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## **Knowledge Management and Job Performance in the Public Sector: The Moderating Role of Organizational Commitment**

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### **ABSTRACT**

A number of factors have been suggested to explain how individual job performance of an organizational can be improved. To date, some factors have been considered such as person job fit, organizational structure, job characteristics, work involvement and other. Despite these studies, however, few have considered to attempt the influence of knowledge management on job performance. However, the results of those studies are significant and non-significant. Therefore, a moderating variable is proposed. Present study suggested organizational commitment as potential moderating variable on the knowledge management and individual job performance. The data were collected using a survey among 682 respondents from officers of Management and Professional Group (MPG) with grade 41-54 from Malaysian Local Governments. The data were analyzed using Smart PLS and the results showed that the second-order construct knowledge management has a significant effect on job performance. In contrast, no significant effect has been determined of organizational commitment as a moderating variable between knowledge management and job performance. The future implications and conclusion are discussed.

**Keywords:** Job Performance, Knowledge Management, Organizational Commitment, Local Government.

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### **INTRODUCTION**

Local government (LG) has played an important role in providing public services to the communities. They deal at the public level directly and their performances are important towards providing positive public perception of the overall government structure (Mohamed Osman, Jusoh, Bachok & Bakri, 2014). In general, “traditional role of local government authorities (LGs) is to provide services to its local residents with the aim of raising the standard of living through better social and physical facilities and services” (Onu, 1988). As stated, “Malaysian LGs play a significant role in planning, coordinating and controlling the development process at the local level” (Othman, 2005). As for Malaysian LGs, they would face more wide-ranging and dynamic demands from publics to improve forefront services. The public rates efficient service delivery as an absolute main concern, so it is crucial for councils to present the best services they able to do. A smart and knowledgeable public might not simply view forefront employee as front liners, but they would also regard as rubbish collectors, enforcement officers, grass cutters and other LGAs employees as the front-line workers.

Since government’s performance is significantly influenced by their employees’ job performance, the issue relating to the job performance of local government turns down with the question of how do local government authority officers perform their own jobs/tasks. Hence, employee performance standards were designed by the government to measure the performance of the organizations; job performance becomes the most crucial focus of administrators and academics (Salleh, Yaakub & Dzulkifli, 2011).

Additionally, the issues of weakness of the LGs performance have been arising many times by interested and affected parties (Hamdan & Norudin, 2010). Thus, the study intends to investigate to what extend the current condition of LGs job performance. It is required in light to some features of greater understanding for local government job performance identified by certain factors, for instance knowledge management and public service motivation.

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## **LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT**

### **Knowledge Management**

For academicians and professionals, knowledge management has been widely known as a core agenda and has been acknowledged as one of the most crucial sources of competitive advantage. Managing knowledge to achieve organizational performance is not only important for private sectors, but it is significant for the public sector as well (Abu Bakar, Virgiyanti, Tufail & Yusof, 2015). Hence, we begin this study by looking at the definition of knowledge management from few scholars. Moballeghi & Galyani Moghaddam, (2011) have specifically described knowledge management practice as “the acquisition, sharing and use of knowledge within organizations, including learning processes and management information systems” (p.316). The combinations of information and communication technologies and the advent of new tools such as Intranets and groupware systems emphasize the importance of targeting knowledge rather than information or data. It also has been described as “a systematic process for capturing and communicating knowledge people can use” (Moballeghi & Galyani Moghaddam, 2011; p. 316). Some said “it understands what your knowledge assets are and how to profit from them.” (p.316). However, on the other side of that, some said “to obsolete what you know before others obsolete it” (p.316). Basically, the simplest definition about knowledge management is “sharing what we know with others” (Moballeghi & Galyani Moghaddam (2011, p. 316). Syed Ikhsan and Rowland (2004) in their study described knowledge management as a structured and organized effort to use knowledge surrounded by the organization to provide services to the public and to improve performance.

Out of these definitions, the emphasis is on human know-how and how it brings value to an organization. Nevertheless, employing individual proficiency in order to obtain the greatest output for an organization is not an easy task.

### **Job Performance**

Job performance term is debatable as one of the most significant dependent variable of interest among businesses, the government, educators and society. This term has been researched for a long decade on reaching the general definitions and conceptualizations of individual level job performance. Generally, job performance is a key term applied to portray how good a worker performs on his or her task-related duties (Murphy, 1989 & Rotundo, 2000). In other words, it should be viewed as behaviors rather than results. Performance is crucial to employees and employers since it certainly manipulate few decisions about terminations, promotions, merit increases and bonuses (Caillier, 2010). As too much attention has been given about the organizations’ aspect, individual job performance has been studied comprehensively by administrative theorist. It has begun in the early 1900s with Frederick Taylor’s study about his argument which organizations could raise employee productivity by recognizing and regulating the most competent schedule needed. So far, however, there has been a criticism on this study since it highlighted on “mechanization” instead of humanistic side inside the organization (March & Simon, 1958).

