The Influence of Corporate Culture on Organisational Commitment: A Study on a Malaysian Listed Company

Zahariah Mohd Zain
Faculty of Business Management, Universiti Teknologi MARA

Razanita Ishak
Faculty of Business Management, Universiti Teknologi MARA

Erlane K Ghani
Faculty of Accountancy/ Accounting Research Institute
Universiti Teknologi MARA

Abstract

Research has suggested that understanding corporate culture as a management philosophy is essential to managing an organisation in improving its overall performance. Using questionnaire survey, this study examines the influence of corporate culture on organisational commitment. Specifically, this study examines four dimensions of corporate culture, namely teamwork, communication, rewards and recognition and training and development on employees' commitment towards the organisation. One hundred and ninety respondents from a Malaysian listed company participated in the survey. The results show that all dimensions of corporate culture chosen in this study are important determinants in motivating the employees to be committed to their organisation. The findings implicate that an organisation needs to be aware of the importance of these dimensions in providing a favourable working environment to its employees in attaining their full commitment for organisational success.

Keywords: Corporate culture, teamwork, communication, reward and recognition, training and development, Malaysia

1.0. Introduction

One of the eminent themes that is often discussed and debated in the management and business literature is the influence of corporate culture on organisational performance (Chow et al., 2001). Corporate culture is a management philosophy and a way of managing an organisation in improving the effectiveness and efficiency of its performance (Kotter and Heskett, 1992; Ooi and Arumugam, 2006). Understanding corporate culture is essential since it is able to influence the thoughts, feelings, interactions and performance in an organisation (Saeed and Hassan, 2000).

The understanding of the importance of corporate culture is evident when most organisations acknowledged the fact that an organisation's well founded culture could contribute to the achievement in every aspect of performance whether in economy, growth and financial (Maloney and Federle, 1990; Flamholtz and Randle, 1998). For example: In USA, Continental Airlines, Kentucky Fried Chicken, Siemens KWU and Ernst and Young as well as in UK such as Hyundai Car (UK) have become high

leading organisations that have successfully changed their corporate culture and these changes have led to a massive positive impact on the organisational performance.

Starbucks Coffee Company which has grown from just two retail stores in USA to more than 2500 stores worldwide during the past decade is one of the increasing numbers of successful organisations after attributed the organisation to a new corporate culture (Flamholtz and Randle, 1998). This organisation viewed culture as a critical factor to organisational success and came up with a view of "the way we treat our people affects the way our people treat our customers and in turn our success which includes employees' performance" (Flamholtz and Randle, 1998). Such view has led the organisation to a number of human resource practices designed to enhance employees' feeling of being valued by the organisation.

In realising the importance of corporate culture to an organisation, Malaysian organisations, particularly, the listed companies have started to evaluate their current practices in attempting to improve their organisational success. Researches were conducted to examine the current practices of corporate culture and determine whether such practices influence the organisational performance in a specific or various industries. One listed company in Malaysia that has yet to be researched into and of interest is the Malaysian Airports Holding Berhad (MAHB).

The remainder of this paper is structured as follows. The next section provides a review of relevant literature. Section 3 provides brief information on MAHB. Section 4 presents the framework and hypotheses developed in this study. Section 5 provides the research design. The results are presented in section 6. A summary and conclusion are provided in the last section.

2.0. Literature Review

Organisational commitment is often referred to employees' psychological attachment to the organisation (Mowday, 1979; Mowday et al. 1982)[1]. There are three components of organisational commitment, namely, affective commitment, continuance commitment and normative commitment (Meyer and Allen, 1991). Affective commitment refers to employees' positive emotional to the organisation. An employee who is affective committed strongly identifies with the goals of the organisation and tends to remain with the organisation (Kanter, 1968; Mowday et al., 1982).

Continuance commitment refers to the employees' commitment to the organisation due to their perceived high cost of losing organisational membership. This includes loss of economic costs such as pension accruals and social costs such as friendship ties with colleagues (Meyer and Allen, 1991). Of consequence, the employees remained with the organisation because they have to.

Normative commitment refers to the employees' commitment to the organisation due to their feelings of obligation (Meyer and Allen, 1991) which could be derived from many sources. For example: An organisation may have invested resources in training the employees who then feel a moral obligation to put forth effort on their work and stay with the organisation. Normative commitment could also derive before the employees join the organisation through their families or socialisation processes that requires loyalty to one organisation. Of consequence, the employees stayed with the organisation because they ought to.

