

# The Impact of Communication Satisfaction and Emotional Exhaustion on Organizational Commitment

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Emotional Exhaustion on Organizational Commitment

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- (2) No portion of this research project has been submitted in support of any application for any other degree or qualification of this or any other university, or other institutes of learning.
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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between communication satisfaction and organizational commitment, and between emotional exhaustion and organizational commitment. The study further examined which independent variable (communication satisfaction and emotional exhaustion) have a more significant impact on the dependent variable (organizational commitment). The study also examined age and gender differences in organizational commitment. The research was conducted using Downs & Hazen 1977 Communication Satisfaction Questionnaire (CSQ), Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) to measure emotional exhaustion, and Mowday, Steers & Porter (1979) Organizational Commitment Questionnaire. A total of 450 questionnaires were being distributed to sales assistant across 30 clothing retail brands in Klang Valley, and a total of 210 respondents returned their completed questionnaires to the researcher after two weeks.

Results revealed that male and younger workers reported lower organizational commitment compared to female and older workers. There's a significant positive relationship between communication satisfaction and organizational commitment, and a significant negative relationship between emotional exhaustion and organizational commitment. However, result from standardized multiple regression revealed that communication satisfaction has a stronger impact on organizational commitment as compared to emotional exhaustion. There were several significant predictors of organizational commitment based on the subscales of communication satisfaction. The subscales were communication climate, organizational integration, media quality and personal feedback.

This study provided an insight to managers in various industries, on how communication satisfaction and emotional exhaustion will impact organizational commitment, especially managers in the service industry. Recommendations were suggested to improve communication satisfaction level of employees and reduce emotional exhaustion, which in turn will improve organizational commitment and reduce turnover cost. Future research should focus on increasing sample size; explore communication satisfaction at an in-depth level, and adding mediating or moderating variables in testing relationship.

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

### Background of the study

The world as we know of today has become more competitive compared to few years back, as all the downsizing and expanding, increasing globalization, diversifying labor forces, elimination of traditional organization forms and benchmarking are happening (Carr, 2005). Gone are the days where technology was not well-developed, and operations of company tend to be smaller in scale and localized. Employees back then looked at salary as the main criteria while selecting and staying in a job. As time goes by, with better technology and greater access to information, employees today who are better educated tend to look beyond salary payout, and consider other areas before they decide to enter or exit a job. Some of the areas that employees focus on before they enter a job include salary and job scope. After they have joined the organization, employees focused on areas beyond salary and job scope, which includes relationship with supervisor, working environment and job condition. Thus, it is important to ensure that organization stays competitive to maintain their employees, and address the right issues to keep the employees satisfied.

Employees are particularly important in the service industry, as they provide customers with a first impression towards the company. Malaysia was ranked 28<sup>th</sup> among the 60 countries being studied in the Ernst & Young Globalization Index 2011. It measures how the 60 largest countries, based on GDP, are connecting to other countries in the world. Other competitive Asia countries being ranked on the top 30 in the Globalization Index include Hong Kong (No.1), Singapore (No.3), Taiwan (No.12) and South Korea (No.29). Based on the study, Malaysia is especially strong

in the trade category, which include buying and selling of goods and services. There is also an increase in terms of cultural integration, with the development of the tourism industry (“Ernst & Young”, 2012). Based on this ranking and findings, it can be seen that Malaysia has become competitive in the global market and has slowly gain importance in its economic status. The country would require more employees who provide good service to the customers in order to compete in the global market.

Malaysia needs to upkeep their standing in the trade category, by focusing on the quality and services provided to the potential investors and buyers, to ensure that they continue to perform in this area. Tourism is an area that contributes to the trade and retail industry, where the Ministry of Tourism captured a 30% rate in shopping expenditure that contributes to the country’s economic setting (Tourism to give Malaysia a boost, 2012). Kuala Lumpur was recently being selected by CNN as the fourth best shopping destinations globally, after New York, London and Tokyo and it is expected that retail sales will grow by 6.0% in 2013 (Knight Frank, 2012). This showed that Kuala Lumpur is one of the more popular shopping destinations for tourists, and the importance of the retail industry in ensuring that their product and service quality reflect the best of Malaysia, to maintain its ranking in the trade category. Tourists are important contributors to the retail industry in Malaysia. Research found that tourists, especially Middle Eastern tourist often travel to Malaysia to shop for items like clothes and textiles (39.1% of their total purchased items), and they have demand for very high level of service in their travel experience (Ariffin & Hasim, 2009). The Malaysia Tourism Ministry rolled out the Mega Sale Carnival in 2012, mainly to attract tourists to shop in Malaysia, and it is expected to increase tourist traffic by 10% (Dass, 2012). Thus this study focuses on the sales assistant in the clothing retail industry, in order to provide an insight towards improving service quality of the frontline employees.

There is a drastic increase in Malaysia’s technology development based on the Globalization Index 2011, mainly due to the increased of internet and broadband usage and subscription (Ernst & Young”, 2012). This of course includes the retail service industry, in order to keep up with the globalization. Many companies use internet for product development, for advertising and marketing of company product

and services, and also allowing the employees to connect using email and even to communicate with employees from other countries (InVirCom, 2007). Communication satisfaction is a concept that began to gain importance since 1970s. When the term communication satisfaction was first introduced by Wiio (1976), it reflects a minimal amount of elements, which are job satisfaction, message content, improvements in communication and channel efficiency. There were no mention of technology development while explaining communication satisfaction (Down & Adrian, 2012). Since then, communication pattern changes rapidly with the development of technology. It is crucial to study whether communication satisfaction changes in this current workforce, where technology plays an important role on how the organization connects with their employees. It is important for employees to feel connected and informed about the organization's progress, to promote organizational commitment.

Various researches (Ahmad, 2004; Alanezi, 2011) showed that there is a positive relationship between communication satisfaction with organizational commitment. Worker's communication satisfaction has become an important factor in determining employees' organizational commitment. Employees tend to feel happy and loyal to a company if they experienced a good communication network. Organization plays an important role in ensuring that the staffs are satisfied with the communication pattern within the company, and whether they have an effective supervisor-supervisee relationship. Many employers do not know how to get their employees satisfied through effective communication models developed by various researchers, as this is not a widely studied concept in the Malaysian context.

Another issue to be focused in this study is emotional exhaustion. Emotional exhaustion is the feeling of being emotionally strained caused by one's work, with extreme psychological and emotional demand experienced by the individual (Maslach & Jackson, 1981). This is an issue occurring in the workforce at an alarming rate. Some of the causes of emotional exhaustion include unclear or overly challenging job condition, working in a high pressure environment and not getting sufficient support from others (Smith, Segal & Segal, 2012). Frontline employees are found to be working longer hours, up to 12 hours per day, and most of the time is spent standing

at their counter. They often need to sacrifice public holidays and weekends as those are the days with highest traffic flow (Kumar & Kapila, 2012). Sales assistant in the clothing retail industry are frontline employees. According to Babakus, Yavas and Ashill (2009), as the frontline employees serve as a “bridge” in connecting the organization to customers; they are often the role models that influence customers’ perception towards an organization. They face the challenge of fulfilling customers’ expectations by providing quality service, while at the same time maintaining the performance and goals set by the management. Organizations expect employees to be more innovative, hardworking and loyal to a company; while in turn employees expect company to take care of their welfare, giving them more support in their work and rewarding them based on performance accordingly.

It was found that emotional exhaustion constitutes the core of burnout (Muhammad & Hamdy, 2005). Burnout has become a common issue in the work world in this modern society because of scarcity of resources and increase competitiveness. The effects of burnout include insecurity and lack of self-esteem; the employees need recognition from their job to avoid feeling of worthlessness (Spector, 2000). Various studies (Karatepe & Tekinkus, 2006; Muhammad & Hamdy, 2005) also showed that burnout is negatively related to organizational commitment. This means that as organizations place high demand on the employees without giving them the support needed, employees tend to feel less committed to the company, resulting in employees leaving the company, and increased turnover cost for organizations.

Communication satisfaction and emotional exhaustion are the important issues to be studied in current workforce, in order to understand employees’ attitude and behavior. Both issues can have an effect on organizational commitment, which will influence the profit and reputation of an organization. Most studies had been from the past researches were geared more towards the Western culture, as most of them were conducted in the Western countries. Thus, the impact of communication satisfaction and emotional exhaustion on organizational commitment was investigated in this study for the sales assistant in the Malaysian clothing retail context.

## **Problem Statement**

According to Bernama (2012), based on a study conducted by Jobstreet.com in 2012, 78% of Malaysians are feeling unhappy with their job. Many tend to perceive that these employees left an organization mainly due to their dissatisfaction with salary. However, this study by Jobstreet.com revealed that the unhappiness that employees experience is mainly due to the job scope, followed by poor relationship with superior. The main reasons that lead to happiness at work are satisfaction with the work experience, having good relationship with the superiors, and lastly is their friendship with fellow colleagues. Employees appreciate superiors who provide guidance, feedback, and value their output. 62% of the respondents said they would leave the current company and look for another job in order to gain better job satisfaction.

Based on the above, it can be seen that satisfaction in employees is no longer motivated by purely salary payout. Communication satisfaction plays an important role in ensuring employees' satisfaction and organizational commitment. More than half of the employees studied are feeling unhappy with their work and would choose to leave an organization. This is a very alarming figure considering that business is getting more competitive, and it is harder for employers to maintain their talents.

It was also found that recently, half the employees worldwide reported higher job stress as compared to earlier years, especially employees from Asian countries. Malaysia is one of the countries that reported growing work stress level, after Taiwan and China. It was recorded that employees in Malaysia worked more than 10 hours per working day, and the stress experienced is considerably higher than recorded in United States. It was stated that 40% of turnover in the United States was caused by job stress, and job stress caused RM920 billion annually to the United States workforce industry (Dorn, 2012). According to Smith, Segal & Segal (2012), extreme and prolonged stress will lead to emotional exhaustion, or more commonly referred to as burnout. This showed that emotional exhaustion is an important concept that needs to be understood in the Malaysia context, as it can be seen that emotional exhaustion will lead to turnover, which in turn lead to a big amount of costs to the

companies. Malaysia being one of the Asian countries with rising stress level, this matter must be taken seriously to prevent further damage to the current workforce.

Previous studies showed that both communication satisfaction and emotional exhaustion are related to organizational commitment. These two incidents might cause organizational commitment to increase or decrease, which in turn will affect turnover rate. Based on the study by Lew (2011), it was found the organizational commitment has a strong negative relationship with turnover. Thus the study on organizational commitment is important to predict intention to quit.

According to Malaysian Employers Federation (MEF), the highest turnover rate is from employees in the non-manufacturing sector, such as hotel, restaurant, communication and associations (Wong, 2012). It can be seen that most of the industries being mentioned are industries that involved providing services, and a lot of interaction with customers. As stated in Wong (2012), Malaysia recorded a 21% turnover rate in the year 2011, comparing to 10.1% in early 2010 (Pharmy, 2010), this figure is alarming considering that the percentage doubled. Retail industry in Malaysia itself recorded a turnover rate of 18% in year 2011, one of the highest turnover rate industries among the non-manufacturing sector, followed by investment industry (17.4%), business services like marketing or human resource agents (16%) and banking industry (12%) (Wong, 2012). No record has been found for turnover rate specifically from the frontline employees or sales assistant, but it can be seen that the industries being studied involved dealing with customers. This is part of the reason where respondents being chosen for this study are clothing retail industry sales assistant, and also due to their job nature that requires interaction with customers. Employee's turnover will cost a big flow of cash from the company because they might need to face decrease in sales and productivity, and also more money in order to hire another person. This will in turn placed our country's economy at stake.

This study aims to fill certain research gaps as well. Most studies on the relationship between emotional exhaustion with organizational commitment examined employees in banking, education, insurance and medical industry, however, relatively few studies has examine the clothing retail industry, where the employees need to experience high level of stress at work due to their role to ensure that they are

providing high quality of service, taking care of goods that they handle, and meeting the sales target and expectations set by the company. Also, there is a lack of study in the field on communication satisfaction, which focuses more on interpersonal relationship. Besides that, most of the studies examined the relationship between communication satisfaction and organizational commitment, and relationship between emotional exhaustion and organizational commitment separately, thus this study aims to examine which variable will have a stronger impact on influencing organizational commitment.

## **Research Objectives**

There are five objectives for this study. First objective of this study is to examine the relationship between communication satisfaction and organizational commitment. Previous researches found relationship between these two concepts and this study aims to investigate whether the situation is the same in Malaysian context with different target samples.

Second objective is to examine the relationship between emotional exhaustion and organizational commitment. Emotional exhaustion and organizational commitment were found to have negative relationship based on past researches, thus this study aims to examine if this condition applies to Malaysia context.

Third is to examine the gender differences of organizational commitment level of front line sales assistant in clothing retail industry. This allowed organizations to understand which gender requires more attention to avoid losing great talents.

Fourth is to examine the age differences of organizational commitment level of front line sales assistant in clothing retail industry. It was reported that Generation Y tends to experience higher turnover intention, due to their high expectations towards the job condition (Wong, 2012). Thus this study aims to provide an insight on how age will have an effect on organizational commitment.

The fifth objective of this study aims to investigate the impact of communication satisfaction and emotional exhaustion on organizational commitment.

There is no research found to be comparing the impact of these two independent variables on organizational commitment, thus this study aims to provide an insight on which area should be targeted in order to deal with commitment issues more effectively.

## **Research Questions**

Q1: Is there a relationship between communication satisfaction and organizational commitment?

Q2: Is there a relationship between emotional exhaustion and organizational commitment?

Q3: Is there a difference in organizational commitment level between genders?

Q4: Is there a difference in organizational commitment level between age group?

Q5: Which is the best predictor for organizational commitment?

## **Significance of Study**

Studies have documented that both communication satisfaction and emotional exhaustion will affect organizational commitment. This study can create awareness for managers involved in dealing with frontline employees in Klang Valley, especially managers managing the sales assistant in the clothing retail industry, the current level of communication satisfaction and the severity of emotional exhaustion experienced by this group of employees. This is especially important for employers that is in the retail and trading industry, and may also provide an insight for employers in the service industry.

