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The Effect of Decent Work on Job Satisfaction and Organizational Commitment

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Abstract

This conceptual paper explores the relationship between the five dimensions of decent work—safe working conditions, access to healthcare, adequate compensation, free time and rest, and complement values—and their positive impacts on job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Drawing on existing literature, the study highlights how these dimensions collectively foster a supportive work environment that enhances employee attitudes towards their organization. By employing a theoretical framework, the paper posits that decent work not only contributes to increased job satisfaction but also strengthens organizational commitment among employees in for-profit enterprises in Guangdong Province. The study highlights the importance of addressing these issues in order to increase employee satisfaction and foster a positive psychological contract between employees and the organization. Given the theoretical nature of this study, future research is recommended to empirically test the proposed model, explore mediating factors, conduct sector-specific investigations.

Keywords: Decent work; Job satisfaction; Organizational commitment; For-profit enterprises

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Introduction

The intensification of global competition and economic transformation has led to the liberalization of the global labor market and the flexibilization of labor relations (Ferraro et al., 2018; Pereira et al., 2019). Workers now face significant challenges, including job insecurity, reductions in social protection, weakened bargaining power, and wage stagnation (Van Hootegeem et al., 2023). The concept of "decent work" has gradually become a significant topic in both academic and practical discussions (Rydzik & Kisson, 2024). The International Labour Organization (ILO) first introduced the concept of decent work in 1999, defining it as a condition where workers' rights are protected, fair incomes are ensured, and a safe working environment and social protection are provided (ILO, 1999).

To better measure decent work at the micro-level, Duffy et al. (2016) developed a 15-item self-report Decent Work Scale (DWS), grounded in The Psychology of Working Theory (PWT) and the conceptualization of decent work. Using a sample of working adults in the United States, this scale covers five dimensions: safe working conditions, access to healthcare, adequate compensation, freedom of time and rest, and value congruence (Duffy et al., 2017a).

Once micro-level decent work measurement standards were established, researchers began exploring its antecedents and potential outcomes. Studies have emphasized the role of decent work in fostering dialogue between organizations and employees, as well as its potential impact on sustainable organizational outcomes (Blustein et al., 2023).

These outcomes include both positive and negative aspects. From a positive perspective, decent work has been found to improve job satisfaction, life satisfaction, and affective commitment (Atitsogbe et al., 2021; Blustein et al., 2023; Huang et al., 2022; McIlveen et al., 2021). Individuals with decent work experience greater fulfillment of survival, social connection, and self-determination needs (Dodd et al., 2019; Duffy et al., 2017b). Duffy et al. (2021) found that decent work positively contributes to satisfaction of survival needs, physical health, healthy behaviors, and reduction of health symptoms. Decent work also promotes work engagement (Kashyap & Arora, 2020; Lee et al., 2023), innovative behavior (Yan et al., 2023), and employee voice behaviors (Sheng & Zhou, 2023).

Conversely, decent work can reduce negative work-related outcomes. Research indicates that decent work lowers employees' turnover intentions (Dodd et al., 2019; McIlveen et al., 2021), decreases burnout (Dinis et al., 2024), reduces occupational fatigue (Di Fabio et al., 2021; Duffy et al., 2021), and mitigates work-family conflict (Vignoli et al., 2020). However, empirical research on decent work remains in its early stages (Pereira et al., 2019). Studies examining the relationship between decent work, work attitudes, and employee behaviors are particularly limited (Nourafkan & Tanova, 2023).

Current studies on the relationship between the five dimensions of decent work and job satisfaction have yielded mixed results, with findings varying across different contexts and industries. Some studies suggest that specific dimensions of decent work, such as adequate compensation and free time and rest, do not significantly predict job satisfaction (Vignoli et al., 2020). In contrast, others highlight that only safe working conditions are positively associated with job satisfaction (Atitsogbe et al., 2021). These divergent conclusions underscore the complexity of decent work as a construct and emphasize the need for a more nuanced understanding of its impact on employee attitudes.