Meyer and Allen (1991) argued that these components are not mutually exclusive. This implied that employees could be simultaneously committed to an organisation in an affective, continuance and normative commitments at varying levels of intensity. Employees could at any point of time have a commitment profile that reflected high or low levels of all components (Meyer et al. 2002). These different profiles would eventually lead to different effects on workplace behaviour. Employees' commitment profile could be influence by many factors, one of it being corporate culture.

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[1] Organisational commitment is different from job satisfaction as the later reflects employees' feelings about their job. Organisational commitment is also not an organisational identification since the later represents employees' experience of a sense of oneness within their organisation.

Corporate culture involves with social expectations and standards as well as the values and beliefs that individuals hold central and that bind organisational groups (Lawson and Shen, 1998). It is a pattern of basic assumptions invented, discovered or developed by a given group as it learns to cope with its problem of external adaptation and internal integration (Schein, 1992). These values are then being taught to new members in the organisation as the correct way to think and feel in relation to these problems. Culture is looked upon as a reward of work (Peters and Waterman, 1982).

A large body of the management and business literature has examined the link between corporate culture and organisational performance. This body of literature has identified various dimensions of corporate culture related to organisational performance (such as Meyer and Allen, 1991; Ricardo and Jolly, 1997; Lau and Idris, 2001; Meyer et al. 2002). These include communication, training and development, rewards and recognition, effective decision-making, risk taking for creativity and innovation, proactive planning, teamwork and fairness and consistency in management practices (Ricardo and Jolly, 1997; Lau and Idris, 2001). Within these dimensions, four important dimensions of corporate culture are teamwork (Morrow, 1997; Osland, 1997; Karia and Ahmad, 2000; Karia and Ashari, 2006), communication (Nehers, 1997; Myers and Myers, 1982), training and development (Karia, 1999; Karia and Ahmad, 2000; Acton and Golden, 2002) and rewards and recognition (Zigon, 1997; Allen and Helms, 2002). Most of the results examining these dimensions found significant influence on organisational performance. However, these studies were often conducted in a non-Malaysia setting.

In Malaysia, there are studies that have examined the link between corporate culture and organisational commitment (Karia, 1999; Saeed and Hassan, 2000; Karia and Ahmad, 2000; Lau and Idris, 2001; Ooi and Arumugam, 2006). However, the number of studies is sparse. Karia and Ahmad (2000) examined the effect of teamwork on organisational commitment and found significant relationship between these two variables. Similar results were shown in an earlier study by Karia (1999) on the link between training and development and organisational commitment. A recent study by Ooi and Arumugam (2006) found that teamwork, training and development, rewards and recognition and communication significantly influence organisational performance. However, their study is limited to a semi-conductor industry.

In summary, review of the literature found that these four dimensions play an important role in motivating employees and hence provide high commitment towards an organisation. This study aims to examine these dimensions of corporate culture in a Malaysian listed company, namely the Malaysian Airports Holding Berhad (MAHB). Examining these dimensions in such an organisation provides further understanding and evidence on the importance of these dimensions to organisational commitment.

3.0. Malaysian Airports Holdings Berhad

Malaysian Airports Holdings Berhad (MAHB) is a company listed in the Bursa Malaysia. It is involved in managing and operating 39 airports in Malaysia as well as providing airport-related services. The airports under its ambit include 5 major international airports, 16 domestic airports and 18 short take-offs and landing ports that serve communities in less accessible areas in Malaysia.

MAHB through a subsidiary of Malaysia Airports Sdn Bhd is currently holding a 30-year lease and licence granted from the Malaysian Ministry of Transport effective from November 1992. This grant allows MAHB to operate all existing airports in Malaysia. On 30 November 1998, MAHB became the first airport company in Asia and one of just six in the world to be listed in the stock exchange (Bursa Malaysia).

The role of MAHB in airport operations includes the development, management and maintenance of existing terminal buildings, runways, roads and car parks. MAHB is entrusted with the overall responsibility for operational efficiency, passenger and aircraft safety and security and the fulfilment of environmental requirements.

Through its many subsidiaries, MAHB is also involved in the operations of duty free and non-duty free outlets, the provision of food and beverage related services at the airports, property investment holding of the car park, airside hotel and the Pan Pacific Kuala Lumpur International Airport, the Free Commercial Zone and the Kuala Lumpur International Airport's Southern Common Facilities as well as palm oil plantations. Currently, MAHB has over 7000 personnel across 39 offices in Malaysia (MAHB, 2007).

MAHB is expected to constantly find solutions in delivering better and efficient services, operations and customer satisfaction. The primary challenge it faces is providing the industry with the information and availability needed to efficiently administer its resources especially when human lives are involved. Therefore, implementing good dimensions of corporate culture is evident.

