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The Relationship of Organizational Commitment and Employee Job Satisfaction

A Case of Quick Service Restaurants in the Philippines

[1]Danilo P. Nuñez Jr, [2]Jayvie O. Guballo*
Corresponding Author: * danilopnunezjr@iskolarngbayan.pup.edu.ph
[1] Polytechnic University of the Philippines, Manila, Philippines
[2] Rizal Technological University, Mandaluyong, Philippines

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the relationship between organizational commitment and job satisfaction among employees in selected quick-service restaurants (QSRs) in the Philippines. Using a descriptive-correlational design, data were collected from 279 frontline employees of Jollibee and McDonald's across Metro Manila. The Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ) and Job Descriptive Index (JDI) measured various dimensions of commitment and satisfaction. Findings revealed high levels of affective and normative commitment, moderate continuance commitment, and overall high job satisfaction, particularly in career development. A strong positive correlation was found between organizational commitment and job satisfaction, with normative commitment showing the strongest link. No significant differences were observed between local and international QSR brands. These results suggest that emotional and moral factors, more than financial considerations, play a central role in employee satisfaction in the fast-paced food service sector. The study contributes to HR practices by emphasizing the need for purpose-driven work environments and growth opportunities. It concludes that strengthening affective and normative commitment enhances retention and satisfaction. It is recommended that QSRs implement structured recognition programs, leadership development tracks, and internal promotion initiatives to build a more committed workforce. This study is limited by its use of non-probability sampling and focus on Metro Manila, which may affect the generalizability of the results. Practically, these findings guide QSR managers in

designing targeted employee engagement and retention strategies. Socially, the study highlights the importance of supporting frontline worker well-being and career growth in high-turnover industries.

Keywords
Organizational Commitment
Job Satisfaction
Quick Service Restaurants

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Introduction

In today's fast-paced and service-oriented industries, retaining a dedicated and satisfied workforce is a critical challenge particularly in the quick-service restaurant (QSR) sector, which experiences some of the highest employee turnover rates globally. In the Philippines, QSRs such as Jollibee and McDonald's play a significant role in employment and economic activity, yet face increasing challenges related to employee disengagement, limited career progression, and retention. Recent labor trends show a continued rise in voluntary turnover, with resignation rates increasing from 14.2% in 2022 to 15.9% in 2023 [1], reflecting broader concerns around job satisfaction and organizational loyalty. Organizational commitment, defined as the psychological attachment an employee has to their workplace, has been recognized as a key factor influencing job satisfaction, performance, and retention. Meyer and Allen's Three-Component Model [2] categorizes commitment into affective (emotional attachment), continuance (cost-related), and normative (moral obligation). These dimensions interact with various workplace factors and have distinct implications for employee behavior and organizational outcomes. Job satisfaction, meanwhile, is often explained through Locke's Value-Percept Theory [3], which emphasizes the alignment between employees' work values and their actual experiences. Elements such as compensation, work environment, recognition, and growth opportunities influence not only satisfaction but also long-term organizational engagement.

While previous studies have explored these constructs in diverse industries, few have examined their interaction within the Philippine QSR context. Existing literature often centers on multinational corporations or academic settings, leaving a research gap in localized, service-sector environments where frontline roles dominate and resources for employee development may be limited [4]. Addressing this gap is vital for tailoring strategies that reflect the unique workforce challenges of the QSR industry in the Philippines.

This study aims to examine the relationship between organizational commitment and job satisfaction among QSR employees in selected Metro Manila locations. It also explores whether notable differences exist between local (Jollibee) and international (McDonald's) brands. Insights gained are expected to inform practical strategies to improve employee retention, engagement, and service delivery in fast-paced environments.