Communication satisfaction is gaining prominence in current workforce as salary is no longer the main concern of employees. However, relatively few studies had focused on this concept, especially in Malaysia context. Thus, this study is

significant as it contributes towards the understanding of a relatively new construct in the Malaysia workforce, which may aid in understanding the increasing turnover rate.

This study allows an understanding of whether communication satisfaction or emotional exhaustion will have a stronger impact on influencing organizational commitment. This is to ensure that when trying to target in resolving the organizational commitment issues, organizations would know whether it is more important to take proactive measures in increasing communication satisfaction, or to take preventive measures instead to deal with causes of emotional exhaustion. Most studies conducted do not compare the impact of these two elements on organizational commitment.

Organizations can benefit from this study as they are able to know how to improve the interpersonal communication structure among their employees. This will help organizations to develop better strategies to maintain their workers' commitment. Companies will also be more alert about the issue of emotional exhaustion that is happening and take more initiative to deal with it. Although no figure was found to be documented about the turnover rate in Malaysia caused by job stress, however, in view that 40% of the turnover rate in the United States is caused by emotional exhaustion, this issue should be a major concern to employers.

Turnover has been found to have negative impact on organizations involved in the retail industry. No specific information was recorded in Malaysia context, but based on study in United States, one of the impacts is on organization's revenue. The estimated cost for losing an employee earning about \$8 per hour in a retail outlet ranges from \$3,500 to \$25,000. The costs involved are hiring a new staff, training costs and lost sales. Costs are higher when the turnover positions have higher salary involved and greater job responsibility. It will also cause lower workplace morale, as remaining employees have increased responsibility to finish the work of the employee who left, and new hired staffs may face the stress in learning new responsibilities. It may also lead to reduced marketing return on investment, as lower quality of service due to lack of experience may lead to losing of returning customers (Markovich, M., 2013). These negative impacts showed the importance of studying elements that will aid in reducing turnover.

In order to maintain Malaysia's ranking in the Globalization Index being the strongest in its trading category and being one of the most popular shopping destinations, it is important for the organizations to focus on dealing with employees involved in the trading industry, ensuring that they are satisfied with organization's communication pattern and do not experience high level of stress.

## **Definition of Variables**

Gender and age group of respondents were compared in examining their level of organizational commitment. According to UNESCO (2003), gender refers to the roles and responsibilities of men and women, shaped by family influence, society or culture where the individual lives in. It also refers to the expectations that others have on how men or women should behave, based on the concept of masculinity and femininity.

Age group can be defined as a social group or status of individual who shared the same age range and are a recognizable group. Some of the age groups will be categorized into terms like infant, youth, young adult, adult, elderly (Definitions of Anthropological Terms, 2012). Age groups were not categorized in this study, and only the age was presented.

The independent variables for this study are communication satisfaction and emotional exhaustion, which were used to test the relationship with and impact towards organizational commitment.

According to Crino and White (1981), communication satisfaction was defined as individual's satisfaction with the communication pattern within an organization.

Emotional exhaustion was defined as the feeling of being emotionally strained caused by one's work, with extreme psychological and emotional demand experienced by the individual (Maslach & Jackson, 1981).

Organizational commitment was defined as the psychological attachment that employees felt towards the organization that they work in (Schultz & Schultz, 1998).

## **Hypotheses**

Hypothesis 1: There is a significant relationship between communication satisfaction and organizational commitment.

Hypothesis 2: There is a significant relationship between emotional exhaustion and organizational commitment.

Hypothesis 3: There is a significant difference in organizational commitment level between genders.

Hypothesis 4: There is a significant difference in organizational commitment level between the different age groups.

As there were no past research found on comparing the impact of communication satisfaction and emotional exhaustion on organizational commitment, thus no hypothesis was developed.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **Theoretical Framework**

This section explains the theoretical background that this research is based on, and the development of instruments to test the constructs based on these theories. This section also explains findings and supports from past researches related to the constructs used in this study.

#### **Downs and Hazen (1977) Communication Satisfaction**

The term communication satisfaction has always been thought as a unidimensional term since it was introduced by Level (1959), and only begun to gain prominence during 1970's when Wiio (1976) introduced its multidimensional nature, followed by Downs and Hazen in 1977 (Clampitt & Downs, 1987). According to Downs and Adrian (2012), Wiio (1976) study introduced four dimensions of communication satisfaction, which are job satisfaction, message content, improvements in communication and channel efficiency through a study of 22 communication audit in a Finnish organization. The factor analysis revealed these four dimensions.

Using the similar method, Downs and Hazen (1976) further developed the construct into more factors. Downs and Hazen (1977) described communication satisfaction using eight different factors. The factors deal with satisfaction with communication information, relationships, channels, and climate. The eight factors are communication climate, relationship to superiors, organizational integration,

media quality, horizontal and informal communication, organizational perspective, relationship with subordinates, and personal feedback.

Clampitt and Downs (1987) provide explanation of each dimension, as developed by Downs and Hazen (1977). Communication climate refers to communication at the organizational and individual levels, whether or not the company's communication is stimulating or motivating and encourages employee identification. It also assessed the perceived competence of employees in communication and the how well information flow contributes to the working process. It also assessed whether employees' attitude towards communicating within the organization is healthy for growth.

Relationship to superiors refers to upward and downward communication, where supervisor's openness, ability to listen, and perceived trust is being measured. There are three core aspects of this dimension, which are superior's openness to ideas, superior's attentiveness and superior's willingness to offer guidance to solve job-related issues.

Organizational integration refers to the sufficiency of information the employees receive regarding their immediate working environment, in order to help employees feel integrated. It also refers to employees' satisfaction towards information that employees received from the company, such as benefit, policies, or about their job.

Media quality refers to helpfulness and clarity of information as they are being passed on through several channels. It includes various communication channels in the company including whether meetings are well organized with proper minutes being taken, instructions given are short and clear, newsletter that thoroughly conveys company's happenings.

Horizontal and informal communication refers to the amount of information in the communication network and the accuracy of it. It also refers to the satisfaction of employees towards the grapevine within the organization, whether they are active or not. Grapevine refers to the informal communication within the organization which is a non-structural network. It refers to employees who know each other and talk informally. It can be work related or people related. Employees often refer to

grapevine when the information from formal channel is insufficient (Tripathi & Reddy, 2008).

Organizational perspective refers to the corporation goals and performance, financial standing and changes within the organization. Besides internal information, it also consists of knowledge about external events such as new government policies and economic conditions. It consists of the widest kind of information related to the organization.

Relationship with subordinates refers to the receptivity of employees to downward communication and their ability to send good information upward. This is only directed to those at supervisory level.

The personal feedback dimension refers to superiors' understanding of problems faced on the job and whether or not employees feel the criteria by which they are judged are clear. It is important for employees to get such information as it is related to their appraisal.

Since then, various researchers identified the relevancy of this construct and implemented it for their studies since 1980's.

### **A Multidimensional Theory of Burnout by Christina Maslach**

The term “burnout” began in early 1970s, at a clinical stage. Clinical professionals used burnout to describe employees’ behavior, including certain characteristics like restlessness, low job motivation, and short-tempered. As burnout has more negative effect of clinicians as compared to researchers, clinicians tends to focus on prevention or treatment for burnout, rather than studying burnout as a construct itself using scientific measures (Larson, 2006).

As stated in Larson (2006), it was Freudenberg (1974) who started using the term “burnout” to describe employees admitted to psychiatric hospital with symptoms like low work motivation, lack of job commitment, limited emotional associations and fatigue at work. Researchers further understand the need to understand the construct in order to find a solution for the burnout issue. It was during 1980s that

more scientific researches were conducted in order to define burnout and come out with theories to support the construct. It was Maslach (1981) Multidimensional Theory Burnout that is most widely used in recent studies on burnout.

The multidimensional theory of burnout divided burnout into three core components, which are emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment (Maslach & Jackson, 1981).

Emotional exhaustion occurs when employees feel that their job has exceeded the limit of their emotions and they could not bear with it. It might be caused by several factors such as excessive workload or dilemma in job. Employees may be lack of energy and feel worn out (Cooper, 1998). This component is also related to individual factors of burnout, such as a person's personality, thoughts or attitude. Employees who are more pessimistic are more prone to encounter emotional exhaustion as compared to an optimist (Radomski & Latham, 2008).

Depersonalization is different from emotional exhaustion where this component is related to interpersonal dimension. It is referred to as interpersonal dimension because it is a condition where individual is detached from others, where they usually have negative thoughts or may react negatively. They became defensive and it is caused by extreme emotional exhaustion. (Cooper, 1998).

Reduced personal accomplishment is characterized by a situation where employees feel that they are unable to contribute. Employees felt that they are not giving any contribution and they cannot meet the expectations of their job. They feel incompetent and they are unable to help their clients. Individual will evaluate their own performance and it may or may not lead to burnout (Cooper, 1998).

Person who displays all three dimensions mentioned above is highly likely that they are experiencing burnout. However, the key aspect that leads to burnout is the heightened level of emotional exhaustion, and this dimension is the core dimension that explains experienced burnout (Maslach & Jackson, 1981).

## **Porter, Steers, Mowday and Boulian (1974) Organizational Commitment**

Becker (1960) is one of the researchers who first introduced organizational commitment. He developed the side bet theory which first used to describe commitment. Side bet theory describes that continuance commitment developed as employees accumulate their qualities that increased their linkage to organization's membership. These qualities may include seniority, networks built within the organization, career development and positive social and job related gain. The more employees developed such qualities, the more they have to lose if they changed to another organization, thus leading them to remain in the organization (Krausert, 2008).

Porter et al (1974) viewed organizational commitment as a psychological attachment in relation to how much they are involved and identified themselves with regards to the organization they are currently working at. The concept is further characterized by whether employees intend to stay in the organization, agree with the values and goals of the organization, willingness to invest extra hard work and effort in contributing to the organization (Manetje, 2009).

There is a considerable difference between loyalty and organizational commitment. Both are similar considering that they are both attitudes towards an organization which leads to a set of behaviors. The differences between these two construct is because the faithfulness as describe in loyalty is not associated to a strongly held principle or emotional affection towards an object or person. However, the construct of organizational commitment requires an individual to identify and emotionally attached to the company and its value system, with a desire to stay with the organization. One can be loyal to a company, but may not be committed to its goals, ideas and values (Niehoff, Moorman, Blakely & Fuller, 2001).

## **Operational Definition**

There are various definition for each concept, and this section provides the different definition of the concept studied, based on books, past researches, and the researcher explained the operational definition for each concept in this study.

### **Communication Satisfaction**

Crino and White (1981) defined communication satisfaction as an individual's overall satisfaction with the communication practices within an organization. It includes obtaining sufficient amount of general information related to organization, such as policies, performance, company mission and vision, and working conditions. It also refers to the communication quality between the employee with superiors and subordinates.

Operational definition for communication satisfaction in this study is adopted from Redding (1978), who defined communication satisfaction as the degree of satisfaction an employee perceived in his total communication environment in an organization as a whole.

### **Burnout/Emotional Exhaustion**

There are various definition of burnout. Riggio (2003) defined burnout as a condition caused by a long-term exposure to work stress and employees become less committed to their jobs and begin to withdraw from work.

Spector (2000) defined burnout as a distressed psychological state that might be experienced by employees after working in a job for a period of time. They will suffer from emotional exhaustion and have low work motivation in organization.

According to Greenberg (2006), burnout can be expressed through mental state, body reactions, and action, in response to undesirable stress in work. Rice (1987) also

mentioned that burnout is not a warning sign of stress, it is the result caused by stress that people cannot cope in work.

Operational definition for emotional exhaustion is adopted from Maslach and Jackson (1981), who defined burnout as a syndrome of emotional exhaustion and pessimism that occur frequently among individuals who dealt with people in their job, such as human service professionals. Emotional exhaustion refers to the feeling of emotionally strained caused by the work a particular person is doing, which placed extreme psychological and emotional demand on the individual, be it heavy workload or unrealistically high expectations. It is the feeling of fatigue towards job, and the description only lies within job, not expanding to other personal lives.

### **Organizational commitment**

According to Schultz and Schultz (1998), organizational commitment refers to the degree of psychological identification or attachment that an employee held over the organization that he or she works in.

Muchinsky (2006) defined organizational commitment as the sense of faithfulness that an employee has towards his or her employer. Riggio (2003) mentioned that organizational commitment is an employee's attitude towards the entire organization that he or she works in. It is similar to job satisfaction where both of them involves feelings towards the organization.

Operational definition for organizational commitment is being adopted from Porter et al. (1974), as cited in Sharma and Bajpai (2010), which discuss three major components of organizational commitment as being "a strong belief in and acceptance of the organization's goals, a willingness to exert considerable effort on behalf of the organization, and a definite desire to maintain organizational membership".

## **Past Researches**

This section studied on the past researches related to the current study for development of hypotheses. Based on previous studies, researcher was able to hypothesize the possible result for the current study.

### **Communication Satisfaction and Organizational Commitment**

Research found that communication satisfaction is positively related to organizational commitment; high level of communication satisfaction will lead to high level of organizational commitment. Ahmad (2004) conducted a study on 252 academic staffs to examine the relationship between communication satisfaction and organizational commitment. The instruments used are Downs and Hazen (1977) Communication Satisfaction Questionnaire and Allen and Meyer (1990) Organizational Commitment Questionnaire. Results revealed that the staffs are moderately satisfied with communication, with subordinate communication being the most satisfactory. It is also found that communication satisfaction has a significant positive relationship with organizational commitment. Only four dimensions were being found to be significant predictor of organizational commitment, which are media quality, horizontal communication, organizational integration and communication climate.

This is supported by the study of Alanezi (2011) conducted on 465 secondary teachers in Kuwait to examine the relationship between communication satisfaction and organizational commitment. The instruments being used are Downs and Hazen (1977) Communication Satisfaction Questionnaire and Downs (2008) Commitment Scale. Results revealed that overall there is a significant positive relationship between communication satisfaction and organizational commitment. They have also found consistent result with Ahmad (2004), which showed that media quality and horizontal communication are significant predictors of organizational commitment. The contradictory result with Ahmad (2004) is that this researcher found supervisor

communication and communication with subordinates as significant predictors of organizational commitment.

