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## Gender Differences in Organizational Commitment: A Case Study of Public Bank Employees in Thailand

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### Abstract:

Organizational commitment has increasingly become one of the most interesting areas of management and organizational behaviors in the past years. Numerous studies attempted to investigate the relations between gender and organizational commitment to examine whether men and women differ in commitment. These studies reported contradictory findings in particular in a public bank in Thailand, which many studies found no significant difference between males and females in organizational commitment. Hence, the purpose of this present study is to explore the differences between male and female employees in organizational commitment. A sample of 143 employees who worked at a selected public bank headquarters was gathered data through a survey questionnaire. Results of independent samples *t*-test analysis indicated that there was no significant difference between male and female employees of this bank in affective commitment and normative commitment while continuance commitment was found a significant difference between males and females ( $t=3.133$ ,  $p = .002$ ). Male employees were reported to have a higher continuance commitment than female employees. Discussion and recommendations for future studies were also discussed.

### Keywords:

*Gender differences, Organizational commitment, Public bank employees*

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## INTRODUCTION

Organizational commitment has increasingly become one of the most interesting areas of management and organizational behaviors in the past decades. For a number of good reasons, there is an increasing interest in comparing gender differences in organizational commitment in different contexts. Past research attempted to describe whether men and women are distinctive in organizational commitment. Numerous studies revealed that men had a stronger organizational commitment than women (Marsden, Kalleberg, & Cook, 1993; Gumbang, Suki, & Suki, 2010; Farooq & Zia, 2013; Jena, 2015) while several research found the contrasting results (Wahn, 1998; Khalili & Awmawi, 2012; Jena, 2015; Messner, 2017). The contradictory results of gender differences in previous studies can be labeled that types of jobs and organization of participants involved in these studies might be the key factors that determine the differences between men and women.

In Thai context, numerous investigations on the relationships between individual differences and organizational commitment in the public bank were conducted. These past studies reported that males and females had the same level of organizational commitment while other socio-demographic variables had been found the significant differences (Leetrakul & Freestad, 2014; Techai et al., 2015). Although the findings of past studies in Thai context are distinctive from previous studies conducted in the different backgrounds and contexts, it should be added that one of the most important factors that distinguishes the results of these studies is the scale measurement. Based on the literature review, past studies related to gender differences in organizational commitment in a public bank in Thailand did not regularly use three-component of organizational commitment proposed by Meyer and Allen (1991) to measure the degree to which an employee identifies with the bank and its goals and want to remain as a member of the bank. Hence, this present study aims at comparing gender differences in three-component of organizational commitment rather than the entire organizational commitment to determine whether males and females are committed differently in terms of distinctive components of organizational commitment. This current study also enhances the body of knowledge in this area in Thai context.

## Literature Reviews

### *Organizational Commitment*

Organizational commitment refers to an attitude demonstrating the extent to which employees identify to their organization and want to remain as a member in an organization (Philips & Gully, 2012; Baldwin, Bommer, & Rubin, 2013). Meyer and Allen (1991) theorized three distinguished components identified employee's degree of connection to the organization including affective, continuance, and normative commitment.

#### **Affective commitment**

represents an employee's positive emotional attachment to stay with the organization and strong identification with its values and goals. Employees who are affectively committed want to remain in the organization due to the feeling to personal connection with their colleagues and friends or experience pleasure and satisfaction from affiliation. For example, an employee who is affectively committed to an organization feels that "I have a good co-worker and boss at work." This reflects their perception on commitment as they feel they want to.

#### **Continuance commitment**

refers to an employee's desire to stay with the organization because the costs of leaving are greater than the benefits. For instance, an employee who has continuance commitment feels that I earned a scholarship from an organization to study in an MBA program, which I will have to pay back if I will not continue my job for another four years. In many cases, employees who desire to remain as a member in the organization based on continuance commitment are because they have no choices to go somewhere else to get more benefits and compensations that they presently receive from the existing company. This reflects their perception on commitment as they feel they have to.

**Normative commitment** refers to an employee's feeling obligated to remain as a member in the organization for the moral or ethical reasons. For example, an employee who is normatively committed feels obligated to stay with the organization because he/she received a company's tuition reimbursement to study in an MBA program in a top university. This commitment leads employees to remain in the organization because they feel they should.

Employees can be committed to the organization in affective, continuance, and normative ways at the same time with different degrees of intensity, which means that these three components of organizational commitment are not equally exclusive (Philips & Gully, 2012). Also, employees with different genders can be distinctively committed to the organization in varying levels (Aydin, Sarier, & Uysal, 2011).

