

# Organizational Commitment and Organizational Citizenship Behaviour: A Study among Public Sector Employees

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## ABSTRACT

Organizational commitment reflects employees' dedication to their organization, while organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) entails voluntary actions beyond formal job duties. Strong commitment fosters positive work environments and encourages behaviors benefiting the organization, like assisting colleagues or suggesting improvements. Research has primarily explored the relationship between overall organizational commitment and OCB, often overlooking the distinct impacts of its various dimensions. Furthermore, limited attention has been given to how affective, continuance and normative commitment uniquely contribute to the different aspects of OCB among public sector employees. On top of that, this paper discusses extensive findings and the theoretical basis explaining the relationship between organizational commitment and OCB, which was limited in the literature. This study addresses these gaps by reviewing Social Exchange Theory (SET) to explain the effect of organizational commitment on OCB and thoroughly examine the relationship between these variables. The findings of this study have practical implications that can empower organizations to enhance employee engagement and performance. They reveal that continuance and normative commitments significantly influence OCB, suggesting that organizations can strengthen these commitments by providing clear career paths, recognizing employee contributions, and fostering a strong sense of organizational loyalty.

**Keywords:** Organizational citizenship behavior, organizational commitment, organizational development, Social Exchange Theory, higher education institution

## INTRODUCTION

In today's competitive world, organizations constantly seek innovative ways to maximize their personnel's efficiency and effort. Various organizational conditions, such as increased challenges and enthusiasm, necessitate the development of a new generation of employees. An organization's functioning depends on employees' willingness to engage with ethical and behavioral issues (Sani & Maharani, 2019). Human resources are a critical component of government and commercial organizations and are pivotal in achieving organizational goals. Therefore, leaders must prioritize expanding human resources to boost effectiveness, as an organization's success hinges on its employees' intelligence, integrity, and efficiency (Anwar & Abdullah, 2021). Organizational citizenship behavior (OCB), defined by Organ et al. (2005), encompasses fundamental behaviors demonstrated toward clients, supervisors, and coworkers. These behaviors include helping colleagues, taking on extra tasks, and speaking positively about the organization to outsiders. Research consistently shows that OCB enhances organizational effectiveness (Arsan et al., 2022; Wuisan et al., 2020). OCB characteristics include assisting colleagues, exceeding job requirements, being punctual, volunteering for tasks, maintaining a positive attitude, and portraying the organization positively. Effective

leadership entails creating a vision for the organization's future, ensuring members focus on this vision, and demonstrating commitment to the organization (Anwar & Abdullah, 2021).

Studies reveal a positive correlation between OCB and job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and overall organizational performance (Arsan et al., 2022; Wuisan et al., 2020). Other studies have stated that OCB reduced employee turnover, improved customer satisfaction, and increased financial performance (Chang et al., 2021; Marihot et al., 2023). Based on the previous studies, it can be concluded that OCB is a crucial aspect of organizational behavior with significant implications for effectiveness and success. Furthermore, limited studies from Malaysian scholars have been found in the literature on the contributions of affective commitment, continuance commitment, and normative commitment to OCB among employees in public higher education institutions. Understanding these distinctions is vital, as it may shed light on the underlying mechanisms that drive public sector employees to engage in discretionary behaviors. Despite a growing body of research demonstrating a positive relationship between organizational commitment and OCB, the exact mechanisms by which organizational commitment leads to greater engagement in citizenship behaviors remain unclear (Grego-Planer, 2019; Raza et al., 2019). This study aims to bridge these gaps by comprehensively examining the effects of organizational commitment on OCB among public higher education employees. By exploring the relationship between different dimensions of commitment and OCB, this research seeks to provide valuable insights for scholars and practitioners.

### Research Objectives

1. To determine the Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB) level among Malaysian public sector employees;
2. To determine the level of organizational commitment in terms of affective commitment, continuance, and normative commitment among Malaysian public sector employees;
3. To determine the relationship between organizational commitment (affective commitment, continuance, and normative commitment) and OCB among Malaysian public sector employees;
4. To determine which organizational commitment dimensions contribute most to OCB.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Conceptualizing of Organizational Commitment