The study by Varona (1996) investigated the relationship between organization communication satisfaction and organizational commitment across three Guatemalan organizations. The samples consisted of 307 participants, which include employees from a Catholic school, employees from a private Catholic hospital, and employees from a food factory. There were three instruments being used for this study, which are Downs (1990) Communication Audit Questionnaire (CAQ) to measure communication satisfaction; Mowday, Porter and Steers (1979) Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ) and Cook and Wall (1980) Organizational Commitment Instrument to measure organizational commitment. Results revealed that communication satisfaction has prediction power towards organizational commitment. The subscales which displayed as significant predictors are organizational integration, horizontal communication, media quality, relationship to superiors, organizational perspective, personal feedback and communication climate. This is consistent with the study by Ahamd (2004) and Alanezi (2011), which reflect media quality and horizontal communication as significant predictors of organizational commitment. Contrary to Ahmad (2004) and Alanezi (2011), this study by Varona (1996) found most of the subscales in communication satisfaction as significant predictors of organizational commitment.

Besides that, Carriere and Bourque (2009) also conducted a study to investigate the relationship between internal communication practices, communication satisfaction, job satisfaction and organizational commitment. The study was conducted on 91 paramedics in Canada, with a mean organizational tenure of 3.5 years and mostly male (74.7%). Instrument used to measure internal communication practices is the 122-items Communication Audit Scale (CAS), Communication Satisfaction Questionnaire (CSQ) to measure communication satisfaction, Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ) to measure job satisfaction, and lastly Affective Organizational Commitment Scale to measure organizational commitment. Result revealed that communication practices explained 49.8% of variation of communication satisfaction, and communication satisfaction fully

mediates the relationship between internal communication practices and organizational commitment.

A study by Seven (2012) examined the relationship between communication satisfaction and organizational commitment. They have also examined the predictive power of each component of communication satisfaction. The study was conducted on 358 Turkish National Police, and the instruments used are Downs and Hazen (1977) Communication Satisfaction Questionnaire and Mowday, Porter and Steers (1974) Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ). They found that there are three components from communication satisfaction that are significant predictors of organizational commitment, which are communication climate, organizational integration, and relationship and communication with superiors. Thus, instead of examining communication satisfaction as a whole construct in previous analysis, this study focused on individual components in explaining the variation in organizational commitment.

Hypothesis 1: *There is a significant relationship between communication satisfaction and organizational commitment.*

### **Burnout (Emotional Exhaustion) and Organizational Commitment**

Research found that emotional exhaustion is negatively related to organizational commitment, where high emotional exhaustion will lead to low organizational commitment. Muhammad and Hamdy (2005) examined the relationships among those who have experienced burnout, supervisory support and work outcomes (job satisfaction, organizational commitment and intention to leave). A total of 510 questionnaires were distributed to 7 companies of three industries (financial services, investment, real estate) and 308 returned. The instruments used were Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) for measuring burnout, four-items from Mowday, Steers and Porters (1979) for measuring organizational commitment, two-items from Moore (2000) for intention to leave and Koseke et al. (1989) for supervisory support. The results indicated that experienced burnout was related to low

job satisfaction, low organizational commitment and higher intention to leave. While supervisory support tends to lessen the effect of burnout on job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and intention to leave.

Besides that, study by Karatepe and Tekinkus (2006) on 363 front-line bank employees also found negative relationship between these two variables. The purpose of the study is to identify the relationship between emotional exhaustion and burnout. Emotional exhaustion was measured using eight items from Maslach Burnout Inventory (1981) and affective organizational commitment was measured using the Mowday et al. Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ).

McLaurine (2008) conducted another study with the purpose to examine the burnout level of correctional officers and the relationship of burnout indicators (i. e. emotional exhaustion, cynicism) with organizational commitment. Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) was used to measure indicators of burnout, while Mowday, Steers and Porter (1979) Organizational Commitment Questionnaire were being used to measure organizational commitment. The study was conducted on 163 correctional officers in the Fayette County Detention Center. Results found that increased indicators of burnout (emotional exhaustion and cynicism) have a fair to moderate strong relationship to decreased organizational commitment. There is a significant negative relationship between emotional exhaustion and organization commitment.

Gemlik, Sisman and Sigri (2010) conducted a study on 459 health sector employees in Turkey, aiming to investigate the relationship between burnout and organizational commitment. The instruments used are Maslach Burnout Inventory, and Allen and Meyer's Organizational Commitment Scale. Results revealed that emotional exhaustion, the main component of burnout, have a meaningful descriptive power towards organizational commitment, and the relationship is strongest with affective and normative commitment (53.3% and 32.6% respectively).

*Hypothesis 2: There is a significant relationship between emotional exhaustion and organizational commitment.*

## **Gender and Age Differences in Organizational Commitment**

Study done by Clayton, Petzall, Lynch and Margaret (2007) aims to find out the influence of demographic variables on organizational commitment, such as gender, age and tenure. The study was conducted on 312 financial planners in Australia using the Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ) by Porter et.al. (1974). Results found that females showed higher organizational commitment compared to males.

Khalili and Asmawi (2012) study also supported the findings, where the study was conducted to investigate the influence of gender differences on organizational commitment. The samples are 108 employees in a private SME company in Iran. Organizational commitment was measured using Allen and Meyer (1990) scale, which accessed participants' affective, normative and continuance commitment.

*Hypothesis 3: There is a significant difference in organizational commitment level between genders.*

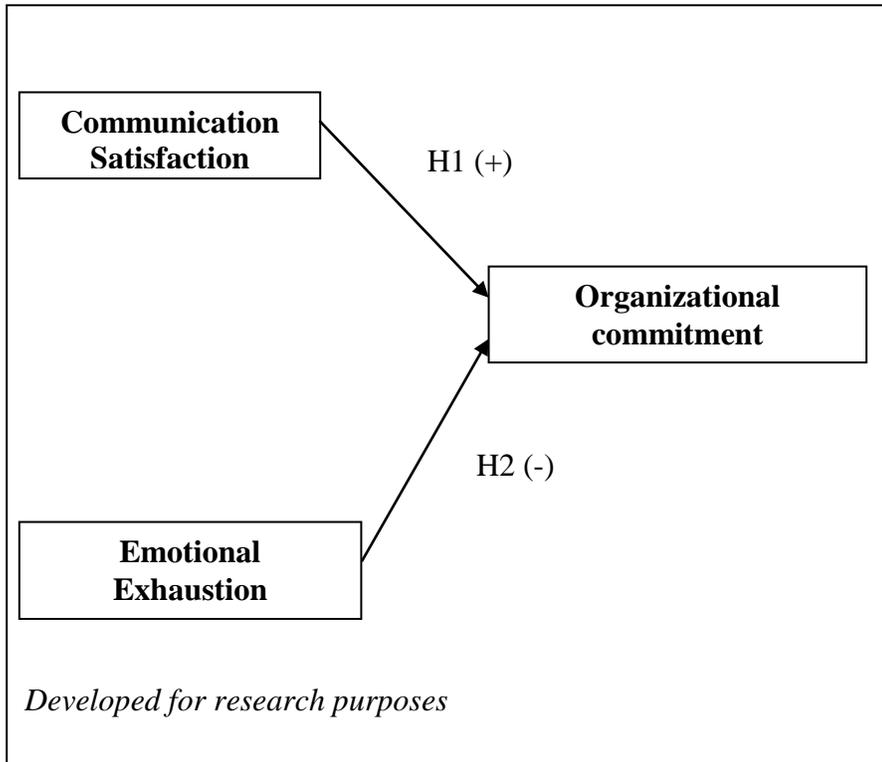
A study by Salami (2008) conducted on 320 employees from the service and manufacturing industry found that employees who are older (between 40 to 50 years old) and married tend to have higher organizational commitment than those who are young (between 29 to 40 years old) and single, measured using Mowday, Steers and Porter (1979) Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ).

Salami's study is also supported by Cordas (2008) study on 2,663 public sector IT workers in the United States, who found that age has a significant strong negative significant influence on organizational commitment, which in turn will influence turnover decision making, where employees younger than 30 years old will have a significant lower commitment and higher turnover intention. The instrument used is the 65-item UNT research survey that measures many types of employees' attitudes.

*Hypothesis 4: There is a significant difference in organizational commitment level between the different age groups.*

## Conceptual Framework

Figure 1: Communication Satisfaction, Emotional Exhaustion and their relationship with organizational commitment



The research model shows an overall explanation for this study. First, the participants will be selected based on their age and gender. After that they will be examined in terms of their communication satisfaction level and emotional exhaustion level respectively. These will be examined by using descriptive statistics. In the second part on the study, the relationship between communication satisfaction and organizational commitment as well as the relationship between emotional exhaustion and organizational commitment will be examined. We will also examine whether communication satisfaction or emotional exhaustion has a stronger influence towards organizational commitment.

## Measurements

The measurement being chosen to measure communication satisfaction is the *Communication Satisfaction Questionnaire* by Downs and Hazen (1977). This measurement can be found in the study by Ahmad (2004) and Alanezi (2011) to measure communication satisfaction in the education industry. It has been widely used in many studies intended to measure communication satisfaction.

The measurement used to measure emotional exhaustion is Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI). This measurement can be found in the study by Glazier (2005). Based on the literature review, it can be seen that this instrument is most widely used in measuring emotional exhaustion, and this instrument itself is also being used as a theory to explain the concept of burnout.

Lastly, in order to measure organizational commitment, Mowday, Steers and Porter (1979) Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ) will be used. The questionnaire can be found in Han (2007). This is because most of the article discussed above are applying this instrument to measure organizational commitment as a whole construct, and this study aims to examine organizational commitment in general, instead of using Allen and Meyer (1990) to separate it into affective, normative and continuance commitment.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **METHODOLOGY**

This chapter will address the research design that described the method used in conducting the research and testing the hypotheses. It involves the method and technique used to collect data, the sampling technique to choose the appropriate respondents for this research, how was the data collection procedure, the instruments used to obtain data, and lastly how the data analysis will be done to obtain the results.

#### **Descriptive and Explanatory Research**

This study is a combination of descriptive research and explanatory research. Descriptive research is conducted where nothing is manipulated in the study environment. Descriptive study provides information on a naturally occurred feelings, actions or thoughts of a particular group. The objective of descriptive research is to record the environment of a particular phenomenon. It may involved a one-time interaction with a group of participants, referred to as cross-sectional study; or study of individuals over a period of time, referred to as longitudinal study. Descriptive research can be conducted via interaction with participants (survey, interview) or without interaction with the participants (observation or studies using existing record) (Descriptive Studies, 2013). Example of descriptive research in this study is to examine what are the differences in gender and age of participants towards their organizational commitment level.

Explanatory research aims to analyze and explain how or why a particular phenomenon is occurring. It explains the nature of relationship between variables, and this can be done through hypothesis testing. Explanatory research is more in depth comparing to descriptive research, as it goes beyond describing the

characteristics. It is important to identify and control the independent and dependent variables in explanatory research, to better explain a particular link or phenomenon of the study (Understanding Research, 2008).

## **Research Design**

The method used for this study is survey method. According to Kraemer (1991), as cited in Glasow (2005), survey research can be described by three characteristics. The first characteristic is the researcher is able to quantitatively report certain characteristic of the studied population. This method is commonly used to describe relationship among variables. Second characteristic of a survey research is the results obtain are often subjective, as the response are collected from a group of people, whose thoughts and behavior varies. The third characteristic of a survey research is the results are derived from a group of people (sample) that represents the population. The evaluated result will then be generated to represent the population.

Survey method can be conducted through questionnaire and interview, and for this research, self administered questionnaire were distributed and collected to obtain result for this study. There are several advantages of self-administered questionnaire. First is that self-administered questionnaire it allows a comprehensive result on sample's attitudes, thoughts and behavior, to be used to imply population's phenomenon with smaller sampling range error. Second is that this method is cost and time efficient as it can be administered to large number of respondents simultaneously and cover a wider area (can be sent via email). Questionnaire takes less skill to administer thus resulting in fewer human errors. Besides that, self-administered questionnaire allows greater anonymity, resulting in respondents feeling more comfortable in expressing their personal thoughts and experiences. Some disadvantages related to self-administered questionnaire include incomplete information, as questionnaire consists of a series of prearranged response, which may not cover all aspects of a certain phenomenon. It may also result in lower response rate if the questionnaire is too complex and may only be answered by respondents

with certain level of education (Cargan, 2007). However, self-administered questionnaire has considerably more advantages than disadvantages, and has been widely used in many social and business researches.

The sampling method for this study is non-probability sampling and the technique being used is convenience sampling. This sampling technique is being used for this study instead of probability sampling because it is cost saving, and there is no existing name list available for all clothing retail front line employees. Convenience sampling refers to obtaining responds from group of people who are conveniently available to provide the required information. The probability of every individual in the population for being chosen is not equal. It is often used for research at the exploratory phase and is the best way to getting information fast, efficient and cost saving. The disadvantage of this method is that the result may be difficult to generalize to the population, as samples being selected is based on easy accessibility (Sekaran & Bougie, 2010). Convenience sampling applies when the researcher selects the preferred clothing brands, and distributes the questionnaires in their outlets to the front line employees.

Cross sectional survey design involves observation of a sample or phenomenon that happens at one point of a time. This design is often used in exploratory and descriptive studies. Cross sectional survey design is as opposed to longitudinal studies, which focused on observation of a sample and phenomenon over an extended period of time. Longitudinal studies focused on changes of a sample or phenomenon over time (Babbie, 2010). Cross sectional survey design is used for this study where a group of clothing retail industry employees will be selected and placed in to groups based on their gender and age groups. Cross sectional design is used in this study because it is able to describe the characteristics of the clothing retail industry and the differences between two or more populations (gender and age group differences) at the same point of time.

