

THE ANTECEDENTS OF AFFECTIVE COMMITMENT THROUGH COHESIVENESS ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE IN THE HOTEL INDUSTRY: JOB SATISFACTION AS A MEDIATOR

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Abstract: This study aims to explore the direct impact of cohesiveness organizational culture (COC) on both employee job satisfaction (JS) and employee affective commitment (AC) within the hotel industry, as well as the indirect impact of (COC) on (AC) through its effect on (JS). A quantitative research methodology was employed, and self-administered surveys were utilized and distributed to a randomly selected sample of employees. Data were collected from 438 of hospitality sector employees. The structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM V.4) was used to examine the interrelationships between variables and to examine the research hypotheses. The SEM results showed that (COC) has a positive impact on (AC) and (JS), and (JS) has a positive and significant impact on (AC). Moreover, (JS) partially mediates the relationship between (COC) and (AC). These findings offer valuable insights for organizational leaders and HR practitioners, in order to create a more committed and motivated workforce, leading to improved organizational performance and reduced turnover rates.

Keywords: Cohesiveness Organizational Culture, affective commitment, job satisfaction, hotel industry

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INTRODUCTION

Human resources are pivotal in securing the enduring prosperity of businesses within the hospitality industry. Nowadays, there's a pressing need to cultivate an organizational culture conducive to effective human resource management. Fostering a supportive organizational culture is paramount for sustaining a competitive edge in the market. It's crucial to establish an organizational culture that fosters maximum support and ongoing enhancement within the firm. The long-term advancement of an organization hinges on its cultural framework, given its substantial impact on employee dedication, cohesiveness, commitment, and retention within the firm (Arifin, 2015; Reidhead, 2020).

When an organization offers flexibility, it creates a cohesive work environment where employees can enjoy both unity and independence without experiencing any burdens. Since hospitality industry is recognized as a labor intensive industry, the success of a hotel largely relies on its employees, it's essential to cultivate a culture that enables them to work with wholehearted commitment and dedication (Braithwaite et al., 2017). Organizational culture forms an integral aspect of the overarching organizational structure. It acts as a catalyst for promoting teamwork, nurturing member relationships, fostering professional development, and facilitating communication across diverse groups (Watanabe, 2024).

According to Kontoghiorghes (2016), organizational culture comprises a blend of values, beliefs, work methodologies, and relationships that distinguish one company from another, such as organizational cohesiveness. Cohesion, as defined by Corey (1992) and Bravo et al. (2019), represents the collective strength of team members' commitment to their team and maintain enthusiasm for collaborating together. Research by Clark et al. (2009) characterizes cohesion as the emotional and mental force that inspires employees to remain within a group, forging strong bonds among teammates. It stands out as the most influential factor in group dynamics, continually evolving as a dynamic process. Teams with high cohesion, as noted by Keller (1986), demonstrate increased support among members, fostering collaboration towards shared objectives.

Job satisfaction stems from employees' perceptions of the significance of their job performance and its impact on work outcomes (Siswanto and Yuliana, 2022). It reflects individuals' emotional response to their job and is manifested through a positive attitude toward their job and the elements within their work environment (Alamir et al., 2019; Banks et al., 2016; Siswanto and Yuliana, 2022). In this context, Hartika et al (2022) emphasized the crucial importance of

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effectively managing employees, highlighting them as valuable assets for any company. One of the things that must be the main attention to the company is job satisfaction with its employees, because employees who do not feel comfortable at work, may struggle to unleash their full potential and consequently find it difficult to concentrate and fully engage with their work. For that reason, monitoring job satisfaction is imperative for every organization as it influences absenteeism, employee turnover, morale, grievances, and other critical organizational issues (Alamir et al., 2019; Banks et al., 2016; Siswanto and Yuliana, 2022; Mickson et al., 2020; Sim and Lee, 2018). Affective commitment is emotional engagement with a company's values and goals and an employee's identification with the company (Dick and Metcalfe, 2001). It refers to the emotional bond an employee forms with the organization. Consequently, they feel deeply connected to the organization's objectives and are inclined to remain an integral part of it (Adekola, 2012). Budur (2022) pointed out that the affective commitment denotes the emotional connection and sense of affiliation individuals foster with their organization.

