

# Investigating the Correlates and Predictors of Affective and Continuance Organizational Commitment: A Cross-sectional Survey of Malaysian Academic Librarians

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## Abstract

*This study attempts to identify the correlates and predictors of affective and continuance organizational commitment. Meyer & Allen's (1997) conceptualization and operationalization of organizational commitment has been adopted for this study. This study was carried out to determine whether work related variables such as job satisfaction, job involvement, job autonomy, job performance feedback, role conflict and role clarity would have a predictive relationship with affective as well as continuance organizational commitment. Additionally, the study also investigated whether worker related variables such as employee's age, job tenure and employment tenure would also account for the variance in both affective as well as continuance organizational commitment. It employs a cross-sectional survey design in which 279 academic librarians from all the eight universities were randomly selected to participate in the study. The survey resulted in a 63 percent response rate in which 139 of the questionnaires returned were usable. The results of running Pearson Product Moment Correlation analyses showed that worker related variables such age, job tenure and organizational tenure to be significantly but negatively correlated with continuance organizational commitment but not significantly correlated with affective continuance commitment. Similarly, the results of running Pearson Product Moment Correlations showed that work related variables such as job satisfaction, job autonomy, job involvement, job feedback, role conflict and role clarity to be significantly and positively correlated with affective organizational commitment but not with continuance organizational commitment. The study provides an empirical glimpse of the organizational commitment phenomenon in a Malaysian academic library setting. The findings provide encouraging empirical illumination that most Western based organizational commitment theories have important application for academic librarians in Malaysia*

**Keywords:** Allen and Meyer's Organizational Commitment Scale; Academic libraries; Organizational commitment; Affective commitment; Continuance commitment

## 1. Introduction

The topic of organizational commitment has received considerable theoretical and empirical attention among scholars and researchers in the field of human resource management, organizational psychology and organizational behavior (Mowday, Porter and Steers, 1982; Mathieu and Zajac, 1990; Meyer and Allen, 1997). Hundreds of studies have been reported in the empirical literature in the field of human resource management, organizational behaviour and organizational psychology. However, there is a dearth of studies on organizational commitment among librarians and even lesser among academic librarians in Malaysia (Rubin and Buttlar, 1992; Hovekamp, 1994; Noor and Noor, 2006). This study represents an attempt to fill in the empirical gap in the library and information science management literature. The authors of this study build upon their previous study that evaluated the psychometric properties of Allen and Meyer's (1990) multi-dimensional organizational commitment scale (Noor and Noor, 2006)

## 2. Research Objectives

Much has been reported in the empirical literature on the correlates and predictors of organizational commitment (Mathieu and Zajac, 1990; Meyer and Allen, 1997). A review of the empirical literature has brought to light a number of significant correlates and predictors. This study was carried out to find out whether the correlates and predictors of organizational commitment in non-library organizational setting particularly those identified in the West and other cultural settings (Japan and Korea) would also hold true among academic librarians in Malaysia. Specifically, this study was carried out to determine whether *work related* variables such as job satisfaction, job involvement, job autonomy, job performance feedback, role conflict and role clarity would have a predictive relationship with affective as well as continuance organizational commitment. Additionally, the study also investigated whether *worker related* variables such as employee's age, job tenure and employment tenure would also account for the variance in both affective as well as continuance organizational commitment.

## 3. Literature Review

In the light of the above research objectives, we review the theoretical and empirical literature on the correlates and predictors of organizational commitment. We divide the review into three sections: theoretical review on organizational commitment, empirical review on work related correlates and predictors of organizational commitment and empirical review on worker related correlates and predictors of organizational commitment.

### (a) Organizational Commitment

Organizational commitment has been theoretically defined in various ways by various researchers and scholars in different fields. The two most well known theoretical definitions are by Mowday, Steers and Porter (1979) and by Meyer and Allen (1997). Mowday, Steers and Porter (1979) have conceptually defined organizational commitment as a unidimensional construct. According to them, organizational commitment can be categorized by at least three factors: (i) a strong belief in and acceptance of the organization's goals and values; (ii) a willingness to exert a considerable effort on behalf of the organization; (iii) a strong desire to remain in the organization. This unidimensional conceptualization of the organizational commitment construct has resulted in a 15-item measure called the "Organizational Commitment Questionnaire" (Mowday, Steers and Porter, 1979).

A more recent conceptual definition is by Meyer and Allen (1997) who have given a multidimensional definition of the organizational commitment construct. Organizational commitment according to Meyer and Allen (1997) has three components or dimensions: affective, continuance and normative. Affective commitment has been defined as the employees' emotional attachment to, identification with and involvement in the organization. Employees with strong affective commitment will remain in the organization because they *want to* (Meyer and Allen, 1997). Continuance commitment on the other hand has to do with employees' awareness of the costs associated with leaving the organization (Meyer and Allen, 1997). Employees whose primary link with the organization is based on continuance commitment remain in the organization because they have to or need to. Normative commitment has to do with feelings of obligations to the present organization based on employees' own personal norms and values. Employees whose primary link with the organization is based on normative commitment remain in the organization because *they feel they ought to* (Meyer and Allen, 1997). This multi-dimensional definition of the

organizational commitment construct has resulted in a 24-item scale of affective (8 items), continuance (8 items) and normative (8 items) organizational commitment.