## **Subjects/Sample**

The respondents are full time clothing retail industry sales assistant around Klang Valley. Retail can be defined as a distribution channel where all the marketing efforts is being directed towards final consumers, based upon selling of goods and services obtained from wholesaler. They are considered as “middleman” between wholesaler and final consumers. They are selling in a small quantity and often offer after sales services. Retail outlets are being set up in locations that are easily accessible and they are the primary source of current retailing market information. Employees working in the retail industry require direct interaction with final consumers, and the need to apply social and interpersonal skills into their modern sales technique (Londhe, 2006). Clothing can be collectively defined as garments, which include various clothes and apparel being used for covering (Craik, 2009). The clothing consists of both men and women collection.

There were a total of 30 clothing retail brands being approached in the Klang Valley clothing retail industry. The number of respondents varies between each brand. Brands were not being listed to ensure anonymity and avoid generalizing results to the particular brand being mentioned. Based on the research done by Krejcie and Morgan (1970), they have developed a table to determine sample size from a population size. The target population should be at least 420 people, to achieve target samples of 201 respondents (refer to table in Appendix B). A total of 450 questionnaires have been distributed to the clothing retail front line employees, and a total of 210 completed questionnaires were returned to the researcher after two weeks. The response rate for this study is 47%. According to Sekaran and Bougie (2010), a response rate of 30% is considered acceptable for most researches.

## **Data Collection Method**

The researcher approached each store and obtained permission from the retail manager to conduct a research on the front line employees. Most stores have been very accommodating, as they were being ensured that no brand or name will be

mentioned in the research, only group data will be represented. Researcher checked with the retail manager on the number of staffs in each store, and passed the questionnaires to the manager based on number of staffs for the particular brand. Researcher explained to the manager that there are a total of 4 sections in the questionnaires and all staffs are required to answer all. It was communicated that this is not compulsory for all staffs to answer, if the employees do not feel comfortable in conducting the research. Researcher then gave a time frame of 2 weeks for the employees to fill up the questionnaires.

After two weeks, researcher approached the retail manager again to collect the completed questionnaires. The respondents were segregated based on their gender and three different age groups (21-30, 31-40 and 41-50 years old). The result was evaluated using the SPSS software.

## **Instruments and Score**

### **Downs and Hazen (1977) Communication Satisfaction Questionnaire (CSQ)**

The instrument used to measure communication satisfaction level is the *Communication Satisfaction Questionnaire* by Downs & Hazen (1977). This 43-item questionnaire consists of eight dimensions which are the communication climate, relationship to superiors, organizational integration, media quality, horizontal and informal communication, organizational perspective, relationship with subordinates, and personal feedback.

As stated in Downs and Hazen (1977), communication climate refers to whether company's communication is motivating at both individual and organizational level, whether it stimulates the working process. Relationship to superiors measures superior's ability to communicate openly with the subordinates, be it listening or speaking to them. Organizational integration refers to whether employees are well informed about their job, company's policies and functions of

some other related departments. Media quality assessed the usefulness of company information sources such as memos and newsletter.

Horizontal and informal communication refers to the number of activities within the organization’s information network, and how accurate is the information within. Organizational perspective can be defined as information related to the organization, be it internal (company policies and goals) or external (government policies or economic conditions). Relationship with subordinates refers to the relationship with supervisors with their subordinates, whether they are able to send good information upward. Personal feedback refers to whether employees are clear about how they are being evaluated by their superiors, and whether superiors understand problems faced on the job.

The items for each subscale are described as follows (Downs & Hazen, 1977):

Table 1: Items in Each Subscale of Communication Satisfaction Questionnaire

<b>Subscale</b>	<b>Items</b>
Communication Climate	19, 21, 23, 26, 27
Relationship to Superiors	20, 22, 25, 29, 34
Organizational Integration	4, 5, 10, 11, 15
Media Quality	24, 33, 35, 36, 38
Horizontal and Informal Communication	28, 30, 31, 32, 37
Organizational Perspective	6, 12, 13, 16, 17
Relationship with subordinates	39, 40, 41, 42, 43
Personal Feedback	7, 8, 9, 14, 18

It is indicated on a seven-point scale which ranges from very dissatisfied (1) to very satisfied (7). Each factor’s score was range from 5 - 35. The scores were placed in three general categories; scores scaled from 5 - 15 represented dissatisfaction with the factor, scores scaled from 16 – 20 represented indifference, scores scaled from 25 - 35 represented satisfaction (Ahmad, 2004).

Based on the research conducted by Downs and Hazen (1977), the Cronbach-Alpha reliability coefficients for the questionnaire is .94. While for the internal reliability, Zwigze-Koning and De Jong (2007) reported in their research a consistently high coefficient alpha with a range of .79 to .99 (Ahmad, 2004).

### **Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI)**

The Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) will be used to measure the level of burnout. Only the emotional exhaustion subscale will be used for this study (9 items), example item is “I feel used up at the end of the workday”. It is measured based on 0-7 Guttman scale consisting of never to everyday.

Emotional exhaustion describes feelings of emotionally overstretched and exhausted with work. High mean scores on this scale represent higher degree of experienced burnout (Maslach & Jackson, 1981).

Table 2: Items in Emotional Exhaustion Subscale of Maslach Burnout Inventory

Burnout Subscales	Items
Emotional Exhaustion	1, 2, 3, 6, 8, 13, 14, 16, 20

Table 3: Level of Burnout Based on MBI Score

Burnout Subscale	Low	Moderate	High
	Score Ranges		
Emotional Exhaustion	0 - 16	17 - 26	27 +

Based on the study done by Muhammad and Hamdy (2005), the Cronbach’s coefficient alpha for this instrument is .94. The convergent validity for this instrument is based on the external validation of personal experience. People who were rated by

colleagues as emotionally drained by job scored higher on emotional exhaustion ( $r=0.41$ ,  $p<0.001$ ). Those who reported physical fatigue also scored higher on emotional exhaustion ( $r=0.42$ ,  $p<0.01$ ) (Maslach & Jackson, 1981).

**Mowday, Steers and Porter (1979) Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ)**

In measuring organizational commitment, Mowday, Steers and Porter (1979) Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ) will be used. There are 15 items for this questionnaire and there is no subscale. Example items are “I am proud to tell others I am part of this organization” or “I really care about the fate of this organization”. Participants need to respond using a seven-point Likert scale ranging from “strongly disagree” (1) to “strongly agree” (7). There are both positive and negative items for this questionnaire and they are as follows:

Table 4: Positive and negative items in Organizational Commitment Questionnaire

Items type	Items number
Positive items	1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 8, 10, 13, 14
Negative items	3, 7, 9, 11, 12, 15

After reverse coding for those items that represents a lack of commitment, the total score will be calculated to represent the variable of organizational commitment. This instrument has a Cronbach alpha of 0.9 (Salami, 2008). The homogeneity of OCQ resulted in a single-factor solution, which indicates a measurement of single underlying construct. The scores that shows low organizational commitment is from 15 to 45, moderate organizational commitment is from 46 to 76, while high organizational commitment is from 77 to 105 (Shaari, Yaakub & Hashim, 2004).

## **Data Analysis**

There are two types of statistics, which are descriptive and inferential statistics. Both statistical techniques were used for this study.

Descriptive statistics focused on organization of data and summarization of numerical information into a format that is easier for viewing. It involves measuring central tendency, such as mean and median, and measuring dispersion, such as standard deviation and range (Lee, Lee & Lee, 2000).

Inferential statistics refers to using sample data to infer the general conclusions that applies to the population. Inferential statistics can be referred to as hypothesis testing, where information from a sample is being used to test a hypothesis about the entire population (Lee, Lee & Lee, 2000).

Hypotheses 1 and 2 will be measured using correlation analysis. Correlation is a statistical technique used to analyze the relationship or association between two or more variables (Aggarwal & Khurana, 2010). This study measures the relationship of communication satisfaction and emotional exhaustion with organizational commitment.

Hypotheses 3 will be determined using independent groups t-test to identify whether there is a significant difference between two groups. Independent groups t-test can be defined as a statistical technique used when there are two experimental conditions and different participants have been used for each (Field, 2009). In this study, there are different group being used to measure organizational commitment, which is male and female.

Hypotheses 4 will be determined using one-way between groups ANOVA to identify whether there is a significant difference between the three age groups. One-way between groups ANOVA is similar to independent groups t-test, except that ANOVA is being used to measure the significant difference in the mean of three or more groups (Field, 2009). One-way between groups ANOVA is being used to test three different age groups for hypotheses 2, which are 20-30, 30-40 and above 40.

Lastly multiple regression analysis will be used to identify which independent variable has a stronger impact on the dependent variable. Regression analysis refers

to study on nature of relationship between variables, in order to predict and unknown value (dependent variable) from a known value (independent variable). Multiple regression is used when there are more than two variables at a time, where one variable is dependent and others are independent variables. In this study, multiple regression is being used to determine whether each independent variable (communication satisfaction and emotional exhaustion) has a significant impact on organizational commitment, and which is the better variable to use to predict organizational commitment level (Aggarwal & Khurana, 2010).

## **Fieldwork**

The time frame used for data collection was about one month, and result analysis and conclusion will be done in another one month. Hence, the total time needed to produce findings is about 2 months. The budget used for this study is the printing of questionnaires, total 450 copies are being printed, 8 pages, per page cost RM0.05, and hence, total cost used is about RM180. A cover letter was attached to the questionnaires inviting them to participate. It explained the purposes of the study, the participation was voluntary and they were assured that all responses would remain confidential, respondents would remain anonymous and only grouped data would be presented.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **RESULTS**

#### **Descriptive Statistics**

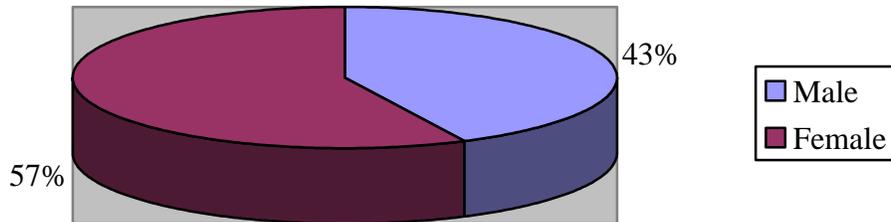
Descriptive statistics refers to a meaningful way to present data, especially those in a large amount. It summarized a data where a meaningful pattern will emerge for easy understanding. It is easier for researcher to interpret the data when it is presented using descriptive statistics. Generally there are two measures used to describe data, which are measures of central tendency and measures of spread. Measures of central tendency are used to determine the central position of the frequency within a group of data collected. These include mean, median and mode. Measures of spread refer to the spread of scores when conducting the data summary. It provides information on the possible scores that differs from the mean score, some may be lower or higher, and it will be presented in range, variance, standard deviation, quartile and absolute deviation (Lund & Lund, 2013).

Some of the importance of central tendency includes obtaining a representative value (average) to describe the data in general. It also allows using the central tendency figure to make comparisons between different groups being studied. Central tendency is also important in order to use further statistical analysis, to generate more in depth result for explaining the concept, such as to run T-test or correlation analysis (Karuna, 2012). Measures of spread will usually be used alongside measures of central tendency. Measures of spread provide information on how well the central tendency represents the population. If there is a big value for the spread, it may indicate that the central tendency is not representative of all the data collected, as there may be a large difference among individual score (Lund & Lund, 2013).

## Frequencies

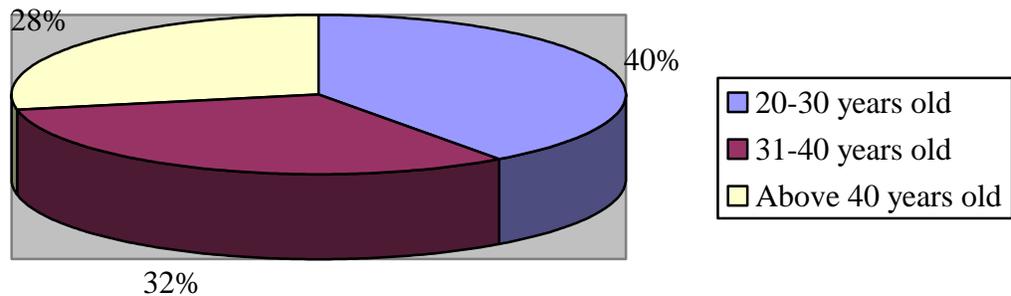
The demographic characteristics of the respondents are as follows. There were a total of 210 respondents, 90 males (42.9%) and 120 females (57.1%) participated in this study.

Figure 2: Gender



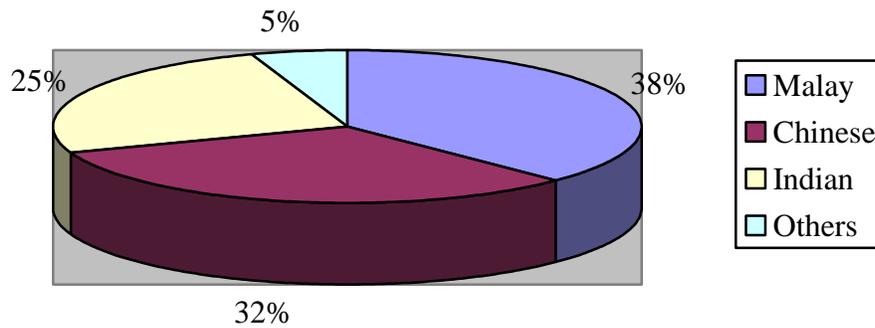
There were three age groups, which were 20-30 years consisting 84 respondents (40.0%), 31-40 years consisting 67 respondents (31.9%) and above 40 years consisting 59 respondents (28.1%).