It involves a profound attachment characterized by loyalty, identification, and enthusiasm towards the organization's objectives and principles (Harrison et al., 2022). Employees displaying high levels of affective commitment are motivated by a genuine passion for their work and a strong inclination to contribute to the organization's success (Meredith et al., 2023). Lahmar et al. (2023) suggest that AC nurtures a sense of mutual concern and reciprocity between employees and their organization, leading to increased job satisfaction, motivation, and ultimately, improved organizational performance.

Scholarly literature has highlighted a scarcity of studies investigating the correlation between organizational culture and affective commitment within the Gulf region, particularly with limited focus on Saudi Arabia. This research aims to fill this gap by specifically exploring these dynamics within the context of Saudi Arabian hotels. By doing so, it seeks to enrich the existing body of knowledge. This study endeavors to examine whether a cohesive organizational culture can predict affective commitment among hotel employees and whether job satisfaction serves as a mediator in this relationship. Such exploration may deepen our comprehension of the factors driving engagement among hotel employees, thereby facilitating the improvement of working conditions.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

1. Social exchange theory

Social exchange theory (SET) stands as one of the foremost influential conceptual frameworks in comprehending workplace behavior (Cropanzano and Mitchell, 2005). This research is theoretically underpinned by social exchange theory, which provides a theoretical framework for understanding various organizational interactions, posits that human relationships are formed by the exchange of resources, which can include tangible rewards and intangible rewards, such as respect and support. These relationships encompass interactions between employers and employees, among coworkers, and between employees and supervisors, and according to SET, the exchanges within a team—such as support, information, and emotional backing - contribute to these bonds. When team members feel that their contributions are valued and reciprocated, they are more likely to develop strong connections with one another. High cohesiveness can enhance collaboration, improve communication (Clydesdale, 2020). According to this theory, when individuals are treated well, they feel compelled to reciprocate such treatment, and they perceive a positive exchange environment, they are more likely to embrace and contribute to a positive organizational culture. Additionally, the theory suggests that satisfied employees are more likely to remain with the organization, and will show fully engage with their work, reflecting a reciprocal exchange of positive feelings, and suggests that creating a fair and equitable work environment can enhance job satisfaction, leading to increased motivation and productivity (Kartika and Purba, 2018). Which we can understand from that Social Exchange Theory provides a useful framework for understanding how the dynamics of exchange within an organization affect cohesiveness, culture, and job satisfaction.

2. Cohesiveness Organizational Culture and affective commitment

Organizational culture stands out as a crucial element contributing to heightened employee commitment, especially during a scarcity of skilled workers, where commitment serves as a significant indicator of enhanced loyalty and retention. Nevertheless, there exists a scarcity of research delving into the global perspective of the correlation between cohesiveness organizational culture and affective commitment (Dunger, 2023). Sutan Ardani (2017) carried out a study exploring the relationship between organizational culture, cohesiveness team and organizational commitment within Bank Negara Indonesia. The results revealed that organizational culture had a direct and positive impact on organizational commitment. Lee et al. (2018) further examined the relationship between organizational culture and affective commitment among employees working in three high-technology companies in China. The result of the study indicated that, organizational culture significantly impacts affective commitment. In addition, Dunger (2023) investigate the relationship between team cohesion as one of the organizational cultural dimensions and organizational commitment among employees from nine industries in Germany, and affirmed that cohesion culture positively and significantly influence organizational commitment. This raises the question of whether this relationship may exist in another industry, such as the hospitality industry. Accordingly, the following hypothesis was proposed:

H1: COC has a positive and direct effect on AC

3. Cohesiveness Organizational Culture and job satisfaction

Many studies have linked organizational culture to job satisfaction. Zumrah and Boyle (2015) posit that a positive company culture can enhance employee engagement and satisfaction. Schuster et al. (2016) further assert that satisfied employees within an organization's culture are motivated to go the extra mile, improving business performance compared to

competitors. This assertion is supported by Mas-Machuca et al. (2016), who affirm in their study that a positive organizational culture is closely associated with heightened employee satisfaction. Furthermore, Belias et al. (2015) have established a link between organizational culture and employee satisfaction, proposing that job satisfaction mirrors organizational culture, as satisfaction across different work aspects correlates with organizational elements. Additional studies, such as those by Avram et al. (2015), have similarly shown significant connections between job satisfaction and corporate culture. Research by Tran (2021) explored the relationship between organizational culture and job satisfaction among employees across various sector organizations in Vietnam. The findings suggest that adhocracy culture positively influences job satisfaction, whereas clan and market cultures have negligible predictive power on job satisfaction. In another study, Pawirosumarto et al. (2017) analyzed the influence of organizational culture on job satisfaction within Parador Hotels and Resorts, Indonesia. The findings reveal a positive and notable correlation between organizational culture and job satisfaction. Moreover, Li and Tresirichod (2024) explored the relationship between organizational culture, job performance, and job satisfaction of employees in the food industry of private enterprises in Sichuan, and proved that organizational culture has a positive impact on both employee job performance and job satisfaction and significantly affects job satisfaction through job performance. Conversely, Bigliardi et al. (2012) asserted that a bureaucratic organizational culture adversely affects job satisfaction, whereas innovative or supportive organizational cultures yield positive effects. This finding holds true for all workers within the research and development functions of pharmaceutical companies. In a direct study of the effect of group cohesion on job satisfaction, Iskandar (2019) proved that there is direct effect of group cohesiveness on job satisfaction among employees on human resource development agency of Ministry of Home Affairs in Indonesia. This raises the question whether the culture of cohesion in hotels can have a positive or negative impact on employees. Therefore, it would be proposed that:

H2: COC has a positive and direct effect on JS

4. Job satisfaction and affective commitment

With a reflective view of the organizational and administrative literature, there's a consistent link between job satisfaction and organizational commitment. While research suggests that job satisfaction can predict organizational commitment, it's unclear whether improving job satisfaction leads to greater organizational commitment or if higher levels of commitment come before increased job satisfaction (Billingsley and Cross, 1992). Lima and Allida (2021) delved into this relationship in a study focused on employees of a specific higher educational institution in Northwest Haiti. Their results unveiled a strong, positive connection between job satisfaction and affective commitment. Research conducted in Malaysia revealed that among 10 job-related factors, satisfaction with salary was the only one found to have a noteworthy positive correlation with affective commitment among employees in Sarawak's tourism industry (Lew, 2007). Furthermore, Chordiya et al. (2017) expanded on this by investigating the link between job satisfaction and affective organizational commitment across four states in the US and in India. Their findings indicated that job satisfaction significantly bolsters affective organizational commitment in both countries. This research represents the first attempt to explore the mediating role of job satisfaction in the relationship between cohesive organizational culture and affective commitment. While previous research has established links between organizational culture and commitment, the specific pathway through job satisfaction remains underexplored. By investigating how a cohesive culture influences employees' job satisfaction, which in turn strengthens their emotional attachment to the organization, this research aims to fill a critical gap in understanding the dynamics that drive affective commitment in the workplace. These discussions can be formulated into the following hypotheses:

H3: JS has a positive and direct effect on AC

H4: JS mediates the relationship between COC and AC

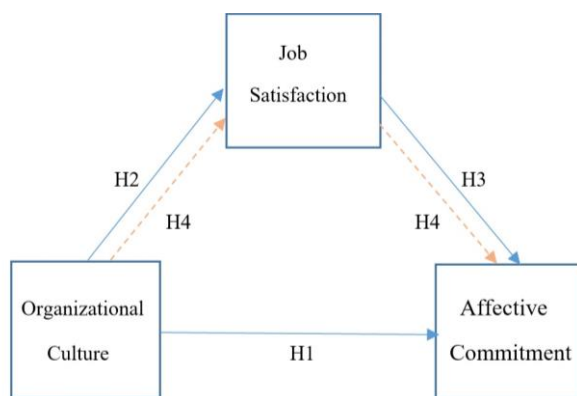


Figure 1. Research Conceptual Framework

METHODOLOGY

1. Measurement model and scale development

The study's survey was divided into three distinct sections. The initial part provided an overview of the research objectives and the necessary guidelines for completing the survey. The second part focused on gathering information about the demographic characteristics of the participants. The third part of the study involved investigating various aspects. A 5-point Likert scale was employed, with a rating of 1 indicating "strongly disagree" and a rating of 5 representing "strongly agree". In relation to the Cohesiveness organizational culture (COC) scale, five items were

utilized, which were developed by Bavik (2016). Additionally, the affective commitment (AC) scale, consisting of five items, was adopted from Meyer et al. (2002). The job satisfaction (JS) scale, adapted from Meyer et al. (2002), employed four items. The reliability of the measurements used in this study was checked to make sure they were consistent. They did this using a statistical method and got results that showed good reliability (around 0.8 or higher). To ensure the survey's consistency and user-friendliness, it underwent evaluation by university professors and hospitality experts. Finally, to ensure the survey accurately captured the intended concepts, they looked at how people responded and made some adjustments to the wording and order of the questions based on that feedback.

2. Research sample and data collection method

Data has been collected from deluxe hotels in Saudi Arabia, specifically in Alhasa. The reason for selecting this sector is due to the labor-intensive nature of the hotel industry, which heavily relies on human resources for various service-oriented functions. This reliance is particularly influenced by factors such as employees' cohesiveness organizational culture (COC), their satisfaction (JS), and their affective commitment (AC). The participants for this study were selected using a convenience sampling technique, based on their availability and willingness to participate. The data collection process began in September 2023 and lasted for two months. A total of 500 surveys were distributed, out of which 438 were completed, resulting in an impressive response rate of (87.6%). It is worth noting that there were no missing data in the completed surveys. The study's sample size of 438 valid responses followed Nunnally's (Nunnally and Bernstein, 1994) guideline, which recommends a ratio of 1:10 between the number of items in the measurement instrument and the sample size. Considering that the survey consisted of 14 items, a sample size of at least 140 participants was deemed appropriate. Among the 438 valid responses, it was observed that (77.1%) of the respondents identified as male, totaling 337 employees, while (23.9%) identified as female, totaling 101 employees. The majority of respondents, accounting for (83.9%), fell within the age range of 26 to over 40 years. In terms of educational level, a significant proportion of respondents (70.2%) possessed a bachelor's degree. Additionally, a considerable proportion of respondents (72.6%) had 1-5 years of experience, as shown in Table (1).

Table 1. Students' Profile *(N= 438)

		Freq.	%
Gender	Male	337	77.1
	Female	101	23.9
Age	20 to25 Years	70	16.1
	26 to 40 Years	283	64.5
	Over 40 Years	85	19.4
Educational Level	Diploma Degree	103	23.5
	Bachelor Degree	308	70.2
	Post-graduate Degree	27	6.3
Work Experience	Less than 1 Year	50	11.3
	From 1-5 Years	318	72.6
	Over 5 Years	70	16.1

