment. This is different from the finding obtained by Cennamo and Gardner (2008). Meanwhile, extrinsic work values did not have any significant relationship with continuance and normative commitment. Prestige work value also had no significant relationship with continuance commitment. Nkomo (2014) revealed that most of the source of motivation factors have no significant relationship with all three dimensions of commitment. The significant relationships were only found in the relationship of intrinsic motivation with normative commitment and the relationship of external self-motivation with affective commitment. Only goal internalization had shown significant relationship with all three dimensions of commitment.

Yi (2014), who focused on manufacturing sector in Malaysia, investigated the impact of distributive justice, procedural justice, job satisfaction and work-life balance on Gen Y's organizational commitment. These aspects have shown a significant impact on Gen Y's organizational commitment. In a different study, Wanjugu (2015) examined the effect of workplace relationship, work-life balance and technology support on commitment among generation Y government employees in Kenya, Africa. The findings revealed that workplace relationship, work-life balance and technology support aspects have a significant effect on Gen Y's commitment.

Other than that, Wang (2015) studied the antecedents of commitment among Chinese potential successors based on organizational commitment theories and Chinese culture. The researcher concluded that identify alignment and career interest alignment have a positive significant influence on affective commitment. Besides that, financial cost and social cost have a positive significant influence on

continuance commitment, while family expectation and confusion values have a significant influence on normative commitment. The findings showed that most of the variables have a positive significant influence on commitment, but for family expectation, it has no significant influence on normative commitment. Meanwhile, Daee (2016) attempted to identify the influence of personal values on the three types of organizational commitment among Gen Y from various sectors in the United States. The study revealed that there was a positive and significant influence on the relationships between personal values and all three types of commitment.

Then, Filiana (2016) investigated the relationship of intrinsic factors and extrinsic factors with affective, continuance and normative commitment in various sectors in Indonesia. Five factors were analyzed from intrinsic and extrinsic factors in job satisfaction. The finding, however, showed that only nature of job (one of intrinsic factors) significantly affected all components of organizational commitment. Intrinsic factors such as recognition revealed a significant influence on affective commitment whereas job supervision and responsibility significantly predicted affective commitment and continuance commitment. On the other hand, extrinsic factors such as pay and fringe benefits showed a significant impact on affective commitment, while operating policies and procedure revealed a significant relationship with continuance commitment. Orlowski et al. (2016) explored the influence of perceptions of task, process and relationship conflict on organizational commitment among Generation Y's restaurant employees in the United States. The finding indicated that there was a negative influence of perceptions of task and process on organizational commitment. However, no significant influence on relationship of conflict with organizational commitment was revealed in the study.

6.2. Categorization of the Antecedents of Organizational Commitment

Table 02 shows the six categories of the variables. The categories include personal characteristics, job characteristics, work experience, role-states, job satisfaction and motivation.

Table 02. Antecedents of organizational commitment

Variables	Antecedents					
	PC	JC	WE	RS	JS	M
Reciprocal norm	√					
Culture belief	√					
Need for growth	√					
Need for Existence	√					
Perceived organizational politics	√					
Job Characteristics		√				
Job Satisfaction					√	
P-O Fit	√					
Intrinsic factors						√
Extrinsic Factors						√
e-HRM systems		√				
Perception of well-being	√					
Supervisor-nurse communication			√			

Training and development			√			
Personality	√					
Employee involvement			√			
Leader interpersonal communication skill			√			
Trust in management			√			
Work centrality		√				
Communication		√				
Employer branding			√			
Work environment			√			
Perception of leadership			√			
Age	√					
Education level	√					
Tenure	√					
Marital Status	√					
Work values	√					
Sources of motivation						√
Gender	√					
Organizational Justice			√			
Work life Balance			√			
Relationship						√
Technology Support						√
Identity alignment	√					
Confusion value	√					
Family expectation	√					
Career interest alignment	√					
Financial Cost		√				
Social Cost		√				
Perceived lack of skill		√				
Personal Value	√					
Extrinsic					√	
Intrinsic					√	
Task Conflict				√		
Process Conflict				√		
Relationship Conflict				√		

Personal Characteristic (PC); Job Characteristic (JC); Work Experience (WE); Role-States (RS); Job Satisfaction (JS); Motivation (M)

As demonstrated in Table 02, the researchers categorized the variables based on several frameworks developed by past researchers (Mathieu & Zajac, 1990; Meyer & Allen, 1991; Mowday et al., 1982; Steers, 1977). The past researchers who examined antecedents of organizational commitment classified the variables into several categories. Steers (1977) classified the variables into three categories which include personal characteristics, job characteristics and work experience. Then, Mathieu and Zajac (1990) proposed role-states category as one of the antecedents of organizational commitment. Other

factors such as job satisfaction and motivation are also considered. Therefore, this study focuses on six categories of the variables as a guideline for the review.