Figure 3: Age



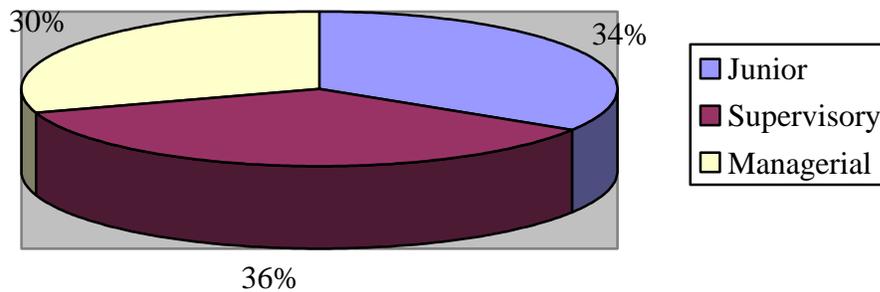
The respondents consist of four groups based on race. Most respondents were Malay, which consists of 79 respondents (37.6%), followed by Chinese with 67 respondents (31.9%), Indian with 53 respondents (25.2%), and others with 11 respondents (5.2%). The respondents that marked others are Sikh and also the ethnic groups from East Malaysia, such as Iban, Melanau and Kadazan.

Figure 4: Race



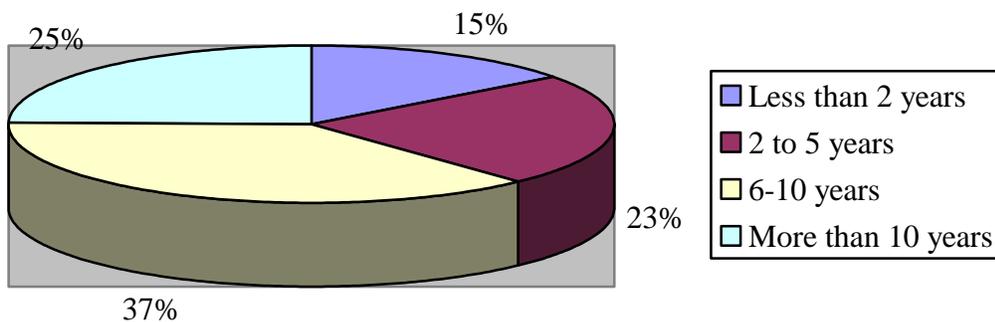
In terms of job position, most respondents were at supervisory level, with 76 of the respondents (36.2%), followed by junior level with 71 respondents (33.8%) and managerial level with the fewest, at 63 respondents (30.0%).

Figure 5: Job Position



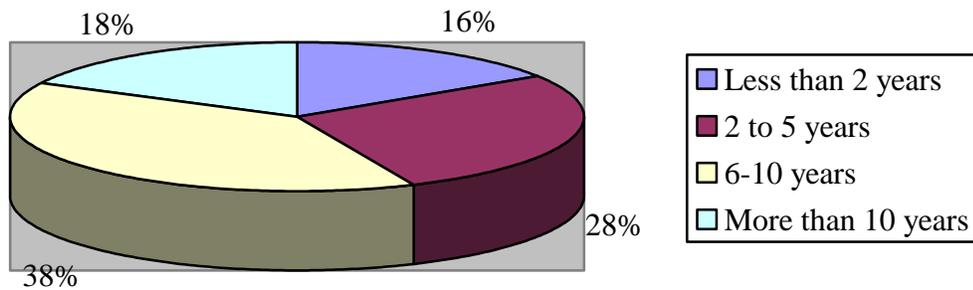
Most respondents have about 6 to 10 years experience, with 78 respondents out of the 210 respondents (37.1%), followed by more than 10 years with 52 respondents (24.8%), 2 to 5 years with 49 respondents (23.3%) and less than 2 years with 31 respondents (14.8%).

Figure 6: Years of Working Experience



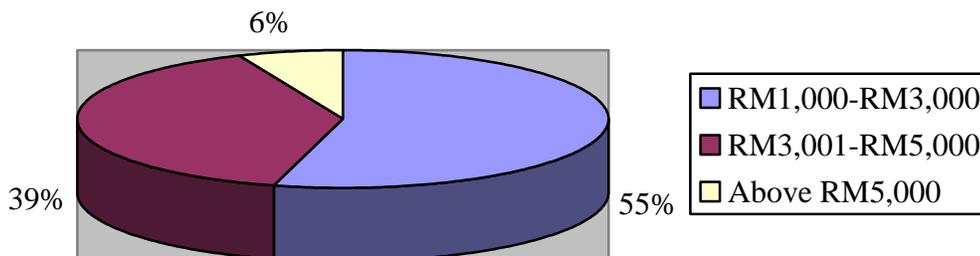
Further than the respondent's working experience, the research also looked at the number of years the respondents has been working in the current company. Most of the respondents spent 6 to 10 years in the current company, with a frequency of 82 respondents (39.0%), followed by 2 to 5 years with 58 respondents (27.6%). There are 37 respondents who have been with the current company for more than 10 years (17.6%), and lastly is 33 respondents who have been with the company for less than 2 years (15.7%). This section explains that number of years of working experience may be experience accumulated from other companies, where some with 10 years working experience may just joined the current company for few years.

Figure 7: Number of Years in Current Company



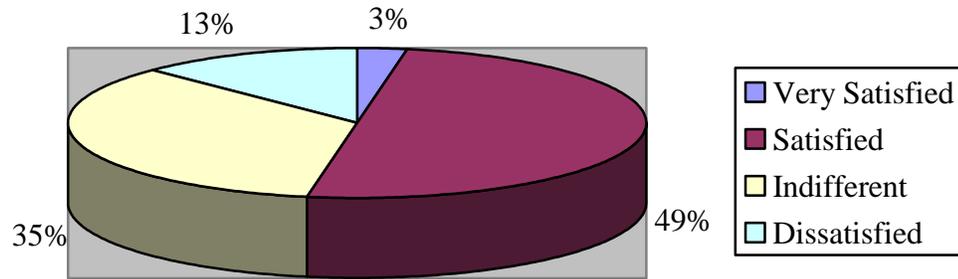
Monthly income ranges from RM1,000 to RM3,000 with the highest frequency at 114 respondents (54.3%), followed by RM3,001 to RM5,000 with 83 respondents (39.5%) and only 13 respondents has a monthly income above RM5,000 (6.5%). By comparing the job position and working experience with the monthly income, it can be seen that most of the respondents do not earn an income above RM5,000, despite of their senior position and being an experienced worker.

Figure 8: Monthly Income



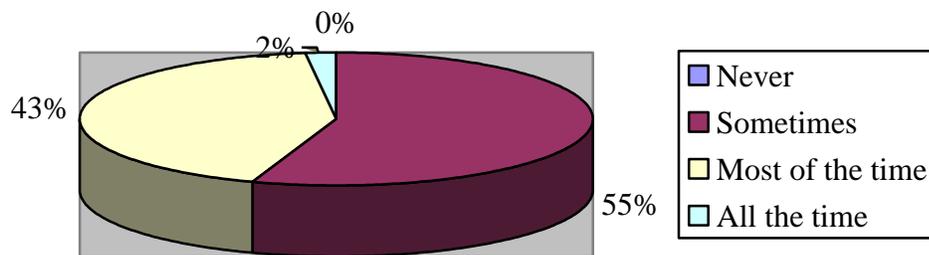
When asked about whether the respondents are satisfied with their job in general, with a choice of yes or no, 105 respondents reported that they are satisfied with their current job condition (50%), 73 respondents being indifferent towards the level of satisfaction (34.8%), 26 respondents reported being dissatisfied (12.6%) and only 6 respondents reported very satisfied (2.9%).

Figure 9: Satisfaction Level



Respondents were also being asked about whether the respondents encountered exhaustion, either physically or mentally; they were given options of never, sometimes, most of the time and all the time. 55.2% of the respondents reported that they were physically exhausted sometimes, and 42.9% reported physical exhaustion most of the time and 1.9% reported all the time. In terms of mental exhaustion, 61.0% reported mentally exhausted sometimes, 37.1% reported most of the time, and 1.9% of the respondents reported all the time. Both physical and mental exhaustion contributes to the experience of emotional exhaustion.

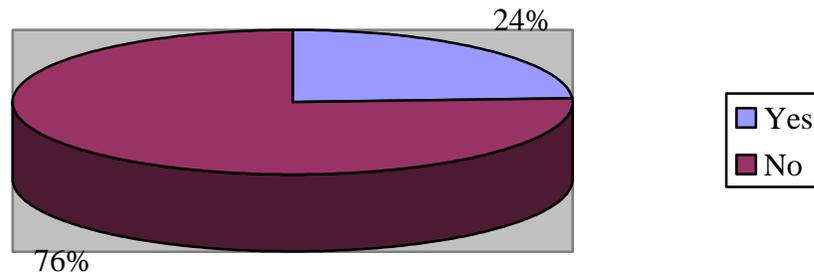
Figure 10: Physical Exhaustion Level



In examining the respondents' intention to quit, 75.7% of the respondents did not have the intention to quit their current job, which made up more than half of the respondents. 24.3% of the respondents reported that they have the intention to quit

their job. Intention to quit was used to reflect the employees' commitment towards a company; employees who planned to leave reflected that they have low commitment towards the organization.

Figure 11: Intention to quit

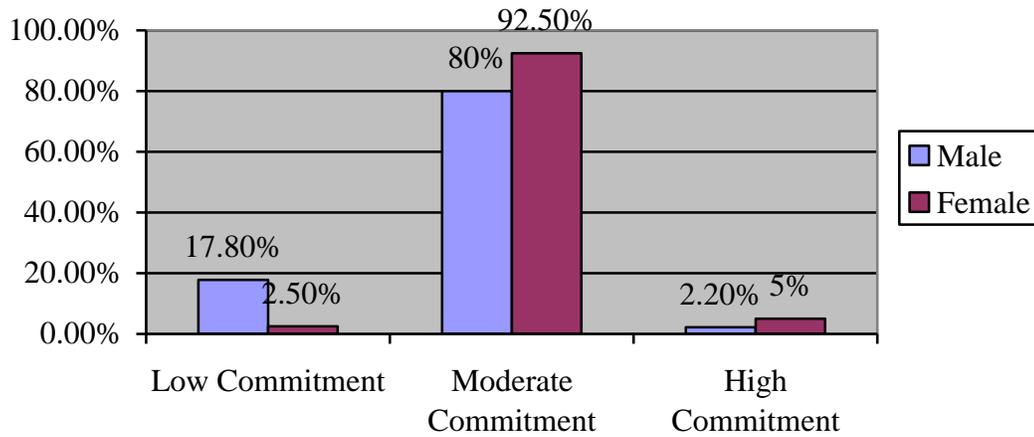


These general information was further used to compare with the result generated based on each variable's instrument, where the result generated tends to be more accurate, as it is being analyzed based on each item and subscale. This is because some respondents may not be aware that they might be facing issue in terms of their satisfaction level, emotional exhaustion level or their commitment level.

### **Organizational Commitment Level**

For the scores of organizational commitment, 15 to 45 is low commitment, 46 to 76 is moderate, while 77 to 105 is high organizational commitment. For male respondents, 80% of the respondents scored moderate commitment, 17.8% scored low commitment and only 2.2% of the respondents scored high commitment. For female respondents, 92.5% of females scored moderate commitment, 5% scored high commitment and 2.5% respondents scored low commitment.

Figure 12: Organizational Commitment Level (Gender)



The organizational commitment scores were being compared among gender and age differences using mean, to find out the average scores of the groups, and standard deviation were used to examine how far the scores from the mean are. The mean is being used as it is the most common value in measuring central tendency. The mean value minimized the error in predicting other values in the data set, as it includes all the value in the data to get the average value (Lund & Lund, 2013). Median was not being chosen as the value provided is usually not as informative as mean. Mode is the least used measure of central tendency as it is usually used when the data is not numerical, it tend to be less accurate as sometimes there may be more than one mode, or there may be no mode at all (Mean, mode and median, 2013). The standard deviation value is being used in terms of measures of spread, as it is an average deviation around the mean, and is suitable to use alongside the mean score. Standard deviation allows a more accurate prediction of the scores, as they are usually one standard deviation above or below the mean score. Unlike variance, it is not being expressed in squared unit, thus it is more descriptively meaningful. Standard deviation is easier to interpret as compared to variance (Ibrahim & Mikhail, 2006).

The mean organizational commitment scores between male and female were compared. It was found that there were mean differences between male and female in terms of organizational commitment. For male, the descriptive statistics for organizational commitment is as follows. They scored a mean of 58.11 with standard

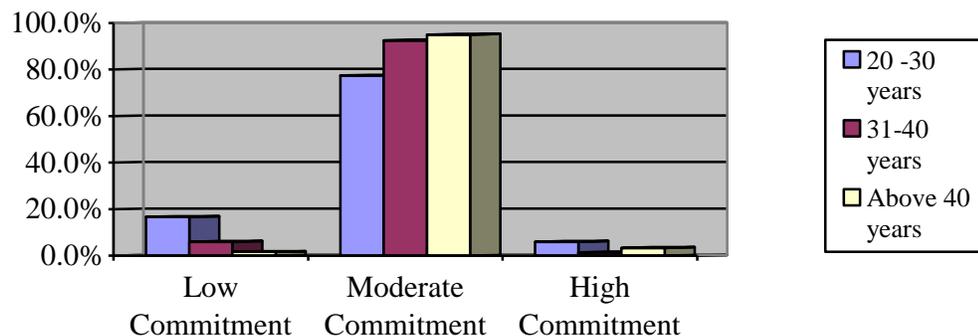
deviation of 11.55. For female, the descriptive statistics for organizational commitment includes a mean score of 64.93 with standard deviation of 8.31. It can be seen that female had a smaller standard deviation value as compared to male, which means that female’s organizational commitment score tend to distribute closer to the mean value. Female scored a higher mean in organizational commitment as compared to male; this showed that females tend to have higher organizational commitment as compared to males. An independent sample T-test was used to analyze if the mean differences is significant to explain the difference between genders.

Table 5: Mean and Standard Deviation for Organizational Commitment between Genders

Organizational Commitment	Mean	Standard Deviation
Male	58.11	11.55
Female	64.93	8.31

In terms of age group, for 20 to 30 years old, 77.4% of the respondents scored moderate commitment, 16.7% of respondents scored low commitment and 6.0% scored high commitment. For age group of 31 to 40 years old, 92.5% of respondents scored moderate, 6.0% scored low commitment and 1.5% scored high on organizational commitment. Lastly in age group above 40 years old, 95.0% scored moderate organizational commitment, 3.4% scored high commitment and only 1.7% respondent scored low commitment.

