THE Predictors of Employee Commitment among Food Service Industry Workers in Monkayo, Davao de ORO

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the influence of employee empowerment and work orientation on employee commitment among food service workers in Monkayo, Davao de Oro. Utilizing a descriptive correlational research design, the study surveyed 185 employees from selected restaurants using adapted standardized questionnaires. Mean, Standard Deviation, Pearson product-moment correlation, and Multiple Regression Analysis were the statistical tools utilized to analyze the study results. Findings revealed that both employee empowerment, measured through indicators such as knowledge and skills, trust, job satisfaction, communication, incentives, and role clarity, and work orientation, comprising job, career, calling, social embeddedness, and busyness, significantly influence affective, continuance, and normative commitment. The results underscore the importance of fostering a supportive and empowering work environment to strengthen employee loyalty and performance. This study offers valuable insights for food industry managers seeking to improve workforce retention and engagement through strategic organizational practices. Furthermore, the regression model indicates that the combined effect of employee empowerment and work orientation explains 47% of the variation in employee commitment.

KEYWORDS: *Business Management, employee commitment, employee empowerment, work orientation, Philippines*

INTRODUCTION

Employee commitment plays a crucial role in business success, as it encourages individuals to support organizational goals, prioritize the company's interests, and actively contribute to its overall performance (Jatmiko et al.,

2020). The greatest asset of a company is its committed employees, which greatly boosts overall productivity and profitability (Estigoy & Sulasula, 2020). Committed employees tend to exert maximum effort, enhancing productivity and reducing turnover, especially when they feel respected and appreciated (Lao & Borbon, 2021).

In the food service industry, workers often face difficult customers with a courteous manner while enduring long hours, high demands, limited training, low or inconsistent pay, and job insecurity (Han et al., 2016). However, empowering employees has been demonstrated to improve commitment, increase employee engagement, and greatly enhance performance (Prathiba, 2016). In addition, Albasal et al. (2022) found that employee empowerment has a positive, significant impact on organizational commitment. However, work orientation has a significant impact on employee attitudes and behaviors, particularly on organizational commitment (Meyer et al., 2016).

Khan and Iqbal (2020) defined employee commitment (EC) as a multifaceted concept involving dedication to various organizational aspects, emphasizing the need to understand its factors and outcomes to strengthen overall commitment. Employee empowerment (EE) refers to providing employees with a sense of purpose, influence, support, and resources, thereby enhancing their engagement and encouraging positive behaviors that contribute to the organization's success (Abulwa & Susan, 2017). Moreover, employee empowerment (EE) is crucial for organizational success as it boosts employee commitment, job satisfaction, and performance. In addition, work orientation describes what a person seeks in their career (Schabram et al., 2023).

This study was anchored in the Three-Component Theory of Organizational Commitment by Allen and Meyer (1990), which posits that commitment comprises three dimensions: normative, affective, and continuance commitment. This study examines the relationship between work orientation and employee empowerment, as well as the predictors of employee commitment among food service industry workers in Monkayo, Davao de Oro, Philippines.

Purpose of the Study

The study specifically aimed to explore several key research questions. First, it examined the level of employee commitment among workers in the food service industry, focusing on three indicators: affective, normative, and continuance commitment. Second, it assessed the level of employee

empowerment across knowledge and skills, trust, job satisfaction, communication and information flow, incentives and rewards, and role clarity. Third, the study investigated the status of work orientation, including job, career, calling, social embeddedness, and busyness. Fourth, the study aimed to ascertain whether there is a significant correlation among the independent variables of employee empowerment (EE), work orientation, and employee commitment (EC). Lastly, the study aimed to determine whether these variables best predict employee commitment among workers in the food service industry.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design. This study employed a quantitative, descriptive-correlational design to examine the relationships and predictive influences among employee empowerment, work orientation, and employee commitment. Smith (2023) explained that the quantitative approach involves using numerical data and statistical methods to answer specific research questions and systematically analyze social phenomena. According to Sirisilla (2023), the descriptive component of the design mapped each variable as it existed at the time, identifying trends, patterns, and traits without attempting to determine causal relationships. Similarly, Fleetwood (2024) stated that a correlational approach demonstrated the type and degree of relationships between variables.

Research Locale. This study was conducted in the Municipality of Monkayo, Davao de Oro, specifically Barangay Poblacion, focusing on restaurants within the food industry. Municipal Planning and Development Office (2022): Poblacion is one of the most developed and populous barangays in Monkayo, hosting the majority of the municipality's commercial activities. This makes it a strategic area for collecting data on consumer behavior, employee practices, and business operations, especially in the food service sector. The study involved 185 workers from the food service industry in Monkayo, Davao de Oro. The study utilized simple random sampling. The respondents in this study were regular employees in the food industry who had worked with their company for at least one year. Those who had resigned, were employed by third-party organizations, or were not part of the food industry were excluded. The survey questionnaire, validated by experts, consists of three parts. Part I of the employee commitment scale was adapted from Joung et al. (2015), with 24 items and Cronbach's alpha coefficients of 0.921 for affective

commitment, 0.919 for continuance commitment, and 0.927 for normative commitment. Part II on employee empowerment, adapted from Shedid (2019), comprises 44 items and has an overall Cronbach's alpha of 0.70. Lastly, the part III work orientation was adapted from Willner et al. (2020), comprising 25 items and yielding an overall Cronbach's alpha of 0.82.