Meyer and Allen's multidimensional scale of organizational commitment has been used in numerous studies in the West as well as in other cultural settings in the East (Meyer and Allen, 1997; Jong, Price and Mueller, 1997) However very few studies on organizational commitment among Malaysian employees have employed Meyer and Allen's multidimensional scale (Ali and Gill, 1999; Kim, 2001; Nik and Mohd, 2002; Nik, Nordin and Abdullah, 2006; Noor and Noor, 2006). However, none of these studies have explored the relationship between Meyer and Allen's affective and continuance scale with *work as well as worker* related variables among Malaysian employees let alone among Malaysian academic librarians. In the light of these findings, we hypothesize that relationships would exist between *work and worker related* variables with affective as well as continuance organizational commitment.

### **(b) Work Related Correlates and Predictors of Organizational Commitment**

Six work related variables have been identified in the empirical literature to have statistically significant effect on the variation of organizational commitment among employees. The six variables are job satisfaction, job involvement, job autonomy, job performance feedback, role conflict, and role clarity. We will examine the empirical literature on each and every one of these six work related variables.

Job satisfaction has been conceptually defined as the extent to which employees like (satisfaction) or dislike (dissatisfaction) their jobs (Spector, 1997). The empirical literature on job satisfaction has revealed two types of measures for job satisfaction: a global and a faceted measure. For this study, we have defined job satisfaction as a constellation of a person's attitude towards or about a job as a whole rather than examining its separate facets (Cammann, Fichman, Jenkins and Klesh, 1979). Job satisfaction is perhaps the most frequently cited correlate and predictor of organizational commitment (Spector, 1997).

Bateman and Strasser (as cited in Harrison and Hubbard, 1998) however have argued that job satisfaction is a consequence or effect of organizational commitment rather than the cause of it. The preponderance of empirical evidence in a meta-analytic review conducted by Mathieu and Zajac (1990) however supported the notion that job satisfaction has an antecedent influence on organizational commitment rather than the reverse. Bluedova (as cited in Razali, 1996) found job satisfaction to have an antecedent influence on organizational commitment among insurance employees. Ferris and Aranya (as cited in Razali, 1996) also found job satisfaction to be a correlate of organizational commitment among accountants. Naumann (1993) found a modest correlation between job satisfaction and organizational commitment,  $r = 0.61$ ,  $p < .05$ . Harrison and Hubbard (1998) also found a modest correlation between job satisfaction and organizational commitment,  $r = 0.52$ ,  $p < .001$ . In a Malaysian study conducted recently, Kamarul, Sharifah, Zetty, Suzana and Siti (2003), however found a weak correlation between job satisfaction and organizational commitment,  $r = 0.23$ ,  $p < .001$ . In the light of these findings we anticipated a relationship to exist between job satisfaction and affective and continuance organizational commitment.

Job involvement is another work related variable which has been seen to have a significant effect on employees' organizational commitment. Lodahl and Kejner (as cited in Cook, Hepworth, Wall and Warr, 1981) have conceptually defined job involvement in terms of the extent to which employees personally identify with their work. Mathieu and Zajac (1990) in a meta-analytic review of the antecedents and correlates of organizational commitment found

job involvement to be significantly correlated with organizational commitment. Buchko, Weinzimmer and Sergeyev (1998) in their study on organizational commitment among Russian employees found a strong correlation between job involvement and organizational commitment,  $r = 0.75$ ,  $p < .001$ . In a study on organizational commitment among employees' in six organizations in Kota Kinabalu, Chong (2006) found job involvement to have an effect on employees' organizational commitment. In the light of the above findings, we anticipated job involvement to have an effect on Malaysian academic librarians affective as well as continuance organizational commitment

The third work related variable that has been identified to have an influence on organizational commitment is job autonomy. Job autonomy has been conceptually defined as the degree to which employees' are allowed freedom, independence and discretionary powers when performing their job tasks and responsibilities (Sims, Szilagy and McKemey, 1976). The more autonomy an employee has about what, when and how to do work, the greater he or she would be feel a sense of responsibility for the job related activities. Naumann (1993) in a study on the antecedents and consequences of organizational commitment among expatriate managers found a statistically significant moderate relationship between job autonomy and organizational commitment,  $r = 0.30$ ,  $p < .05$ . Gregersen and Black (1996) in a study on multiple commitments upon repatriation found a significant relationship between job autonomy and organizational commitment,  $r = 0.30$ ,  $p < .001$ . However, a weak correlation between job autonomy and organizational was found by Jong, Price and Mueller (1996),  $r = 0.19$ ,  $p < .01$ . In the light of these findings, we anticipated job autonomy to be correlated with affective as well as continuance organizational commitment.

Another work related variable that has been found to be a significant correlate and predictor of organizational commitment is job performance feedback. Sims, Szilagy and McKemey (1976) have conceptually defined job performance feedback as the extent to which employees receive information that reveals how well they are performing on the job. Job performance feedback is conceptualized in two ways: feedback from the job itself and feedback from agents (Hackman and Oldham, 1975). Feedback from the job itself is the degree to which performing the job tasks and responsibilities required by the job results in employees obtaining information about his or her performance. Feedback from agents is the degree to which employees receive direct and clear information about his or her performance from supervisors and co-workers. Naumann (1993) in his study on organizational commitment among expatriate managers found a small correlation between job performance feedback and organizational commitment,  $r = 0.29$ ,  $p < .05$ . In a study on organizational commitment among nursing employees in Malaysia, Pearson and Chong (1997) found a weak correlation between job performance feedback and organizational commitment,  $r = 0.13$ ,  $p < .05$ . In the light of these findings, we anticipated a relationship to exist between job performance feedback and affective as well as continuance organizational commitment.