Moreover, while the relationship between decent work and job satisfaction has been examined to some extent, research exploring how decent work influences organizational commitment—a key determinant of employee retention and organizational performance—remains limited (Huang et al., 2022). Organizational commitment, defined as employees' psychological attachment to their organization (Hngoi et al., 2023), plays a crucial role in fostering a stable and motivated workforce (Cayupe et al., 2023). Despite its importance, there is still a notable gap in understanding how the five dimensions of decent work affect organizational commitment (Huang et al., 2022).

This study aims to address these gaps in the literature by systematically investigating the impact of the five dimensions of decent work on both job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Through analysis, this research seeks to provide a comprehensive understanding of how various aspects of decent work contribute to these critical organizational outcomes, which serves as a foundation for further research in organizational behavior. The findings are expected to advance the theoretical framework of the decent work construct and offer practical insights for organizations aiming to enhance employee well-being and commitment through the promotion of decent work practices. By uncovering the effects of different dimensions of decent work on job satisfaction and organizational commitment, the research provides scientific guidance for organizations to optimize management practices, improve employee satisfaction and loyalty, and enhance organizational performance. Furthermore, this study provides strong support for promoting decent work policies, contributing to improving job quality on a broader societal scale, fostering harmonious labor relations, and ultimately driving sustainable social and economic growth.

Problem Statement

Enhancing employee job satisfaction and strengthening organizational commitment is a significant challenge facing organizations today. High employee turnover and low motivation are often attributed to dissatisfaction and low value alignment between employees and organizations (Pariyanti et al., 2024). Previous research has shown that job satisfaction is primarily influenced by individual factors, job characteristics, environmental factors, and compensation (Locke, 1976). Decent work offers favorable working conditions, and according to The Psychology of Working Theory (PWT), it can improve job satisfaction by fulfilling employees' basic needs (Duffy et al., 2016). Some empirical studies have also found a positive relationship between decent work and job satisfaction (Atitsogbe et al., 2021; Duffy et al., 2021). However, current research on the relationship between decent work and job satisfaction is still in its early stages, and no consensus has yet been reached (Nourafkan & Tanova, 2023).

For instance, Vignoli et al. (2020) found that the dimensions of adequate compensation and free time and rest did not predict job satisfaction, while Di Fabio & Kenny (2019) concluded that four other dimensions of decent work significantly predicted job satisfaction, but access to healthcare had no significant impact. McIlveen et al. (2021), using a sample of 201 employees in Australia, found that safe working conditions and free time and rest did not predict decent work, while Atitsogbe et al. (2021) discovered that only safe working conditions positively predicted job satisfaction, with no significant predictions from the other four dimensions. Additionally, Chen et al. (2020) found that all five dimensions of decent work had a significant positive impact on job satisfaction. These varied findings highlight the lack of a unified conclusion regarding the relationship between the five dimensions of decent work and job satisfaction, suggesting the need for further research using different sample populations to validate this relationship. This study aims to explore and validate the relationship between decent work and job satisfaction, contributing to uncovering the "black box" of how decent work influences employee job satisfaction and providing organizations with insights on improving employee motivation.

Numerous empirical studies have indicated that factors such as organizational justice, organizational trust, person-organization fit, and quality of work-life significantly and positively affect organizational commitment (Alomran et al., 2024; Jafari et al., 2024; Malokani et al., 2024; Park & Hai, 2024). These factors are clearly related to decent work. Additionally, psychological contract theory offers an explanation for the positive relationship between decent work and organizational commitment. According to psychological contract theory (Rousseau & Tijoriwala, 1998), the efforts and contributions employees make in their work are based on the principle of reciprocity. Decent work provides employees with economic rewards (adequate compensation), recognition, career development, and workplace benefits (e.g., safe working conditions, complement values), which help establish a positive psychological contract between employees and the organization. This, in turn, encourages greater employee loyalty to the organization (Bal et al., 2013). Thus, it is reasonable to hypothesize that decent work may influence organizational commitment.

