

The Important Role of Dimension in Human Resources Studies: The Curious Case of Employee Satisfaction

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ABSTRACT

Human resources studies are closely related with behavioral study and gained several scholarly attention Indonesia. But there is an important aspect, regarding how scholars use variables in their respective studies, the dimension of a variable is often forgotten. This article will try to shed light on this topic. by doing a thorough review of the case of the employee satisfaction variable. We will explore how the employee satisfaction variable is viewed, and how by looking at the dimension of this variable an entirely new perspective could be found on how this variable interacts with other variables, namely organizational commitment. We will look thoroughly at several studies, especially those that focused on the establishment of the dimension from this variable, and discuss the study's results., Then try to explain, how future research can utilize dimensions to gain a better understanding of human resources and behavioral studies.

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1. INTRODUCTION

With the rapid development of Indonesia's Economy, understanding the context of Human Resources Study becoming more and more important. Several attempts have been made to understand aspects of human resources, from the generational perspectives [1], directly looking at the behavioral aspects such as job satisfaction and organizational commitment [2], or how commitment affects performance [3]. Simply

put, the Human Resources Study is gaining serious scholarly attention in Indonesia.

But just like how the studies progress in other parts of the world, there is an important aspect that is often forgotten by the researcher. The fact that inside a variable exists a dimension, that can only grow with the expansion of research in certain topics. An example of this is the employee satisfaction variable. Employee satisfaction is often looked up as an important variable to predict a plethora of other variables, such as

organizational commitment. But the fact is, when trying to find the impact of employee satisfaction, researchers mostly forgot the existence of employee satisfaction dimensions [4]. This could become a problem because employee satisfaction as a variable, is always growing.

Since the inception of job satisfaction as a concept, experts started to look at how this concept will grow. Within the job satisfaction concept, exists the satisfaction that is mainly felt by the employee [5], and it is certainly, consists of multiple dimensions, such as the physical condition of the job, and mainly compensation [6]. The job satisfaction concept gave birth to employee satisfaction, and this variable continues to grow, and now it is often found that employee satisfaction has tens of indicators to measure [7]. These facts indicate that, as a variable employee satisfaction has multiple dimensions that sadly never gained that much attention from scholars, especially from Indonesia.

Employee satisfaction as a variable provides an important lesson on how a variable progresses and how the lack of attention to dimension could provide an obstacle for future research. The most common method to understand the interaction between employee satisfaction, and for example, organizational variables is directly connecting both variables, with organizational commitment as the dependent variable, and sometimes the interaction between both variables can be explained [3], [8]. But oftentimes, these interactions left more answers than questions, just like how employee satisfaction is unable to predict normative commitment [9], or how it is unable to predict the continuance commitment [2], and when looking at how employee satisfaction dimension interacted with organizational commitment, it is found that one of its dimension, satisfaction with colleagues, did not explain and did not affect the organizational commitment [4].

with these inconsistencies that have been found especially while looking at the interactions between employee satisfaction and organizational commitment, it is paramount for researchers to look at how

dimension played a role in this. This article planned to do just that, unearthing and bringing forward the discussion on the importance of dimension in human resources study. We will focus on the employee satisfaction variable and its interaction with organizational commitment, provide a thorough literature review, and present the recent developments in the study. All in order to better understand employee satisfaction and organizational commitment itself, and further understand the human resources studies.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

In the literature review we will provide in-depth literature on employee satisfaction and organizational commitment. The review will start on employee satisfaction as a variable, including its history, and then we will focus on organizational commitment.

2.1 *Employee Satisfaction*

Employee satisfaction is a variable that has its roots in the concept of job satisfaction, which comes from Vroom's theory of valence, instrumentality, and expectancy. Several experts define job satisfaction as a sense of fulfilment from various aspects that people get from their work [5]. This feeling of fulfilment has a positive impact on the organization, including employees with job satisfaction, or what is called employee satisfaction, it will be easier for them to have organizational citizenship behavior [10], [11] or in several positions, the organization will do various things. to be able to generate employee satisfaction such as providing appropriate compensation [12], [13]. So in general, it can be concluded that employee satisfaction focuses on the sense of fulfilment, and satisfaction, experienced by employees related to work.

In its development, employee satisfaction has become a determinant, especially for positive behavior related to the organization. Several experts position employee satisfaction as a determinant of work safety behavior [14]. Apart from

that, employee satisfaction has also been empirically proven to be a variable that influences business performance [15]. Apart from that, there are also various empirical findings that position employee satisfaction as a determinant of organizational commitment [8], [16]. What can be concluded is that as a variable, employee satisfaction was found to be a determinant of various positive cultures, one of which is organizational commitment.