Role conflict has consistently been found to be a significant correlate and predictor of organizational commitment in a number of studies. Role conflict has been conceptually defined in terms of the degree to which demands are made on the employees in the workplace (Rizzo, House and Lirtzman, 1970). There could for instance be a conflict between organizational demands and employees own values, conflict between numerous or difficult tasks and conflict between obligations to several individuals. In view of conflicting demands that are made on employees, role conflict has been seen to have a statistically significant negative effect on organizational commitment. Higher incidents of role conflict have been found to negatively affect organizational commitment (Mathieu and Zajac, 1990). Jong, Price and Mueller (1997) found a statistically significant negative but weak relationship between

role conflict and affective organizational commitment,  $r = -0.21$ ,  $p < .01$ . Naumann (1993) in his study on organizational commitment among expatriate managers found a moderate but statistically negative relationship between role conflict and organizational commitment,  $r = -0.40$ ,  $p < .05$ . Gregersen and Black (as cited in Gregersen and Black, 1996) however did not find a statistically significant relationship between role conflict and organizational commitment. However, in a later study, they found a small but statistically significant negative correlation between role conflict and organizational commitment.  $r = 0.30$ ,  $p < .001$ . In the light of these findings, we anticipated a statistically significant relationship would exist between role conflict and affective as well as continuance organizational commitment.

Role clarity has been conceptually defined by Rizzo, House and Lirtzman (1970) as the extent to which an employee knows what is expected of him or her for adequate performance of his job tasks and responsibilities. Gregersen and Black (as cited in Gregersen and Black, 1996) posited that role clarity would enhance a sense of felt responsibility and as such would bring about an increase in organizational commitment among employees. Mathieu and Zajac (1990) in their meta-analytic review of the antecedents and correlates of organizational commitment found role clarity to be a consistent predictor of organizational commitment. Gregersen and Black (1996) in their study on multiple commitments upon repatriation among Japanese expatriates, found a statistically significant but moderate correlation between role clarity and organizational commitment,  $r = 0.41$ ,  $p < .001$ . Palich, Hom and Griffeth (1995) in their study on organizational commitment among foreign employees of an American multinational company found a statistically significant but strong correlation between role clarity and organizational commitment.  $r = 0.64$ ,  $p < .05$ . In the light of these findings, we anticipated role clarity would have a statistically significant effect on affective as well as continuance organizational commitment

### **(c) Worker Related Correlates and Predictors of Organizational Commitment**

Three categories of worker related correlates and predictors of organizational commitment have been identified in the empirical literature: age, job tenure and organizational tenure. The authors of this study have conceptually defined age as the employees' biological age. As individuals get older and stay longer in the organization, alternate employment opportunities tend to diminish while personal investments in the organization tend to increase. Such a situation, will therefore enhance commitment levels towards the organization they are currently employed. Azzat and Barcelona (1997) found age to be moderately correlated with organizational commitment,  $r = 0.50$ ,  $p < .05$ . Harrison and Hubbard (1998) also found a moderate correlation between age and organizational commitment,  $r = 0.51$ ,  $p < .001$ . In another study on the antecedents of organizational commitment among Korean employees, Sommer, Seung-Hyun and Luthans (1996) found a small correlation between age and organizational commitment,  $r = 0.23$ ,  $p < .01$ . Luthans, McCaul and Dodd (1985) in a study on organizational commitment among Japanese, Koreans and American employees found a weak correlation between age and organizational commitment,  $r = 0.13$ ,  $p < .001$ . Finally, Buchko, Weinzimmer and Sergeev (1998) in their study on organizational commitment among Russian employees also found a weak correlation between age and organizational commitment,  $r = 0.21$ ,  $p < .05$ . In the light of these findings, we anticipated that age would have an effect on affective as well as continuance organizational commitment.

Organizational tenure is another worker related variable that has been found to be significantly correlated to organizational commitment. We have conceptually defined organizational tenure as the number of years an employee has been working in the present organization. Sommer, Seung-Hyun and Luthans (1996) found a statistically significant but weak relationship between organizational tenure and organizational commitment,  $r = 0.27$ ,  $p$

< .001. Buchko, Weinzimmer and Sergeev (1998) also found a statistically significant but small correlation between organizational tenure and organizational commitment,  $r = 0.29$ ,  $p < .001$ . Finally, Nauman (1993) in his study on organizational commitment among expatriate managers also found a weak correlation between organizational tenure and organizational commitment,  $r = 0.21$ ,  $p < .05$ . In the light of these findings we anticipated that organizational tenure would have an effect on affective as well as continuance organizational commitment

The last category of work related variable that has been identified to have an influence on organizational commitment is job tenure. Chong (2006) has conceptually defined job tenure as the number of years since taking up the first job position. Sommer, Seung-Hyun and Luthans (1996) found no statistically significant relationship between job tenure and organizational commitment,  $r = -0.09$ ,  $p > .05$ . Nauman (1993), however found a very weak relationship between job tenure and organizational commitment. In the light of these conflicting findings, we anticipated to find a statistically significant relationship between job tenure and affective as well as continuance organizational commitment.