However, existing literature on the impact of the five dimensions of decent work on organizational commitment is scarce, with only Huang et al. (2022) examining the relationship between decent work and affective commitment. Since affective commitment is only one aspect of organizational commitment, it cannot comprehensively measure employees' overall commitment to the organization. Therefore, further research is needed to explore the relationship between decent work and organizational commitment as a whole. This study aims to investigate and verify the relationship between decent work and overall organizational commitment, thereby expanding the scope of work attitude outcomes associated with decent work.

Literature Review

This study aims to explore the impact of decent work on job satisfaction and organizational commitment. The literature review will focus on theoretical and empirical research closely related to these topics, systematically examining the relationships between decent work, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment. Particular attention is given to controversies and gaps in existing research, clarifying the positioning and contribution of this study within the broader literature. This comprehensive review not only lays the theoretical foundation for the empirical analysis but also offers new perspectives for understanding how decent work affects employee attitudes.

Decent Work and Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction is an emotional state based on an employee's overall evaluation of their work and is crucial for effective organizational functioning (Indrayani et al., 2024). Many researchers have explored job satisfaction to determine the relationship between working conditions, employee outcomes, and organizational performance. Key factors influencing job satisfaction include individual characteristics, job attributes, environmental factors, compensation, promotion, and clear job expectations (Wang, 2024).

Decent work emphasizes providing employees with physically and interpersonally safe working conditions, which fulfill basic human needs for physical and emotional safety (Duffy et al., 2017a). A supportive and secure work environment significantly influences job satisfaction. Research consistently shows that employees who perceive their work environment as safe, both physically and emotionally, report higher job satisfaction. For instance, Öktem & Öztoprak (2020) found a significant positive relationship between a safe work atmosphere and job satisfaction. Similarly, Taheri et al. (2020) demonstrated that job satisfaction is statistically related to a safe and supportive work environment.

Health care access is a vital component of decent work, ensuring employees can meet their health needs. According to the psychology of working theory (Duffy et al., 2016), meeting basic survival and social connection needs enhances well-being and job satisfaction. Empirical studies confirm this. For example, Choi & Ju (2021) found that workers' health status positively correlates with job satisfaction, while Shin et al. (2020) demonstrated that health conditions directly impact employee satisfaction. Research further emphasizes the importance of promoting health to improve job satisfaction, particularly for vulnerable groups like female workers (Bae, 2021).

Adequate compensation, as part of a decent work environment, provides financial security and influences overall well-being and job satisfaction (Cooke et al., 2019; Duffy et al., 2016). Research shows that compensation is a key determinant of job satisfaction (Saman, 2020). Higher salaries contribute to greater job satisfaction, allowing employees to afford a better quality of life (Arief et al., 2021). Studies such as those by Elsayhori et al. (2022) and Atman (2020) consistently show a positive relationship between salary satisfaction and job satisfaction.

The availability of free time and rest reflects employee autonomy, which is central to motivation (Sheldon et al., 2017). A balance between work and personal life fosters higher levels of well-being and job satisfaction, as well as lower turnover intentions (Kaya & Karatepe, 2020; Yang & Jo, 2022). Employees who achieve a better work-life balance experience less role conflict and report higher job satisfaction (Jackson & Fransman, 2018; Sudibjo & Suwarli, 2020).

The alignment between individual and organizational values plays a critical role in shaping job satisfaction. According to the psychology of working theory (Duffy et al., 2016), when personal values align with organizational values, the individual's self-determination needs are fulfilled, positively impacting job satisfaction. Research on person-organization (P-O) fit shows that higher levels of value congruence lead to greater job satisfaction (Kaur & Kang, 2021; Shah & Ayub, 2021; Yeni et al., 2022).

Based on the above analysis, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H1: Safe working conditions have a significant positive impact on job satisfaction.

