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ORIGINAL ARTICLE

A Study on Organizational Commitment Among the Employees Of Malaysian Childcare Centres

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ABSTRACT

The childcare sector has grown enormously over the years in Malaysia due to a growing number of women who join the paid labour. However, childcare owners had facing with the high job turnover rate among the employees and difficult to retain the employees for a long period. Therefore, the childcare centres should execute the internal market orientation (IMO) behaviour in order to attain the highly satisfied and committed employees towards the childcare centres. Moreover, to the researcher's knowledge based on the literature review, till the date, there was a lack of study which investigated the mediation effect of employee job satisfaction (EJS) on the relationship between IMO behavior and employee organizational commitment (EOC) within childcare centres. Stranded by the Two Factor Theory-Herzberg and Equity Theory, and also based on literature, this study proposed a theoretical framework relating IMO behavior, EJS and EOC. A total of 360 front-line employees from registered childcare centres in 12 states from Peninsular Malaysia, representing a response rate of 72%, participated in this study. The researcher collected the data through self-administered survey questionnaires. The study employed exploratory factor analysis (EFA) to conclude the construct validity. The hypotheses were tested using Multiple Regression Analysis with SPSS version 19.0. The findings showed that: (1) IMO behaviour had a positive relationship with EOC, (2) IMO behavior had a positive relationship with EJS, (3) EJS had a positive relationship with EOC, and (4) EJS had mediated the relationship between IMO behavior and EOC. Accordingly, it was strongly suggested by this study that if the childcare centers want to increase job satisfaction level and organizational commitment level among their employees, they should make efforts to execute IMO behaviour which was viewed by the employees as the important element in influencing their job satisfaction and then their organizational commitment toward the organization.

Keywords: Internal Market Orientation Behaviour, Employee Job Satisfaction, Employee Organizational Commitment, Childcare Centres

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INTRODUCTION

The childcare sector has grown tremendously over the years in Malaysia, due to the growing number of women who are joining the paid labour force (Omar, Abu, Sapuan, Aziz & Nazri, 2010). In fact, the number of childcare centres in Malaysia has been steadily increasing and is expected to continue to increase in the future. A good formal early childhood education is importance in contributing to the human capital building and to the nation's growth (Chiam, 2008), especially in achieving Vision 2020 which is to see Malaysia as a developed country. Furthermore, good quality childcare centres could give overwhelming effects on children development, survival and growth because children's development is influenced by their childcare experiences (Omar, Abu, Sapuan, Aziz and Nazri, 2010). Therefore, the requirement of childcare service is increasing which leads to the increasing number of childcare centres in Malaysia.

Childcare is a phrase used to depict the care of children during day by a person other than their parents or legal guardians who is someone outside the family members with the certain fees (Omar, Nazri, Abu and Omar, 2009). Normally, early childcare education in Malaysia is placed under two ministries, namely, the Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development and The Department of Social Welfare which controls the development of early childhood care in Malaysia. There are several empirical studies were conducted on childcare centres. For example, Grigg (2009) conducted a study on employee job satisfaction, employees' organisational commitment and intent to leave or employee retention within childcare centres in West Carolina. Meanwhile, Omar, Nazri, Abu and Omar (2009) studied the relationships among parents' perceived service quality, satisfaction, trust and loyalty within childcare centres in Kuala Lumpur and Selangor. While Cleveland, Gunderson and Hyatt (2003) studied the low wage services among the employees in childcare centres in Canada. The reviews clearly show that the research on employees' organisational commitment and the factors that contribute to employees' organisational commitment in the childcare sector is still lacking. It is assumed that employees who have high organisational commitment will contribute towards improving quality of service in the childcare centres.