However, employee satisfaction itself does not necessarily stand alone. Job satisfaction, which is the root of employee satisfaction, has various dimensions that form job satisfaction, such as satisfaction with the physical condition of the company, and satisfaction with the compensation provided by the company [6]. In its development, these various dimensions have the opportunity to interact with other variables, are considered to be dimensions of employee satisfaction, and provide more insight into employee satisfaction itself [7], [17]. So special attention needs to be paid to explore the dimensions of employee satisfaction further.

This dimension of employee satisfaction itself consists of several dimensions. There are dimensions of satisfaction regarding the physical condition of the work environment, and satisfaction with the compensation provided by the company [6]. Apart from that, several experts also formulated other dimensions, such as satisfaction with supervisors, satisfaction with company policies, and satisfaction with colleagues [7], [18]. These various dimensions ultimately become a deepening of the employee satisfaction variable, and experts try to produce a complete understanding to explain the concept of this dimension of employee satisfaction. Discussion regarding the development of this concept will be discussed in the discussion section of this article.

2.2 *Employee Satisfaction Dimensions*

In this part of the literature review we will discuss the employee satisfaction dimension. We will be focused on 5 dimensions, which are satisfaction with the organization's physical condition, satisfaction with the organization's compensation, satisfaction with the supervisor's interaction, satisfaction with colleagues, and satisfaction with the organization's policy.

This article will provide an expert opinion on each of these dimensions, taken from previous research. There are several other dimensions, like leadership style [7]. But these 5 dimensions is the one that used in the work of Almeida et.al that will be discussed in this article. To ease the explanation process we will utilize just these 5 dimensions.

a. Satisfaction with the organizations or company's physical condition

The first dimension is the dimension of employee satisfaction with the company's physical appearance, which explains that employees will be satisfied with their work if they work in a place that meets their expectations [6], such as suitability for their work, conformity with job security standards, and a sense of security. general comfort that can support his work. According to several findings, satisfaction with the company's physical appearance can foster trust, which even leads to independent work safety practices [14]. In general, it can be concluded that employee satisfaction with the company's physical environment can have a significant positive influence on positive behavior related to the company.

b. Satisfaction with the organizations or company's compensation

Satisfaction with compensation is how the compensation provided by the company or organization is in accordance with employee expectations, especially compared to the work he or she does [6]. Locke's definition continues to develop where in employee compensation itself, there is direct compensation, such as salary and bonuses, and other compensation that is intangible, and invisible [19]. Compensation as a dimension of employee satisfaction has been empirically proven in several studies, such as those conducted in South Korea [17], and thus it can be concluded that satisfaction with compensation is one of the dimensions of employee satisfaction.

c. Satisfaction with the supervisor's interaction

Supervisors play an important role in maintaining employee satisfaction, whereas in empirical research, it was found that interaction with supervisors can maintain a climate of teamwork in an organization [18]. Satisfaction with the supervisory relationship itself illustrates that employees receive support from supervisors that is in accordance with what they expect, and in accordance with their work, this has a positive impact on employee satisfaction and interactions between leaders and subordinates [20]. So here, satisfaction with supervisors has empirical support and is definitively one of the dimensions of employee satisfaction.

d. Satisfaction with colleagues

One dimension of employee satisfaction, but which has received less attention both empirically and theoretically, is the dimension of relationships with colleagues. Workplace relationships become a catalyst in colleague relationships, where these relationships can have an influence on workplace behavior [21]. In a study, it was found that relationships in the workplace, the existence of voice control, and opinion leaders in the workplace can build other employees' views on organizational commitment [22]. This means that, although there is not yet abundant empirical evidence regarding colleague relationships as a dimension of employee satisfaction, existing research has sufficiently proven that relationships with colleagues can influence behavior in the workplace. So, we still use colleague relationships as one of the dimensions of employee satisfaction, because in the dimension of interaction with supervisors, in the case of organizations in the modern era, supervisors can also be considered colleagues [23]. This is why in this study, colleague relationships remain one of the dimensions of employee satisfaction.

e. Satisfaction with the organization's policy

Company policy is the final dimension of employee satisfaction, and some experts think that even providing compensation is part of company policy [6]. However, company policy here is something with a broader meaning, such as how the company designs knowledge transfer policies and authority

division policies [24] and also how the company regulates the workload between employees [25]. So by definition, company policies are various things decided by the company, which are related to the policy of division of work, authority, and the climate of knowledge transactions within the company. Because it is binding, comprehensive, and influences all employees, it is inevitable that company policy is the final dimension of employee satisfaction.