#### 4. Hypotheses

On the basis of the review of previous related literature, we formulated the following non-directional hypotheses:

- (a) There is a statistically significant positive relationship between job satisfaction and affective as well as continuance organizational commitment
- (b) There is statistically significant positive relationship between job involvement and affective and as well as continuance organizational commitment
- (c) There is a statistically significant positive relationship between job autonomy and affective as well as continuance organizational commitment
- (d) There is a statistically significant positive relationship between job performance feedback and affective as well as continuance organizational commitment
- (e) There is a statistically significant negative relationship between role conflict and affective as well as continuance organizational commitment
- (f) There is a statistically significant positive relationship between role clarity and affective as well as continuance organizational commitment
- (g) There is a statistically significant positive relationship between employees' age and affective as well as continuance organizational commitment
- (h) There is a statistically significant positive relationship between organizational tenure and affective as well as continuance organizational commitment
- (i) There is a statistically significant positive relationship between job tenure and affective as well as continuance organizational commitment

## 5. Method

### (a) Population and Sample

The target population for this study was academic librarians (professionally trained library employees) in all the nine university libraries in West Malaysia. Out of the nine universities who were invited to participate in this study, only one university library refused to participate as they had other administrative obligations to fulfill at the time the study was being conducted. The remaining eight university libraries gave their consent by providing the researchers with a list of the names of their professionally trained library employees. This information enabled the researchers to construct a sampling frame for each of the eight university libraries. All in all there were two hundred and seventy nine (279) academic librarians for all the eight university libraries.

Allowing for a plus and minus 5% error rate a sample size of two hundred and twenty-two was derived. Using the Statistical Product Services and Solutions software, the authors randomly selected the participants from each of the university library. A response rate of 63% was achieved resulting in one hundred and thirty nine (139) usable questionnaires. The findings for this study were based on the analyses of the responses from the 139 usable questionnaires that were returned.

## 6. Measures

### (a) Affective Organizational Commitment

Eight items from Meyer and Allen's (1997) affective commitment scale were employed to measure affective organizational commitment (see Appendix 1). These items have been adapted to suit the library setting. The word organization has been replaced by the word library.

### (b) Continuance Organizational Commitment

Nine items from Meyer and Allen's (1997) continuance organizational commitment scale were employed to measure continuance commitment (see Appendix 1). These items have been adapted to suit the library setting. The word organization has been replaced by the word library.

### (c) Job Satisfaction

A 3-item scale from the Michigan Organizational Assessment Questionnaire was employed to measure overall or global job satisfaction (Cammann, Fichman, Jenkins and Klesh, 1979; Spector, 1997) (see Appendix 1)

### (d) Job Involvement

A 3-item scale derived from Lodhal and Kejner's (as cited in Cook, Hepworth, Wall and Warr, 1981) measure of job involvement was employed for this study (see Appendix 1)

### (e) Job Autonomy

A 4-item scale adapted from Hackman and Oldham (1975) Job Diagnostic Survey was used to measure job autonomy (see Appendix 1)

### (f) Job Performance Feedback

Four survey items derived from Hackman and Oldham (1975) Job Diagnostic Survey were employed to measure job performance feedback (see Appendix 1)

**(g) Role Conflict**

A 5-item scale from Rizzo, House and Lirtzman (1970) was employed to measure role conflict (see Appendix 1)

**(h) Role Clarity**

A 5-item scale from Rizzo, House and Lirtzman (1970) was employed to measure role clarity (see Appendix 1)

**7. Results**

**(a) Construct Validity and Internal Reliability Assessments**

Exploratory factor analyses using Maximum Likelihood analyses and internal reliability assessments using Cronbach's alpha were employed to demonstrate construct validity and internal reliability assessments for all the eight scales employed in this study. The results of running exploratory factor analyses for demonstrating convergent as well as divergent validity for affective and continuance organizational commitment were reported in an earlier paper by the authors (Noor and Noor, 2006). This paper will report the results of demonstrating construct validity and internal reliability assessment for the remaining scales: job satisfaction, job involvement, job autonomy, job performance feedback, role conflict and role clarity.

**(b) Job Satisfaction Scale**

A visual inspection of Table 1 shows that all the three (3) items that were employed to measure job satisfaction are loaded onto a single discrete factor. The three (3) items explain 50.4% of the variance in the scale. The results of assessing the internal reliability of the scale using Cronbach's alpha yields a value of 0.50 which is below the 0.70 value as recommended by Nunnally (1978).

Table 1: Validity and Reliability for Job Satisfaction

Scale Item	Factor Loadings	Cronbach's alpha
Jobsat 1	0.72	0.50
Jobsat 2	0.81	
Jobsat 3	0.86	

Notes

Percent of Variance Explained (50.4%).

Item Descriptions are found in Appendix 1

**(c) Job Involvement Scale**

A visual inspection of Table 2 shows that all the three (3) items that were employed to measure job involvement are loaded on a single discrete factor. The three (3) items explain 63.7% of the variance in the scale. The results of assessing the internal reliability of the scale using Cronbach's alpha yields a value of 0.70 which meets the value as recommended by Nunnally (1978).



Table 2: Validity and Reliability for Job Involvement Scale

Scale Item	Factor Loadings	Cronbach's alpha
Jis 1	0.72	0.70
Jis 2	0.81	
Jis 3	0.86	

Notes:

Percent of Variance Explained (63.7%)

Item Descriptions can be found in Appendix 1

#### (d) Job Autonomy Scale

A visual examination of Table 3 shows that all the four (4) items that were employed to measure job autonomy are loaded onto a single discrete factor. All the four (4) items explain about 68.5% of the variance in the scale. The results of assessing the internal reliability of the scale using Cronbach's alpha yields a value of 0.85 which is above the value recommended by Nunnally (1978).