### *Gender and Organizational Commitment*

Various studies reported empirical evidences on gender differences in organizational commitment. Some research found that men had a higher organizational commitment than women (Marsden, Kalleberg, & Cook, 1993; Gumbang, Suki, & Suki, 2010; Farooq & Zia, 2013; Jena, 2015). On the other hand, many studies discovered that females had a higher level of organizational commitment than males (Khalili & Awmawi, 2012; Jena, 2015; Messner, 2017). Specifically, females were found to have a greater level of normative commitment than males (Wahn, 1998; Khalili & Awmawi, 2012; Jena, 2015). A meta-analysis conducted by Dalgıç (2014) to determine the effects of gender on organizational commitment from 33 studies that utilized Allen and Meyer's Organizational Commitment Scale measurement in the years of 2000-2014. The total sample size of 11,690 teachers was calculated. The results revealed that there were no significant relationships between male and female teachers in overall organizational commitment, affective, continuance, and normative commitment. In contrast, the meta-analysis of Aydin, Sarier, and Uysal (2011), which analyzed 15 graduate theses done between 2005-2009 found that there were distinctions between males and females in terms of organizational commitment and its levels. The inconsistent results of gender differences in past studies can be described that types of jobs and organization of respondents who were involved in these studies might be the key factors that determine the differences between men and women.

In Thailand, numerous studies have investigated the relationships between individual differences and organizational commitment in different setting. However, many of them have made an effort to scrutinize the effect of individual factors on organizational commitment in a public bank. For example, Leetrakul and Freestad (2014) studied factors that affected organizational commitment of employees at a government bank in Thailand. Data were collected from 400 employees of a government bank in region 15. Analysis of t-test and F-test revealed that employees with different demographic variables including age, position, and monthly income were found a significant difference at 0.05 level while gender, educational level, work experience, and marital status had no significant difference in organizational commitment. Similarly, Techai et al. (2015) investigated individual and work related factors that had an influence on organizational commitment and the effects of organizational commitment on the performance success of employees at Bank for Agriculture and Agricultural Cooperatives (BAAC) in Lower Northern Branch Administration Department in Thailand. A total sample of 346 officers was gathered through the questionnaire. For the relations between personal factors and organizational commitment, results of regression analysis showed that only marital status had a significant effect on commitment while gender, age, educational level, and position were found no significant impact on organizational commitment. Although previous studies in organizational commitment in a government bank in Thailand mostly found no significant difference between male and female employees while various studies conducted in different cultures and setting found the contrary results, this cannot be concluded that organizational settings are the sole key that make the inconsistent results. The scale measurement, which included the different components of organizational commitment, can be one of various factors, which creates the varying results between males

and females in organizational commitment. Normally, three-component model including affective, continuance, and normative commitment developed by Meyer and Allen (1991) was used as variables to compare differences between men and women. Nevertheless, past studies relating to organizational commitment in Thai context, especially the government bank used other variables and instruments to compare the mean difference in commitment between genders. In the light of this, it can be assumed that if this present study use three-component of organizational commitment as variables to examine gender differences, the results should be different.

Hence, according to this assumption, the research hypotheses of this present study were proposed as follows:

H<sub>1</sub>: There is a significant difference between male and female employees in affective commitment.

H<sub>2</sub>: There is a significant difference between male and female employees in continuance commitment.

H<sub>3</sub>: There is a significant difference between male and female employees in normative commitment.

## Methodology

This study was a descriptive study in which mean differences between male and female employees who worked at the public bank headquarters in Thailand were compared. A total of 400 questionnaires were distributed to employees in all departments in the public bank headquarters by using a proportional stratified sampling approach for data collection. Of 143 agreed to participate and complete the questionnaire. A modified version of 17-item of Organizational Commitment Scale (OCS) originally developed by Meyer and Allen (1991) was used for data collection. This scale measurement was a 5-point rating scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). To ensure a quality of this scale measurement, validity with index-objective congruence (IOC) method and reliability with Cronbach's Alpha test were conducted. Results of IOC showed no item of this scale received the score less than 0.5, which refers to an acceptable content validity of this scale. In addition, alpha score of each component of organizational commitment scale was greater than 0.7, which refers to an acceptable internal consistency of this scale measurement (Nunnally, 1978). Table 1 exhibited alpha scores for each organizational commitment component and a total score for organizational commitment scale. For data analysis, descriptive statistics and independent samples t-test were used to test the research hypothesis.

**Table 1 Reliability Coefficients of Three Dimensions of Organizational Commitment**

Scale Measurement	No. of Items	Alpha Score
Affective Commitment	10	0.73
Continuance Commitment	4	0.77
Normative Commitment	3	0.75
Organizational Commitment	17	0.87

## Results

Socio-demographic characteristics of Thai public bank employees were analyzed by frequency distribution as shown in Table 2. Results exhibited that females were a majority group of this study (69.2%). Fifty-six percent of them were aged between 31-40 years. More than a half of them were educated in an undergraduate level (58.7%). More than fifty percent of respondents reported that they had worked in a management level (52.4%). Among the participants in this present study, 45.5% of them had more than 15 years of working experience.