4.0. Framework and Hypotheses
4.1. Framework

Figure 1 illustrates the framework that underpins this study. The framework posits that corporate culture could influence organisational commitment. This framework is based on Lau and Idris's (2001) four dimensions of corporate culture. The four dimensions are teamwork, communication, training and development and rewards and recognition. These four dimensions are selected because they have been selected as those likely to have the greatest effects on employees' behaviour (Ricardo and Jolly, 1997; Lau and Idris, 2001). It is expected that these dimensions of corporate culture influence the organisational commitment. Therefore, the four dimensions of corporate culture becomes the independent variable.

Organisational commitment could be influenced by corporate culture because it reflects the relative strength of employees' attachment or involvement with their organisation (Lau and Idris, 2001). Organisational commitment could either derive from affective commitment, continuance commitment and normative commitment. Therefore, organisational commitment is the dependent variable in this study.

Figure 1: Framework of this study
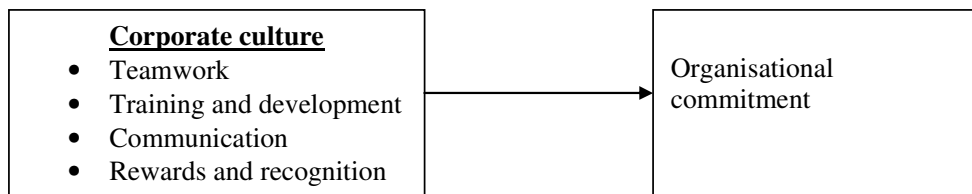
4,2. Hypotheses

A body of the literature has examined the link between teamwork and organisational performance (Karia and Ahmad, 2000). These studies found that teamwork is one of the important dimensions in influencing organisational success as well as achieving good relationship between workers and managers. The results indicate that an organisation that practices some levels of teamwork often experienced an increase in employees' commitment to the organisation. It is expected that similar results would appear in this study. Therefore, the following null hypothesis is developed:

  H1:   There is no significant relationship between teamwork and organisational commitment.

Another body of the literature has examined the link between communication and organisational performance (Neher, 1997; Myers and Myers, 1982). Communication refers to the sending and receiving messages by means of symbols and sees organisational communication as a key element of organisational climate (Drenth et al., 1998). Studies examining this issue found that the manner in which the organisational goals and employees' role in advancing these goals are

communicated to employees strongly organisational commitment (Robbins, 2001; Brunetto and Farr-Wharton, 2004). This led to the following null hypothesis:

H2:   There is no significant relationship between communication and organisational commitment.

Another body of the literature has examined the link between training and development and organisational performance. The studies that have examined this dimension found that this dimension plays an important role since it facilitates the updating skills, lead to increase commitment, well-being and sense of belonging and consequently led to the strengthening of organisational competitiveness (Cherrington, 1995; Bartlett, 2001) particularly, organisational commitment. Therefore, the following null hypothesis is developed:

H3:   There is no significant relationship between training and development on organisational commitment.

Studies have also examined the link between rewards and recognition and organisational performance. Rewards and recognition refer to something that increases the frequency of an employee's action (Zigon, 1997). This dimension is considered a motivating factor in helping employees build feelings of confidence and satisfaction (Keller, 1998) and should closely align to organisational strategies (Allen and Helms, 2002). Studies that examined this issue found consistent influence that rewards and recognition influence employees' commitment and in turn influence organisational success (O'Driscoll and Randall, 1999; Zhang, 2000; Karia and Ashari, 2006).

H4:   There is no significant relationship between rewards and recognition and organisational commitment.

5.0. Research Design

This study focuses on corporate culture and its impact on organisational commitment. Specifically, this study looks into whether:

1. Teamwork influence organisational commitment.
2. Training and development influence organisational commitment.
3. Communication influence organisational commitment.
4. Rewards and recognition influence organisational commitment.

This study examines these issues by way of a questionnaire survey.

5.1. Sample Selection

This study uses employees of all departments in MAHB. The respondents are selected based on Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) sample size table. The total number of employees in MAHB is 353 whilst there are 11 departments in MAHB. Based on Krejcie and Morgan's table, the number of sample used would be 187 respondents. To determine the number of sample in each department, the total number of the sample is divided by the total number of available department. This comes up to 17 respondents in each department.

5.2. Questionnaire Design

The questionnaire used in this study is adapted from Lau and Idris (2001) and Ooi and Arumugam (2006) with some modifications to suit the context of this study. The questionnaire consists of six sections. The first section requests the respondents to complete 8 questions related to training and development. These include employees are encouraged to accept education and training within the organisation, availability of resources for employees' education and training within the organisation, employees are trained to use quality management tools, specific work-skills training given to employees, management's concern for employees' career development, opportunities for training and adequacy time spent on training session.