Lately, many Malaysian childcare centres have been plagued with problems of well-being of children under their care. There have been occasions of children's death that may have been caused by negligence of the childcare centres' employees. This has led to the Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development intervening in order to solve the problems as reported by Hashim (2012); Isa (2007); Zulkifli (2012). These incidents and negligence's could be due to poor commitment from the childcare centres' employees. In addition, Cleveland, Gunderson and Hyatt (2003) stated that appropriate salary, working conditions and benefits are necessary to attract and retain committed employees. However, many of childcare centres have not provided adequate salary, better benefits and good working conditions for their employees. As a result, the childcare centres were difficult to retain the employees due to high employee turnover which is believed to have a connection with uncommitted employees (Huntsman, 2008). Similarly, Malaysian childcare centres also experience a high job turnover rate among their employees which resulted from lower organisational commitment (Persatuan Taska Negeri Selangor, 2011; Persatuan Pengasuh Berdaftar Malaysia, 2012). Furthermore, the research of the effects of internal market orientation on employee job satisfaction and employees' organisational commitment within childcare centres in Malaysia is believed to be crucial since the studies that relate employee job satisfaction and employees' organisational commitment with internal market orientation are still lacking, especially in the childcare setting. To date, there is a lack of studies that investigates the effects of internal market orientation on employee job satisfaction and employees' organisational commitment within childcare centres. Based on the above justifications, this research could be well justified. Specifically, the current study aims to investigate the effect of internal market orientation on employees' organisational commitment within childcare centres' employees in Malaysia as mediated by employee job satisfaction. Therefore, there is an urgent need to review the current legislation in the effort to upgrade the services offered by child care centres. In doing so, the main features of safety and quality shall be first examined in order to focus on the important aspects that should be given extra attention. Hence, the causes of the safety and quality problems in child care centres as mentioned above must be addressed and a new model of safety and quality assurance need to be discovered and developed based on the current grievances of the parents and others (Sulaiman et al, 2017).

The current study gives a substantial contribution to the present literature related to the Two Factor Theory-Herzberg and Equity Theory by investigating the relationships among internal market orientation, employee job satisfaction and employees' organisational commitment. From the theoretical perspective, the findings of this study will increase the number of empirical findings on internal market orientation and the relationship with employee job satisfaction and employees' organisational commitment in service organisations. From the managerial perspective, the current study provide benefits to the childcare providers enable them to provide high service quality to the customers and direct to a higher level of employees' organisational commitment and better business performance within childcare centres in Malaysia. In addition, this study guides the childcare sector to attract many parents and encourage them to switch from baby-sitter services to childcare services. From policy making perspective, this study provides guidelines for developing quality early childhood education and care for the children from zero to four years, with the ultimate vision of producing future leaders who are able and charismatic.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Employees' Organisational Commitment

Past research disclosed that employees' organisational commitment has become the most essential item to the organisation; perhaps this finding would lead to an increase in studies on employees' organisational commitment (Jamaludin, 2009). Porter (2006) pointed out that employees' organisational commitment is a vital link in identifying the success or failure of the organisation. In other words, an employee who has a higher organisational commitment will be a dynamic employee and boost the organisation, with which he or she is connected. Employees' organisational commitment indicates a level of employee job satisfaction at their workplace (Allen & Meyer, 1990; Grigg, 2009; Messmer, 2006; Meyer & Allen, 1988; Oliver, 1990).

The view of organisational commitment has been identified in various modes in the literature. Employees' organisational commitment is viewed as an approach because it is linked to an employee's attitude about his or her organisation (Allen & Meyer, 1990; Lumley, Coetzee, Tladinyane & Ferreira, 2011). Employees' organisational commitment is the connection with a certain organisation and recognition of its values and objectives (Padala, 2011; Porter, Steers, Mowday & Boulian, 2004). However, some authors have determined employees' organisational commitment to be a sense of loyalty and psychological attachment; for example, Buchanan (1974); Etzioni (1975); Hall, Schneider and Nygren (1970); Romzek and Hendricks (1982); and Romzek (1989).

Herman (2005); Messmer (2006); and Porter (2006) conducted research that focused on three elements of employees' organisational commitment: affective commitment, continuance commitment and normative commitment. This is further supported by Jamaludin (2009) conducted a research on organisational justice (distributive, procedural and interactional justice) and its relationship with employees' organisational commitment (affective commitment, continuance commitment and normative commitment). Grigg (2009) also mentioned that if the employees have a higher level of involvement, then their level of commitment is higher to remain with the organisation.

Internal Market Orientation

The root of internal market orientation can be traced to market orientation and also internal marketing concepts (McGrath, 2009). Generally, internal market orientation seeks to provide stability between employees' views of what they have given to their works and the views of what they will get from their works (Lings & Greenley, 2005). In addition, there are a few empirical researches for small-sized organisations that provide the same results as the large organisations, which show the importance of implementing the internal market orientation in order to ensure their growth and long-term survival (Inoguchi, 2011). Inoguchi (2011) argued that market orientation or internal market orientation is also an important notion for small-sized organisations since they have less competitive advantage and fewer resources compared to the large organisations. This trend can be supported by several researches, such as by Blankson, Motwani and Levenburg (2006); Keskin (2006); and Mahmoud (2011) who found out that internal market orientation does affect small and medium entrepreneurship business performance.