2.3 *Organizational Commitment*

Organizational commitment is a concept that comes from the VIE theory proposed by Vroom, where the reason people persist or remain in a company or organization is that they have the expectation that there will be something they can gain by staying in a company or organization [26]. The emergence of the concept of organizational commitment is based on researchers' efforts to answer the turnover phenomenon that occurs in companies. Apart from the need for the desire to stay in the company (intention to stay), another thing is also needed and arises in the form of commitment to the organization [27] which means there is the integrity of the employee's attitudinal aspects towards the company. This attitudinal aspect means that there is an attitude that employees consciously take to remain in the company.

In its development, experts in behavioral science view organizational commitment as something important. Experts have found that one of the impacts of employees who have organizational commitment is that they more easily adopt positive things such as Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB) [11]. Apart from that, various studies also show that practical aspects, such as performance, can also be influenced by organizational commitment [3], apart from that there are

also other factors such as satisfaction with life which are also influenced by organizational commitment [28]. This means that organizational commitment plays an important role in encouraging positive behavior, and of course returning to its essence, it also helps reduce turnover [29] and is a solution in dealing with employee turnover [9].

So now the question arises, if it is so important, then how do you grow organizational commitment? Some experts think that there are several factors that influence organizational commitment, and one of the factors that is considered to have a cause-and-effect relationship is job satisfaction [29]. This has been proven again, especially in the modern era where in extreme work conditions, such as during the pandemic, job satisfaction is an inseparable factor in influencing individual organizational commitment [30]. Various empirical studies have been described in the previous section, and some are included in this section, but indeed, experts still have to continue to explore experts' understanding of the job satisfaction factors that influence organizational commitment.

Because it is still a fact that not many studies have explored the influence of job satisfaction dimensions on organizational commitment [4]. This is why, how the dimensions of job satisfaction influence organizational commitment is an interesting topic. The theoretical contributions will further strengthen experts' understanding of the interaction between these two variables.

2.4 *Organizational Commitment Dimensions*

The dimension of organizational commitment is not as definitive as employee satisfaction dimensions. The early organizational commitment concept provided by Porter, which also became the most used measurement for organizational commitment, the newest version only had 9 indicators, and the newest proved to be a better alternative

compared to its predecessor [31]. With few indicators, but arguably a reliable measurement it is a hard task to categorize the dimension of organizational commitment, especially if we use Porter's et.al concept.

But in 1990, Meyer and Allen proposed that organizational commitment had three components. This proposal also became the very first appearance of the three components of organizational commitment, the affective component, the normative component, and the continuance component [32]. These components, in the current expansion of organizational concepts, are also viewed as the dimension of organizational commitment because of how similar these components behave with dimension.

So on the basis of this article, organizational commitment as a variable has three components. The first is affective commitment which mainly focuses on an affective aspect of the individual towards the organization. The second component is the normative aspect, which focuses on the moral aspect of the individual towards the organization. The last one is the continuance component which focuses on the options individuals have, regarding staying or leaving the organization [32], [33].

3. DISCUSSION

In this part of the article, we will discuss several findings from previous research, especially regarding the importance of dimension in human resource research. In the first part of the discussion, we will highlight several previous research that mentioned and urged researchers on the importance of dimension, especially in the topics of satisfaction, and in this case employee satisfaction, and other topics in human resources research. In the second part, we will present the work of Almeida et.al that successfully mapped out the dimension of employee satisfaction [4] and their interesting

finding. In the last part, we will discuss the importance of dimensions for human resource research moving forward. We will start the discussion with how previous researchers highlighted the importance of dimension.

3.1 *The Importance of Dimension*

Previous researchers provided an important point of view. Satisfaction, and in this case job satisfaction is a long-standing variable, one of many that comes from the VIE theory by Vroom [6]. Scholars believe that Locke was the very first to formulate this variable [29], and from the very beginning, it has been widely accepted that a satisfied employee will provide greater performance, thus creating the belief that satisfaction will always lead to better performance in an organization.

However, this belief was eventually challenged by several other researchers. One such important critique of this belief is an article published by Fisher in 1980, that raises the doubt that job satisfaction is always directly related to performance [34]. In around the same year, experts started to provide several concepts and theories, regarding other variables, and one of them is the concept of organizational commitment [27]. In the work presented by Fisher, he proposed that there are variables that could affect the relationship between job satisfaction and performance, and there is a suggestion that inside the job satisfaction itself, there a possibility, starting from other views of satisfaction, and the determinants of job satisfaction itself.

