

Antecedents and Consequence of Organization Learning Capability in a Malaysian Government-linked Company (GLC): A Case Study in Malaysia Airports Holdings Berhad

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ABSTRACT

The academic community and practitioners have displayed heightened attention towards organizational learning, especially as a tactical instrument. It is typically wielded in amplifying the principal competence of an organization and generating its driven benefits to achieve success. Extension in the field has resulted in the conceptualization of the organizational learning capability, which underlines the significance of the factors that expedite organizational learning or organizational inclination for learning. However, minimal amount of research has been done with focus on affiliated factors that may advance its progress despite documented literary values. Regardless, human resource management practices and servant leadership are some of the exemplary factors found to be strong predictors for organizational learning capability. Scholarly interest in correlating organizational learning capability with organizational commitment is also minimal, thereby necessitating deeper investigation to analyse such association. Recognizing the gap in linking or integration among human resource management practices, servant leadership, organizational learning capability and organizational commitment together, this has spurred this research, which aimed to explore the antecedents of organizational learning capability and its resulting aftermath in Malaysia Airport Holdings Berhad. Data collection was undertaken by implementing the quantitative approaches consecutively using a sample of 330 employees of the organization. Then, the PLS-SEM software (Partial Least Square - Structural Equation Modelling) was employed to analyse the hypotheses. It culminated in outcomes that supported the all-inclusive hypothesized relationships between the two predictors, i.e., human resource practices and servant leadership respectively and organizational learning capability. A correlation between organizational learning capability and organizational commitment was found. Moreover, this work has also contributed theoretically in several ways, thus imparting supplementary insight regarding the antecedents and aftermath of organizational learning

capability specifically in a Malaysian Glc. In a nutshell, this research contributed in further augmenting the comprehensive landscape of antecedents and aftermath of organizational learning capability in Malaysia.

Key Words: *Organizational learning capability, human resource management practices, servant leadership, organizational commitment*

ABSTRAK

Pembelajaran organisasi telah menarik perhatian dan minat di kalangan para ahli akademik dan pengamal industri, dan dilihat sebagai pendekatan strategik bagi meningkatkan kekompetenan organisasi dan mencipta kelebihan bersaing sesebuah organisasi untuk berjaya. Lanjutan dari kajian pembelajaran organisasi ini, konsep keupayaan pembelajaran organisasi muncul dengan memberi penekanan kepada faktor-faktor pemboleh pembelajaran organisasi atau pencetus kepada organisasi untuk belajar. Walaupun bidang ini diperakui kepentingannya, namun penumpuan terhadap kajian ini masih ada kekurangan terutamanya kajian faktor-faktor yang berkaitan untuk memperkembangkan bidang ini. Faktor seperti amalan pengurusan sumber manusia dan kepimpinan *servant* dikenalpasti sebagai perkaitan yang kuat terhadap keupayaan pembelajaran organisasi. Selain itu, kajian menunjukkan hanya sedikit kajian yang menumpukan perkaitan di antara keupayaan pembelajaran organisasi dan komitmen organisasi. Justeru, kajian yang lebih mendalam diperlukan untuk menganalisa perkaitan yang berkenaan. Dengan mengenalpasti adanya jurang kajian yang menghubungkan dan mengintegrasikan amalan pengurusan sumber manusia, kepimpinan *servant* dan komitmen organisasi, maka kajian ini dijalankan bertujuan untuk mengkaji peramal keupayaan pembelajaran organisasi dan hasilnya di Malaysia Airport Holdings Berhad. Kajian kuantitatif diaplikasikan untuk pengumpulan data secara perkadaran dengan sampel seramai 330. Perisian PLS-SEM (*Partial Least Square-Structural Equation Modelling*) diaplikasikan untuk mengkaji hipotesis kajian. Dapatan kajian menyokong keseluruhan hipotesis hubungan di antara dua peramal iaitu amalan pengurusan sumber manusia dan kepimpinan *servant* terhadap keupayaan pembelajaran organisasi. Pembelajaran organisasi didapati turut berkaitan dengan komitmen organisasi. Kajian ini membuat beberapa sumbangan teoritikal dan memberikan pengisian berkenaan penyebab dan hasil keupayaan pembelajaran organisasi khususnya di syarikat-berkaitan kerajaan Malaysia. Pendek kata, kajian ini membantu memberikan gambaran yang lebih menyeluruh berkenaan penyebab dan hasil pembelajaran organisasi di Malaysia.