Employees display organizational commitment as a personal trait, demonstrating their dedication to their work, sense of responsibility, and loyalty to the company (Al-Jabari et al., 2019). Developing a positive employee attitude requires a strong commitment from the company. Moreover, maintaining this positive attitude requires even stronger dedication to optimize the company's functions once established. According to Al-Jabari and Ghazzawi (2019), organizational commitment reflects an individual's self-motivation to contribute to the organization's success and prioritize its interests. It signifies how an employee aligns with the organization's goals and intends to remain a part of them (Telaumbanua et al., 2019). Essentially, it is an attitude that demonstrates an employee's loyalty to the organization and an ongoing process through which employees express their dedication to the organization's continual success and advancement. Affective, normative, and continuation commitment are the three dimensions of organizational commitment that Allen and Meyer (1990) introduced. Affective commitment is an employee's emotional connection, sense of belonging, and active engagement towards the organization. Employees with high affective commitment remain with the organization due to their intrinsic desire to do so (Widodo & Gustari, 2021). In other words, it reflects an emotional connection to the organization. Meanwhile, continuance commitment refers to recognizing the expenses of terminating one's affiliation with the organization. Employees with high continuance commitment remain in their jobs due to a sense of necessity (Allen & Meyer, 1990). The perception of significant costs, including economic, social, and professional consequences, associated with

leaving the organization (Arsan et al., 2022). The last dimension of organizational commitment, normative commitment, is the sense of duty or obligation to remain employed. Employees with normative solid commitment believe it is their moral obligation to remain loyal to the organization (Obedgiu et al., 2017).

The model developed by Meyer and Allen is noteworthy due to its ability to offer a detailed comprehension of the factors that influence employee retention within organizations. The model enables organizations to customize their strategies to enhance each type of commitment by differentiating between affective, continuance, and normative commitment. The three-component model of organizational commitment developed by Meyer and Allen continues to be a crucial framework for comprehending and overseeing employee commitment (Arsan et al., 2022). For this study, organizational commitment is seen as an antecedent of OCB. Leaders can enhance their ability to cultivate a dedicated and enthusiastic workforce by identifying the factors contributing to OCB and using this knowledge to create more focused and impactful strategies.

### **Conceptualizing of Organizational Citizenship Behaviour (OCB)**

Organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) refers to the actions performed by individuals within an organization that go beyond their formal job duties (Ismail et al., 2021b). These behaviors, referred to as extra-role behaviors, are highly regarded due to their contribution to the overall effectiveness and success of the organization. (Obedgiu et al., 2017; Sylviana et al., 2020). The company highly regards employees who demonstrate OCB as valuable assets. These behaviors encompass assisting colleagues with tasks not explicitly specified in their job descriptions, following workplace regulations and protocols, and willingly taking on extra responsibilities (Sylviana et al., 2020; Ismail et al., 2021b). OCB entails employees providing additional support to their coworkers and the organization, surpassing expectations. What distinguishes OCB is that these actions are voluntary and not contingent upon any specific rewards or incentives. Instead, employees participate in OCB driven by an authentic inclination to support their colleagues and contribute to the organization's overall success (Grego-Planer, 2019). Researchers worldwide are continuing to explore OCB as a means to enhance organizational effectiveness. These behaviors include assisting new colleagues, supporting coworkers with heavy workloads, working extra hours, taking on additional tasks, accepting temporary inconveniences without complaint, advocating for the organization, and openly discussing critical organizational issues (Ismail et al., 2021a). Employee flexibility is crucial in today's fast-paced work environment, especially with the increasing performance of tasks within teams (Parry & Battista, 2019). OCB is crucial in enhancing organizations' long-term performance instead of prioritizing short-term gains.

### **The Theorizing of Organizational Citizenship Behaviour**

This study utilized Social Exchange Theory (SET) to explain the relationship between organizational commitment and OCB. According to SET, reciprocity, or the exchange of favors, governs individuals' relationships within their social environments, influencing individual behaviors, attitudes, and social interactions (Ahmad et al., 2023; Ismail et al., 2021a; Slattery et al., 2010). SET is foundational to several studies within organizational contexts, particularly those focusing on employee and employer relationships. Researchers like Moorman et al. (1993) have proposed models that use structural equation modeling to elucidate the relationships between job attitudes, organizational commitment, and OCB. Pierce and Maurer (2009) suggested that employees are more likely to engage in OCB when they perceive their social exchanges with the organization as fair or favorable. According to SET, employees strive for balance in their workplace interactions, seeking equity in their social exchanges (Adams, 1965). Past research has also suggested that organizational commitment is a proxy for an employee's social exchange relationship with their organization (Satardien et al., 2019; Xerri & Brunetto, 2013). This suggests that OCBs are more common among staff members dedicated to their company. Moreover, studies have indicated that organizational commitment positively influences employees' engagement in OCBs, and organizational

commitment is a positive moderator in the relationship between job satisfaction and OCB (Arsan et al., 2022). This shows that workers who are extremely happy and deeply committed to the company are more likely to exhibit OCB, which enhances productivity and effectiveness.