Based on an extensive review of the pertinent literature, there are many parallels among market orientation, internal marketing and internal market orientation, especially in their meanings (Berry, 1981; Gounaris, 2006; Jaworski & Kohli, 1993; Lings & Greenley, 2005). The internal customers (employees) are the main focus of internal market orientation, in contrast to the market orientation, which concentrates on the external customers (Gounaris, 2006; Lings, 2004; Lings & Greenley, 2005). McGrath (2009) argued that the employee's attachment in the internal market orientation (internal market intelligence generation, internal communication and response to intelligence) is crucial in order to increase the satisfaction and commitment of employees, which, in turn, will lead to the improved business performance of the organisation. While Gray (2010) defined internal market orientation as an enabler in the quest of business success because it provides a landscape for employees and customers of the organisation to operate. On the other hand, according to Lings and Greenley (2010), internal market orientation can be defined as a continuing marketing focus inside an organisation that is intended for employees. Thus, internal market orientation encourages employees to support the organisation's market goals and motivates them to perform better, and provide excellent service that eventually can increase customer preservation and boost the organisation's success.

Employee Job Satisfaction

Saif, Nawaz, Jan and Khan (2012) pointed out that employee job satisfaction is a persistent attitude and that it needs constant management. However, until now, there is no general explanation of employee job satisfaction that represents all these elements at the same time (Bernal, Castel, Navarro & Torres, 2005). Feinstein and Vondrasek (2001) and Locke (1969) highlighted that employee job satisfaction is a condition of delight gained by the employees due to their work. Leimbach (2006) defined employee job satisfaction as a different thing to different people. Research conducted by several authors, such as Allen (2006); Boselie and Wiele (2002); Cuong and Swierczek (2008); Grigg (2009); Lambert, Hogan and Barton (2001); and Spector (1997) revealed that the higher degree of employee job satisfaction, the

higher the degree of the decision to remain in the organisation. Therefore, employees with a higher degree of job satisfaction will contribute to the organisational commitment, which will lead to them remaining in the organization. Lumley, Coetzee, Tladinyane and Ferreira (2011) and Rothmann and Coetzer (2002) pointed out that employee job satisfaction can be defined as a reflection of a job resulting from what the employees want and the real result they achieve. Furthermore, Hong and Waheed (2011) added that employee job satisfaction is basically related to the achievement, pay, empowerment, personal growth, occupational stress, company and administrative policy, the overall working conditions and the relationship with others.

Spector developed a Job Satisfaction Survey in 1985, which contains nine dimensions namely, communication, contingent rewards, co-workers, fringe' benefits, nature of work, operating procedures, pay, promotion and supervision (Spector, 1985, 1994, 1997). Aluja, Blanch and Garcia (2005) and Bytyqi, Reshani and Hasani (2010) introduced three dimensions of job satisfaction, that is, reaction to the work conditions, the strength between the expected and the real and the employees' mindsets which replicate their relationships. Padala (2011) used five dimensions of employee job satisfaction, that is, job-concrete, job-abstract, psycho-social, economic aspects and community growth. Meanwhile Saridakis, Torres and Tracey (2009) used seven dimensions of job satisfaction in their study, that is, the work itself, the sense of achievement, training, salary, security, autonomy and the scope of job.

Much research has been done to clarify the mediating effects of employee job satisfaction. For example, a research was conducted by Liang, Chan, Lin and Huang (2011) investigated the relationship between transformational, transactional leaderships and task performance and to clarify the mediating effects of employee job satisfaction. Furthermore, according to Ding, Lu, Song and Lu (2012), employee job satisfaction played a mediating role on the relationship between servant leadership and employee loyalty among 186 MBA students of the Chinese University of Science and Technology and part of employees at the same university.