Table 2. Measurement Mode

Scale Variables and Items	Outer Loading	α	CR	AVE	VIF
Cohesiveness Organizational Culture (COC)		0.881	0.841	0.652	
The hotel provides a warm and welcoming atmosphere, reminiscent of a close-knit family.	0.862				1.562
In the workplace, my colleagues prioritize directness and honesty when engaging with one another.	0.969				2.311
In times of high workload, we support each other.	0.985				2.351
The act of working in a team instills a sense of certainty in my job.	0.881				1.085
The hotel fosters a welcoming and amicable atmosphere for its employees.	0.863				1.069
Affective Commitment (AC)		0.873	0.922	0.686	
I genuinely empathize with the challenges this hotel is experiencing.	0.806				1.898
My hotel evokes a deep sense of belonging within me.	0.830				1.678
- I have a profound emotional bond with this hotel.	0.798				1.681
The hotel makes me feel like I am a valued member of their family.	0.820				1.988
My role in this hotel feels uniquely tailored to me.	0.802				1.752
Job Satisfaction (JS)		0.941	0.883	0.752	
I am pleased with the work that I do	0.816				2.136
I am content with how my colleagues and superiors treat me.	0.814				1.125
I am fulfilled by the level of success I have attained in my work.	0.904				2.283
My work brings me a positive and fulfilling feeling.	0.796				1.220

The responses provided by the employees exhibited a broad spectrum of average scores, signifying a significant level of diversity in their answers. The standard deviation (SD) values further accentuated the extent of variation in their responses. These findings suggest that the responses were not tightly clustered together (Tabachnick et al., 2019).

Additionally, the statistical data exhibited skewness and kurtosis values that fell within the acceptable range of -2 to +2, indicating a normal distribution. This adherence to the criteria established by Nunnally and Bernstein (1994) suggested that the data distribution followed the anticipated pattern of a normal distribution. It is also noteworthy that all the measurement scale items in the study had Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values below 5. This observation indicates that there are no concerns regarding multicollinearity, as shown in Table 2.

3. Data analysis methods

In this study, the analysis phase utilized smart partial least squares (Smart-PLS) software, which is tailored for handling latent factors not directly observable, representing a nonparametric approach. Version 4 of the Smart-PLS software was employed for data analysis. Widely acknowledged in the social sciences, Smart-PLS is esteemed for its capacity to yield dependable results, particularly in exploring relationships among multiple variables. It is especially suited for studies emphasizing the prediction of dependent variables rather than confirming an existing conceptual model. Following a methodology advocated by Leguina (2015), the research analysis involved a two-phase process. The initial phase concentrated on validating convergent and discriminant validity, while the subsequent stage was dedicated solely to scrutinizing the hypotheses outlined in the research.

RESULTS

1. Assessment of the measurement model

The assessment of the conceptual research model's convergent and discriminant validity, along with the scale's reliability, followed established guidelines outlined by Hair et al. (2021) and Kline (2023). These guidelines encompassed evaluating composite reliability (C.R) scores, internal consistency (α) scores, and measures of convergent and discriminant validity. Convergent validity was assessed using several criteria, including composite reliability (C.R) scores, outer loadings, and average variance extracted (AVE) values. The findings presented in Table 2 indicated that all values exceeded the recommended minimum thresholds of C.R greater than 0.7 and AVE greater than 0.5. These results suggest excellent internal consistency reliability for the scales employed in the study. Moreover, all outer loadings were above 0.708 and statistically significant, aligning with the criteria established by Hair et al. (2021). Thus, these outcomes, as outlined in Table 2, confirm the reliability and validity of the measures utilized in the research, supporting the conclusion of satisfactory convergent validity for the examined research constructs. The current study utilized various methods to evaluate discriminant validity, including cross-loadings, the Fornell-Larcker criterion (1981), and Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) proportions. The results, presented in Table (3), consistently showed that each latent variable's outer-loadings exceeded their cross-loadings, indicating stronger associations with their intended constructs rather than with others. Additionally, in Table 4, the AVE scores' diagonal values surpassed the correlations between variables, indicating a lack of expected conceptual associations with other measures and further supporting evidence of discriminant validity. The study successfully achieved discriminant validity, with HTMT ratios below 0.90, aligning with Leguina's (2015) criteria (refer to Table-4). This outcome suggests minimal overlap among the examined constructs, thereby providing a robust foundation for the study's conclusions.