Borman and Motowidlo (1993) argued that the entire job performance might be segregated by the general dimensions of task performance and contextual performance. They illustrated task performance or in-role performance as “ the proficiency with which job incumbents perform activities that are formally recognized as part of their job, activities that are contributing to the organization’s technical core either directly by implementing a part of its technological process, or indirectly by providing it with needed materials or services” (Borman & Motowidlo, 1993; p.73). Then, they portray contextual performance or extra-role performance as “discretionary behaviors that apply across all jobs are not necessarily role prescribed and that contribute to the social and psychological environment of the organization. For examples, the contextual activities are “volunteering, persisting, helping, cooperating and following the rules” (Borman & Motowidlo; 1993, p.73). Both terms have been recognized as it varies between different jobs assigned

### **Knowledge Management and Job Performance Relationship**

According to McAdam & O’Dell (2000), the use or benefits of KM in their study discovered private and public organizations perceived benefits via the improvement of quality, efficiency and effectiveness, learning of management and minimization of products and services operational cost. Conversely, responses from public sector received more significant value, “reflecting the current drive for efficiency in all areas of the public sector and recognition that knowledge can make an important contribution”.

Past researches about knowledge management and job performance in the public sectors indicated that employees with knowledge management were more positive towards their job performance (Chong, Salleh, Syed Ahmad & Syed Ikhsan, 2011; Girard & McIntyre, 2010 & Sandhu, Jain & Ahmad, 2011). In contrast, there is significant negative association between ICT know-how and skills, and organizational performance. This is due to the reality that the accountants perceived themselves as professionals in their field of expertise. Therefore, their exposure to ICT has limited them on performing their jobs (Chong, Salleh, Syed Ahmad & Syed Ikhsan, 2011).

Additionally, Skyrme (2003) suggests that knowledge management can play an important role in increasing efficiency in decision making and public service delivery. On the other hand, Jones (2001) revealed that many researchers admitted that there are many concepts that support the association between knowledge sharing and performance, but empirical research is limited.

However, there are some main individual hurdles occurred during the knowledge management practice in the public sector organization such as shortage of time, low communication and a shortage of interpersonal skills (Sandhu, Jain & Ahmad, 2011). They suggested an for upcoming study on knowledge management in the public organization might also observe the effect on job/ task related outputs such as efficiency, productivity, commitment, performance and others. So far, very few researches had explored the effect of KM on public sector organizational outcomes. Therefore, researcher of the current study has developed the following hypothesis:

**H1:** *There is a significant relationship between knowledge management and job performance.*

### **Organizational Commitment (OC) as a Moderator**

Organizational commitment refers to “the relative strength of an individual’s identification with, and involvement in a particular organization. Commitment represents something beyond mere passive loyalty to an organization. It involves an active relationship with the organization, such as individuals are willing to give something of them in order to contribute to the organization’s well-being” (Dilulio, 1994). Thus, commitment can be expressed not only from the expressions of person’s beliefs and views but also from his or her actions (Mowday, Steers & Porter, 1979).

In addition, research by Ilyas (2013) examines the relationship between person job fit, job satisfaction, job commitment and intention to quit amongst employees of various organizations of Pakistan. Results suggest that organizational commitment moderates the relationship between person job fit and intention to quit. In contrast, organizational commitment does not moderate the relationship person job fit and job satisfaction. This significance of this research will help managers to remain an environment that will help employees to create compatibility with his/her abilities that match with the job and in turn increasing job satisfaction and reducing intention to quit.

Yeh and Hong (2012) in their study among employees of a Taiwanese shoes subsidiary in China found that (a) leadership style is positively and significantly affected to organizational commitment, (b) organizational commitment have a constructive outcome on job performance, (c) leadership approach is positively and significantly affected job performance and (d) organizational commitment holds a partial mediating result between the relationship of leadership style and job performance.

Che Rose, Kumar and Pak (2009) in their study among public service managers in The Administrative and Diplomatic officers found that organizational commitment does not fully mediate the association among work climate and performance. Results indicated that the workers who alleged their work climate positively would be showing higher levels of performance due to their high commitment at work.