Two Factor Theory-Herzberg

The Two Factor Theory-Herzberg was developed in 1959 by Frederick Herzberg, also known as Herzberg's Motivation-Hygiene Theory and Dual-Factor Theory, explains that there are certain factors in the workplace that contribute to employee job satisfaction and other sets of factors that contribute to employee job dissatisfaction (Hackman & Oldham, 1976). Basically, this theory tries to clarify why employees act the way they do and advises on factors and approaches that when applied, could get the best results of employees due to their organisational commitment (Baah & Amoako, 2011). Khalifa and Truong (2009) pointed out that job characteristics relate to what employees do, which is related to the nature of the work, such as achievement, competency, status, personal worth and self-realisation.

In fact, both the hygiene (extrinsic) and motivation (intrinsic) factors of the Two Factor Theory-Herzberg have been proven to have significant and practical implications in order to forecast employee organisational commitment (Lahai et al., 2004). However, Kaptijn (2009) argued that the motivation factors had more influence on affective commitment compared to hygiene factors. In contrast, Hong and Waheed (2011) disclosed that the hygiene factors (in this case, it refers to the working conditions) lead the motivators in terms of employee job satisfaction among the sales people in Malaysia. Islam and Ismail (2008) argued that Malaysian employees are more concerned with hygiene factors (extrinsic factors), such as money and working conditions, compared to motivator factors (intrinsic factors), namely, full appreciation of work done. Therefore, it is important for organisations to build an environment in which employees are motivated to perform their tasks effectively, as, at the same time, they also have an opportunity to fulfill their own objectives (Samad, 2011).

Equity Theory

The Equity Theory was developed in 1963 by John Stacey Adam, which describes the relational satisfaction among the employee interpersonal relationships due to fair or unfair views in distributing the organisational resources (Carrell & Dittich, 1978). According to Lings and Greenley (2005), Equity Theory applies the concept of exchange between employees and managers which is one of the basic notions of internal market orientation. The employees feel they are treated fairly if they perceive the ratio of their inputs to their outcomes is comparable to their co-workers (Spector, 2008). In contrast, if the employees feel that their co-workers are getting more rewards and recognition, even though they have done the same quality and quantity of work, they will feel dissatisfied (Guerrero, Andersen & Afifi, 2007). Khalifa and Truong (2010) pointed out that, clearly, many researchers have conducted studies on the relationship between perception of equity and employee job satisfaction. Deconinck and Bachmann (2007) in their study concerning the relationships among perceived pay fairness, employee job satisfaction, employees' organisational commitment and turnover intention of marketing managerial employees. Furthermore, Malik and Naeem (2011) disclosed that distributive and procedural justice had a significant and positive relationship with employees' organisational commitment among junior faculty

employees. Zawahreh and Madi (2012) argued that equity pay was a driver for three major factors in organisational outcomes, namely, employee job satisfaction, motivation and performance. According to Bakhshi, Kumar and Rani (2009), distributive justice had a significant and positive relationship with employee job satisfaction.