Table 3. Cross-loadings Indicators

	EMA	GPI	CEP
COC-1	0.862	0.331	0.140
COC-2	0.969	0.294	0.135
COC-3	0.985	0.161	0.208
COC-4	0.881	0.139	0.131
COC-5	0.863	0.263	0.109
AC-1	0.363	0.806	0.188
AC-2	0.135	0.830	0.254
AC-3	0.121	0.798	0.139
AC-4	0.113	0.820	0.233
AC-5	0.132	0.802	0.186
JS-1	0.143	0.126	0.816
JS-2	0.110	0.212	0.814
JS-3	0.106	0.228	0.904
JS-4	0.232	0.138	0.796

Table 4. Evaluating the Discriminant Validity of Scales

	Fornell-Larcker			HTMT		
	COC	JS	AC	COC	JS	AC
1- COC	0.735					
2. AC	0.583	0.773		0.642		
3. JS	0.524	0.350	0.819	0.658	0.465	

Table 5. Estimates of structural parameters
(Note:*** $p < 0.001$, ** $p < 0.01$, and* $p < 0.05$)

	Hypotheses	Beta (β)	T- Statistics	Results
H-1	COC ->AC	0.380***	3.584	Accepted
H-2	COC ->JS	0.692***	9.563	Accepted
H-3	JS ->AC	0.267*	2.325	Accepted
H-4	COC ->JS->AC	0.158*	2.193	Accepted

2. Hypotheses testing

To assess the research hypotheses, Smart-PLS v. 4 was employed. The obtained goodness-of-fit (GoF) value of 0.69 indicates a significant level of fit, meeting Chin's (1998) criteria. According to these standards, for a model to exhibit

satisfactory fit, the R2 values associated with latent variables should exceed 0.10. In this study, the R2 values for JS and AC variables were remarkably strong, measuring at 0.568 and 0.643 respectively, exceeding the specified minimum standards. This confirms the model's consistency with the observed data. Furthermore, the analysis included assessment of the standardized root mean residual (SRMR) score, which ideally should be under 0.08, and the normed fit index (NFI) score, which ideally should surpass 0.90. In our analysis, both the SRMR (0.047) and NFI (0.976) values exceeded the recommended thresholds, further substantiating the adequacy of the model in fitting the data. Once the model's fit was confirmed, the beta value and t-statistics for the research hypotheses were estimated using Smart-PLS v. 4. The results, depicted in Table 5 and Figure 2, indicated that AC was positively and significantly influenced by COC ($\beta=0.380$; $t\text{-value} = 3.584$) and JS ($\beta=0.267$; $t\text{-value} = 2.325$). Furthermore, JS was positively and significantly impacted by COC ($\beta=0.692$; $t\text{-value} = 9.563$), validating hypotheses H1, H2, and H3. Regarding the indirect hypothesis, JS was found to partially mediate the relationship between COC and AC ($\beta=0.158$; $t\text{-value} = 2.193$), thus affirming hypothesis H-4.