Table 3: Validity and Reliability for Job Autonomy Scale

Scale Item	Factor Loading	Cronbach's alpha
Jobauton 1	0.72	0.85
Jobauton 2	0.85	
Jobauton 3	0.86	
Jobauton 4	0.87	

Notes:

Percent of variance Explained (68.5%)

Item Descriptions can be found in Appendix 1

#### (e) Job Performance Feedback

A visual inspection of Table 4 shows that all the four (4) items that were employed to measure job performance feedback are loaded onto a single discrete factor. The four items measuring job performance feedback explain about 52.9% of the variance in the scale. The results of assessing the internal reliability of the scale using Cronbach's alpha yields a value of 0.70 which meets the value recommended by Nunnally (1978).

Table 4: Validity and Reliability of Job Performance Feedback scale

Scale Item	Factor Loadings	Cronbach's alpha
Perfee1	0.60	0.70
Perfee2	0.75	
Perfee 3	0.75	
Perfee 4	0.80	

Notes:

Percent of Variance Explained (52.9%)

Item descriptions are found in Appendix 1

#### (f) Role Conflict Scale

A visual inspection of Table 5 shows that all the five (5) items that were employed to measure role conflict are loaded onto a single discrete factor. All the five (5) items explain about 57.4% of the variance ion the scale. The results of assessing the internal reliability of the scale

using Cronbach's alpha yields a value of 0.70 which meets the value recommended by Nunnally (1978).

Table 5: Validity and Reliability of Role Conflict Scale

Scale Items	Factor Loadings	Cronbach's alpha
rolcon1	0.80	0.70
rolcon2	0.43	
rolcon3	0.84	
rolcon4	0.78	
rolcon5	0.85	

Notes:

Percent of Variance Explained (57.4%)

Item Descriptions are found in Appendix 1

### (g) Role Clarity Scale

A visual inspection of Table 6 shows that all the five (5) items that were employed to measure role clarity are loaded on a single discrete factor. All these five (5) items explain about 66.3% of the variance in the scale. The results of assessing the internal reliability of the scale using Cronbach's alpha yields a value of 0.87 which is above the value recommended by Nunnally (1978)

Table 6: Validity and Reliability of the Role Clarity Scale

Scale Item	Factor Loadings	Cronbach's alpha
rolclari1	0.74	0.87
rolclari2	0.84	
rolclari3	0.80	
rolclari4	0.87	
rolclari5	0.82	

Notes:

Percent of Variance Explained (66.3%)

Item Descriptions can be found in Appendix 1

## 8. Testing of Hypotheses

We hypothesized that age, organizational tenure, job tenure, job satisfaction, job involvement, job autonomy, job performance feedback, role conflict and role clarity would be correlated with affective and continuance organizational commitment. We employed Pearson Product Moment Correlation analysis to test whether a statistically significant relationship would exist between each of the aforementioned variables with affective and continuance organizational commitment. Additionally, we also employed stepwise Multiple Linear Regression Analysis to examine whether the variables which have been identified as correlates are also predictors of affective and continuance organizational commitment

### (a) Correlation Analysis of Worker Related variables with Affective and Continuance Organizational Commitment

The results of running a Pearson Product Moment Correlation between age, organizational tenure, and job tenure with affective and continuance organizational commitment are presented in Table 7. A visual examination of Table 7 shows that neither age ( $r = 0.15$ ,  $p >$

.05), organizational tenure ( $r = 0.10$ ,  $p > .05$ ) nor job tenure ( $r = 0.05$ ,  $p > .05$ ) are significantly correlated with affective commitment. However, age ( $r = -0.23$ ,  $p < .01$ ), organizational tenure ( $r = -0.20$ ,  $p < .01$ ) and job tenure ( $r = -0.24$ ,  $p < .05$ ) are significantly correlated with continuance commitment.

Table 7: Correlations of Worker Related Variables with Affective and Continuance Organizational Commitment

Variable	Affective Commitment	Continuance Commitment
Age	0.15 n.s.	-0.23**
Organizational Tenure	0.10 n.s.	-0.20 *
Job Tenure	0.05 n.s.	-0.24**

\*\* Correlation is significant at  $p < .01$

\* Correlation is significant at  $p < .05$

n.s. not statistically significant

### (b) Correlation Analyses of Work related variables with Affective and Continuance Organizational Commitment

The results of running a Pearson Product Moment Correlation between job satisfaction, job involvement, job autonomy, job performance feedback, role conflict and role clarity with affective and continuance organizational commitment are presented in Table 8. A visual inspection of Table 8 shows that job satisfaction ( $r = 0.42$ ,  $p < .01$ ), job involvement ( $r = 0.31$ ,  $p < .01$ ), job autonomy ( $r = 0.40$ ,  $p < .01$ ), job performance feedback ( $r = 0.30$ ,  $p < .01$ ), role conflict ( $r = -0.20$ ,  $p < .05$ ), and role clarity ( $r = 0.46$ ,  $p < .01$ ) are significantly correlated with affective but not continuance organizational commitment.