The theoretical framework guiding this study illustrates how the three components of organizational commitment includes affective (emotional attachment), continuance (cost-based commitment), and normative (moral obligation). Those influence employees' perceptions of job satisfaction. These components directly informed the selection and structure of the research instruments. For instance, the Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ) was adapted to measure each dimension individually, while the Job Descriptive Index (JDI) captured satisfaction outcomes related to work conditions, compensation, and career growth. During the analysis, these dimensions were mapped to correlate with satisfaction variables, revealing which types of commitment most strongly predicted employee contentment. The framework served as the analytical lens for the entire study. Each component (affective, continuance, and normative) guided the alignment of survey sections, informed the coding of variables in SPSS, and shaped the interpretation of correlation results in Table 3. For instance, normative commitment's strong link to career development was anticipated based on the theory's emphasis on moral obligation, and this guided both the instrument design and thematic emphasis in the analysis. (See Fig. 1)

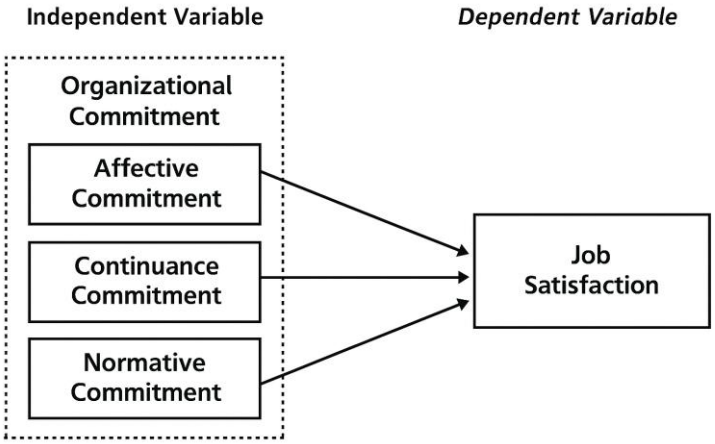


Fig. 1. Research Paradigm

This framework provides a structured understanding of how the different types of organizational commitment are hypothesized to influence job satisfaction within the context of frontline employees in quick-service restaurants (QSRs).

Literature Review

Organizational commitment and job satisfaction are core constructs in organizational behavior research. Meyer and Allen [1] conceptualized commitment into three components (affective, continuance, and normative) each influencing employee behavior differently. Locke [2] complemented this by proposing that job satisfaction arises when work experiences align with individual values. Loan [3] demonstrated that job satisfaction mediates the link between commitment and performance, highlighting the role of emotional attachment. Sore [4] confirmed that financial rewards, peer support, and decision-making participation significantly enhance commitment in fast-food settings.

In the local context, Tugade [5] found high job satisfaction but only moderate commitment among manufacturing workers in Manila. Olivar et al. [6] revealed that job characteristics partly mediate the satisfaction-commitment relationship in Davao-based QSR staff. Abdul Aziz et al. [7] emphasized that post-pandemic motivational factors such as achievement and recognition enhance satisfaction in Malaysian QSRs. Khor et al. [8] focused on Gen Z, showing that stress lowers satisfaction and increases turnover intent, while commitment boosts retention. Alserhan et al. [9] further confirmed that affective and normative commitment reduce turnover intentions. Teal [10] identified job satisfaction as the strongest predictor of QSR employee retention, surpassing grit and training satisfaction. Bennett [11] reported a moderate positive correlation between satisfaction and commitment among fast-food employees in the Caribbean.

Abun et al. [12] showed that strong workplace relationships enhance job satisfaction in Philippine academic institutions. AlKahtani et al. [13] supported the role of employee empowerment in fostering both satisfaction and commitment through social exchange mechanisms. Abdelhakim and Agwa [14] found that CSR activities positively affect job satisfaction and organizational commitment in Egyptian QSRs, particularly during crisis recovery. Gorham [15] noted that transformational leadership improves satisfaction and retention in U.S. fast-food chains. Jiang et al. [16] observed that compensation, job security, and decision-making involvement boost retention in Philippine food companies, mediated by job satisfaction. Reyes et al. [17] developed a millennial-focused retention model where training, career planning, and work-life balance were key satisfaction drivers. Chico et al. [18] linked a positive organizational culture in Panabo City's fast-food chains with improved employee satisfaction and performance. Chan et al. [19] concluded that leadership, rewards, and communication significantly enhance engagement and satisfaction among McDonald's employees in Malaysia.