Figure 13: Organizational Commitment Level (Age Group)



There were mean differences for organizational commitment between the three age group of 20 to 30 years old, 31 to 40 years old and above 40 years old. For the age group of 20 to 30 years old, the mean organizational commitment score is 59.73 with a standard deviation of 12.54. For the age group of 31 to 40 years old, the mean score obtained is 62.42, with a standard deviation of 8.95. Lastly for the age group above 40, the mean score was 64.78 with a standard deviation of 7.47. Organizational commitment was highest among the respondents above 40 years old, the standard deviation is the smallest, which means the score tends to distribute more equally around the mean score of 64.78. This is followed by respondents aged between 31 to 40 years old, and lastly respondents between 20 to 30 years old, who scored the lowest organizational commitment among all three groups. A one-way ANOVA test was conducted to examine if the mean differences between age group is significant in explaining the different level of organizational commitment.

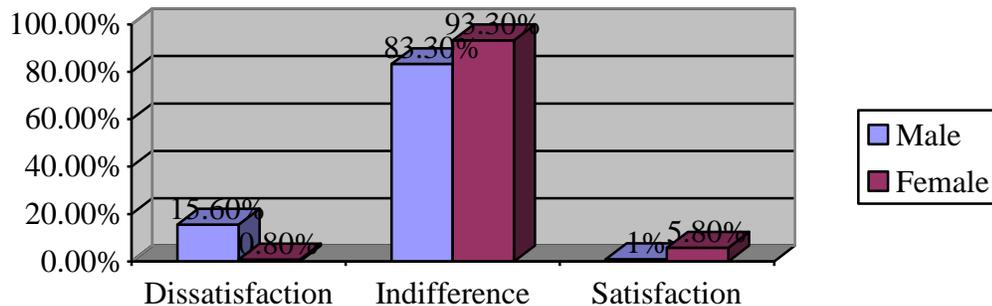
Table 6: Mean and Standard Deviation for Organizational Commitment between Age Group

Organizational Commitment	Mean	Standard Deviation
20 to 30 years old	59.73	12.54
31 to 40 years old	62.42	8.95
Above 40 years	64.78	7.47

### **Communication Satisfaction Level**

By adding all the scores in the Communication Satisfaction Questionnaire, dissatisfaction ranges from 40 to 120, indifference ranges from 121 to 200, while satisfaction ranges from 201 to 280. 83.3% males reported indifference in terms of communication satisfaction, 15.6% males reported dissatisfaction, and only 1% of the male respondents reported satisfaction. For female participants, 93.3% females scored indifference for communication satisfaction, 5.8% reported communication satisfaction and only 0.8% females reported communication dissatisfaction.

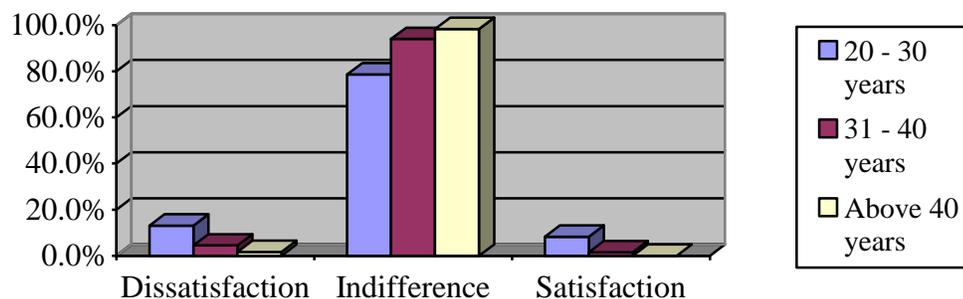
Figure 14: Communication Satisfaction Level (Gender)



Generally both genders were indifferent towards communication satisfaction, which means that they do not feel exceptionally dissatisfied or satisfied towards the communication pattern in the company, it is within the range of satisfactory. There is a higher percentage of female who experienced communication satisfaction as compared to male (5.8% and 1% respectively), and the mean score of female communication satisfaction (169.34) is considerably higher than male (146.41), thus it can be seen that female experienced higher communication satisfaction than male.

In comparison between age groups, respondents between age 20 to 30 were also indifferent towards communication satisfaction (78.6% of respondents), 13.1% of the respondents were dissatisfied and 8.3% were feeling satisfied with the communication practices within the organization. For age group between 31 to 40, 94% of the respondents scored indifferent, 4.5% scored dissatisfaction and only 1.5% scored satisfaction. For age group above 40, 1.7% of the respondents scored dissatisfaction, and the balance 98.3% were indifferent towards communication satisfaction.

Figure 15: Communication Satisfaction Level (Age Group)

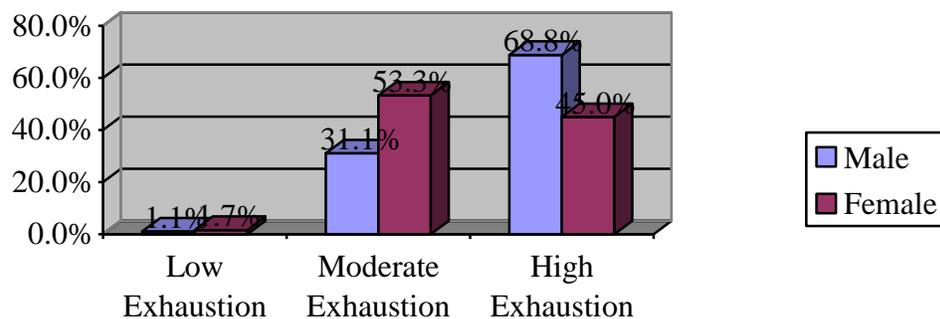


The result showed that generally, respondents from all age group are indifferent towards the communication satisfaction, where it is within the satisfactory level as reported by the respondents towards the organization. Respondents that experienced highest communication satisfaction were respondents from the age group of above 40 years old, with a mean score of 164.46, followed by age group 31 to 40 years old (160.63) and lastly is age group of 20 to 30 years old, with a mean score of 155.15. Generally, participants in the age group of above 40 years old experienced highest level of communication satisfaction.

### Emotional Exhaustion Level

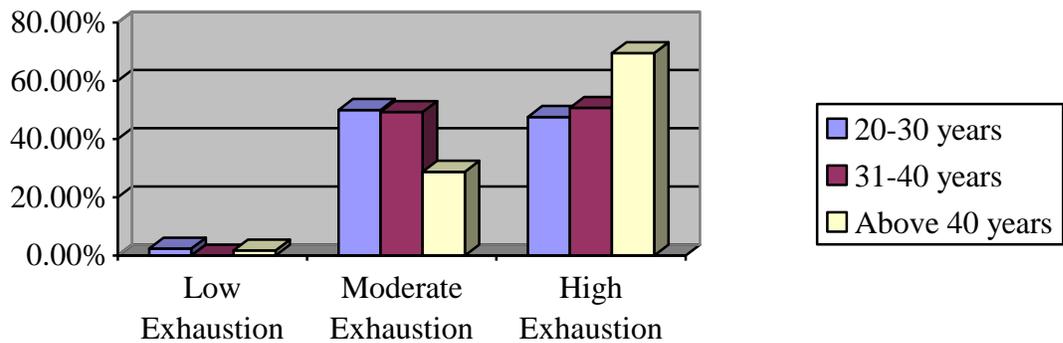
In terms of emotional exhaustion, the scores for low emotional exhaustion is from 0 to 16, moderate is from 17-26, and high emotional exhaustion is 27 and above. For male respondents, 68.8% of the respondents reported high emotional exhaustion, 31.1% of male respondents had moderate emotional exhaustion, and 1.1% of the respondents reported low emotional exhaustion. For female respondents, 53.3% of them scored moderate emotional exhaustion, 45.0% of them scored high emotional exhaustion, and 1.7% of the respondents scored low emotional exhaustion. Both genders scored considerably high on emotional exhaustion, with more males scoring high emotional exhaustion as compared to females, who mostly fell under moderate level. The mean score for male emotional exhaustion is 30.19, and the mean score for female emotional exhaustion is 26.23.

Figure 16: Emotional Exhaustion Level (Gender)



For comparison between age groups, 20 to 30 years scored most on moderate emotional exhaustion (50% of the respondents), followed by high level of emotional exhaustion (47.6% respondents) and 2.4% on low exhaustion. Respondents aged 31 to 40 years old scored most on both moderate and high emotional exhaustion. 49.3% of the respondents scored moderate emotional exhaustion, while 50.7% scored high on emotional exhaustion. There were no respondent who reported low emotional exhaustion. For respondents aged 40 years and above, 69.5% scored high emotional exhaustion, followed by moderate with 28.8% respondents and low exhaustion with 1.7% respondent. Emotional exhaustion is reported to be more prevalent among the age group above 40 years old, as they have the most respondents with high emotional exhaustion, followed by respondents aged 20 to 30 years old and lastly respondents aged 31 to 40 years old. The mean score for age group above 40 years old is 29.41, which is the highest among the three age groups, followed by participants aged 20 to 30 years old, with a score of 27.94, and the lowest emotional exhaustion is participants in age group of 31 to 40 years old, with a mean score of 26.61.

Figure 17: Emotional Exhaustion Level (Age Group)



## Reliability Analysis

A Cronbach's coefficient alpha was conducted to measure the internal consistency of each scale. A Cronbach's alpha above 0.7 is considered as a scale with good internal consistency reliability (Leech, Barrett & Morgan, 2005).

The Cronbach's coefficient alpha reliability for Downs and Hazen (1977) Communication Satisfaction Questionnaire is .918 for all the 40 items. Removal of any items from the questionnaire will not improve the reliability of this scale, and removal of some items will even lower the reliability, thus there were no changes made to the scale.

Emotional exhaustion was measured using subscale of Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI), which is the 9-item emotional exhaustion scale, the Cronbach's coefficient alpha reliability of .866. No items were being removed from the scale as well, as it will reduce the reliability in measuring emotional exhaustion.

Lastly is the 15-item Mowday et. al. (1979) Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ) with a Cronbach's coefficient alpha reliability of .918. The scale remains with no items being deleted to maintain the high reliability index.

All three questionnaires displayed a Cronbach's Alpha value above 0.7, which showed good internal consistency reliability.

## **Inferential statistics**

Inferential statistics are being used to make predictions about a population, based on analyses of information or observation collected from sample. The result of analysis will be generalized to the population, thus it is important to ensure that the sample is representative of the population. This is done by using the test of significance. Test of significance is used to examine the probability that the sample is representative of the population (for example: 95% probability that the sample is representative of the population). Test of significance tells us the probability that the results could have occurred by chance, where there is no relationship at all between the variables (Crossman, 2012).

Inferential statistics deal with analyzing two or more variables. Analysis of two variables is called bivariate analysis (such as independent sample T-test), and analysis of more than two variables is called multivariate analysis (such as one way ANOVA). Researcher can either compare two or more variables to one another, or

examine the relationship between them. Some other examples of inferential statistics include correlation and regression (Inferential Statistics, n. d.).

## **Correlation**

Hypothesis 1: There is a significant relationship between communication satisfaction and organizational commitment.

Table 7: Correlation between Measures

<b>Measure</b>	<b>Organizational Commitment</b>
<b>Communication Satisfaction</b>	.849**
<b>Emotional Exhaustion</b>	-.622**

Note: \*\* $p < .01$

A bivariate correlation was conducted to investigate the relationship between communication satisfaction and organizational commitment. There is a significant relationship between communication satisfaction and organizational commitment ( $r = .849$ ,  $p < .01$ ). The result indicated that it is a significant positive relationship between communication satisfaction and organizational commitment. This showed that when communication satisfaction level is higher, organizational commitment will be higher. The research hypothesis accepted. Hypothesis 1 accepted.

Hypothesis 2: There is a significant relationship between emotional exhaustion and organizational commitment.

A bivariate correlation was conducted to investigate the relationship between emotional exhaustion and organizational commitment. There is a significant relationship between emotional exhaustion and organizational commitment ( $r = -.622$ ,

p<.01). The result indicated that it is a significant negative relationship between emotional exhaustion and organizational commitment. This showed that when emotional exhaustion increase, organizational commitment tend to decrease, which means they have lower organizational commitment. The research hypothesis accepted. Hypothesis 2 accepted.

Table 8: Correlation between Measures

<b>Measure</b>	<b>Organizational Commitment</b>
<b>Communication Climate</b>	.640**
<b>Relationship to superiors</b>	.683**
<b>Organizational Integration</b>	.741**
<b>Media Quality</b>	.721**
<b>Horizontal and Informal Communication</b>	.568**
<b>Organizational Perspective</b>	.619**
<b>Relationship with Subordinates</b>	.376**
<b>Personal Feedback</b>	.721**

Note: \*\*p<.01

A bivariate correlation was conducted to further investigate the relationship of each subscale in communication satisfaction and organizational commitment. There is a significant relationship between each subscale and organizational commitment. However, the relationship with organizational commitment is strongest for the subscales of organizational integration (r=.741, p<.01), media quality (r=.721, p<.01), personal feedback (r=.721, p<.01) and relationship to superiors (r=.683, p<.01).

The relationship is weakest between relationship with subordinates and organizational commitment (r=.376, p<.01), followed by horizontal and informal communication with organizational commitment (r=.568, p<.01).

### Gender Differences in Organizational Commitment

Hypothesis 3: There is a significant difference in organizational commitment level between genders.

Table 9: Independent sample T-test for gender differences in organizational commitment

		Mean	SD	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Organizational Commitment	Male	58.11	11.55	-4.750	154	.000
	Female	64.93	8.31			

Independent sample t-test was conducted to investigate the gender differences in organizational commitment. The result showed that mean score of males (58.11) is lower than females (64.93), and there is a significant difference between males and females in level of organizational commitment ( $t(154) = -4.750, p < .05$ ). Group with higher score indicate higher organizational commitment. This showed that females ( $M=64.93, SD=8.31$ ) have a statistically significant higher organizational commitment as compared to males ( $M=58.11, SD=11.55$ ). The research hypothesis is accepted. The results showed that there is a significant difference between genders in level of organizational commitment. Hypothesis 3 is accepted.