H2: Access to health care has a significant positive impact on job satisfaction.

- H3: Adequate compensation has a significant positive impact on job satisfaction.
H4: Free time and rest have a significant positive impact on job satisfaction.
H5: Complement values have a significant positive impact on job satisfaction.

Decent Work and Organizational Commitment

Organizational commitment refers to an individual's emotional attachment, loyalty, and identification with their employing organization (Mowday et al., 1979). Numerous empirical studies have explored the antecedents of organizational commitment. Factors such as perceived organizational equity (Purwanto, 2020), quality of work life (Sumarsi & Rizal, 2022), personal loneliness (Jung et al., 2021), organizational culture (Soomro et al., 2024), work-life balance, person-job fit (Jafari et al., 2024; Park & Hai, 2024), and organizational trust (Alomran et al., 2024) are widely considered to influence organizational commitment. Many of these factors are directly related to the concept of decent work. According to psychological contract theory (Dabos & Rousseau, 2004), employees expect their efforts at work to be appropriately rewarded, not only in monetary terms (such as adequate compensation) but also through recognition, professional development, and favorable working conditions (such as safe working conditions, access to health care, free time and rest, and complement values). Reciprocity plays a critical role in explaining the relationship between psychological contract fulfillment and employee attitudes and behaviors (Doden et al., 2018). A successful reciprocal exchange can be seen as the organization's care and support for its employees, leading to increased loyalty and commitment from employees, creating a mutually beneficial dynamic (Cropanzano et al., 2017). The implementation of decent work facilitates the development of positive relational psychological contracts between employees and the organization, promoting higher levels of organizational commitment (Bal et al., 2013).

Safe working conditions ensure that the workplace is free from physical hazards, accidents, and injuries, while also promoting a respectful and harassment-free environment (Duffy et al., 2017a). Safe working conditions are vital as they directly impact work-related outcomes (Bashir et al., 2020) and enhance employee motivation (Iis et al., 2022), thus strengthening organizational commitment (Ni et al., 2023; Popoola & Fagbola, 2023). Conversely, poor working conditions can lead to employee stress, disengagement, and turnover (Thomas et al., 2021; Zong & Tsaur, 2023), which is consistent with findings from Ali et al. (2022) and Mawritz et al. (2022).

Access to health care is a fundamental aspect of decent work, providing employees with necessary medical resources and services to meet their health needs (Duffy et al., 2017a). The provision of health care fosters a positive employment relationship and a sense of reciprocity (He et al., 2023). Research has shown that organizational commitment is positively influenced when employers fulfill their obligations, including health care provisions (Peng & Li, 2021). On the contrary, violations of the psychological contract regarding health care can trigger negative reciprocity, leading to adverse outcomes in the employee-organization relationship (Kingshott et al., 2020). Employees who perceive organizational support, such as access to health care, tend to feel a greater obligation to reciprocate through increased organizational commitment (Chernyak-Hai et al., 2023; Meilisa & Bernarto, 2020).

Adequate compensation is an essential element of the psychological contract, representing fair and competitive pay aligned with an employee's skills, qualifications, and responsibilities. Compensation goes beyond financial rewards to encompass benefits and recognition, and when employees feel their contributions are adequately compensated, it fosters a positive psychological contract and enhances organizational commitment. Adequate compensation also reflects organizational fairness, which further promotes commitment (Jang et al., 2021). Employees are more likely to be committed to their organization when they feel their work is rewarded fairly (Nasution et al., 2019; Triana, 2017). Research by Ashraf (2020) confirms that compensation has a direct and significant positive impact on organizational commitment.