Cai Cen et al. [20] emphasized that compensation and work environment positively affective commitment and competence, especially among educators, but their findings apply

similarly to service settings. Plata et al. [21] analyzed organizational cultures in Batangas QSRs and found that team- and people-oriented cultures improved worker satisfaction. Rodriguez and Palallos [22] found that employee commitment directly influences inventory accuracy and operational efficiency in QSRs in Quezon City. Varner [23] demonstrated that ethical leadership and organizational citizenship reduce turnover and enhance satisfaction in food and beverage settings. Silva et al. [24] revealed that burnout and menu complexity negatively impact job satisfaction among food service workers, while motivation and safety awareness contribute positively.

Methods

This study adopted a descriptive-correlational research design to determine the relationship between organizational commitment and job satisfaction among employees working in selected quick-service restaurants (QSRs) in Metro Manila. The study aimed to measure levels of commitment and satisfaction and explore how these constructs influence each other in a high-turnover, customer-driven industry.

A. Participants and Sampling

The target population comprised frontline employees of two leading QSR brands in the Philippines: Jollibee (local) and McDonald's (international). Participants were chosen using a non-probability convenience sampling technique according to their willingness and availability. Effective access to staff from various branches was made possible by this sampling technique, despite the possibility of selection bias. The survey was completed by 279 people in total.

B. Research Instruments

The study employed a structured questionnaire divided into three parts:

- Part I: Socio-demographic profile (e.g., age, gender, job position, years in service).
- Part II: Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ), adapted from Meyer and Allen's model [1], measuring affective, continuance, and normative commitment on a 5-point Likert scale.
- Part III: Job Descriptive Index (JDI), assessing satisfaction dimensions like compensation, supervision, work environment, and career development.

A structured questionnaire was developed by the researchers, drawing directly on the affective, continuance, and normative dimensions of Meyer and Allen's Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ) [1], and the compensation, supervision, work environment, and career development dimensions of the Job Descriptive Index (JDI) [25]. Reliability testing using Cronbach's alpha yielded a coefficient of 0.902, indicating excellent internal consistency across survey items.

C. Data Collection Procedure

Data collection occurred over two months, employing both paper-based and digital forms to accommodate employee schedules. Participation was voluntary and anonymous. Respondents were informed about the purpose of the study and provided informed consent. Managers facilitated access to store employees during pre-shift briefings.

Ethical approval for the study was granted by the Polytechnic University of the Philippines – University Research Ethics Committee (UREC). All procedures complied with ethical standards involving human participants.

D. Data Analysis

Quantitative data were encoded and analyzed using SPSS. Descriptive statistics such as frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation were used to interpret demographic data and variable levels. The Pearson correlation coefficient determined the strength and direction of the relationship between organizational commitment and job satisfaction. Independent samples t-tests were used to assess differences based on brand affiliation (Jollibee vs. McDonald's).

Results and Discussion

A. Demographic Profile

The workforce was primarily young (21–30 years old), with a majority female composition and a high concentration of service crew members. Most had 1–2 years of tenure, which aligns with industry averages for QSR roles in the Philippines. This demographic suggests a transitional employment population, often composed of students or early-career individuals.

B. Organizational Commitment Levels

Table 1 summarizes the results. Affective and normative commitment were both rated as high (M = 3.99 and 3.78, respectively), while continuance commitment was moderate (M = 3.39). The high affective and normative commitment levels suggest that QSR employees are more driven by emotional bonds and shared values than by financial necessity unlike continuance commitment, which scored moderately. These findings support Meyer and Allen's [2] framework, as well as Sore's [4] observation of similar trends among fast-food workers. This indicates that even in high-turnover environments, organizational attachment is shaped more by emotional and cultural alignment than economic obligation.