According to Zehir, Muceldili and Zehir (2012), their results of the study revealed that CE is positively correlated with OCB among workers and the association is partially mediated by affective and continuance commitment. The research also finds that developing and CE may have other beneficial such as stronger commitment and OCB. They suggested for future research should add diverse dimensions such as self-renewal and corporate venturing. Next future research might also consist of non-financial outcomes such as employee satisfaction, creativity and turnover intention.

Numerous studies also have been conducted to analyze the position of organizational commitment as mediating variables, but to the best of researcher’s knowledge, no study has been reported specifically on the role of organizational commitment as moderating on the association between knowledge

management and job performance. However, Jamal (2011) has studied the association between stress and job performance of employees in public sector and this study applied different variable namely stress. Hence, the researcher decided to locate OC as a moderating variable between knowledge management and job performance. Therefore, this study develops hypothesize that:

*H2: Organizational commitment moderates the association between knowledge management and job performance.*

## **METHODS**

This research applied quantitative method with cross-sectional design. The construct measurements were adopted from previous studies (Knowledge Management- Lee, Lee & Kang, 2005; Organizational Commitment- Allen & Meyer, 1990 & Job Performance- Koopsman, Bernaards, Hildebrandt, Schaufeli, De Vet & Van der Beek ,(2011); Koopsman, Bernaards, Hilderbrandt, van Buuren, van der Beek & de Vet, (2013) & Koopsman, Bernaards, Hilderbrandt, Buuren, van Beek, van Der & Vet. (2014) and followed by questionnaires distribution to the selected respondents, which focuses on Malaysian local authorities’ officers from The Ministry of Urban Wellbeing, Housing and Local Government of Malaysia (Kementerian Kesejahteraan Bandar, Perumahan dan Kerajaan Tempatan Malaysia).

The list of the Malaysian Local Government officers (group of management and professional) was used as the sampling frame for this study as they are the key person who involves with the decision making. A total of 1336 LAs officers were stratified randomly chosen. The person’s in-charge has been contacted through telephone call and by mail requesting their cooperation to inform the respondents to participate in this research. The post-mailed approach is applied to increase willingness of honest answer and to gain a broader coverage of potential respondents. Hence, 682 useable questionnaires were contributed to this study.

This study practices partial least square (PLS) to test hypothesis with structural equation model (SEM). PLS is considered an approach which can provide much value for causal inquiry in communication-related and behavioral research fields (Lowry & Gaskin, 2014). Besides, PLS is powerful in modeling which allows for complex models that include latent (unobserved) variables, formative variables, chains of effects (mediation), and multiple group comparisons of these more complex relationships. PLS has the capability to calculate t-values through a technique called bootstrapping if the data are normally distributed and samples are independent. Therefore, the Partial Least Square (PLS) procedure and structural equation modeling tool (Smart-PLS 2.0 M3) by Ringle, Wende & Will (2005) are used to analyze the data.

## **RESULTS**

Table 1 summarizes the descriptive statistics of personal respondent’s profile and characteristics, in terms of their gender, age, education level, grade of current position and working experience. Referring to the Table 1, looking at the age group, the highest number or respondents are between 31-40 years old (41.3%), followed by the age group between 41-50 years old (23.2%) and between 21-30 years old (22.4%) while the lowest number of respondents are above 50 years old (13.1%). With regard to educational level, 70% of respondents hold bachelor degree (undergraduate), followed by master degree (15.9%), diploma (11.8%), other professional qualification (1.7%), and the smallest lowest number of respondents attained doctor of philosophy with the rate of 0.6%.

**Table1.** Demographic Profile of Respondents

	Frequency	Percent
<b>Gender:</b>		
Male	378	55.6
Female	302	44.4
<b>Total</b>	680	100%
<b>Age:</b>		
21 - 30 years	152	22.4
31 - 40 years	281	41.3
41 - 50 years	158	23.2
Above 50 years	89	13.1
<b>Total</b>	680	100%

<b>Highest Education:</b>		
Diploma	78	11.8
Undergraduate	462	70.0
Master	105	15.9
Doctor of Philosophy	4	0.6
Other professional qualification	11	1.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>660</b>	<b>100%</b>

### Measurement Model

In order to evaluate the reflective measured model’s outer loadings, composite reliabilities, average variance extracted (AVE = convergent validity) and discriminant validity were assessed. Table 2 illustrates that all reflective constructs have high level values of internal reliability and consistency, as demonstrated by the above composite reliabilities values. As can be seen from Table 2, the composite reliability coefficient of each latent constructs ranged from 0.847 to 0.912 for knowledge management and job performance respectively, with each exceeding the minimum acceptable level of 0.70, suggesting adequate internal consistency reliability of the measures used in this study (Hair, Hult, Ringle & Sarstedt., 2014).