RESEARCH FRAMEWORK

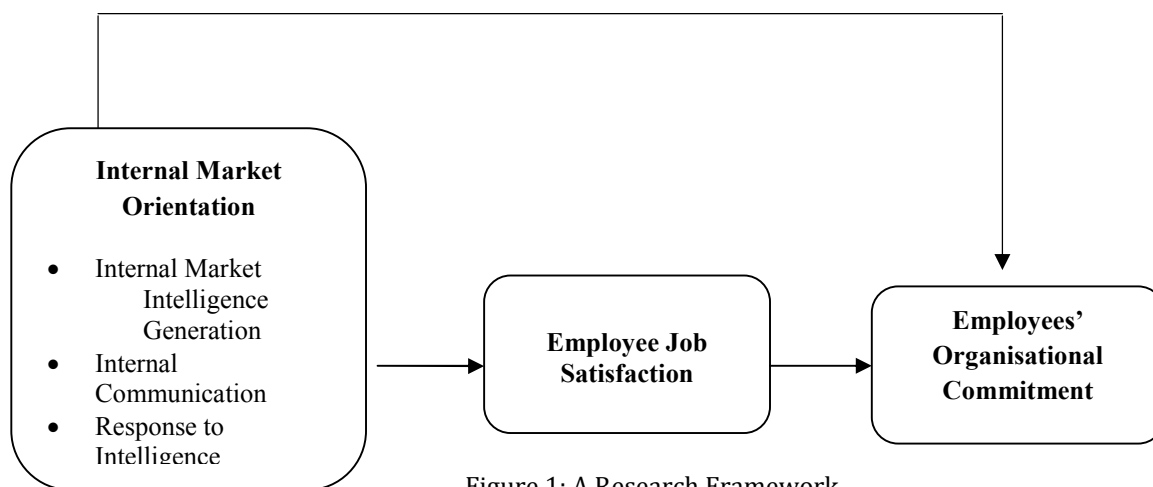


Figure 1: A Research Framework

Research framework has been developed from literature review and research problem of study which is illustrated in the Figure 1 above. The current theoretical framework or research model investigates the relationships among employees’ organisational commitment, internal market orientation and employee job satisfaction. The main constructs to be examined are employees’ organisational commitment as a dependent variable, the different aspects of internal market orientation as independent variables and employee job satisfaction as a mediator variable.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

Sampling Design

In this study, the general population comprised all the employees of registered and licensed childcare centres that are operating in Malaysia, including Sabah and Sarawak which is 4265. Since the current study is only focusing on registered and licensed childcare centres located in Peninsular Malaysia, therefore, the specific population for the study is should contained the number of all employees of registered and licensed childcare centres that are operating in Peninsular Malaysia which is 3565. The sampling frame for the current study is supposed to be a list of all the full-time front-line employees from registered and licensed childcare centres in Peninsular Malaysia, comprising 12 States of Kedah, Perlis, Penang, Perak, Selangor, Kuala Lumpur, Negeri Sembilan, Johore, Malacca, Kelantan, Terengganu and Pahang which is 3565. The sample size for the current study was obtained from the sampling table developed by Sekaran and Bougie (2010). The sample size for the current study is 346 since the total number of childcare employees is 3565. However, the researcher distributed 692 questionnaire based on suggestion by Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2003) who stated that the response rate for delivered and collected questionnaires is normally 50%. The researcher used the first technique which is a disproportionate stratified random sampling technique in order to get the desired sample size for each state.

Data Collection and Administration

The questionnaire for the current study, comprising 103 questions (using a five-point Likert type scale) was distributed to full-time front-line employees in registered and licensed childcare centres to evaluate their views on the variables of the study. Before proceeding with an actual data collection, this study will perform a pilot test using the same sample from the population with the sample size of 30 respondents in order to proof the reliability of the items used in the questionnaire. The researcher collected the data for the pilot study from 30 full-time front-line employees from three childcare centres in Kedah. Total 692 questionnaires that were distributed. Of the 692 questionnaires circulated, a total of 364 questionnaires were returned, representing a response rate of 53%. The researcher divided the questionnaires into four sections. The first section measured the independent variable which consists of internal market orientation were adapted from the work of Gounaris (2008) and Gounaris et al. (2010). The second section measured the mediator which is employee job satisfaction adapted the work of Spector (1985,

1994, 1997). The third section measured the dependent variable which is employees' organizational commitment measurement from the work of Allen and Meyer (1990). The last section collected the demographic data concerning the respondents who are the front-line employees within the registered and licensed childcare centres in Malaysia. The information obtained from the respondents included their race, religion, age, tenure of service, education, income per month and job status. All parts in the survey of this study were rated using five-point Likert scale (1 represent "strongly disagree" and 5 represent "strongly agree").

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Profile of Respondent

Table 1: Profile of Respondent

| Demographic Variables | Categories | Frequencies | Percentage |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|-------------|------------|
| Race | Malay | 350 | 97.2 |
| | Chinese | 4 | 1.1 |
| | Indian | 5 | 1.4 |
| | Others (Thai) | 1 | 0.3 |
| Religion | Muslim | 351 | 97.5 |
| | Christian | 3 | 0.8 |
| | Buddhist | 2 | 0.6 |
| | Hindu | 4 | 1.1 |
| Age | Below 20 years | 33 | 9.2 |
| | 20 – 30 years | 169 | 46.9 |
| | 31 – 40 years | 99 | 27.5 |
| | More than 40 years | 59 | 16.4 |
| Service Tenure | 2 – 4 years | 164 | 45.6 |
| | More than 4 – 6 years | 87 | 24.2 |
| | More than 6 – 8 years | 58 | 16.1 |
| | More than 8 years | 51 | 14.2 |
| Educational's Level | PMR | 23 | 6.4 |
| | SPM | 265 | 73.6 |
| | STPM | 32 | 8.9 |
| | Others (Diploma) | 40 | 11.1 |
| Income Per Month | Less than RM500 | 82 | 22.8 |
| | RM500 – RM750 | 155 | 43.1 |
| | RM751 – RM1000 | 66 | 18.3 |
| | More than RM1000 | 57 | 15.8 |
| Job Status | Full Time | 360 | 100.0 |