Figure 1 shows the conceptual framework of the study. The literature review outlined a research framework to explain the relationship between various dimensions of organizational commitment towards OCB. This framework is related to the Social Exchange Theory, which explains that the dimension of organizational commitment will impact human quality and well-being. This research framework conceptualizes and measures organizational commitment in various ways.

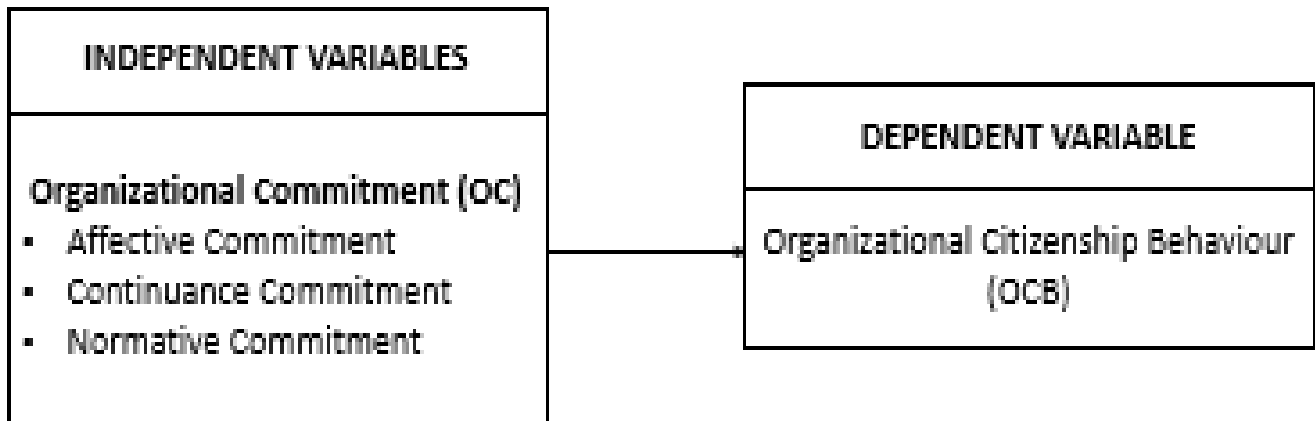


Figure 1. Research framework

## METHODOLOGY

This study employed a quantitative study using the survey method. A structured self-administered questionnaire is used to collect data. One hundred non-academic employees from a public higher education institution were involved as respondents. The questionnaire was adapted based on previous research and translated into bilingual English and Malay. The questionnaire consists of three sections (Sections A, B, and C) using the 5-point Likert scale, ranging from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree.” Section A is the socio-demographic respondents’ section, consisting of four items. Section B measures organizational commitment, which consists of 18 items adapted from Abdullah (2011), and Section C measures OCB, which consists of 24 items adapted from Podsakoff et al. (1990). Descriptive statistics are used in data analysis to describe the frequency and percentage of respondents’ demographic profiles and the level of organizational commitment and OCB among respondents. Correlation and multiple linear regression were employed to examine the relationship between organizational commitment (affective commitment, continuance, and normative commitment) and OCB and determine which dimensions of organizational commitment contribute most to OCB.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The age distribution revealed that the largest proportion fell within the 40–49 age range, followed by those over 50. Male and female respondents equally represented both genders. In terms of tenure, most participants had over 15 years of work experience, with significant numbers also reporting 1–5 years and 11–15 years of experience. Regarding marital status, most respondents were married, while a smaller percentage identified as single.