6.3. Discussion

As shown in Table 01, most of the past studies are multivariate rather than bivariate which means the past researchers had included two or more variables in their studies. This provides a broader insight on the factors that can affect Gen Y's organizational commitment. Moreover, most of the factors were significantly related to organizational commitment. This shows that Gen Y's organizational commitment is indeed influenced by a myriad of factors. Based on the review, past studies mainly focus on personal characteristic dimension rather than role-states and job satisfaction dimensions. This is supported by Howe and Strauss (1991) in which they claimed that each generation experiences different life events. Hence, each generation's values, personalities as well as attitudes are bound to be different from one another and this could be the reason why past researchers heavily emphasize on personal characteristic dimension.

One of the insights gathered from the review highlights geographical factor. Little is known about Gen Y's organizational commitment in non-Western countries such as in Malaysia as most of the previous studies were concentrated on Western countries. The findings obtained from the Western context could not be generalised to Malaysian Gen Y since they experience different life events than Gen Y in other countries. For example, Yi (2014) found that work-life balance of Malaysian Gen Y was significantly and positively related to organizational commitment. Differently, Rajput et al. (2012) found insignificant relationship between work-life balance and organizational commitment among Gen Y in India. Similar to Rajput et al. (2012), Evangelista (2009) also reported that there was insignificant relationship between work-life balance and organizational commitment among Gen Y in the Philippines. Therefore, different variations of findings on Gen Y's organizational commitment can be found across different countries.

Besides geographical factor, the result could also be different between sectors. For instance, a significant and positive relationship between certain sectors and organizational commitment was found such as in public organization (Wanjugu, 2015) and manufacturing sector (Yi, 2014). However, the result was insignificant for information technology sector in both the Philippines (Evangelista, 2009) and India (Rajput et al., 2012). Thus, the findings could vary across different sectors.

Although most of the factors influencing organizational commitment indicated a significant relationship, the results were differed when each component of organizational commitment was tested individually. For example, Lim (2014) reported that there was a positive and significant relationship of employee involvement and leader interpersonal communication with affective and continuance commitment, but insignificant relationship with normative commitment. Similar result can also be seen in the study by Nkomo (2014) in which the researcher found a positive and significant relationship between prestige work values and affective as well as normative commitment. However, the relationship between prestige work values and continuance commitment was insignificant. Nkomo (2014) also found that intrinsic motivation has a positive and significant relationship with normative commitment but it has insignificant relationship with affective and continuance commitment. This shows that each factor has a

different effect on each dimension of organizational commitment. However, as shown in Table 01, not all past studies investigated each dimension of organizational commitment. Most of the studies focused on examining affective commitment compared to normative and continuance commitment. This implies that affective organizational commitment is the most desirable organizational outcome.

Another key finding from the review is that most studies merely assumed a linear relationship between independent and dependent variables. The cause of the relationship between the two variables, however, was not investigated. Thus, an intervening variable could explain why and how the relationship occurs. For instance, Nkomo (2014) found a positive and significant relationship between the overall work values and general organizational commitment across various sectors in South Africa. The findings, however, were inconsistent when the relationship between each dimension of work values and each dimension of organizational commitment was tested individually. This shows that the relationship is inconclusive and it requires further investigation.

7. Conclusion

In this review study, there are several important points that can be highlighted. Among all antecedents, personal characteristics emerges as the most researched antecedent, while role-states and job satisfaction are the least antecedents being studied. This review also found variations in terms of organizational commitment dimension measurement, the context of the research and the relationship between the constructs. Evidently, these variations appear to give different influences on the result of the studies.

The following implications emerge from this review on antecedents of organizational commitment among Generation Y. Firstly, the size of population of youngsters within the age range of 27 to 37 years old is bigger in China, India and Malaysia. Hence, researchers should focus on Generation Y's commitment in non-Western countries. For instance, in Malaysia, Gen Y dominates more than 50 percent of the workforce (Ministry of Human Resources Malaysia, 2016; Queiri, Dwaikat, & Yelwa, 2016). Although the Gen Y population is increasing in the workplace, not much is known about this particular group specifically on the factors that can influence their organizational commitment.

In order to elucidate the antecedents of organizational commitment particularly among Gen Y in Malaysia, it is important for future researchers to first examine whether the characteristics of Gen Y developed by Western researchers are applicable and generalizable to Malaysian Gen Y. This is evident from the review whereby inconsistent result was found between different research settings (i.e., countries and sectors). In this review, it appears that there is a lack of research in the banking sector. Examining Gen Y working in banking sector is considered as significant because according to Asian Institute of Finance (2014), Gen Y workforce is estimated to increase to 50 percent within the next six to seven years. This implies that almost half of the percentage of people working in banks will be employees from the Gen Y group. Thus, it is imperative that organizations understand about Gen Y in order to manage them better. Past studies showed that Gen Y demonstrate distinct characteristics than the other generations (Chen & Choi, 2008; Lub et al., 2012; Solnet et al., 2012; Twenge et al., 2010), and this may have an implication on human resource management in general.

Last but not least, the review also highlights that Gen Y's organizational commitment can be influenced by various factors; however, the causal relationship between the constructs has not yet been clarified. So, it is not obvious which factor is the most dominant in influencing Malaysian Gen Y's organizational commitment. Therefore, more studies are required to understand about Malaysian Gen Y, their characteristics compared to other generations, and how these characteristics can influence their attitudes as well as their organizational outcomes.

Acknowledgments

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