Data Collection. The researchers used the standard protocol of collecting the necessary data. The process begins with obtaining the Dean of the Graduate School of the University of Immaculate Conception's approval. Ethical clearance was obtained from the UIC Research Ethics Committee for the entire board's review of the study's moral aspects. Letters requesting research were sent to the human resources office or the owners of food service establishments in Monkayo, Davao de Oro. To accommodate participants' work demands, the survey was made accessible both on-site and at home, allowing workers to complete it at their convenience. Participants had sufficient time to independently evaluate the informed consent form (ICF) and the survey form. The researcher took a month to complete the data collection.

Ethical Considerations. This study is committed to upholding ethical standards in research by submitting the research protocol for review and approval by the UIC Research Ethics Committee (UIC-REC), as indicated by the assigned Protocol Code: GS-ER-02-25-0204. The research underwent a thorough ethical review to ensure compliance with the ten foundational ethical principles, namely: social value, informed consent, vulnerability issues, risk-benefit ratio, privacy and confidentiality of information, justice, transparency, researcher qualification, adequacy of facilities, and community involvement.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Levels of Employee Commitment, Employee Empowerment, and the Status of Work Orientation of the Workers

The overall mean level of employee commitment is 3.81, which is described as high, indicating that employee commitment in the food service industry is often evident. The standard deviation of 0.52 implies homogeneity of the responses. Affective commitment, with a highest category mean score of 3.86, which is considered high, indicates that workers generally feel emotionally attached to and involved with the organization. Normative commitment is also

described as high, with a category mean of 3.84, indicating that workers feel compelled to remain in their workplace due to financial concerns, limited alternatives, potential life disruptions, and the risk of significant personal sacrifices. Continuance commitment received a category mean of 3.73, indicating that respondents generally uphold traditional views on workplace loyalty and believe in staying committed to their current employer out of a sense of duty and ethical responsibility. This finding supports the study by Abuhashesh et al. (2019), which emphasized that employee loyalty is a crucial factor influencing attitudes and behaviors that ultimately impact the achievement of business goals, underscoring the importance of employee commitment. Additionally, the results support the study of Jatmiko et al. (2020), which found that committed employees exhibit a strong determination to work diligently toward organizational goals and demonstrate a deep sense of loyalty to their institution.

Table 1

Level of Employee Commitment, Level of Employee Empowerment, and the Status of Work Orientation of the Workers

Variables and Indicators	Mean	SD	Description
Employee Commitment (EC)	**3.81**	**.52**	**High**
Affective Commitment	3.86	.59	High
Continuance Commitment	3.84	.67	High
Normative Commitment	3.73	.68	High
Employee Empowerment (EE)	**3.73**	**.37**	**High**
Knowledge and Skills	3.67	.41	High
Trust	3.80	.67	High
Job Satisfaction	3.62	.45	High
Communication and Information Flow	3.64	.48	High
Incentives and Rewards	3.31	.59	Moderate
Role Clarity	4.35	.58	Very High
Work Orientation	**3.96**	**.46**	**High**
Job	4.02	.60	High
Career	4.11	.73	High
Calling	3.89	.72	High
Social Embeddedness	4.17	.68	High
Busyness	3.60	.89	High

The level of employee empowerment among workers in the food service industry was measured at an overall mean of 3.73 and a standard deviation of 0.37, both of which are considered high. Knowledge and skills were rated high,

with a mean of 3.67, suggesting that frontline employees generally feel equipped with the necessary training, skills, and organizational support to perform their roles effectively. Trust also scored high, with a mean of 3.80, indicating that employees generally feel trusted and respected by their supervisors, are empowered to make decisions independently, and perceive strong trust and collaboration within the organization. Job satisfaction revealed a high category mean of 3.62, implying that workers generally find their work satisfying, interesting, and rewarding, feel recognized and fairly compensated. However, some still occasionally consider leaving their jobs.

On the other hand, communication and information flow reveal a high category mean of 3.64, indicating workers generally experience open, clear, and timely communication in the workplace, which supports effective client service and encourages active employee involvement. Incentives and rewards reveal an overall mean score of 3.31, which is moderate. There is some recognition and performance-based rewards for employees, but there remains room to enhance the consistency and extent of incentives for contributions and efficiency. Lastly, role clarity received a very high score, with a category mean of 4.35, indicating that employees have a strong understanding of their job responsibilities and objectives, which supports greater efficiency and productivity in the workplace. The results support those of Mukwakungu et al. (2018), who discovered that employee empowerment enhances customer satisfaction, service quality, and overall organizational performance.