To assess the convergent validity for each construct, the standardized factor loadings were applied to determine the validity of the two constructs (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988). Based on Chin (1998), the AVE values (see table 2) exhibited high loadings (>0.5) indicating that on average, the constructs explain more than half of the variance of its indicators. The findings showed that each factor loading for the reflective indicators ranged from 0.580 to 0.946. An AVE of less than 0.50 however indicates that, on average, more error remains in the items than the variance explained by the constructs. Therefore, results of this investigation show that this study’s measurement model has demonstrated an adequate convergent validity.

**Table2.** *Construct Validity for Reflective Constructs.*

First Order Construct	Second Order Construct	Scale Type	Item	Loadings	AVE	CR
Knowledge Internalization		Reflective	KM1	0.855	0.692	0.870
			KM2	0.893		
			KM3	0.741		
Knowledge Creation		Reflective	KM6	0.665	0.562	0.835
			KM7	0.830		
			KM8	0.832		
			KM9	0.650		
Knowledge Management	Reflective	Knowledge Internalization	0.842	0.735	0.847	
		Knowledge Creation	0.872			
Affiliation		Reflective	OC10	0.822	0.689	0.869
			OC14	0.833		
			OC16	0.835		
Continuance		Reflective	OC2	0.714	0.577	0.803
			OC5	0.804		
			OC12	0.759		
Normative		Reflective	OC3	0.826	0.699	0.874
			OC9	0.843		
			OC15	0.839		
Organizational Commitment	Reflective	Affiliation	0.904	0.753	0.901	
		Continuance	0.776			
		Normative	0.918			
		JP3	0.791			
		JP4	0.750			
Contextual performance	Reflective	JP5	0.698	0.597	0.921	
		JP7	0.580			
		JP8	0.789			
		JP9	0.844			
		JP11	0.787			

			JP12	0.805		
			JP13	0.814		
			JP14	0.709		
	Job Performance	Reflective	Task Performance	0.884	0.838	0.912
			Contextual Performance	0.946		

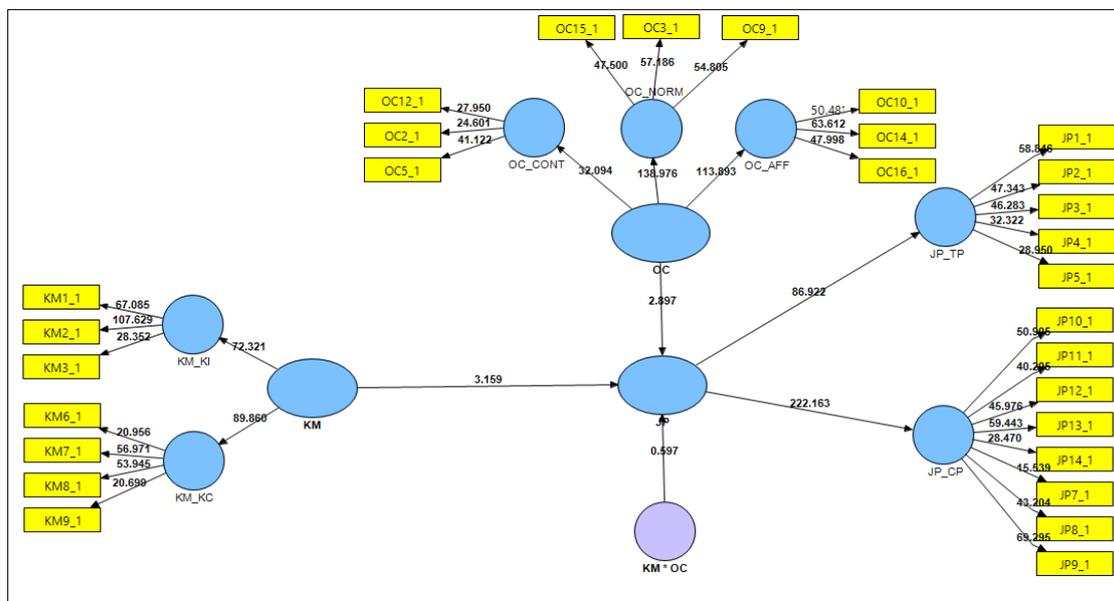


Figure2. Structural Model

Note: KM= Knowledge Management, OC= Organizational Commitment, JP= Job Performance