Table 8: Correlations between Work Related Variables with Affective and Continuance Organizational Commitment

Variable	Affective Commitment	Continuance Commitment
Job satisfaction	0.42**	0.06 n.s.
Job Involvement	0.31**	0.04 n.s.
Job Autonomy	0.40**	0.04 n.s.
Job Performance Feedback	0.30**	0.08 n.s.
Role Conflict	-0.20*	0.05 n.s.
Role Clarity	0.46**	0.13 n.s.

\*\* Correlation is significant at  $p < .01$

\* Correlation is significant at  $p < .05$

n.s. not statistically significant

### (c) Stepwise Multiple Linear Regression Analysis on Affective Commitment

Regressing all the six correlates of work related variables on affective organizational commitment resulted in only four of the correlates to be also predictors of affective commitment. A visual examination of Table 9 shows that the following correlates are also predictors of affective commitment: job satisfaction (Beta = 0.27,  $p < .001$ ), role clarity (Beta

= 0.23,  $p < .05$ ), job autonomy (Beta = 0.21,  $p < .05$ ) and job involvement (Beta = 0.19,  $p < .05$ ). Collectively all the four predictors explain 36% of the variance in affective commitment (R Square = 0.36%).

Table 9: Stepwise Multiple Regression of Work related Variables on Affective Organizational Commitment

Variable	Beta	P Value
Job Satisfaction	0.27	.000
Role Clarity	0.23	.007
Job Autonomy	0.21	.010
Job Involvement	0.19	.010

R Square: 0.36

#### (d) Stepwise Multiple Regression Analysis on Continuance Organizational Commitment

Regressing the three (3) correlates of continuance organizational commitment revealed only one of the correlates to be also the predictor of continuance organizational commitment: job tenure (Beta = -0.25,  $p < .05$ ). This means that job tenure explains about 6% of the variance in continuance organizational commitment. The results are displayed in Table 10

Table 10: Stepwise Multiple Regression of Worker Related Variables on Continuance Commitment

Variable	Beta	R Square	P value
Job Tenure	-0.25	0.06	0.03

## 9. Discussion

There is a dearth of empirical literature on organizational commitment among academic librarians let alone among academic librarians in Malaysia. This study sought to identify the correlates and predictors of organizational commitment among academic librarians in Malaysia by employing a set of work and worker related variables that have been empirically demonstrated to be correlates and predictors of organizational commitment in studies done in the West. Six work related variables (job satisfaction, job involvement, job autonomy, job performance feedback, role conflict and role clarity) and three worker related variables (age, employment tenure and job tenure) have been employed to analyze how much of the variance in organizational commitment among academic librarians in Malaysia can collectively be explained all these nine variables. Instead of relying on a unidimensional conceptualization and operationalization of the organizational commitment construct as done in previous studies, this study has employed Allen and Meyer's (1991) multi-dimensional conceptualization and operationalization of the organizational commitment construct. Specifically the researchers were keen to determine whether the nine aforementioned variables would correlate significantly with and predict affective as well as continuance organizational commitment among academic librarians in Malaysia.

The results of running a Pearson Product Moment Correlation analysis between affective organizational commitment and all the six work related variables were consistent with the findings from previous studies on organizational commitment conducted in the West. Job satisfaction was found to be significantly and positively correlated with affective organizational commitment ( $r = 0.42, p < .01$ ). This finding is consistent with that of Nauman (1993), Harrison and Hubbard (1998) and Kamarul, Sharifah, Zetty, Suzana and Siti (2003). This finding is not unexpected as Mathieu and Zajac (1990) in their meta-analytic review of the antecedents of organizational commitment found job satisfaction to be consistently and significantly correlated to organizational commitment. Workers who are satisfied with their work are likely to be more affectively committed towards their organization. Academic librarians in Malaysia are no different from other professionals in the West. They would experience greater affective commitment if they are satisfied with their jobs. The relationship between job satisfaction and affective commitment however is a moderate one. Job satisfaction has been found to be not only a significant correlate but also a significant predictor of affective organizational commitment ( $\text{Beta} = 0.27, p < .01$ ). Hence, the more satisfied the academic librarians are with their jobs, the more affectively committed they will be towards their library.

Job involvement has also been found to be significantly correlated and predictive of affective organizational commitment ( $r = 0.31, p < .01$ ;  $\text{Beta} = 0.19, p < .05$ ). This finding supports that of previous studies by Buchko, Weinzimmer and Sergeev (1998). However the correlation coefficient for this study ( $r = 0.31$ ) is much smaller when compared to that of Buchko, Weinzimmer and Sergeev (1998) which was quite large: 0.75. Hence, the more involved academic librarians are with their jobs, the more affectively committed they will feel towards their library. One possible explanation for this small correlation coefficient among Malaysian academic librarians could be that they are not that involved with their jobs when compared to their Russian counterparts in a manufacturing plant.

Job autonomy has also been found to be significantly correlated and predictive of affective organizational commitment ( $r = 0.40, p < .01$ ;  $\text{Beta} = 0.21, p < .05$ ). This finding reinforces that of Nauman (1993), Gregersen and Black (1996) and Jong, Price and Mueller (1996). It appears that the more autonomy and discretionary powers academic librarians are endowed with, the more affectively committed they will feel towards their library.