Table 1. Mean Scores and Interpretation of Organizational Commitment Dimensions

Type of Commitment	Mean	Std. Dev.	Interpretation
Affective	3.99	0.86	High
Continuance	3.39	0.82	Moderate
Normative	3.78	0.80	High

C. Job Satisfaction Levels

Employees reported high satisfaction across all measured dimensions. *Work environment* emerged as the top driver (M = 3.96), followed by *Career Development* (M = 3.91) and *compensation* (M = 3.62). This reflects the importance of opportunities for growth and quality interpersonal relationships in fast-paced service roles. These results echo the conclusions of Abdul Aziz et al. [7], who highlighted recognition and achievement as strong motivators in QSR settings, particularly post-pandemic. The high ratings for career growth also align with Olivar et al. [6], who found that job characteristics mediate satisfaction in Davao-based QSRs. The findings imply that frontliners value long-term development pathways even in what are traditionally seen as transitional roles.

Table 2. Mean Scores and Interpretation of Job Satisfaction Dimensions

Job Satisfaction Area	Mean	Std. Dev.	Interpretation
Work Environment	3.96	0.75	High
Career Development	3.91	0.77	High
Compensation	3.62	0.86	High

D. Correlation Between Variables

A strong positive correlation was found between organizational commitment and job satisfaction, with the highest correlation observed between normative commitment and career development ($r = 0.710$, $p < 0.01$). Normative commitment had the strongest correlation with job satisfaction, especially in relation to career development. This suggests that value alignment plays a key role in shaping satisfaction in QSR employees. For example, during informal conversations held after survey distribution, several employees from McDonald's branches in Quezon City shared that internal promotions and birthday recognition programs significantly impacted their motivation to stay. These examples reinforce how low-cost strategies, when aligned with personal and professional values, can strengthen employee commitment.

Table 3. Detailed Pearson Correlation Between Organizational Commitment and Job Satisfaction Dimensions

Dimension	Compensation	Work Environment	Career Development	Overall
Affective	0.472	0.658	0.694	0.671
Continuance	0.525	0.450	0.532	0.447
Normative	0.653	0.691	0.710	0.690
p-value (all)	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
Interpretation	Significant	Significant	Significant	Significant

This confirms the findings of Loan [3], who described job satisfaction as a mediator that links emotional connection to performance. The particularly strong link with normative commitment reinforces the view that personal values and internalized loyalty are key drivers of satisfaction, an insight also reflected in Khor et al.'s [8] study on Gen Z fast-food workers in Asia.

E. Differences Between QSR Brands

Independent t-tests showed no significant difference ($p > 0.05$) in both organizational commitment and job satisfaction between employees of Jollibee and McDonald's. This suggests that despite differing ownership structures and training models, both companies offer similar experiences that affect these psychological constructs. Olivar et al. [6] similarly noted that job satisfaction outcomes in QSRs tend to be more influenced by frontline job characteristics than by the corporate brand. The implication here is that employee experiences are shaped less by brand identity and more by localized store culture, team dynamics, and role expectations.

All things considered, the results show that moral and emotional commitment are more important in keeping QSR employees than monetary commitment. Career advancement and a positive work atmosphere are closely linked to job satisfaction, but brand affiliation has no discernible impact on results. These findings support the notion that enhancing employee engagement and retention in the QSR sector requires complementary to brand-level policies.