From Table 2 above, the largest percentage of the respondents or childcare centres employees that participated in this study are mostly Malays. The Malays constituted about 97% of the respondents compared to the Chinese (1.1%), Indians (1.4%) and others (0.3%). The others here refer to Thais. In terms of the religion of the total respondents, about 98% of them are Muslim, compared to Christian (0.8%), Buddhist (0.6%) and Hindu (1.1%). Most of the respondents' ages are between 20 – 30 years, which is about 47% of the total respondents. The current study also found that the respondents have 2 – 4 years in service tenure, equaling about 46% of the total respondents compared to more than 4 – 6 years in service tenure (24.2%), more than 6 – 8 years in service tenure (16.1%) and more than 8 years in service tenure (14.2%). In terms of educational level, the Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia (SPM) holders dominated the overall respondents, of about 74% compared to Peperiksaan Menengah Rendah (PMR) holders (6.4%), Sijil Tinggi Persekolahan Malaysia (STPM) holders (8.9%) and others (11.1%). The others here refer to Diploma holders. The findings show that about 43% of respondents have an income between RM500 – RM750 per month compared to 22.8% with less than RM500, 18.3% (RM751 – RM1000) and 15.8% (more than RM1000) income per month. All respondents (100%) had full-time job status, since the researcher had set the criterion that the respondents must be a full-time in service instead of part-time.

Reliability Analysis

Table 2: Reliability Coefficient for Each Construct

| Construct | No. of Items | Cronbach's Alpha |
|---|--------------|------------------|
| Internal Market Intelligence Generation | 9 | 0.828 |
| Internal Communication | 8 | 0.845 |
| Response To Intelligence | 3 | 0.648 |
| Employee Job Satisfaction | 9 | 0.851 |
| Employees' Organisational Commitment | 5 | 0.784 |

The Cronbach's Alpha for the independent variable, internal market orientation, ranged from 0.648 (response to intelligence) to 0.845 (internal communication). The findings showed that all the dimensions of internal market orientation construct had reliability coefficients above 0.60, and, dependent variable, employee organisational commitment, was 0.784 which also showed reliability coefficients above the minimum standard.

Descriptive Analysis of the Constructs

Table 4: Descriptive Statistics of the Constructs (n=360)

| Construct | Mean | Standard Deviation | Minimum | Maximum |
|---|-------|--------------------|---------|---------|
| Internal Market Intelligence Generation | 3.483 | 0.678 | 1.000 | 5.000 |
| Internal Communication | 3.706 | 0.721 | 1.630 | 5.000 |
| Response to Intelligence | 2.394 | 0.854 | 1.000 | 5.000 |
| Employee Job Satisfaction | 2.573 | 0.796 | 1.000 | 5.000 |
| Employees' Organisational Commitment | 3.677 | 0.746 | 1.600 | 5.000 |

The results in Table 4.8 below show that from among the internal market orientation variables, internal communication contributed the highest mean value 3.706, compared to internal market intelligence generation and response to intelligence, for which the mean values were 3.483 and 2.394, respectively. However, response to intelligence contributed the highest standard deviation value, which was 0.854 compared to internal market intelligence generation and internal communication, which were 0.678 and 0.721.

The mean value for the employee job satisfaction variable was 2.573 and the standard deviation was 0.796. It was revealed that the employees in the examined organisations had a high perception in terms of pay, supervision, benefits, communication, work itself and work condition provided by the managers in order to perform better.

For the employees' organisational commitment variable, the mean value was 3.677 and the standard deviation value was 0.746. The results disclosed that the employees from the studied childcare centres had a high perception due to their normative commitment, such as trying to be a loyal employee to their organisations and having a moral obligation in their work.