### Age Differences in Organizational Commitment

Hypothesis 4: There is a significant difference in organizational commitment level between age groups

Table 10: One-Way ANOVA for Organizational Commitment between Age Groups

Dimension	Mean (SD)			df	F	p
	20-30	31-40	Above 40			
Age				Between groups	Within groups	
Organizational Commitment	59.73 (12.54)	62.42 (8.95)	64.78 (7.47)	2	207	4.33 .014

Note: \* $p < .05$

A one-way between subjects ANOVA was conducted to compare age differences on organizational commitment for 20 to 30 years old, 31 to 40 years old, and above 40 years old. There was a significant effect of age differences on organizational commitment at the  $p < .05$  level for the three conditions [ $F(2, 207) = 4.33, p < .05$ ]. Post hoc comparisons using the Tukey HSD test indicated that the mean score for the age group 20 to 30 years old ( $M = 59.73, SD = 12.54$ ) was significantly different than the age group above 40 years old ( $M = 64.78, SD = 7.47$ ). However, the age group 31 to 40 years old ( $M = 62.42, SD = 8.95$ ) did not significantly differ from group 20 to 30 years old and group above 40 years old. Taken together, these results suggest that differences in age group do have an effect on memory for words. Specifically, results suggest that older workers tend to have higher organizational commitment. The difference is significantly different between age group 20 to 30 years and above 40 years. This showed that respondents aged 20 to 30 years old have significantly lower organizational commitment level comparing to group above 40 years. The research hypothesis is accepted. Hypothesis 4 accepted.

### Standardized Multiple Regression

Table 11: Standardized Multiple Regression for communication satisfaction and emotional exhaustion

	R <sup>2</sup>	Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	Std. Error	$\beta$	$\beta_i$	t	Sig.
Regression	.729	.726	5.43				
Communication							
Satisfaction				.324	.776	16.14	.000
Emotional							
exhaustion				-.172	-.112	-2.33	.021

A standardized multiple regression was used to determine which one has a stronger impact of organizational commitment between communication satisfaction and emotional exhaustion. In the standardized multiple regression, both independent

variables together explain 72.6 percent of the variance in the organizational commitment, which is highly significant as indicated by the F-value in the ANOVA table [ $R^2=.729$ ,  $F(2, 207)=277.75$ ,  $p<.01$ ]. Communication satisfaction significantly predicted organizational commitment,  $\beta=.324$ ,  $p<.01$ . Emotional exhaustion also significantly predicted organizational commitment,  $\beta=-.172$ ,  $p<.05$ . One standard deviation change in communication satisfaction is followed by .776 increase in organizational commitment ( $Y=15.10+.324X$ ). One standard deviation change in emotional exhaustion is followed by .112 decrease in organizational commitment ( $Y=15.10+(-.172X)$ ). Hence, communication satisfaction has a stronger impact on organizational commitment comparing to emotional exhaustion.

Table 12: Standardized Multiple Regression for subscales of communication satisfaction

	R <sup>2</sup>	Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	Std. Error	$\beta$	$\beta_i$	t	Sig.
Regression	.757	.747	5.21				
Communication Climate				.341	.126	2.62	.009
Relationship to superiors				.165	.074	1.36	.176
Organizational Integration				.776	.321	6.45	.000
Media Quality				.644	.231	4.17	.000
Horizontal and Informal Communication				.078	.029	.60	.552
Organizational Perspective				.068	.025	.52	.602
Relationship with subordinates				.128	.057	1.44	.152
Personal feedback				.530	.233	4.41	.000

As communication satisfaction was found to have a stronger impact on organizational commitment, a standardized multiple regression was used to determine

which subscales in communication satisfaction is a significant predictor of organizational commitment. In the standardized multiple regression, the concept of communication satisfaction explains 74.7 percent of the variance in the organizational commitment, which is highly significant as indicated by the F-value in the ANOVA table [ $R^2=.757$ ,  $F(8, 201)=78.30$ ,  $p<.01$ ]. The significant predictors of communication satisfaction's subscales for organizational commitment are communication climate,  $\beta=.126$ ,  $p<.01$ ; organizational integration,  $\beta=.321$ ,  $p<.01$ ; media quality,  $\beta=.231$ ,  $p<.01$ ; and personal feedback,  $\beta=.233$ ,  $p<.01$ . One standard deviation change in communication climate is followed by .341 increase in organizational commitment ( $Y=7.11+.126X$ ). One standard deviation change in organizational integration is followed by .776 increase in organizational commitment ( $Y=7.11+.321X$ ). One standard deviation change in media quality is followed by .644 increase in organizational commitment ( $Y=7.11+.231X$ ). One standard deviation change in personal feedback is followed by .530 increase in organizational commitment ( $Y=7.11+.233X$ ). Hence, the significant predictors for organizational commitment in terms of communication satisfaction are communication climate, organizational integration, media quality and personal feedback.

Correlation study found that all subscales of communication satisfaction have a significant relationship with organizational commitment, however, standardized multiple regression only found four significant predictors of organizational commitment from subscales of communication satisfaction. Correlation measures the strength of relationship among two variables, without knowing the functional relationship. Regression is used to find the form of relationship between independent and dependent variable, in a linear line. In another word, regression explains a unit change in independent variable will lead to a beta-unit change in Y. This showed that correlation only measures how one random variable changes with another, but in regression, such association is parameterized by a statistical model, providing a more detailed description of the correlation. When all factors are being placed together to run in regression, some variables tend to lose its significance (Welge & Fauler, 2012).

## CHAPTER 5

### DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Key findings of this study will be discussed in this chapter, to compare the hypotheses tested and the result with past researches. This chapter focuses on the significant differences in gender and age for organizational commitment. Communication satisfaction and emotional exhaustion was examined to find the correlation with organizational commitment. Both variables was compared to find out the variable with a stronger impact on organizational commitment, and how this will provide implications for organizations, to better manage their employees. Limitations of this study will be examined and future recommendations are suggested for a more comprehensive research.

#### Interpretation of Results

**Hypothesis 1: There is a significant relationship between communication satisfaction and organizational commitment.**

It has been found that there is a significant positive relationship between communication satisfaction and organizational commitment among clothing retail sales assistant. The researches that supported this finding include Ahmad (2004) and Alanezi (2011). The relationship is strong among these two variables, as reported by past researches. The subscales with the strongest relationship to organizational commitment are organizational integration, media quality, personal feedback and relationship to superiors.

Both organizational integration and media quality were found to have significant positive relationship with organizational commitment. It is important for employees to feel integrated in an organization as it shows the ability of leaders to lead their employees. Leaders must have the ability to carry out company strategy,

and effectively communicate to the employees regarding their role in helping the company to achieve goals. Failure to do so may result in employees doubting the ability of their superiors. Media quality is crucial in ensuring that message is being communicated to employees effectively. When messages are not being transmitted through the right channel, it may result in overlapping jobs among a few employees, causing confusion (Marquis, 2013). Personal feedback and relationship to superiors is found to have strong relationship in this study probably due to the nature of job being studied. They required superior's guidance and support in terms of how to deal with customers more effectively, and they need to be well aware that other than their sales performance, what are the other areas that will be used to judge their job performance, such as customer service quality, store upkeep, and relationship with colleagues.

**Hypothesis 2: There is a significant relationship between emotional exhaustion and organizational commitment.**

Findings from this research reported that emotional exhaustion had a significant negative relationship with organizational commitment. The findings were supported by various past researches like Muhammad and Hamdy (2005) and McLaurine (2008). Emotional exhaustion is said to cause low job satisfaction, low organizational commitment and higher intention to leave (Muhammad & Hamdy, 2005). Clothing retail sales assistant were the front line employees for an organization, as they are the people who dealt with customers directly. They experienced emotional exhaustion may be due to their daily job in dealing with customers demand, heavy workload, the expectation to achieve certain sales target and not employee friendly working hours. They might also experience role stress where they are unable to balance the life between work and family (Karatepe, Sokmen, Yavas & Babakus, 2010).

**Hypothesis 3: There is a significant difference in organizational commitment level between genders.**

In terms of gender differences, female scored a considerably higher mean score as compared to male. Female scored 64.93 in organizational commitment while male scored a mean of 58.11. Based on mean score, it can be seen that female tend to have a higher organizational commitment as compared to male. An independent sample T-test revealed that there is a significant difference between male and female in organizational commitment, with female tends to have higher organizational commitment. This is supported by past researches conducted by Clayton, Petzall, Lynch and Margaret (2007) and Khalili and Asmawi (2012), which found that female tend to have higher organizational commitment than male, even in a different industry from this current study. One explanation for this phenomenon is that there is higher percentage of women in the retail industry, and this might in turn create a gender inequality. Men in this clothing retail industry would feel left out working with more women than men, thus they might seek for jobs with a more balance gender distribution, leading to lower commitment in male respondents (Moncrief, Babakus, Cravens & Johnston, 2000).

**Hypothesis 4: There is a significant difference in organizational commitment level between age groups.**

In terms of age differences, respondents in the age group of above 40 scored the highest mean score at 64.78, followed by the age group of 31-40 years old at 62.42 and 59.73 for age group of 20-30 years old, for organizational commitment. However, one-way ANOVA test revealed that there is only a significant difference between age group of 20-30 years old and above 40 years old in terms of organizational commitment, while respondents in age group of 31-40 years old have no considerable difference from other age groups. We can conclude that respondents above 40 have higher organizational commitment than respondents in group of 20 to 30 years old. These findings were supported by the study done by study of Salami

(2008) which found that people above 40 tend to have higher organizational commitment, and Cordas (2008) who reported lower commitment for people aged 30 and below. According to Kaur and Sandhu (2010), older workers tend to have higher organizational commitment due to the changes in their environment and life experiences, especially for those with mid or late career stage. Older workers tend to have a different attitude, as they focus more on work stability and time spent on personal life. They are likely to adapt better to organization's culture and policies, thus leading to a favorable working environment for the older workers.

### **Impact of Communication Satisfaction and Emotional Exhaustion on Organizational Commitment**

It was found that as compared to emotional exhaustion, communication satisfaction had a greater impact on organizational commitment, where it can better predict the organizational commitment level among the clothing retail sales assistant based on their level of communication satisfaction. This means that if communication satisfaction is high, we can predict that organizational commitment is high as well. However, it is less accurate to predict organizational commitment level based on emotional exhaustion, where an employee with high emotional exhaustion may not necessarily have low organizational commitment. Clothing retail sales assistant is a position that requires communication with colleagues, to ensure they are updated about customers' request and smooth operations in store. As they dealt with customers a lot, it is important for them to share their experiences among each other, or to get guidance from their superior, in order to improve the service quality. Sales assistant is a position that serves as a mediator between a company and a customer. Customers would judge the company's performance based on the sales assistant's service quality. Thus, it is also important to ensure that company shares their value and expectations in a clear communication pattern to the sales assistant, to avoid any miscommunication.

As communication satisfaction has a stronger impact on organizational commitment, thus each subscale in communication satisfaction is being examined to

identify the significant predictor. The significant predictors found were communication climate, organizational integration, media quality and personal feedback. This finding is supported by the study of Ahmad (2004). Ahmad (2004) found that media quality and organizational integration are both significant in predicting relationship with organizational commitment. Personal feedback and communication climate as significant predictors was supported by the study of Varona (2004), which found that both subscales were the strongest organizational commitment predictors across three Guatemalan organizations. Though most of the studies reviewed reflected that horizontal and informal communication is a significant predictor of organizational commitment, however, this was not found in current study. This may be due to the industry being studied is different from other researchers. Clothing retail industry may not require as much horizontal and informal communication, if formal communication is well communicated from the organization, thus media quality is being viewed as more significant in determining organizational commitment level, rather than horizontal and informal communication.

It is important for employees to be communicated with company values and direction, in order for them to relate to it and once they feel like part of the organization, their commitment level tend to increase.

## **Implications and Recommendations**

This study is useful for organizations or managers in the clothing retails industry, who need to manage a great team of sales assistant, especially with company with high turnover rates. This study provides an insight to the managers on some of the factors that may lead to reduce organizational commitment, and some of the ways to improve.

One finding from the descriptive data is that position level and tenure has no relation to the income obtained by the employees. It shows that organizations value contributions and performance more than the number of years an employee spends in the company. Tenure does not necessary mean that person who works longer can perform better or complete a task faster. If an employee works with the company for a

long period of time, but did not increase in role and responsibility, they are not considered as efficient employees. Thus, tenure should not be the only element to serve as the criteria for salary payout or in determining employees' organizational commitment level. Organizations need to ensure that they have employees who stay in the organization and at the same time contributing to the company's profit and well-being.

This current research addressed the level of communication satisfaction, emotional exhaustion, and organizational commitment among clothing retail sales assistant in Malaysia. There has not been study on these variables among this target population in Malaysia. The study revealed that generally female experienced higher communication satisfaction than male and most of the respondents being studied were experiencing high communication satisfaction. Respondents that are younger tend to experience lower communication satisfaction as compared to older employees. This implies that it is important for managers to focus on improving the communication satisfaction level of male employees and younger employees, which in turn will increase organizational commitment level. Organization can work on planning more meetings with clearly written minutes from meeting discussion, and also publishing monthly newsletter, to ensure that employees are well informed about company's direction. Superiors should also ensure more face-to-face communication with their subordinates, and constantly providing guidance and feedback on their performance (Ramirez, 2010).

Both males and females experienced moderate to high level of emotional exhaustion. Emotional exhaustion is a form of extreme stress that has been extended for a long period of time (Smith, Segal & Segal, 2012). This shows that Malaysia's clothing retail sales assistant tend to face a great amount of stress at work. This is particular severe in male employees and older employees aged 40 and above. There are certain negative effects of increased emotional exhaustion level, such as decreased job performance, absenteeism, which will lead to decreased organizational commitment or even lead to turnover. Managers need to decide how to curb this issue, to ensure that their employees are satisfied with their job, which lead to increased productivity and commitment level. There are a few ways for managers to

improve the psychological well-being of their employees, especially male employees and employees aged 40 years old above.