### Assessment of Structural Model

Using a bootstrapping technique with a-sampling of 1000, the path estimates and t-statistics were calculated to test the hypothesized relationships. The bootstrapping procedure is needed to be carried out in order to obtain standard errors to determine the significance of the coefficients and for the test of hypotheses (Hair et al., 2014). Figure 2 and table 3 illustrated the estimates for the structural model measurement. Based on the analysis, it shows that there is a relationship between knowledge management and job performance ( $\beta=0.470$ ,  $t=3.159$ ,  $p<0.01$ ). As a result, hypothesis H1 was supported.

Organization commitment is formally hypothesized to be a moderator in the relationship between knowledge management and job performance construct. Based on the provided steps, as can be seen from the table (table 3), the interaction between KM\*OC are negative.

Table3. Results of hypothesis testing

Hypothesis	Relationship	Std. Beta	Std. Error	t-value	Decision
H1	KM -> JP	0.470	0.149	3.159**	Supported
H2	KM * OC -> JP	-0.183	0.306	0.597	Not Supported

\*\* $p<0.01$ , \* $p<0.05$

## DISCUSSIONS

At the outset, Hypothesis 1 predicted that knowledge management is significantly influences job performance. The result revealed a significant relationship between knowledge management and job performance ( $\beta = 0.470$ ,  $t = 3.159$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), supporting Hypothesis 1. Hypothesis 1 predicted that organizational commitment significantly moderates the relationship between knowledge management and job performance. In contrast, no significant relationship between organizational commitment moderates knowledge management and job performance ( $\beta = -0.183$ ,  $t = 0.597$ ) was found, indicating no support for Hypothesis 2.

The second objective of this study was to investigate the moderating effect of organizational commitment on the relationship between knowledge management and job performance. This objective was also looks to test the second research hypothesis that is Hypothesis H2, which states

that organizational commitment moderates the association between knowledge management and job performance of the Malaysian local government authority officers. Unexpectedly, the present study did not find support for this hypothesis. Hence, Hypothesis H2 is not supported.

One possible reason for the absence of support for this hypothesized relationship might be because the individuals who had the high knowledge management appeared to be better with his/her job performance and does not need an organizational commitment to support it. Thus, in the current study, organizational commitment does not act as a buffer against the aversive effects of the knowledge management on the individual's job performance. The contribution of this study is valid for local government authority's officers in Malaysia not to enhance the value of organizational commitment as a moderator.

Another possible explanation for the lack of support for this hypothesized relationship pertains to the study conducted by Schmidt (2007) whereby he examined the moderating effect of affective organizational commitment on the association between work stress and strain. From the results, it showed that the main and interaction effect of commitment were not bound to specific indicators of strain and work stressors, but exhibit at least some degree of invariance across methodological-differences (Schmidt, 2007). These findings also have been linked with previous studies from Begley and Czajka (1993) and Siu (2002) as work stress is not significantly associated to commitment. In a nutshell, it revealed that employees with high commitment do not correlate with work stress they may experience stress as less as threatening and distributing since commitment provides them of stability, security and belonging (Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001). This result also in line with Ilyas (2013) whereby he found that organizational commitment does not moderate between person job fit and job satisfaction.

## **CONCLUSION, RECOMMENDATIONS AND FUTURE STUDY**

In conclusion, this study examines the factors which are expected to influence the association of job performance among the local government officers in public sectors. Applying PLS-SEM analysis technique, the findings illustrates there is one direct and significant impact on the public sector job performance and one moderating factor which is not significant. The significant factor is knowledge management while organizational commitment as a moderating was found not significant between knowledge management and job performance. The results imply that public sectors should enhance and strengths their officers with knowledge management skills and characteristics in order to develop positive job performance image amongst publics through the way of solving the problems or complaints. Indeed, the outcome of this research has provided a new contribution to the public sector, especially on the local government authority.

As a conclusion, this study had delivered the empirical evidence on the relationship between knowledge management and job performance. However, the moderating effect of organizational commitment between the association of knowledge management and job performance has been examined but no significant relationship emerged. This finding is in line with previous studies as no significant relationships exist among the variables of organizational commitment (Begley & Czajka (1993), Siu (2002) and Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001). The contribution of this study is valid for local government authority's officers in Malaysia not to enhance the value of organizational commitment as a moderator. Next, future study might explore other variables that could further enhance the adaption of organizational commitment concept in local government authority.

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