Then experts started to create a more comprehensive model and tried to find the relationship among several variables and job satisfaction. One of them is the relationship between satisfaction and organizational commitment. But then, Meyer and Allen proposed a concept that, inside the organizational commitment, there are several components, namely affective, normative, and continuance components [32]. The main reason for this concept to appear is a belief that it is vague to assume a person

stayed in the organization, for the reason of staying that becoming a basis of the first appearance of the organizational commitment itself [31]. Of course, the new concept received a warm welcome and started to gain scholarly attention.

Around the same time, job satisfaction as a concept also grew exponentially, especially from the indicators perspective, and several experts started to mention employee satisfaction, as a job satisfaction concept applied to employees [7]. The problem started to appear, when experts especially from Asia, started to look at how employee satisfaction affected organizational commitment, especially the component of organizational component presented by Meyer and Allen. Some findings in Asia suggested that the concept of three-component commitment, have severe construct error, especially in normative and continuance component [33]. This trend even continued in recent years, because several findings still pointed out that employee satisfaction should be positively affected by organizational commitment, but failed to explain the impact of employee satisfaction, for example toward normative commitment [9].

These findings actually pointed out concepts that offered and mainly discussed the interaction between variables. There is an important discussion that research overlooked, that inside variables there are not only indicators but also dimensions [35]. This concept offered answers, because in many cases it is true that most of the indicators in Human Resources Studies are reflective, but there are also facts that there are dimensions that are formative, and non-interchangeable [36]. The reason why we bring up these important findings is, that there is a possibility the inconsistencies that happened in how employee satisfaction affected the component of organizational commitment, is because researchers failed to recognize the existence of dimension.

It is not wrong to assume, that long existing variables like satisfaction, and in this case employee satisfaction with tens of indicators have dimensions inside them. The fact that this variable with massive indicators just directly believed to be a determinant of the organizational commitment component, such as normative and continuance commitment which essentially could be argued as dimensions of organizational commitment [33], [37] is a method that could become the reason of the interaction between variable instability. This is also strengthened by the fact that in employee satisfaction studies, a dimension point is rarely pointed out [4].

This is the reason, in the next part, we will discuss the finding of Almeida et.al, which provided insight into how dimension could provide an entirely new perspective, especially in the study of human resources.

3.2 *The Work of Almeida et.al, An Important Point of View Regarding Employee Satisfaction Dimensions.*

One of the notable works that derived from the importance of dimension, is the work of Almeida et.al in 2015, which focused mainly on the employee satisfaction variable. Not only does this work provide a proper analysis on what is the dimension of employee satisfaction, but it also provides a reliable indicator on each dimension that is reliable and completely usable by other researchers. And this work is one that inspires this article.

As we mentioned earlier, employee satisfaction is a variable that has existed for more than 30 years [7]. With this long existence and continuous development, this variable found itself in a position where there are tens of indicators to measure it. Almeida et.al started their work on the basis that, even though this fact is accepted among scholars, there is still quite a little research that looked up the dimension of this variable [4].

With the basis of this understanding, Almeida et.al started to formulate, a rigorous scientific approach to start the lengthy process of unearthing the dimensions of employee satisfaction. After that lengthy process, it was concluded that employee satisfaction had 5 dimensions, and there is satisfaction with the company's physical condition, satisfaction with the company's compensation, satisfaction with supervisor relation, satisfaction with colleagues, and satisfaction with the company's policy [4]. With the establishment of these dimensions, also comes the establishment of measurement with a total of 24 indicators to measure all of these dimensions.

After that, here comes the question, is there any possibility that, by utilizing the dimensional approach, the behavior of employee satisfaction could change? and indeed, Almeida et.al tested these dimensions of employee satisfaction's effect on organizational commitment. The organizational commitment itself is not using the three-component concept, but Porter's organizational commitment. The result is that one of these dimensions, satisfaction with colleagues, does not have any effect or cannot determine the organizational commitment of the test subject [4]. The finding is quite important because, it basically provides a different answer compared to what is commonly found, or believed by researchers.

The basic proven belief is that employee satisfaction always has a positive impact on organizational commitment, as found in many models and concepts [8], [10]. But by looking at dimensions of employee satisfaction, there is a single dimension, based on the finding in Almeida et.al, that cannot do not have any effect on organizational commitment. The question now is, whether the dimensions of employee satisfaction are formative or reflective [36] because if this dimension is indeed formative, scholars cannot just ignore this

finding because whether there is another dimension, or there is a problem in the employee satisfaction indicators, further research is needed to assess how scholars view the interaction between employee satisfaction and organizational commitment.

Indeed, what we explained is one of the serious cases, regarding a certain concept. Because there are possibilities that different research objects could provide different answers, probably. But in the end, the work of Almeida et.al still provides important insight. That dimension is a completely relevant, and important aspect while discussing human resources research. Because there are possibilities that with time many concepts will just continue to grow, find other meanings, or even change completely.