TABLE 1: DEMOGRAPHICS PROFILE of RESPONDENTS

Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Age		
Less than 30	22	22
30-39	27	27
40-49	41	41
50 and above	10	10
Gender		
Female	50	50
Male	50	50
Working Experience (years)		
1-5	22	22
6-10	16	16
11-15	22	22
More than 15 years	40	40
Marital Status		
Single	23	23
Married	77	77

Table 2 shows that the mean OCB score is 1.99, with a standard deviation = 0.835. The data indicates that 35% of respondents exhibit a low level of OCB, 34% display a high level, and 31% demonstrate a moderate level. The scores range from a minimum of 1 to a maximum of 3, showcasing variability in respondents' engagement levels. These findings suggest a mixed landscape of OCB among respondents.

TABLE 2: LEVEL OF ORGANIZATIONAL CITIZENSHIP BEHAVIOUR (OCB)

Level	f	%	Mean	SD
Low OCB	35	35		
Moderate OCB	31	31	1.99	0.835
High OCB	34	34		

The level of organizational commitment was measured by investigating three dimensions of organizational commitment: affective commitment, continuance commitment, and normative commitment. The affective commitment dimension was assessed using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree.” Table 3 presents an overview, with the mean affective commitment score at 1.86 and a standard deviation of 0.792. Most respondents (39%) reported low affective commitment, 36% indicated a moderate level, and 25% expressed high commitment. Continuance commitment, measured similarly, yielded a mean score of 1.98 and a standard deviation of 0.816. Most respondents (34% each) reported low and moderate continuance commitment, while 32% reported high commitment. Normative commitment, also assessed on a 5-point Likert scale, had a mean score of 1.84 and a standard deviation of 0.849. The majority (45%) reported low normative commitment, 29% reported high commitment, and 26% reported a moderate level. These findings highlight varying levels of commitment among respondents by the dimensions of organizational commitment.

TABLE 3: LEVEL OF ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT BY DIMENSION

Level	<i>f</i>	%	Mean	SD
Affective Commitment				
Low	39	39	1.86	0.792
Moderate	36	36		
High	25	25		
Continuance Commitment				
Low	34	34	1.98	0.816
Moderate	34	34		
High	32	32		
Normative Commitment				
Low	45	45	1.84	0.849
Moderate	26	26		
High	29	29		

### The Relationship between Organizational Commitment and OCB

A Pearson correlation analysis examined the relationship between affective commitment, continuance commitment, normative commitment, and OCB. Preliminary analyses ensured adherence to the assumptions. Results indicate a significant positive relationship ( $r = .453, p < .05$ ) between organizational commitment and OCB. This suggests that, generally, organizational commitment influences OCB. Further investigation explored the correlation between OCB and organizational commitment dimensions. The correlation analysis revealed that there is no significant relationship between affective commitment and OCB ( $r = 0.146, p > .05$ ). Conversely, a significant, moderately positive relationship was found between continuance commitment and OCB ( $r = 0.429, p < .05$ ). This indicates that continuance commitment

influences OCB. Similarly, a significant moderately positive relationship was observed between normative commitment and OCB ( $r = 0.372, p < .05$ ), which showed that normative commitment also influences OCB.

TABLE 4: THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT AND OCB

Variables	OCB	AC	CC	NC
Organizational Commitment (OC)	.453**			
Affective Commitment (AC)	.146	.663		
Continuance Commitment (CC)	.429**	.744**	.272**	
Normative Commitment (NC)	.372**	.741**	.249*	.294**

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

\*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

### Organizational Explaining Organizational Citizenship Behaviour

This section summarises the results of the multiple linear regression between the dimensions of organizational commitment. The variables involved were continuance commitment and normative commitment. This analysis excluded the affective commitment dimension, as the finding revealed no significant relationship between affective commitment and OCB. Table 5 highlights the application of multiple linear regression analysis using the “enter” method to evaluate the ability of two variables: continuance commitment and normative commitment. According to the results, all the predictor variables entered in the regression model explained about 23.8% of the variance in OCB. A significant regression was found between continuance commitment ( $\beta = 0.401, p < 0.001$ ) and OCB among respondents. However, there is no significant difference between normative commitment ( $\beta = 0.175, p > 0.05$ ) and OCB among participants.