Pearson Correlation Analysis

As shown in Table 5 below, all the 10 Pearson correlations coefficients were found to be statistically significant at the 0.01 levels of significance. In other words, the data of this study supported the existence of significant relationships between internal market orientation aspects and employees' organisational commitment within childcare centres in Malaysia, ranging from $r = 0.408$ ($p < 0.01$) to $r = 0.476$ ($p < 0.01$). Similarly, the findings also supported the existence of significant relationships between internal market orientation dimensions and employee job satisfaction within childcare centres in Malaysia, ranging from $r = 0.323$ ($p < 0.01$) to $r = 0.545$ ($p < 0.01$). Furthermore, the results also supported the existence of significant relationship between employee job satisfaction and employees' organisational commitment ($r = 0.264$, $p < 0.01$) within childcare centres in Malaysia. In addition, correlations among internal market orientation dimensions were statistically significant, ranging from $r = 0.615$ ($p < 0.01$) to $r = 0.670$ ($p < 0.01$).

Table 5: Pearson Correlation Analysis

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|--------|--------|--------|--------|---|
| (1) Internal Market Intelligence Generation | 1 | | | | |
| (2) Internal Communication | .648** | 1 | | | |
| (3) Response To Intelligence | .615** | .670** | 1 | | |
| (4) Employee Job Satisfaction | .323** | .344** | .545** | 1 | |
| (5) Employees' Organisational Commitment | .456** | .408** | .476** | .264** | 1 |

Note: ** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Multicollinearity Test

Table 5: Multicollinearity Test

| Variables | Tolerance Value | Variance Inflation Factor |
|---|-----------------|---------------------------|
| Internal Market Intelligence Generation | 0.521 | 1.920 |
| Internal Communication | 0.460 | 2.172 |
| Response to Intelligence | 0.402 | 2.489 |
| Employee Job Satisfaction | 0.702 | 1.424 |

Table 6 above illustrates that the tolerance values of all the variables ranged between 0.402 and 0.702. In line with this, the values of variance inflation factor for all the variables were found to range between 1.424 and 2.489. The results revealed that the tolerance values of all the variables of the current study were more than 0.1 and accordingly, the variance inflation factor values were below the threshold value of 10 as proposed by Hair et al. (2010). Briefly, the tolerance values and variance inflation factor values of the variables incorporated in the study were within the suggested threshold values, therefore, it was decided that the issue of multicollinearity did not exist in the current study.

Regression Analysis**Table 6:** Regression Result of the Different Aspects of Internal Market Orientation and Job Satisfaction on Employees' Organisational Commitment

| Independent Variable | Dependent Variable | |
|---|------------------------------------|----------|
| | Employee Organisational Commitment | |
| | Standardised Beta | T- Value |
| Internal Market Intelligence Generation | 0.456*** | 3.833 |
| Internal Communication | 0.408*** | 0.863 |
| Response to Intelligence | 0.476*** | 4.511 |
| Job Satisfaction | 0.264*** | 5.176 |

Note: ***: $p < 0.001$; **: $p < 0.01$; *: $p < 0.05$

As shown in Table 4.13, all the three aspects of internal market orientation (internal market intelligence generation, internal communication and response to intelligence) were positive and significantly contribute to the prediction of employees' organisational commitment at the 0.001 significant level ($\beta=0.456$, $t=3.833$, $p < 0.001$; $\beta=0.408$, $t=0.863$, $p < 0.001$; $\beta=0.476$, $t=4.511$, $p < 0.001$) respectively. Besides, employee job satisfaction had a significant and positive impact on employees' organisational commitment at the 0.001 significant level ($\beta=0.264$, $t=5.176$, $p < 0.001$). In other words, Hypotheses 1, 2, 3 and 7 are supported.

The regression result are the same to three aspects of internal market orientation (internal market intelligence generation, internal communication and response to intelligence) had a significant and positive impact on employee job satisfaction at the 0.001 significant level ($\beta=0.323$, $t=23.721$, $p < 0.001$; $\beta=0.344$, $t=6.927$, $p < 0.001$; $\beta=0.545$, $t=12.292$, $p < 0.001$) respectively. In other words, the findings revealed that Hypotheses 4, 5 and 6 are supported.