Job performance feedback has been found to correlate significantly with affective organizational commitment ( $r = 0.30, p < .01$ ). However, it is not a predictor of affective organizational commitment. This finding supports that of Nauman (1993) and Pearson and Chong (1997). The correlation coefficient for this study is slightly larger than that of Nauman ( $r = 0.29, p < .05$ ) and of that Pearson and Chong ( $r = 0.13, p < .001$ ). Employees who receive continuous and regular feedback on their performance are likely to experience more affective commitment towards their organization. Academic librarians who receive feedback on their job performance will be more affectively committed towards their library.

Role conflict is another work related variable that has been found to correlate significantly but negatively with affective organizational commitment ( $r = -0.20, p < .05$ ). However, it is not a predictor of affective organizational commitment. This finding supports our hypothesis and is consistent with that of Nauman (1993), Gregersen and Black (1996) and Jong, Price and Mueller (1997). Employees who find themselves in conflicting job situations are likely to be less affectively committed to their organizations. Academic librarians are no different from other professionals. The more role conflict they experience, the less affectively committed they will be towards their library.

Role clarity is another work related variable that correlates significantly and positively with affective organizational commitment ( $r = 0.46, p < .01$ ). In addition, it also has a predictive relationship with affective organizational commitment ( $\text{Beta} = 0.23, p < .05$ ). This finding is consistent with that of Gregersen and Black (1995) and that of Palich, Hom and Griffeth (1995). The clearer their job tasks and responsibilities are, the more affectively committed academic librarians will be towards their library.

However, none of the six work related variables are significantly correlated with continuance organizational commitment. This is not surprising since employees whose commitment towards their organization is in the form of continuance commitment remain in the organization because they have to (Meyer and Allen, 1997). Hence, regardless of the variation in work related variables (job satisfaction, job involvement, job autonomy, job performance feedback, role clarity and role conflict) employees whose primary link to their organization is based on continuance commitment will remain in the organization because they have to no matter what happens. For these employees, remaining in the organization is a necessity because they have invested so much in it that leaving the organization is unthinkable. Additionally, they also remain in the organization because of lack of job alternatives elsewhere (Ali and Gill, 1999).

Surprisingly none of the three worker related variables were correlated with affective commitment: age ( $r = 0.15, p > .05$ ); organizational tenure ( $r = 0.10, p > .05$ ); job tenure ( $r = 0.05, p > .05$ ). However all the three worker related variables were significantly correlated with continuance organizational commitment but not in the direction that we posited. Age is significantly and negatively correlated but not predictive of continuance organizational commitment ( $r = -0.23, p < .01$ ). The finding on age is therefore equivocal since previous studies have shown age to correlate positively with organizational commitment (Azzat and Barcelona, 1997; Harrison and Hubbard, 1998; Sommer, Seunh-Hyun and Luthanas, 1996, Luthans, McCauland Dodd, 1985; Buchko, Weinzimmer and Sergeyeve, 1998). One explanation for this finding could be that in the aforementioned studies age was operationalized using a unidimensional measure such as the Organizational Commitment Questionnaire that was developed by Mowday, Steers and Porter (1979) whilst in this study organizational commitment was operationally dichotomized into affective and continuance commitment. Another possible explanation for this negative relationship between age and continuance commitment could be that continuance commitment is actually a mediating variable that mediates between age and turnover. Hence, the older the academic librarian is, the less committed they are towards their library and the less committed they are towards their library, the greater the degree of turnover among academic librarians. In Malaysia, the majority of librarians are women and women are inclined to opt for an early retirement. This would explain why the relationship between age and continuance to be negative instead of being positive as found in previous studies.

Organizational tenure is another worker related variable that is negatively correlated with but not predictive of continuance commitment, ( $r = -0.20, p < .05$ ). This finding is inconsistent with that of previous studies in which organizational tenure was found to correlate positively with organizational commitment (Nauman, 1993; Sommer, Seung-Hyun, and Luthans, 1996; Buchko, Weinzimmer and Sergeyeve, 1998). However, it partially supports our hypothesis since we were expecting organizational tenure to be positively correlated with continuance commitment; but surprisingly there was a negative relationship instead of a positive relationship. A possible explanation could be that academic librarians in Malaysia who have had a longer tenure tend to opt for early retirement as many of the academic librarians in

Malaysia are women. Hence, the longer their tenure in that library, the greater the likelihood of them quitting or retiring and this might explain their decreasing levels of continuance commitment towards their library. Such a behavior among Malaysian academic librarians could explain the negative relationship between organizational tenure and continuance organizational commitment.

Finally, job tenure correlates significantly and negatively and is also predictive of continuance organizational commitment ( $r = -0.24, p < .01$ ;  $\text{Beta} = -0.25, p < .05$ ). This finding however is consistent with a previous study that found a negative relationship between job tenure and organizational commitment (Sommer, Seung-Hyun, and Luthans, 1996). Nauman (1993), reported a positive relationship between job tenure and organizational commitment ( $r = 0.18, p < .05$ ). As such this finding is at best equivocal and conflicting. A possible explanation for this conflicting result could be the researchers' use of multi-dimensional measure of organizational commitment as compared to previous studies that employed a unidimensional measure of organizational commitment. Another possible explanation could be that job tenure is a mediating variable that mediates the relationship between age and continuance organizational commitment. As academic librarians become older, they tend to opt for early retirement (turnover) resulting in decreasing levels of continuance organizational commitment. This might explain why the relationship between job tenure and continuance commitment to be negative rather than positive within the Malaysian academic library environment.