Kata kunci: *Keupayaan pembelajaran organisasi, amalan pengurusan sumber manusia, kepimpinan servant, komitmen organisasi*

INTRODUCTION

The concept of organizational learning capability has enriched the new features of the business environment. In achieving a sustainable competitive advantage, organizational learning capability has been recognized as an essential means to gain today's competitive business environment (Guinot, Chiva & Mallén, 2016). Indeed, organizational learning capabilities have been subjected to the attention of research as it contributes to the survival and sustainability of an

organization (Khalib, et al, 2015). Recent scrutiny on organizational learning capability in Malaysia is attributable in part to the extended perception of organizations and industry members in sustaining their competitiveness and utilizing the volatile circumstances. Zulkarnain et al. (2016) asserted that limited research has been conducted particularly at any government-linked companies in Malaysia because these companies tend to undermine the importance of organizational learning capability as the sustainability practices due to bigger concern on others more importance goals to achieve, despite the fact that they are an integral part of the Malaysian economic engine. This calls for a detailed investigation regarding its role as an antecedent that had guided some organizations to emerge triumphant from the international financial crisis, or its capacity as the fundamental framework to ensure business continuity across different external changes posing either positive or negative impacts on organizations (Khalib et al, 2015; Hooi & Ngui, 2014; Arshad, 2007; Ngui, 2008).

Scholars for organizational learning capability have customarily explored organizational commitment by emphasising it as a focal sub-attitudinal factor required to allow successful change management (Massingham & Diment, 2009). Joo and Shim (2010) is also of the agreement that organizational learning capability is a vital construct for organizational commitment, while Argote (2011) has indicated that its focal importance towards achieving organizational success underlines the need for a deeper understanding of the term. This will undeniably enhance organizational performance and personnel welfare. Thus, this calls for more concentrated efforts in understanding the effect of organizational learning capability upon organizational commitment.

Thus, this study aimed to integrate the relationship among human resource management practices, servant leadership, organizational learning capability and organizational commitment in a Malaysian government-linked company specifically at Malaysia Airports Holdings Berhad by empirically examining the antecedents or determining factors towards organizational learning capability and how the latter impacts on the organizational commitment. Specifically, the objectives of the study are as below:

- 1) To examine the relationship between the human resource management practices and organizational learning capability at Malaysia Airports Holdings Berhad.
- 2) To examine the relationship between servant leadership and organizational learning capability in the context of Malaysia Airports Holdings Berhad.
- 3) To examine the relationship between organizational learning capability and organizational commitment of Malaysia Airports Holdings Berhad.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Several gaps in the existing organizational learning capability literature have prompted this research to be undertaken. Guinot et al. (2016) asserted that the effective development of that capability has not been sufficiently analyzed in the organizational learning literature. There are considerable interests in the existing organizational studies which have empirically demonstrated the influence of human resource management practices and servant leadership on organizational learning capability while the latter impact on organizational commitment. However, despite the increasing number of studies to link the constructs, there has been no direct measurement or

integration of the relationship among human resource management practices, servant leadership, organizational learning capability, and organizational commitment (Hashim, 2015).

(1) Human Resource Management Practices and Organizational Learning Capability

Despite human resource management practices playing a central role in influencing the capacity of the organization to generate new knowledge and stimulate learning (López-Cabrales et al., 2011), however there is little attention given to its important role in determining the organizational learning capability, hence specific linkages between human resource management practices and the organizational learning have not been clearly made (Theriou & Chatzoglou, 2008). This is because the majority of the human resource management research had been focused on the degree to which these human resource practices can enhance individual and organizational performance (Joarder, Sharif & Ahmed, 2011). Kuo (2011) findings indicate HRM strategies result in better organizational learning through the five major constructs which were found to be the most extensively used constructs to measure HRM, personnel staffing, performance appraisal, reward and compensation, training & development and employee participation. In López-Cabrales, Real and Valle (2011), empirical analysis had demonstrated the direct association of HRM practices such as the selection of personnel and competence-based appraisals with the organizational learning capability. While Theriou and Chatzoglou (2008) asserted that human resource management practices effectively act as a trigger toward effective organizational learning processes, of some important variables that can influence human resource managers' way of thinking. This discussion leads the author to formulate the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis (H₁): A significant relationship between human resource management practices and organizational learning capability.