Mediating Effect

Table 7: Mediating Effect of Employee Job Satisfaction on Internal Market Orientation and Employees' Organisational Commitment

| Dependent Variable | Variables | Beta | Beta | Results |
|--------------------------------------|---|--------------------|--------------------|-------------------|
| Employee's Organisational Commitment | Independent Variable Internal Market Intelligence Generation | Step 1 0.456*** | Step 2 0.414*** | Partially Mediate |
| | Mediating Variable Employee Job Satisfaction | | 0.130** | |
| | R ² | 0.206 | 0.219 | |
| | Δ R ² | 0.208 | 0.015 | |
| | F change | 93.980 | 6.965 | |
| | Independent Variable Internal Communication | Step 1 0.408*** | Step 2 0.360*** | Partially Mediate |
| | Mediating Variable Employee Job Satisfaction | | 0.130** | |
| | R ² | 0.164 | 0.179 | |
| | Δ R ² | 0.166 | 0.017 | |
| | F change | 71.437 | 7.579 | |
| | Independent Variable Response to Intelligence | Step 1 0.476*** | Step 2 0.473*** | Partially Mediate |
| | Mediating Variable Employee Job Satisfaction | | 0.130** | |
| | R ² | 0.225 | 0.223 | |
| | Δ R ² | 0.227 | 0.000 | |
| | F change | 105.139 | 0.012 | |

Note: ***: p<0.001, **: p<0.01; *: p<0.05

The beta coefficient for the direct path (step 1) between internal market intelligence generation, internal communication and response to intelligence and employees' organisational commitment are 0.456, 0.408, and 0.476 respectively. When employee job satisfaction was included in step 2, the Beta coefficient dropped to 0.414, 0.360 and 0.473 meaning that mediation did exist in the relationship, but internal market intelligence generation, internal communication and response to intelligence are still significant. Therefore, it could be translated that employee job satisfaction partially mediates the relationship between internal market orientation (internal market intelligence, internal communication and response to intelligence) and employees' organisational commitment.

Hypotheses Testing

Table 7: Summary of the Hypotheses Testing Results

| Hypothesis | Hypothesis Description | Result |
|------------|---|-----------|
| H1 | There is a positive relationship between internal market intelligence generation and employees' organisational commitment | Supported |
| H2 | There is a positive relationship between internal communication and employees' organisational commitment | Supported |
| H3 | There is a positive relationship between response to intelligence and employees' organisational commitment | Supported |
| H4 | There is a positive relationship between internal market intelligence generation and employee job satisfaction | Supported |
| H5 | There is a positive relationship between internal communication and employee job satisfaction | Supported |
| H6 | There is a positive relationship between response to intelligence and employee job satisfaction | Supported |
| H7 | There is a positive relationship between employee job satisfaction | |

| | | |
|-----|--|--------------------|
| | and employees' organisational commitment | Supported |
| H8 | Employee job satisfaction mediates the relationship between internal market intelligence generation and employees' organisational commitment | Partially Mediated |
| H9 | Employee job satisfaction mediates the relationship between internal communication and employees' organisational commitment | Partially Mediated |
| H10 | Employee job satisfaction mediates the relationship between response to intelligence and employees' organisational commitment | Partially Mediated |

CONCLUSION

The main objective of the current study is to examine the relationship between the internal market orientation and employees' organisational commitment. The findings of the current study validate the significant effects of internal market orientation on employees' organisational commitment. Specifically, this study investigates the relationship among internal market orientation, employee job satisfaction and employees' organisational commitment in childcare centres in Malaysia. It also analyses the mediating effect of employee job satisfaction on the relationship between internal market orientation and employees' organisational commitment. Basically, the current study was inspired by the lack of studies in the recent relevant literature relating to the relationships among internal market orientation, employee job satisfaction and employees' organisational commitment in small organisations, especially within the childcare industry.

From the results acquired, the proposed framework was significantly certified. The study variables were detected to have a substantial analytical on employees' organizational commitment. Employees' organisational commitment, however, could be a major link in clarifying the success or failure of the organisation (Porter, 2006). Additionally, employees' organisational commitment depicts the level of employee job satisfaction at their workplace, as suggested by Allen and Meyer (1990); Grigg (2009); Messmer (2006); Meyer and Allen (1988); and Oliver (1990). Consequently, employees with low salary, no adequate in-service training and no other benefits could contribute to low job satisfaction and also a low organisational commitment level, which result in a high turnover rate among the childcare employees (Grigg, 2009).

Therefore, it could be concluded that the managers or owners of the childcare centres should implement internal market orientation in order to improve the intensity of employee job satisfaction, which would lead to higher organisational commitment level among their employees since the internal market orientation notion itself is based on the organisations' commitment and direction, which focus on their employees.

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