TABLE 5: MULTIPLE LINEAR REGRESSION ANALYSIS

Dimension	Beta (Unstandardized Coefficients)	Std. Error	Beta (Standardized Coefficients)	t-value	p-value
Continuance Commitment	.401	.098	.392	4.107	<.001
Normative Commitment	.175	.094	.179	1.868	.065

Notes:  $R = .488, R^2 = .238, \text{Adj. } R^2 = .223, F = 15.175, p = 0.05$

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The study’s findings revealed that the positive relationship between organizational commitment and OCB aligns with previous research by Gregor-Planer (2019), who noted that individuals with strong organizational commitment tend to exhibit enhanced OCB. The study proposed that strengthening organizational commitment can serve as a strategic method for promoting OCB, which, in turn, can result in enhanced organizational performance and a more favorable workplace atmosphere. Similarly, Hasani et al. (2013) discovered that organizational commitment raises the conduct of OCB. In other words, organizational commitment is crucial in fostering OCB. Hence, organizations can gain advantages by

creating policies and practices that improve commitment, thus promoting behaviors that contribute to overall success.

Surprisingly, the finding of this study indicates no significant relationship between affective commitment and OCB. Previous research has suggested a significant positive relationship between these variables, with employees demonstrating higher affective commitment also exhibiting greater OCB, leading to improved organizational effectiveness (Hasani et al., 2013). However, this study did not find such a relationship, probably due to respondents' low level of affective commitment. As a result, this study provides new findings in the literature since the previous studies showed a significant relationship between organizational commitment and OCB (Obedgiu et al., 2017; Widodo & Gustari, 2021). As affective commitment is related to the sense of belonging and active engagement towards the organization, fostering a positive organizational culture is crucial. Therefore, organizations can help employees delegate meaningful responsibilities and ensure that employees feel appreciated and recognized, strengthening affective commitment.

In addition, this study revealed that the dimension of continuance commitment is found to have a significant relationship with OCB. This finding aligns with previous research highlighting the positive relationship between continuance commitment and OCB (Hidayat, 2020; Obedgiu et al., 2017; Ristinah, 2023), the willingness to stay in the organization due to the costs of leaving or the rewards of staying. Furthermore, this study revealed that the level of continuance commitment among the respondents is moderate and low. Therefore, it is suggested that organizations offer employees competitive remuneration, appealing perks, and abundant career advancement opportunities to handle continuance commitment effectively. This will ensure that staying with the organization is advantageous for them. The findings of this study provide valuable insights into the relationship between OCB and continuance commitment, offering practical implications for organizational management and human resource practices.

The last dimension of organizational commitment is normative commitment, which was found to have a significant relationship with OCB. The finding of this study was in line with the previous studies that showed a positive relationship between normative commitment and OCB (Grego-Planer, 2019). In other words, employees with high normative commitment feel they ought to remain with the organization and are more likely to exhibit OCB. Normative commitment is characterized by an obligation to continue employment with the organization. Therefore, organizations can increase normative commitment among employees by emphasizing the importance of loyalty to the organization and creating a culture of shared values and goals. By fostering a sense of obligation and loyalty among employees, organizations can create a positive work environment that promotes OCB and contributes to the organization's overall success. Additionally, organizations can provide opportunities for employees to engage in activities that benefit the organization and the community, which can further enhance normative commitment and OCBs. By fostering a sense of obligation and loyalty among employees, organizations can create a positive work environment that promotes OCB and contributes to the organization's overall success.

Furthermore, multiple regression analysis showed that continuance commitment has the most significant impact on OCB. This study revealed that employees with low levels of continuance commitment also exhibit low levels of OCB. On top of that, Grego-Planer (2019) stated that employees who experience a sense of obligation to stay with the organization are more inclined to perform OCB, which can benefit the organization's performance. This study revealed that both continuance and normative commitment significantly predict OCB, but continuance commitment exerts the most decisive influence. Identifying the primary form of commitment exhibited by employees, whether it is affective, continuance, or normative commitment, can aid in developing more efficacious retention strategies.

This study emphasizes the impact of employees' commitment on OCB, suggesting the need for organizations to cultivate a commitment to enhancing workplace behaviors and performance. This



underscores the intricate relationship between organizational commitment dimensions and employee behavior, highlighting the necessity for comprehensive organizational management strategies. Different strategies can be planned based on the type of commitment that needs strengthening. Increasing job satisfaction can result in a stronger emotional connection to the job and organization while reducing the perceived drawbacks of leaving, which may create a feeling of obligation to remain. Meyer and Allen's three-component model of organizational commitment remains a fundamental framework for understanding and managing employee commitment. Leaders can improve their capacity to foster a committed and passionate workforce by identifying the factors contributing to employee retention and utilizing this understanding to develop more targeted and effective strategies for enhancing OCB.

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