(2) Servant leadership and Organizational Learning Capability

Equally, the servant leadership had played a role in determining the organizational learning capability. Servant leadership in the lens of institutional model is very much relevant as it crosses all boundaries and organizations are now evolving to where humanistic approaches are favoured (Spears, 2012), anchored in the human drive to bond with others and contribute to the betterment of the society (Mittal and Dorfman, 2012). Despite the phenomenon of the model of transformational leadership in recent years, which was widely established and implemented among leaders in organizations, servant leadership behavior can be seen as the better choice to address the people issue. As suggested by Abdul Mutalib and Wan Razali (2012), servant leadership needs to be brought forward as a very important concept and further research on empirical data should be conducted to discover whether it is applicable in different cultural and religious contexts. It is systematically undefined and not yet supported by much empirical research. Choudhary et al. (2012) relates empirically the transformational leader and servant leadership to organizational learning capability. The studies revealed that servant leadership influence followers, empower followers, encourage them for good performance, communicate, and listen to subordinates. The finding showed that servant leadership behavior has a positive impact on organizational learning capability. Ahmad and Ogunsola (2011) assessed three leadership approaches in one of the international universities in Malaysia i.e., transformational, transactional, and servant-leadership approaches. The result shows the servant leadership approach is more dominant in leaders in the university. It is found that the transformational and

transactional leadership approaches have not been perceived as neglected. They are used when situations demand that added further value of flexibility to allow leaders to respond to the changing circumstances of environmental and group dynamics (Ahmad & Ogunsola, 2011). The findings of this research have also suggested that servant leadership approach is preferably used in conjunction with the alternative Bass's transactional and transformational leadership approach.

Based on the arguments and views, it is hypothesized that servant leadership to have a relationship with organizational learning capability as the following:

Hypothesis (H₂): A significant relationship between servant leadership and organizational learning capability.

(3) Organizational Learning Capability and Organizational Commitment

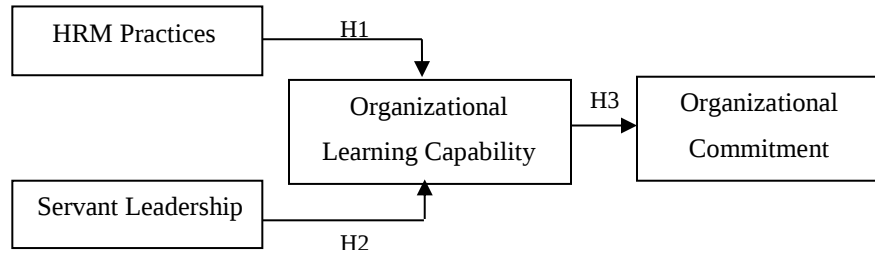
In the outcome context of organizational learning capability, various works (Krishna & Casey, 2008; Joo & Shim, 2010; Ussahawanitchakit, 2008) have highlighted that the relationship between organizational learning capability and organizational commitment remained as a less-delved matter and lacks a comprehensive investigation for further analysis. Despite organizational commitment being extensively worked on, it remains a vital outcome variable capable of influencing the human capital retention in organizations, thus necessitating further efforts (Bhatnagar, 2007).

In Kalyar, Rafi and Ahmad (2012) findings have revealed that organizational commitment is positively predicted by organizational learning. The result suggests that to keep pace with the changing environment, organizations need to remain flexible and improve their employees' commitment via organizational learning in gaining and sustaining competitive advantage. This finding is supported by Talat, Khan, Ahmad and Ahmed (2013) which asserted that to enhance the employee's commitment towards their organization the importance of organizational learning culture cannot be ignored. The result revealed a positive and significant association between organizational learning and organizational commitment among employees working in the Malaysian banking sector. Similarly, Krishna (2008) found a positive relationship and statistically significance between these two concepts in Indian software firms at organizational levels. Camps and Rodríguez (2011) attempted to link between organizational learning capability and organizational commitment in Spain. It is concluded that the employees will be committed to the employer given trust and investment when employees work in an atmosphere of learning. Thus, it is likely that the more employees perceive an organization have the capability to learn, the higher they are psychologically attached to their organization. Hence, this discussion leads the author to formulate the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis (H₃): A significant relationship between organizational learning capability and organizational commitment.