Section B consists of 8 questions related to reward and recognition. These include improved working condition to recognise employees' quality improvement efforts, compensation system

encourages team and individual contribution, rewards and recognition based on work quality, suggestions appropriately rewarded and recognised, rewards and recognition clearly communicated, innovative employees being rewarded and recognised, emphasise on performance-related rewards and organisation equitable in hiring, compensation, recognition and promotion.

Section C requests respondents to respond 8 questions on teamwork. These include work within department is appointed around groups, comfortable to work in team rather than individual, workplace decisions based on consensus, cooperation within departments, sharing of ideas, cliques look after themselves, job participation and interpersonal cooperation.

Section D requests respondents to complete 8 questions on communication. These include management regularly provides feedbacks among teams, continuously improve communication between management and staffs, effective communication, freedom of speech, communication as tool to shape corporate culture, availability of internal communication strategy, communication sharing and open communication.

Section E requests the respondents to respond to questions related to organisational commitment. This section is adapted from Mowday et al. (1979) with some modification which defines the extent the employees are with the organisation, their desire to remain with the organisation and their willingness to expense effort on behalf of the organisation. These include willingness to put great deal of effort beyond what is normally expected, speak highly of organisation, loyalty, willingness to accept any tasks, care about the fate of the organisation, trust, organisational goals, strive for maximum commitment, organisation achievement and fair treatment. The respondents are asked to provide their responses using a 5-point scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The last section, Section F requests respondents' demographic profile such as age, marital status and gender among others. Questions in Section F are asked in categorical form.

5.3. Data Collection

One hundred and eighty seven questionnaires were distributed to the MAHB's employees in all 11 departments. Each department were distributed 17 questionnaires. However, 3 staffs volunteered to participate in the study. This led to a total sample of 190. The respondents were approached by the researcher at their respective departments. The respondents were encouraged to complete the questionnaire on the spot or to return the questionnaire after 2 days. The questionnaires were hand-collected by the researcher after 2 days. All 190 questionnaires distributed were collected and complete.

5.4. Research Construct

Dimensions of corporate culture are assessed by way of a series of questions that require participants to indicate, using a 5-point scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree), their opinions of teamwork, communication, rewards and recognition and training and development. For each respondent, the responses to questions in each dimension are aggregated and an average response was calculated as a score to represent the respondent assessment of the dimensions.

To assess the level of organisational commitment, the respondents are asked to rate the degree of organisational commitment using a 5-point scale of 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The mean scores of the 10 variables related to organisational commitment are used as an indication of the level of organisational commitment.

A reliability test was performed before distributing the questionnaire to the respondents. The results show that the reliability for teamwork is 0.830, training and development (0.889), communication (0.897) and rewards and recognition (0.907). The results also show that the reliability for organisational commitment based on 10 items is 0.924. The results indicate that all variables in this study are reliable.

6.0. Results
6.1. Descriptive Statistics

This section presents the descriptive statistics of the dimensions of corporate culture and organisational commitment. The results are shown in table 1. The results show the mean score for organisational commitment is 3.903. The results indicate that most respondents have high commitment towards their organisation.

Table 1 also show that the respondents provide the highest mean score for training and development (3.7954) followed by communication (3.7738) and teamwork (3.6651). On the other hand, the respondents provide the lowest mean score for rewards and recognition (3.5027).

Table 1:   Descriptive statistics of corporate culture and organisational commitment

Variable	Mean score
Organisational commitment	3.9030
Training and development	3.7954
Communication	3.7738
Teamwork	3.6651
Rewards and recognition	3.5027

6.2. Influence of Teamwork on Organisational Commitment

This section presents the results of testing hypothesis 1. Hypothesis 1 states that there is no significant relationship between teamwork and organisational commitment. Hypothesis 1 is tested using Pearson's correlation. Table 2 presents the results of testing hypothesis 1.

Table 2:   Teamwork and organisational commitment

		Teamwork	Organisational commitment
	r	1	0.523
Teamwork	p		0.000
	N	190	190
	r	0.523	1
Organisational commitment	p	0.000	
	N	190	190

The results show that there is a significant relationship between teamwork and organisational commitment (p=0.000). Such results are consistent with Morrow (1997). The results indicate that teamwork is important in facilitating employees' ability to work together in completing a task. Such finding is also consistent with Osland (1997). Therefore, hypothesis 1 is rejected.