Free time and rest are critical components of employee well-being and work-life balance (Duffy et al., 2017a). When organizations prioritize work-life balance, respecting employees' need for rest and personal pursuits, it fosters a positive psychological contract, thereby increasing organizational commitment (Hasan et al., 2021; Syawal et al., 2023). Research

consistently shows that better work-life balance is associated with higher organizational commitment, while work-family conflict tends to reduce commitment (Fiernaningsih et al., 2019; Lambert et al., 2020). Providing employees with free time and rest as part of their work arrangements helps reduce work-life conflict, positively impacting organizational commitment (Purwanto, 2021; Tran, 2023). Supporting a work-life balance builds a positive psychological contract, leading to higher employee commitment (Aruldoss et al., 2021).

Complement values reflect the alignment between organizational values and employees' personal beliefs and social norms. When individuals experience greater alignment between their values and those of the organization, they are more likely to exhibit higher motivation and commitment (Qiao & Hu, 2024). Research by Afendi et al. (2023) indicates that person-organization fit significantly influences organizational commitment. Employees who perceive that their values are aligned with the organization's values are likely to demonstrate higher levels of commitment. Empirical studies further support the notion that person-organization fit positively impacts organizational commitment (Bahat, 2021; Haryati, 2022; Prasetyaningrum & Hendarsjah, 2022).

Based on the above analysis, this study posits the following hypotheses:

H6: Safe working conditions have a significant positive impact on organizational commitment.

H7: Access to health care has a significant positive impact on organizational commitment.

H8: Adequate compensation has a significant positive impact on organizational commitment.

H9: Free time and rest have a significant positive impact on organizational commitment.

H10: Complement values have a significant positive impact on organizational commitment.

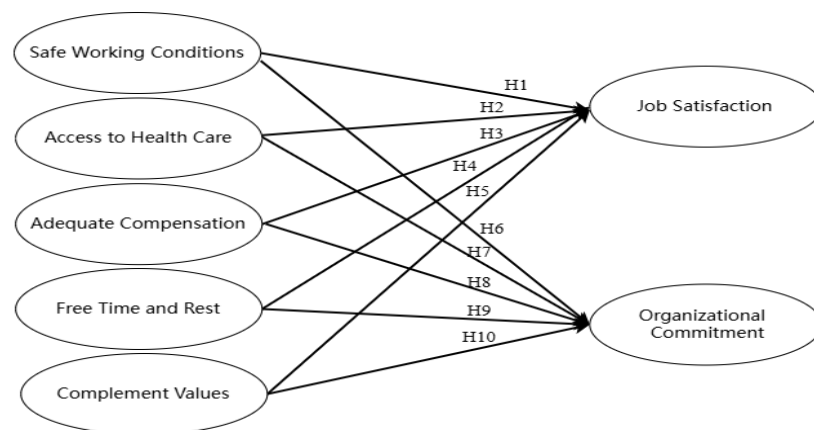


Figure 1 Conceptual Framework

Methodology

Research Design

This study primarily adopts a quantitative research approach, using a cross-sectional survey design for data collection and hypothesis testing. Data were gathered through a structured questionnaire. Given the large number of for-profit enterprises in Guangdong Province and the diverse organizational environments and employee behaviors, it was impractical to concentrate the survey population in one location. Therefore, a survey method was chosen as the final research approach. This method allows for the systematic testing of predetermined issues using quantitative data, enabling the use of statistical tools to validate and analyze the hypotheses (Creswell, 2013). Additionally, surveys are well-suited to answer questions such as "what," "where," "when," and "how" (Wellington, 2015). This method is cost-effective, even when the target population is geographically dispersed, and it allows a large number of participants to

respond within a short period. Furthermore, using online survey tools provides respondents with the flexibility to answer at their own pace, ensuring privacy.

The survey approach was chosen to explore the relationship between decent work and job satisfaction and organizational commitment. The research aims to verify the relationships between the variables. Based on a thorough literature review, validated scales with proven reliability and validity were selected for the survey. The collected data will be analyzed using CB-SEM and AMOS software to assess the significance of relationships and path coefficients (Hair Jr et al., 2021).