## 10. Limitations

The findings from this study should be viewed cautiously due to several methodological limitations. As with all types of data collection technique, the self-reported or self-administered too has a number of limitations. One of the problems facing survey researchers is that of social desirability. Some respondents have a tendency to exaggerate or are given to impression management resulting in inflated and inaccurate scores for a particular variable.

Secondly, practically every variable in this study has multiple conceptualizations and operationalizations. The use of conceptual definitions and operational definitions other than the ones employed in this study could have yield somewhat different findings. This could result in changes in the direction of the relationship between variables as well as in the strengths of the relationship between them. In this study, organizational commitment was operationally dichotomized into affective and continuance commitment. The results show that the three worker related variables were negatively correlated with continuance organizational commitment but not significantly correlated with affective commitment. Previous studies which employed Mowday, Steers, and Porter (1979) unidimensional measure called Organizational Commitment Questionnaire found age, organizational tenure and job tenure to be positively correlated with organizational commitment.

Finally, the use of proportionate stratified random sampling can sometime result in over-representation of respondents in certain strata and this could affect the true estimation of the population. Hence, the issue of representativeness of the sample could be undermined resulting in bias during the data collection phase of the research process.

## 11. Conclusion

The findings from this study provided partial support for the hypotheses posited. Work related variables were found to correlate significantly with affective organizational commitment but not with continuance organizational commitment. However, only four of the work related variables were predictive of the variation in affective organizational commitment: job satisfaction, job involvement, job autonomy and role clarity. Collectively all these four work related variables explain 36% of the variance in affective organizational commitment. None of the six work related variables were correlated with continuance organizational commitment. An increase or decrease in each of the six work related variables would not affect the variation in continuance organizational commitment. More empirical work need to be expended in identifying the correlates and predictors of continuance organizational commitment.

Surprisingly age, organizational tenure and job tenure were not found to correlate significantly with affective commitment. Previous studies have shown all these three worker related variables to correlate positively with organizational commitment. More research needs to be carried out to find out whether statistically significant relationships would exist between age, organizational tenure, job tenure and affective commitment. The three worker related variables however correlate significantly but negatively with continuance organizational commitment. This is inconsistent with that of previous studies where age, organizational tenure and job tenure were found to correlate positively with organizational commitment. Hence, more research needs to be carried out to find out whether this finding is consistent across occupational groups.

Although this study did not examine all of the possible variables that were identified in previous studies to be correlates and predictors of organizational commitment, it nevertheless provides an empirical glimpse of the organizational commitment phenomenon in a Malaysian academic library setting. The findings provide encouraging empirical illumination that most Western based organizational commitment theories have important application for academic librarians in Malaysia.

For a broader understanding of the organizational commitment phenomenon among Malaysian academic librarians, additional research is warranted. Future studies in the form of longitudinal design may provide greater empirical glimpse into both the correlates and predictors of organizational commitment among academic librarians in Malaysia.

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## Appendix 1: Full Item Description for Measures Used

### Affective Continuance Commitment

1. I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career in this library
2. I enjoy discussing my library with people outside it
3. I really feel as if this library's problems are my own
4. I think I could easily become as attached to another library as I am to this one(R)
5. I do not feel like a member of the family at this library (R)
6. I do not feel "emotionally attached" to this library (R)
7. This library has a great deal of personal meaning for me
8. I do not feel a strong sense of belonging to this library

### Continuance Organizational Commitment

1. I am not afraid of what might happen if I quit my job at this library without having another one lined up (R)
2. It would be very hard for me to leave my job at this library right now even if I wanted to.
3. Too much of my life would be disrupted if I decided to leave my job at this library right now
4. It wouldn't be too costly for me to leave my job at this library in the near future(R)
5. Right now, staying with my job at this library is a matter of necessity as much as desire
6. I believe that I have too few options to consider should I decide to leave my job at this library
7. One of the few negative consequences of leaving my job at this library, would be the scarcity of available alternatives elsewhere
8. One of the major reasons I continue to work for this library is that leaving would require considerable personal sacrifice; another place may not match overall benefits I have here
9. If I had not already put so much of myself into this organization, I might consider working elsewhere

### Job Involvement Scale

1. I am very much involved in my job
2. I live, eat and breathe my job
3. The most important things which happen to me involve my job

### Job Satisfaction Scale

1. All in all I am satisfied with my job
2. In general, I don't like my job (R)
3. In general, I like working here

### Job Autonomy Scale

1. I have a lot of say over what happens on my job
2. I have enough authority to do my best when carrying out my job
3. My job allows me to make a lot of decisions on my own
4. I have enough freedom as to how I should do my job

### **Job Performance Feedback Scale**

1. The nature of my job provides me with very few clues to figure out whether I am performing or not (R)
2. The nature of my job provides me with plenty of clues to figure out whether I am performing or not
3. My immediate superiors and co-workers on this job almost never give any feedback as to how well I am performing (R)
4. My immediate superiors and co-workers on this job often provide me with feedback as to how well I am performing

### **Role Clarity Scale**

1. I feel certain about how much authority I have been given to do my job
2. There are clear planned goals and objectives for my job
3. I know exactly what is expected of me
4. I have been given clear explanations of what is expected of me

### **Role Conflict Scale**

1. I often find myself in situations in which there are conflicting requirements
2. I am often asked to do work that are against my better judgment
3. I often have to break a rule or policy in order to carry out a job assignment
4. I often receive incompatible requests from two or more individuals in the workplace
5. I am often asked to do things that are unnecessary