6.3. Influence of Training and Development on Organisational Commitment.

This section presents the results of testing hypothesis 2. Hypothesis 2 states that there is no significant relationship between training and development and organisational commitment. Hypothesis 2 is tested using Pearson's correlation.

Table 3:   Training and development and organisational commitment

		Training and development	Organisational commitment
Training and development	r	1	0.392
	p		0.000
	N	190	190
Organisational commitment	r	0.392	1
	p	0.000	
	N	190	190

Table 3 presents the results of testing hypothesis 2. The results show that there is a significant relationship between training and development and organisational commitment (p=0.000). The results support the results of previous studies (O'Driscoll and Randall, 1999; Zhang, 2000; Karia and Ashari, 2006) that indicate proper training and development enable employees to do the right things the first time. The findings imply that organisation that provides training and development to their employees would lead to higher job satisfaction and commitment towards the organisation. Hypothesis 2 is therefore, rejected.

6.4. Influence of Communication on Organisational Commitment

This section presents the results of testing hypothesis 3. Hypothesis 3 states that there is no significant relationship between communication and organisational commitment. Hypothesis 3 is tested using Pearson's correlation.

Table 4:   Organisational communication and organisational commitment

		Communication	Organisational commitment
Communication	r	1	0.754
	p		0.000
	N	190	190
Organisational commitment	r	0.754	1
	p	0.000	
	N	190	190

Table 4 presents the results of testing hypothesis 3. The results show that there is a significant relationship between communication and organisational commitment (p=0.000). The results indicate that communication is a dominant dimension of corporate culture. The results imply that communication is important in improving employees' commitment which in turn influences organisational commitment. Such finding is consistent with Ooi and Arumugam (2006). Therefore, hypothesis 3 is rejected.

6.5. Influence of Rewards and Recognition on Organisational Commitment
This section presents the results of testing hypothesis 4. Hypothesis 4 states that there is no significant relationship between rewards and recognition and organisational commitment. Hypothesis 4 is tested using Pearson's correlation.

Table 5:   Rewards and recognition and organisational commitment

		Rewards and recognition	Organisational commitment
Rewards and recognition	*r*	1	0.499
	p		0.000
	N	190	190
Organisational commitment	*r*	0.499	1
	p	0.000	
	N	190	190

Table 5 presents the results of testing hypothesis 4. The results show that there is a significant relationship between rewards and recognition and organisational commitment (*p*=0.000). The results indicate that rewards and recognition is a motivating factor in influencing employees' commitment because both elements have motivating effects on people at work. Such finding is consistent to O'Driscoll and Randall (1999) who found that rewards offered by an organisation would have a positive effect on employees' commitment towards their work and their organisation. Therefore, hypothesis 4 is rejected.

6.6. Further Analysis: Multiple Regression

To provide further understanding on the influence of the four dimensions of corporate culture on organisational commitment, a multiple regression analysis was performed. Table 6 presents the results.

Table 6:   Multiple regression analysis

	Unstandardised coefficients		Standardised coefficients		
	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
Constant	1.013	0.229		4.426	0.000
Training	0.074	0.067	0.073	1.107	0.270
Rewards and recognition	0.084	0.060	0.102	1.410	0.160
Teamwork	-0.081	0.079	-0.074	-1.023	0.308
Communication	0.718	0.070	0.724	10.221	0.000

The results in table 6 shows that the four dimensions of corporate culture contribute 59% in influencing organisational commitment. Among the four dimensions of corporate culture, communication is the most important influence on organisational commitment (*p*=0.000).

7.0. Summary and Conclusion

This study examines the influence of corporate culture on organisational commitment. Specifically, this study examines four dimensions of corporate culture, namely teamwork, communication, reward and recognition and training and development on employees' commitment towards the organisation. The results show that all dimensions of corporate culture chosen in this study have significant influence on organisational commitment. The results are consistent to the results of previous studies (such as Ooi and Arumugam, 2006) that signify the importance of these dimensions.

The key finding in this study is MAHB's corporate culture practices are positive towards employees' commitment and this in turn, lead to the organisational success. Therefore, other organisations are encouraged to practice these dimensions of corporate culture in yielding better and long lasting results.

This study is not without limitations. First, this study used a case study approach focusing on one Malaysian listed company, MAHB. Therefore, the findings in this study may not be able to generalise to other organisations. Secondly, the respondents of this study are only 190 which represent only 53.8%. Future study could embark using a larger sample size.

In summary, the findings in this study provide some understanding on the importance of corporate culture on organisational commitment. This study provides knowledge on the influence of corporate culture implemented in a organisation.

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