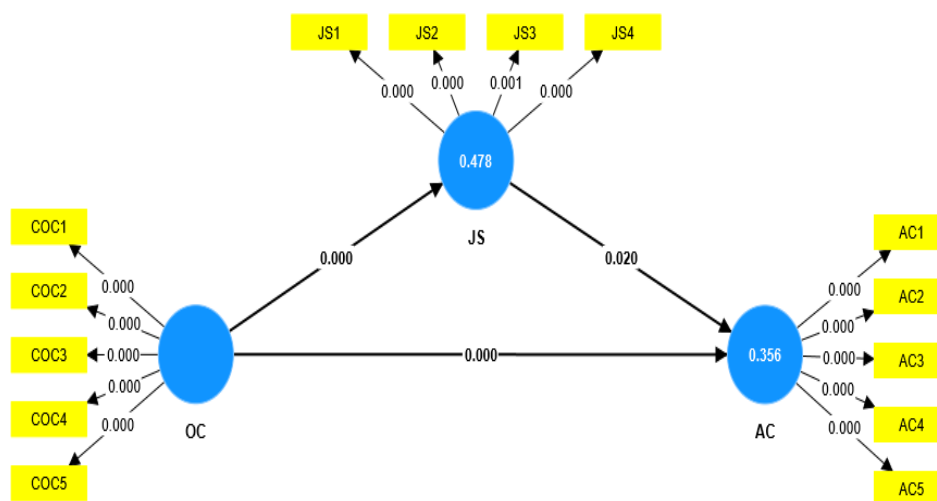


Figure 2. Research Final Model

DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

This study aims to investigate whether job satisfaction acts as a mediator in the relationship between affective commitment among hotel employees and a cohesive organizational culture. By enhancing the consciousness of the elements that motivate hotel employees to engage, this research could help to enhance their working environments. The results indicate that COC has a notable positive impact on AC, through signifying that employees who are committed to organizational change are more likely to exhibit a strong emotional attachment to the organization. This suggests that fostering a culture that emphasizes and supports organizational change can enhance employees' emotional bonds with the organization. This result is in line with Sutan Ardani (2017), Lee et al. (2018), and Dunger (2023), who have studied this relationship in many industries, not including the hospitality industry. Similarly, JS also shows a positive and significant influence on AC, reinforcing the idea that higher levels of job satisfaction lead to stronger affective commitment.

This is consistent with Chordiya et al. (2017), who proved the link between job satisfaction and affective organizational commitment across four states in the US and in India, and partially consistent with Lew Tek Yew (2007), who found that salary was the only factor to have a noteworthy positive correlation with affective commitment among employees in Sarawak's tourism industry in Malaysia. Moreover, the data indicate that COC significantly impacts JS. Consistent with the existing literature, this substantial relationship underscores the pivotal role of organizational change initiatives in shaping employees' job satisfaction in specific focus on deluxe Saudi Arabian hotels. When employees perceive that the organization is committed to change and improvement, their satisfaction with their job increases, which in turn can enhance their commitment to the organization. This result confirms the work of Pawirosumarto et al. (2017), who found a positive and notable correlation between organizational culture and job satisfaction among employees within Parador Hotels and Resorts, Indonesia. In terms of examining the indirect effects, JS partially mediates the relationship between COC and AC. This mediation suggests that part of the reason why commitment to organizational change leads to affective commitment is through its impact on job satisfaction. This partial mediation highlights the dual pathways through which COC influences AC—both directly and indirectly via JS.

This study has significant implications for both scholars and practitioners. In terms of the theoretical implications, this study contributes to the theoretical understanding of organizational behavior drawing upon social exchange theory (SET) by elucidating the pathways of organizational culture that influence employee outcomes. The positive and significant relationships between COC, JS, and AC underscore the critical role of a supportive organizational culture in fostering job satisfaction and, consequently, affective commitment. This research extends the existing literature by highlighting the mediating role of job satisfaction, providing a more nuanced understanding of how organizational culture impacts employee commitment. From a practical perspective, the study's findings offer actionable insights for organizational leaders and HR practitioners. Enhancing organizational culture should be a strategic priority, as it significantly impacts both job satisfaction and affective commitment. Organizations should focus on fostering a positive

and supportive culture to enhance employee satisfaction and commitment levels. This could be achieved through initiatives that promote employee engagement, recognition, and a sense of belonging. Additionally, understanding the mediating role of job satisfaction suggests that interventions aimed at improving job satisfaction will also indirectly bolster employees' affective commitment. By prioritizing these areas, organizations can create a more committed and motivated workforce, leading to improved organizational performance and reduced turnover rates.

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