3.3 Dimension and Human Resources Research: Moving Forward

With the fact that looking at the dimension interaction with other variables, could result in completely different findings from the common results, we believe that looking at dimension while doing research, could provide a benefit for the future of human resources research.

The first one is the fact that using dimension is an acceptable way to start troubleshooting problems encountered in research, The existence of first-order and second-order methods is basically a stipulation that dimension could play an important role, especially if researchers find a problem while directly looking at the impact between variables [36], [38]. With the advancement in analytical tools, the once cumbersome work can now be dealt with with easier application, compared to what researchers had to deal with before [35]. In recent times basically speaking, researchers have a better-equipped tool to do this approach.

Secondly, needless to say, even though the interaction between employee satisfaction and many variables has been firmly described, there are several findings that need further investigation,

especially regarding the interaction between employee satisfaction and the three components of organizational commitment. One of these findings is provided by Yao et.al, in their research employee satisfaction variable failed to determine the normative commitment [9]. There are also 'Azzam and Harsono, that found employee satisfaction does not affect continuance commitment among millennial teachers in Indonesia [2]. Also, another finding in India, concluded that in an adverse situation such as a Pandemic employee satisfaction cannot determine either an affective commitment or normative commitment [30].

One of the reasons provided by scholars is that the construct reliability of the three components of organizational commitment is quite problematic, especially in the normative and continuance components [33]. This is confirmed recently, that a group of researchers in Ethiopia actually found a fourth component, after doing a rigorous test on the measurement provided by Meyer and Allen [37]. Several qualitative research also found that there are possibilities that different cultures could provide a different point of view, for example in constructing organizational commitment [22].

With inconsistencies found in the interaction between employee satisfaction and three components of organizational commitment, the recent finding on three components of organizational commitments, and the work of Almeida et.al, it is possible that the same approach provided by Almeida et.al could be utilized in another variable such as organizational commitment, especially in the three components concept provided by Meyer and Allen. This again could also answer, whether the three components provided by Meyer and Allen, are dimensions, or just another variable [33], [37]. Again, dimension could provide an important explanation in this case.

Lastly, with recent expansion, attention, and interest shown by scholars,

especially from Indonesia, it is worth noting that the importance of dimension could play an important role in this emerging country. The possibility of finding an entirely new concept is not unreachable. The difference in culture could possibly become the main drive for another new expansion in human resources topics [22], [33], [37]. Indonesia has its own uniqueness, and at least in the topics of commitment especially among the millennial generation, there is still so much to do because of the lack of commendable research from this country [39]. It is important to remember especially for Indonesian scholars, that human resources is the key to utilizing the demographic bonus predicted in 2045 [40].

By understanding and accepting the importance of dimension, not only we can find important findings in existing concepts or fields of study, like new dimensions and new indicators, but there is also a possibility that a new concept emerges, or even better, a new theories emerge. Indonesian scholars, and all other scholars can do these amazing things, while we understand the importance of dimension in human resource study.

4. CONCLUSION

There are several conclusions that we made in this article. Firstly, the dimension of the variable is an important aspect in human resource studies, that needed more scholarly attention. By discussing two variables, employee satisfaction and organizational commitment many important aspects still waiting to be unearthed by scholars from these two variables only, if we look from the dimension perspective.

Secondly, the work of Almedia et.al highlights the important findings if we look at the dimension perspective. A well-established variable such as employee satisfaction, and well well-accepted organizational concept like Porter's Organizational Commitment, could provide an entirely different result when looking at the dimension of employee

satisfaction. This finding also strengthens the finding of previous researchers such as Podsakoff about how to utilize dimension in this type of research [36].

Thirdly, other variables such as organizational commitment could also utilize this dimension perspective, especially regarding the three components of organizational commitment presented by Meyer and Allen. Instabilities found across research could indeed be fixed with methods like finding new moderating or mediating variables. But to answer whether there is a problem with this concept construct reliability and other concern that has been found by researchers, the dimension perspective could become the first point of view to answer this kind of question.

Lastly, even though utilizing dimension perspective is costly, it needs a lengthy process and is somewhat cumbersome. In an emerging area like Indonesia, it could provide not only a conceptual breakthrough but even a theoretical breakthrough. In the human resource study, Indonesia is basically still a new market with countless opportunities. Scholars should not forget that this process is what created human resources studies in the first place. The dimension perspective could provide new insight and a greater possibility for a breakthrough, not only for Indonesian scholars but other scholars as well, as long as we are willing to understand this dimension perspective.

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