**Table 2** Frequency Distribution and Percentage of Thai Public Bank Employees' Socio-Demographic Characteristics (n=143)

	Frequency	Percentage
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	44	30.8
Female	99	69.2
Total	143	100
<b>Age</b>		
20-30 years	27	18.9
31-40 years	81	56.6
41-50 years	27	18.9
More than 50 years	8	5.6
Total	143	100
<b>Education</b>		
Bachelor's Degree	84	58.7
Master's Degree	43	30.1
Doctorate's Degree	7	4.9
Others	9	6.3
Total	143	100
<b>Hierarchical Level</b>		
Employee	68	47.6
Manager	75	52.4
Total	143	100
<b>Working Experience in Year</b>		
Less than 5 years	21	14.6
5-10 years	42	29.4
11-15 years	15	10.5
More than 15 years	65	45.5
Total	143	100

Table 3 demonstrated the total mean scores of three-component of organizational commitment. Results showed that affective commitment was in a moderate level and rated as the highest level of organizational commitment of this public bank's employees (M = 2.86, S.D. = .577) while continuance commitment was rated in a low level (M = 2.34, S.D. = .784) as well as normative commitment (M = 2.30, S.D. = .876).

**Table 3** Descriptive Statistics for Organizational Commitment (n =143)

Variables	Mean	S.D.
<b>Affective Commitment</b>	2.86	.577
<b>Continuance Commitment</b>	2.34	.784
<b>Normative Commitment</b>	2.30	.876

To determine the existence of gender differences in each component of organizational commitment, independent samples t-test analysis was conducted. Results of independent samples t-test analysis indicated that there was no significant difference between male and female employees of this bank in affective

commitment ( $t=1.664$ ,  $p = .098$ ) and normative commitment ( $t=1.173$ ,  $p = .243$ ) while continuance commitment was found a significant difference between males and females ( $t=3.133$ ,  $p = .002$ ). In sum, male employees ( $M = 2.63$ ,  $S.D. = .710$ ) were reported to have a higher continuance commitment than female employees ( $M = 2.43$ ,  $S.D. = .893$ ) whereas men and women who worked at this bank headquarters experienced similar level of affective and normative commitment. As a consequence, hypothesis #1 and #3 were rejected, but hypothesis #2 was supported.

**Table 4 Results of the Independent Samples T-Test of Organizational Commitment related to Gender**

Variables	Male (n =44)		Female (n=99)		df	t	p
	M	SD	M	SD			
Affective Commitment	2.98	.518	2.81	.597	141	1.664	.098
Continuance Commitment	2.63	.710	2.21	.785		3.133	.002**
Normative Commitment	2.43	.893	2.24	.867		1.173	.243

\*\*Significant Level at .01

### Conclusion, Discussions, and Recommendations

This study aimed at exploring the differences in organizational commitment between male and female employees at a public bank in Thailand. The results found that affective commitment was rated as the highest mean among three components of organizational commitment following by continuance and normative commitment. To compare three-component of organizational commitment, independent samples t-test analysis was used. The results of independent t-test showed the significant difference in continuance commitment between male and female employees at this public bank, which male employees demonstrated a stronger continuance commitment than female employees. While affective commitment and normative commitment found no significant differences between two genders. The findings of this current study were inconsistent with Khalili et al. (2012) in which affective and continuance commitment were found no significant differences between males and females while normative commitment was found a significant different. In addition, this present study's findings were inconsistent with Jena's study (2015) in which continuance commitment was found no significant difference between males and females. Also, this study was not supported by the previous study of Wahn (1998) who found than women had higher levels of continuance commitment than men. This present study did not support the past studies of Leetrakul and Freestad (2014) and Techai et al. (2015) in which gender differences in organizational commitment was not found.

The results of this present study can be concluded that male employees had a stronger feeling and desire to stay with this public bank than female employees because they felt high economic and social costs involved with leaving. This reason that male employees perceived a higher desire to remain in this public bank than female employees due to continuance commitment is because male employees might be attracted with higher salaries and occupational positions in this public bank. Also, they feel more responsible for their family than females in which they need to stay with the bank to earn compensations and benefits for their livings and families. This public bank should pay more attention on organizational commitment because the different levels of each component of organizational commitment have distinctive effects on employees' job performance and productivity. Even though the mean score of affective commitment was reported as the highest component of organizational commitment, this component was still rated in the moderated level for both men and women in this bank. Thus, the public bank management should create programs and activities that help increase affective commitment. Besides, as normative commitment was received the lowest mean score, which means that employees of this public bank felt less obligated to stay with the bank, an enhancement of reimbursement program and an increasing of opportunity for personal advancement for

employees should be established. These two components of organizational commitment should be developed in balance with continuance component.

This present study recommends gathering data from employees who worked at other branches of this public bank rather than a headquarters to compare differences in organizational commitment. Also, other socio-demographic variables should be compared to examine the mean differences in organizational commitment. The comparison of gender differences in organizational commitment between public and private bank is encouraged in the further study.

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