Conclusion

This study confirmed a strong positive relationship between organizational commitment and job satisfaction among frontline employees in selected quick-service restaurants (QSRs) in Metro Manila. Affective and normative commitment were found to be high, while continuance commitment was moderate, suggesting that emotional and moral factors, rather than financial constraints, drive retention in these roles. Job satisfaction was also high, with career development and work environment rated as key contributors. No significant differences were found between local and international brands, indicating that employee experience is shaped more by frontline role characteristics than by corporate ownership. The study contributes to the limited literature focusing specifically on frontline QSR employees in the Philippine context, a gap that is often overlooked in broader hospitality or organizational behavior research. It affirms that even in transitional or short-term roles, psychological commitment matters and can be shaped by internal HR practices. These findings offer a roadmap for QSRs aiming to create more fulfilling and sustainable workplaces. One notable insight is the strong influence of normative commitment on job satisfaction, particularly in relation to career development. This highlights the growing importance of value-driven management in shaping employee retention, especially for younger generations seeking purpose and alignment in their work.

Future researchers are encouraged to examine longitudinal effects of HR interventions on commitment and satisfaction, and to explore how digital transformation in QSRs may impact employee perception and loyalty. Economically, improving employee commitment and satisfaction can help reduce turnover costs, enhance productivity, and support the long-term profitability of quick-service restaurants.

Limitations

The findings of this study are subject to several limitations. First, the use of non-probability convenience sampling may introduce selection bias and limit the generalizability of the results to the wider QSR employee population. Second, the geographic concentration in Metro Manila constrains the applicability of insights to other regions in the Philippines, where cultural, operational, or economic conditions may differ. Third, the study focused only on two QSR brands, which may not fully capture the diversity of human resource practices across the broader industry.

Future research may consider expanding the sample to include a more geographically and operationally diverse set of fast-food establishments, employing probability-based sampling techniques. Additionally, qualitative methods such as focus group discussions or in-depth interviews could yield deeper insights into employee motivations, workplace values, and generational perspectives that may influence organizational commitment and job satisfaction.

Recommendations

Existing QSR practices in the Philippines already show promise when strategically implemented. For example, McDonald's Philippines has long employed a "Star Crew Program" to reward consistent performance, while Jollibee offers structured training and internal promotion pipelines, particularly in store management roles. These programs demonstrate how low-cost, high-impact initiatives can reinforce affective and normative commitment when aligned with employee values and goals. While the proposed HR strategies are grounded in best practices, implementation may face practical challenges. Smaller franchise-operated stores may lack the resources or managerial bandwidth to roll out structured programs. Additionally, high customer volumes during peak hours often limit time available for mentoring or feedback. Addressing these barriers requires phased integration and the support of head-office-driven incentives.

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Conflict of Interest

The authors affirm that there are no conflicts of interest associated with the publication of this study. The research process, including its design, data gathering, analysis, and interpretation was carried out independently and impartially, without any financial, personal, or professional ties that could have influenced the results.

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Authors



Danilo P. Nuñez Jr is a fourth-year undergraduate student pursuing a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration major in Human Resource Management at the Polytechnic University of the Philippines. He was a class valedictorian in high school and a two-time first-place winner in the Division Schools Press Conference (DSPC) for editorial writing, as well as a Regional Schools Press Conference (RSPC) qualifier. A consistent President's Lister, he brings academic excellence together with seven years of corporate experience, giving him practical insight into human resource functions and workplace dynamics. His research interests include organizational behavior, employee engagement, and strategic HR development. (email: danilopnunezjr@iskolarngbayan.pup.edu.ph).



Dr. Jayvie O. Guballo is a university lecturer specializing in business research, administration, and human resource management. Before entering academia, he spent nearly eight years as a corporate recruitment manager, gaining experience in industries such as hospitality, oil and gas, engineering, and finance. He holds a BS in Office Administration from Rizal Technological University and both an MBA (Human Resource Management) and DBA from the Polytechnic University of the Philippines. He also holds certifications as a Certified Human Resource Professional® (United Kingdom) and Certified Marketing Professional (Australia). (email: joguballo@rtu.edu.ph).