Population and Sample

A research population refers to the large group of individuals that are the focus of a scientific investigation (McCusker et al., 2014). The target population for this study comprises employees of for-profit enterprises in Guangdong Province. The inclusion criteria are employees aged 18 and above, with at least six months of work experience, residing in Guangdong Province. The employees come from various industries, including the service and manufacturing sectors, and hold different positions ranging from frontline workers to top managers. According to the 2023 Guangdong Statistical Yearbook, as of the end of 2023, there were 7.8 million for-profit enterprises in Guangdong, employing approximately 70.72 million individuals (Guangdong People's Government, 2024). This number constitutes the study's target population.

Sample Size and Sampling Technique

This study proposes using multivariate statistical analysis (SPSS) and structural equation modeling (SEM) for data analysis. SEM is especially suitable for large sample sizes, as larger samples improve the stability of the statistical analysis and the validity of various indicators. According to Krejcie & Morgan (1970), for a population size above one million, a sample size of approximately 384 is sufficient for a 95% confidence interval. Therefore, to obtain robust results and reject the null hypothesis, this study requires at least 384 respondents.

The study adopts a random sampling method to ensure the representativeness of the sample. The quality of the sample directly determines the applicability and generalizability of the research findings. Random sampling or stratified random sampling is generally preferred to ensure that the sample effectively represents the larger population. Thus, random sampling was chosen for this study.

Measurements

Measurement of Decent Work: The study uses the Decent Work Scale (DWS) developed by Duffy et al. (2017a) to measure decent work, consisting of five dimensions: safe working conditions, free time and rest, complement values, adequate compensation, and access to healthcare. Each dimension includes three items, for a total of 15 items. The internal consistency estimates (Cronbach's alpha) for the subscales and the overall scale were: Safe Working Conditions ($\alpha = 0.79$), Access to Health Care (0.97), Adequate Compensation (0.87), Free Time and Rest (0.87), Complement Values (0.95), and Total Scale (0.86).

Measurement of Job Satisfaction: The study adopts the Short Index of Job Satisfaction (SIJS) developed by Judge et al. (2000) to measure overall job satisfaction (Cronbach's α ranges from 0.81 to 0.89). The scale includes five items, with items JS3 and JS5 being reverse-scored.

Measurement of Organizational Commitment: The short version of the Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (Mowday et al., 1982), containing nine items, is used to measure organizational commitment. Cronbach's alpha for this scale ranges between 0.74 and 0.92.

All constructs in this study were measured using a five-point Likert scale.

Conclusion & Future Recommendation

This conceptual framework presents an insightful exploration of the relationship between the five dimensions of decent work—safe working conditions, access to healthcare, adequate compensation, free time and rest, and complement values—and their positive impacts on job satisfaction and organizational commitment. By summarizing existing literature and employing theoretical perspectives such as Psychology of Working Theory and psychological contract theory, this study highlights the critical importance of decent work in fostering a supportive and motivating work environment.

The proposed model emphasizes that when organizations provide decent work conditions, they not only satisfy employees' basic needs but also create a foundation for a positive psychological contract. This fulfillment of expectations enhances employees' job satisfaction and strengthens their organizational commitment. Consequently, this framework underscores the vital role that decent work plays in shaping favorable employee attitudes and behaviors, ultimately contributing to the overall effectiveness and sustainability of organizations.

Given the theoretical nature of this study and the absence of empirical data analysis, several avenues for future research can be pursued to validate and expand the conceptual framework. Future studies should focus on empirical testing of the proposed model to confirm the relationships between decent work dimensions, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment through quantitative methods like surveys or structural equation modeling. Additionally, investigating mediating factors such as employee engagement, organizational culture, and leadership style could enhance the framework's comprehensiveness. Sector-specific studies are needed to understand how decent work impacts various industries, while longitudinal research could assess how these relationships evolve over time. Furthermore, future research should consider cultural differences that may affect perceptions of decent work globally and explore how digital transformation influences the implementation of decent work principles and their impact on employee satisfaction and commitment.

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