Burnout can be prevented if organization can provide suitable stress management training to the staffs, and ensure that the staffs have sufficient meal and break time, in order for them to have the energy and rest needed to sustain the long hour job. Some of the ways that managers can help the employees to cope with burnout, including be more attentive to employees' problem, actively addressing their problems and help to deal with it, ensure that employees are clear with their job description, or arrange new duties to the employees if they felt that they are unable to cope (Smith, Segal & Segal, 2012).

According to Haupt (2010), power naps are slowly catching on in the current workforce. A number of organizations are practicing and recognizing the health benefits of power naps. Some of the health benefits of power naps include increased alertness at work, enhanced brain functionality and reduced sickness for the employees. Power naps are not necessary for people who do not get 8-hours of sleep; it is also useful for employees who do not have quality sleeping pattern. Some organizations set up nap rooms for their employees, while others allow their employees to nap at their own desk. Power naps usually takes about 10 to 15 minutes, and the employees will wake up feeling refreshed. Powers naps will lead to a more cheerful person, and this is especially useful to be used in communicating with others, as it makes them more approachable. This creates a cheery communication environment in the office that helps to enhance communication satisfaction. Some multinational companies who encourage power naps are Nike, Google and British Airways.

Communication satisfaction has a greater impact on organizational commitment as compared to emotional exhaustion. Thus managers should take one step at a time, by focusing on increasing communication satisfaction, which will help in increasing organizational commitment, and in turn reducing turnover that happens quite often in the clothing retail industry. It is important for companies to ensure that the money spent on training employees will bring a better return to the company as

compared to their invested cost, in terms of improving their productivity, performance and ensure that they remain with the company.

## **Limitations**

One of the limitations in this study is the generalization of the samples to the population. The total participants of 210 sales assistant may not be as representative comparing to larger sample size. Due to the nature of occupation and a wide range of organizations available, it is not possible to get a full list of employees in the clothing retail industry. Thus, convenience sampling was being used to collect data. This is not the ideal sampling method as not all employees have the equal opportunity to be selected for this study. It is advisable to get the complete list of employees to be studied, in order to obtain a more generalized result.

Besides that, communication satisfaction is being studied generally as a construct, which include a number of subscales which may or may not affect organizational commitment. As can be seen from the results, only certain communication satisfaction subscales are significant predictors of organizational commitment. By studying communication satisfaction with all subscales included, results may be too general since there was influence of insignificant variables.

Comparing to communication satisfaction, emotional exhaustion is a less significant predictor of organizational commitment. This study examined the direct relationship between the two independent variables and one dependent variable. In order to strengthen the relationship between these two variables, a mediating or moderating variable may be added. Mediating variable (job satisfaction, motivation) accounts for the relationship between independent variable and dependent variable. It explains how physical external events will influence the significance level among the variables involved. Moderating variable however influence the direction and/or strength of the relationship between independent variables and dependent variables. Moderating variables can be qualitative (gender, age) or quantitative (salary, reward)

in nature. Both variables will further explain the relationship between the independent variables with organizational commitment (Baron & Kenny, 1999).

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, this study has provided some information into an area not being studied for local market. Communication satisfaction has not been widely studied across various researches and this construct should be given more importance in view of its influence on organizational commitment. It is predicted that communication satisfaction will gain more prominence in the study of organizational behavior, as it is definite that employees will communicate with their colleagues, and organizations will need to share information to the team.

Recently customers are getting more aware of their rights, and their expectations towards service quality have increased. This in turn will create more burdens for employees in the front line industry, including the clothing retail sales assistant. It is important for companies to understand the importance of communication satisfaction now and effectively communicate the market trend and customer's expectations to the employees, and for the employees to communicate among themselves to gain the latest information and guidance on how to handle customers well. Employees who are satisfied with the communication pattern in the company tend to be more committed to the organization, and it helps company to save cost as it reduces turnover rate.

Emotional exhaustion should also be addressed seriously as it affects the well-being of employees, and will reflect in increased turnover rate in view of its negative relationship with organizational commitment. It is predicted that with the increased cost of living and expectations from both company and customers, employees tend to experience higher emotional exhaustion, especially for those with family. Organizations should take necessary preventive measures to ensure that their employees' psychological well-being is being taken care of.

Both communication satisfaction and emotional exhaustion are important measures that impact employees' organizational commitment, with communication

satisfaction being more influential. There are certain research gaps in this study, where future research should focus on improving. First is to improve the samples being drawn and number of participants. Future researches can focus on samples which a complete list of possible participants can be obtained, and implement better sampling method like simple random sampling. This is to ensure that everyone in the population being studied has an equal opportunity to be selected. Also it is recommended to obtain a larger sample size compared to the current study. This is because both practices will result in a more representative sample and researchers would better able to generalize the samples to the population being studied.

Second is the study of communication satisfaction without breakdown of the subscales may be too general. Result revealed that some subscales were not significant predictor of organizational commitment. Thus future research can focus on studying the communication satisfaction's significant predictors of organizational commitment. Besides that, no specific communication method was being defined in this study. Should future researcher aims to be more specific, communication method can be defined thoroughly, in view that there were various communication pattern such as face-to-face, memo, newsletter or email.

Lastly, in order to strengthen the relationship or further explain the relationship of communication satisfaction and emotional exhaustion with organizational commitment, it is recommended to include a moderating variable or mediating variable in between the independent and dependent variables. This will enhance the understanding of whether the relationship is stronger in terms of direct relationship between the independent and dependent variables, or it is stronger with a mediating or moderating variable. Mediating or moderating variables are variables with relations to communication satisfaction, emotional exhaustion and organizational commitment, as can be seen from past researches. Some of it includes work-family conflict, job satisfaction, tenure and other organizational related variables.

This study provided an insight to managers of an organization regarding the importance of communication satisfaction and emotional exhaustion, in helping to understand the organizational commitment level of their employees. Organizational

commitment is closely linked to turnover rate, thus more future studies in this area will be helpful for organizations to identify the issues and actively deal with them in order to reduce turnover cost.

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## APPENDIX A



### **Research Project**

Dear participants:

I am Yau Ai Zhen, student from the Faculty of Accountancy and Management, UTAR and am currently doing Master in Business Administration. This is a survey on Communication Satisfaction, Emotional Exhaustion and Organizational Commitment. The purpose of the research is to understand the level of communication satisfaction and emotional exhaustion among sales assistant in clothing retail industry; it will also examine the relationship of communication satisfaction and emotional exhaustion with organizational commitment. It takes about 20 minutes to complete the questionnaire and the researcher will collect the questionnaire in one week time. You are reminded that your participation for this survey is voluntary. Please be informed that the details provided for this survey is strictly confidential and only grouped data will be presented. Your participation in this survey is truly appreciated.

### Section A: Demographic Information

Please complete the following details for the purposes of the study by ticking (✓) in the box for the details that is appropriate for you.

Gender:  Male  Female

Age:  20-30  31-40  Above 40

Race:  Chinese  Malay  Indian  Others, please specify \_\_\_\_\_

Job Position:  Junior Level  Supervisory Level  Managerial Level

Number of years in the industry:  Less than 2 years  2 to 5 years  
 6 to 10 years  more than 10 years

Number of years in current company:  Less than 2 years  2 to 5 years  
 6 to 10 years  more than 10 years

Monthly Income:  Less than RM1,000  RM1,000 to RM3,000  
 RM3,001 to RM5,000  Above RM5,000

How satisfied are you with your current job?

Very Satisfied  Satisfied  Indifferent  Dissatisfied  Very dissatisfied

How often do you feel physically exhausted from your current job?

Never  Sometimes  Most of the time  All the time

How often do you feel mentally exhausted from your current job?

Never  Sometimes  Most of the time  All the time

Do you have the intention to quit from you current job?

Yes  No

### Section B: Communication Satisfaction

Listed below are several kinds of information often associated with a person's job. Please indicate how satisfied you are with the amount and/or quality of each kind of information by circling the appropriate number at the right.

No	Items	Very Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Indifferent	Somewhat Satisfied	Satisfied	Very Satisfied
1.	Information about my progress in my job	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2.	Personal news	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3.	Information about organizational policies and goals	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4.	Information about how my job compares with others	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5.	Information about how I am being judged	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6.	Recognition of my efforts	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7.	Information about departmental policies and goals	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8.	Information about the requirements of my job	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9.	Information about government action affecting my organization	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10.	Information about changes in our organization	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
11.	Reports on how problems in my job are being handled	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12.	Information about benefits and pay	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
13.	Information about our organization's financial standing	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
14.	Information about accomplishments and/or failures of the organization	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
15.	Extend to which my superiors know and understand the problems faced by subordinates	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

No	Items	Very Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Indifferent	Somewhat Satisfied	Satisfied	Very Satisfied
16.	Extent to which the organization's communication motivates and stimulates an enthusiasm for meeting its goals	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
17.	Extent to which my supervisor listens and pays attention to me	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
18.	Extent to which the people in my organization have great ability as communicators	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
19.	Extent to which my supervisor offers guidance for solving job related problems	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
20.	Extent to which the organization's communication makes me identify with it or feel a vital part of it	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
21.	Extent to which the organization's communications are interesting and helpful	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
22.	Extent to which my supervisor trusts me	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
23.	Extent to which I receive in time the information needed to do my job	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
24.	Extent to which conflicts are handled appropriately through proper communication channels	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
25.	Extent to which the grapevine is active in our organization	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
26.	Extent to which my supervisor is open to ideas	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
27.	Extent to which horizontal communication with other organizational members is accurate and free flowing	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
28.	Extent to which communication practices are adaptable to emergencies	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

No	Items	Very Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Indifferent	Somewhat Satisfied	Satisfied	Very Satisfied
29.	Extent to which my work group is compatible	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
30.	Extent to which our meetings are well organized	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
31.	Extent to which the amount of supervision given me is about right	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
32.	Extent to which written directives and reports are clear and concise	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
33.	Extent to which the attitudes toward communication in the organization are basically healthy	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
34.	Extent to which informal communication is active and accurate	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
35.	Extent to which the amount of communication in the organization is about right	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
36.	Extent to which my subordinates are responsive to downward directive communication	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
37.	Extent to which my subordinates anticipate my needs for information	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
38.	Extent to which I do not have a communication overload	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
39.	Extent to which my subordinates are receptive to evaluation, suggestions, and criticisms	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
40.	Extent to which my subordinates feel responsible for initiating accurate upward communication	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

### Section C: Emotional Exhaustion

This set of questions (No. 1-9) contains statement of job-related feelings. Please read each statement carefully and decide if you ever feel this way about your job. Please circle the number for each statement below.

No	Items	Never	A few times a year	Monthly	A few times a month	Once a week	A few times a week	Everyday
1.	I feel emotionally drained from my work.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
2.	I feel “used up” at the end of the workday.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
3.	I feel fatigued when I get up for work and have to face another day on the job.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
4.	Working with people is really a strain for me.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
5.	I feel burned out from my job.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
6.	I feel frustrated by my job.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
7.	I feel I am working too hard on my job.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
8.	Working with people directly puts too much stress on me.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
9.	I feel like I’m at the end of my rope.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6

### Section D: Organizational Commitment

Listed below are a series of statements that represent possible feelings that individuals might have about the company or organizations for which they work. With respect to your own feelings about the organization for which you are now working, please indicate the degree of your agreement or disagreement with each statement by circling one of the five alternatives for each statement.

No	Items	Strongly Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Slightly Agree	Strongly Agree
1.	I am willing to put in a great deal of effort beyond that normally expected in order to help this organization be successful.	1	2	3	4	5
2.	I talk up this organization to my friends as a great organization to work for.	1	2	3	4	5
3.	I feel very little loyalty to this organization.	1	2	3	4	5
4.	I would accept almost any type of job assignment in order to keep working for this organization.	1	2	3	4	5
5.	I find that my values and the organization's values are very similar.	1	2	3	4	5
6.	I am proud to tell others that I am part of this organization.	1	2	3	4	5
7.	I could just as well be working for a different organization as long as the type of work was similar.	1	2	3	4	5
8.	This organization really inspires the very best in me the way of job performance.	1	2	3	4	5
9.	It will take very little change in my present circumstances to cause me to leave this organization.	1	2	3	4	5
10.	I am extremely glad that I chose this organization to work for over others I was considering at the time I joined.	1	2	3	4	5

No	Items	Strongly Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Slightly Agree	Strongly Agree
11.	There is not much to be gained by sticking with this organization indefinitely.	1	2	3	4	5
12.	Often I find it difficult to agree with this organization's policies on important matters relating to its employees.	1	2	3	4	5
13.	I really care about the fate of this organization.	1	2	3	4	5
14.	For me this is the best of all possible organizations.	1	2	3	4	5
15.	Deciding to work for this organization was a definite mistake on my part.	1	2	3	4	5

APPENDIX B

TABLE 1  
*Table for Determining Sample Size from a Given Population*

<i>N</i>	<i>S</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>S</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>S</i>
10	10	220	140	1200	291
15	14	230	144	1300	297
20	19	240	148	1400	302
25	24	250	152	1500	306
30	28	260	155	1600	310
35	32	270	159	1700	313
40	36	280	162	1800	317
45	40	290	165	1900	320
50	44	300	169	2000	322
55	48	320	175	2200	327
60	52	340	181	2400	331
65	56	360	186	2600	335
70	59	380	191	2800	338
75	63	400	196	3000	341
80	66	420	201	3500	346
85	70	440	205	4000	351
90	73	460	210	4500	354
95	76	480	214	5000	357
100	80	500	217	6000	361
110	86	550	226	7000	364
120	92	600	234	8000	367
130	97	650	242	9000	368
140	103	700	248	10000	370
150	108	750	254	15000	375
160	113	800	260	20000	377
170	118	850	265	30000	379
180	123	900	269	40000	380
190	127	950	274	50000	381
200	132	1000	278	75000	382
210	136	1100	285	100000	384

Note.—*N* is population size.  
*S* is sample size.