Based on the above discussion, it leads to the development of the research framework of this research illustrated in Figure 1 as shown below:

FIGURE 1: Research Framework



Source: Adapted from Chiva et al. (2007), Dierendonck et al. (2011), and Meyer and Allen (1991)

METHODOLOGY

This research is considered as an exploratory study at the organizational level, scoped to an established Malaysian government-linked company, which was conducted at Malaysia Airports Holdings Berhad and its subsidiaries. Thus the target group was at the executive and managerial level i.e. excluding non-executive level in the organization which encompasses of holding company and the subsidiaries of Malaysia Airports Holdings Berhad. This quantitative work described as a cross-sectional study as data collection was done over specific time duration to ensure it was tailored to the research objectives outline. The population of interest for the sampling frame was obtained from the HR Manpower database of the Human Resource Services Department, Malaysia Airports Holdings Berhad. Based on Krejcie and Morgan (1970) table and sample size formula, the target population samples encompassing the executives and above of Malaysia Airports Holdings Berhad which was recorded to a total of 330 individuals. Questionnaires were adopted per previous literature so as to suit the research sample, and were previously utilised or empirically tested. A total of 56 scale items were consequently employed for construct measurement in this study. In analysing data, the first phase of the research was undertaken by utilising the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 20.0 to generate an analysis of the descriptive data obtained. Subsequently, the second phase had utilised the Partial Least Square - Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) to conduct hypotheses testing as outlined previously. The process was expedited by the powerful statistical methodology, which was known for its user-friendliness in conducting second generation multivariate statistical analysis.

EMPIRICAL RESULTS

Error! Reference source not found. Table 1 presents a profile of respondents. All information is presented in actual figures and percentages to facilitate interpretation. The sample consists of a total of 330 respondents. The majority (86%) among the executives are Malay executives and senior executives with tertiary educations. Another (14%) encompasses assistant manager, manager and senior manager. Finally, in term of division/or subsidiaries distribution, the biggest respondents are Malaysia Airport (MA) Sepang (34%), followed by Malaysia Airports Holdings

Berhad (21%), Malaysia Airports Sdn Bhd (18%), MA Niaga (12%), and others divisions (15%). Based on the number of percentages indicated, the stratified sample in this research is believed to be representative of, and in accordance with the total number of target population for each division/or subsidiaries

TABLE 1: Profile of Respondents

Demographic profile	Number of respondents (N=330)	Valid Percentage (%)
Gender:		
Male	214	65
Female	116	35
Age:		
25 and below	23	7
26-35	127	39
36-45	120	36
46-55	50	15
56 and above	10	3
Race:		
Malay	291	88
Chinese	20	6
Indian	12	4
Others	7	2
Education:		
Diploma	119	36
Bach degree	156	47
Master	27	8
Others	28	9
Position:		
Executive	193	59
Senior Executive	89	27
Assistant Manager	2	1
Manager	31	9
Senior Manager	15	5
Division:		
Malaysia Airports Holdings Berhad	69	21
MA Sepang Sdn Bhd	113	34
Malaysia Airports Sdn bhd	59	18
MA Niaga Sdn Bhd	39	12
MA Properties Sdn Bhd	6	2
MAAH	6	2
MACS	3	1
UTW Sdn Bhd	34	10
Others	1	0

(4) Assessment of Convergent Validity

A measurement model has satisfactory internal consistency reliability when the composite reliability (CR) of each construct exceeds the threshold value of 0.7. TABLE 2 shows that the CR of each construct for this study ranges from 0.873 to 0.907, and this is above the recommended threshold value of 0.7. Thus, the results indicate that the items used to represent the constructs have satisfactory internal consistency reliability.

TABLE 2: Convergent Validity

Construct	Items	Loadings	AVE	CR
Human resource management practices			0.580	0.891
<i>Recognition</i>	REC1	0.867	0.766	0.868
	REC2	0.883		
<i>Empowerment</i>	EP1	0.866	0.705	0.827
	EP2	0.812		
<i>Competence development</i>	COM1	0.799	0.651	0.848
	COM3	0.846		
<i>Performance management</i>	PM1	0.915	0.829	0.907
	PM2	0.906		
<i>Fair rewards</i>	FR1	0.927	0.854	0.921
	FR2	0.921		
<i>Staffing and selection</i>	SS1	0.897	0.806	0.892
	SS2	0.898		
Servant leadership			0.588	0.907
<i>Empowerment</i>	EMP1	0.845	0.722	0.912
	EMP2	0.873		
	EMP3	0.84		
	EMP4	0.84		
<i>Standing back</i>	SB1	0.897	1.000	1.000
<i>Accountability</i>	ACC1	0.617	1.000	1.000
<i>Courage</i>	COU1	0.69	1.000	1.000
<i>Authenticity</i>	AUT1	0.7	1.000	1.000
<i>Humility</i>	HUM1	0.895	0.802	0.924
	HUM2	0.873		
	HUM3	0.918		
<i>Stewardship</i>	STE1		1.000	1.000
Organizational learning capability			0.584	0.874
<i>Experimentation</i>	EXP1	0.922	0.853	0.921
	EXP2	0.926		
<i>Risk taking</i>	RIS1	0.924	0.817	0.899