Moreover, the results on work orientation indicate a high overall status, with a mean score of 3.96 and a standard deviation of 0.46. It implies that the workers in the food service industry in Monkayo, Davao de Oro generally possess a strong work orientation, as they frequently demonstrate a sense of purpose, career ambition, and social connection through their work. Job gleaned a high category mean of 4.02, indicating that the workers are primarily motivated to work for financial reasons to support their lifestyles and families. Career also scored high, with a category mean of 4.11, indicating that workers are strongly driven by career advancement, aiming to gain higher positions, greater responsibilities, and greater influence in their professional field over time. Calling had the lowest, yet still high, reveal, with a category mean of 3.89, implying that the workers view their future work as meaningful and purposeful, often seeing it as a vital part of their identity and a way to contribute positively to society. Social embeddedness revealed a high category mean of 4.17, indicating that workers highly value social connection and a sense of belonging

in the workplace, seeking teamwork, familial work environments, and meaningful relationships with workmates. Among the dimensions, busyness, with a mean score of 3.60, had the highest score, suggesting that workers tend to associate their sense of purpose and productivity with being busy, often feeling bored or unfulfilled in the absence of work. This finding supports the study by Rodrigues et al. (2018), which asserts that work plays a vital role in shaping personal identity and serves as a central, purposeful activity that enables individuals to navigate the demands and challenges of a capitalist society.

Correlations Between Variables

The data in Table 2 presents the correlation results between Employee commitment and two key variables: Employee empowerment and Work orientation. The data show that both variables have a statistically significant, moderate relationship with employee commitment, with an R-value of .46, and a p-value of .00, which is less than the alpha set at .05, two-tailed, supporting a significant relationship. It means that as employee empowerment increases, employee commitment increases by 0.46. This implies that giving workers greater freedom, decision-making authority, and growth opportunities significantly increases their loyalty to the company and creates a more committed, driven workforce. This finding aligns with Hanaysha (2016), who found that employee empowerment positively influences organizational commitment, indicating that fostering an empowering workplace can greatly enhance employee loyalty and dedication. This finding further supports the study of Kumar and Kumar (2017), who found that employee empowerment was a motivating strategy that enhanced employees' sense of purpose in their work and their overall relationship with the organization.

Table 2

Correlations Between Variables

Variables Correlated with Employee Commitment	R	*p-value*	Remarks
Employee Empowerment and Employee Commitment	.46	.00	Significant
Work Orientation and Employee Commitment	.68	.00	Significant

Similarly, work orientation shows a strong, positive relationship with employee commitment ($r = .68$, $p < .05$). This suggests that as work orientation status increases, employee commitment increases significantly. This implies that

workers become more committed to their company the more they believe their work has meaning and purpose, and aligns with their own values and objectives. These findings align with those of Willner et al. (2020), who argue that an individual's work orientation shapes not only their daily job experience but also their organizational commitment, likelihood of engaging in citizenship behaviors, intentions to stay or leave, and overall job performance.

Influencers of Employee Commitment

The data in Table 3 pertains to the multiple regression analysis. In terms of singular capacity, employee empowerment shows a p-value of .075, which is greater than the .05 level of significance (2-tailed), with a positive standardized beta of 0.12. It shows that employee empowerment is not a significant predictor of employee commitment. It means that for every unit increase in employee empowerment, there is a corresponding insignificant increase of 0.12 in employee commitment among food service industry workers.

Table 3

Influencers of Employee Commitment

Variables	Standardized Coefficients	t	p-value	Remarks
Employee Empowerment	0.12	1.79	.075	Not Significant
Work Orientation	0.61	9.40	.000	Significant
r = .68				
r^2 = .47				
F = 80.00				Significant
p = .00				

However, in a singular capacity, the independent variable, work orientation, reflects a positive standardized beta value of .61 and a p-value of .00, which is less than the .05 level of significance, 2-tailed. In the singular, work orientation is a significant predictor of employee commitment among food service industry workers. This means that for every unit increase in the status of work orientation, there is a corresponding increase of .61 in the level of employee commitment among food service industry workers. As such, between the two independent variables, work orientation is a better predictor of employee commitment compared to employee empowerment.

In addition, the combined influence of the two independent variables, employee empowerment, and work orientation, as predictors of employee commitment is significant ($p < .05$). Meanwhile, the model explains 47 percent

of the variance of the employee commitment among food service industry workers as indicated by R2= .47. This means that 53 percent of the variance in employee commitment among the food service workers in Monkayo, Davao de Oro can be attributed to other factors aside from two independent variables used as predictors in this study.

The study's findings validate Allen and Meyer's (1990) three-component theory of organizational commitment. The study highlights how these factors interact to shape employees' affective, continuance, and normative commitment to their organization. The results show that workers in the food service industry have high levels of affective, continuance, and normative commitment, indicating a strong working relationship and employer encouragement. These high employee commitment levels can be understood as a relationship between managers or owners and workers, in which collaboration affects workers' overall commitment to the company.

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