	RIS2	0.883		
<i>Interaction with external environment</i>	IEE2	0.56	0.736	0.848
	IEE3	0.887		
<i>Dialogue</i>	DIA1	0.825	0.685	0.897
	DIA2	0.847		
	DIA3	0.836		
	DIA4	0.802		
<i>Participative decision making</i>	PDM1	0.839	0.721	0.886
	PDM2	0.826		
	PDM3	0.882		
Organizational commitment			0.463	0.873
	AC2	0.705		
	AC3	0.713		
	AC4	0.634		
	AC7	0.712		
	CC3	0.715		
	CC4	0.658		
	CC5	0.642		
	CC6	0.658		

^a Average variance extracted (AVE) = (summation of the square of the factor loadings)/{(summation of the square of the factor loadings) + summation of the error variances)}

^b Composite reliability (CR) = (square of the summation of the factor loadings)/{(square of the summation of the factor loadings) + (square of the summation of the error variances)}

(5) Assessment of Discriminant Validity

The discriminant validity of the measurement model utilised in this work was evaluated using two methods, specifically the standards outlined by Fornell and Larcker (1981) and via cross loading. Its validity may be evidenced by two manners: 1) the square root of the AVE value was greater than the association between the measure with the remaining measures, and 2) the loading of the indicator was higher in comparison to their corresponding construct in contrast to other constructs. In Table 3 as below, the bolded factors demonstrate the square root of the AVE values, whereas the non-bolded values indicate the inter-correlation values between the constructs. Therefore, it was evident that all off-diagonal factors were lesser than the square roots of AVE values, specifically the bolded diagonal values. Thus, this ascertained that Fornell and Larcker's standards were satisfied accordingly.

TABLE 3: Discriminant Validity (Correlation Matrix)

	HRM	OC	OLC	SL
Human resource management practices (HRM)	0.762			
Organizational commitment (OC)	0.538	0.680		
Organizational learning capability (OLC)	0.642	0.598	0.764	
Servant leadership (SL)	0.693	0.493	0.588	0.767

Note: Diagonals (bold) represent the square root of the AVE, while the off-diagonals represent

the correlations.

(6) Path Coefficient and Hypothesis Testing

As per Table 4, all proposed hypotheses were substantiated, whereby they displayed significance at the level of 0.01 at least, the anticipated sign directions (i.e. positive), and the path coefficient value (β) that ranged from **0.275** to **0.598**.

TABLE 4: Path Coefficients and Hypotheses Testing

Hypothesis	Relationship	Coefficient	t value	Supported
H ₁	Human resource management practices > Organizational learning capability	0.451	7.7013	YES
H ₂	Servant leadership > Organizational learning capability	0.275	4.7408	YES
H ₃	Organizational learning capability > Organizational Commitment	0.598	14.7117	YES

t-values > 1.645* (p<0.05); t-values > 2.33** (p<0.01)

CONCLUSION

Three hypotheses were established in testing the antecedents and outcome of organizational learning capability. The processes or more had accurately the capability of organizational learning is in existence at Malaysia Airport Holdings Berhad. Though it is not complete, but the emergence to strengthen the organizational learning capability is prevailed. This study had initiated several implications of significant interest for business organizations that highlighted learning as a potential climate for survival. Malaysia Airports Holdings Berhad in particular had displayed interest in the outcomes obtained in the study due to its capacity to impart enhanced understanding regarding inspiring and refining learning capability in the organizational population. This would be achieved by determining the manner in which these antecedents may affect the capability, as well as the manner in which learning may nurture organizational commitment.

Despite the author's utmost efforts, this work remained associated with limitations and restrictions. Thus, the importance of understanding the impact of organizational learning capability and the manner in which it was influenced across time was undeniable. This was specifically due to the constant transformation of learning, which subsequently called for the inclusion of a longitudinal study setting in the future. Such measure may be useful in reaffirming the consistency of the constructs and their correlated relationships across time, as well as continuously assessing the influence of changes.

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