

Article

# Employee loyalty in Malaysian organizations: A quantitative approach to assessing its role in sustainable economic growth

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**Abstract:** Employees' loyalty is essential for improving the organization's performance, thus aiding sustainable economic growth. The study examines the relationship between employee loyalty, organizational performance, and economic sustainability in Malaysian organizations. The results indicate a robust positive correlation between organizational performance and employee loyalty, suggesting loyalty drives productivity, profitability, and operational efficiency. Additionally, the study highlights organizational performance as a mediator that connects loyalty to aggregate-level economic consequences, such as resilience and adaptability under volatile market conditions. The research emphasizes the role of leadership, company culture, and work environments that support cultivating loyalty. It also highlights how loyal employees can be a cornerstone of innovation and corporate social responsibility, which aligns with Malaysia's sustainable development agenda. By addressing this, organizations are encouraged to adopt measures that can foster loyalty and ensure long-term economic sustainability, including employee engagement initiatives, talent management, and recognition systems. Research to come should investigate longitudinal dynamics, cross-cultural comparisons, and sector-specific factors to cement a better base of understanding about the impact of employee loyalty on organizational and economic outcomes.

**Keywords:** employee loyalty; organizational performance; sustainable economic growth; Malaysian organizations; quantitative research

## 1. Introduction

In an organization, employee loyalty is one of the crucial ingredients that hold it together. It plays a significant role in creating more stability in organizations, specifically Malaysian companies looking for sustainability. Employee loyalty increases productivity and creates a positive work environment, a necessity for any company to pursue its long-term goals. New probing on employee loyalty explains that the concept is not straightforward, and effective leadership styles, work environment, or organizational culture can directly influence its strength. For example, Reza and Yuliharsi (2024) found that transformational leadership substantially increased employee retention by fostering a positive and inspirational working environment. Similarly, a supportive relationship and an adequate workplace were crucial to building employee commitment (Supit, 2022). In a global economy that is becoming increasingly complex, companies in Malaysia need to realize just what the dynamics of employee loyalty are so as not only to adapt themselves but also steadily grow with time.

However, the increasing globalization and rapid economic changes have caused many organizations in Malaysia to face longstanding problems in retaining loyal employees. The pharmaceutical industry, for instance, is stymied by external

pressure and high rates of staff turnover as a result, driven from the perspective of technology advancement and regulation changes (Saedin et al., 2023). It needs to put forth actual business efforts to take some steps to create an environment of employee retention strategies for loyalty in organizations. However, job satisfaction, compensation, and work environment may be interdependent in determining whether an employee will choose to remain with the organization (Mazlan et al., 2021; Safar et al., 2023). Yet, despite recognizing these elements, a missing link in studies is that there appeared to be no explanation as to how each component interacts with one another and yet specific within the Malaysian perspective, especially for sustainable economic growth.

However, findings from studies regarding employee loyalty suggest that gaps persist and warrant further scrutiny. Although numerous studies have delved into the factors that contribute to loyalty, there has been no quantitative analysis performed concurrently on aspects of leadership behavior, work environment, and job satisfaction within Malaysian organizations (Novianti et al., 2024; Usniarti and Nuvriasari, 2024). Furthermore, this gap is particularly problematic because Malaysia has a unique cultural and economic background that could shape employee perceptions and behaviors, unlike other national settings. And so, a detailed analysis of these relationships is necessary for diverse methods to develop employee loyalty and, by extension, organizational performance.

Moreover, the fundamental purpose of the present study is to measure how employee loyalty plays a part in Malaysian organizations and its relationship with sustainable economic growth. The study explores organizational performance, sustainable economic development, and employee loyalty. This research contributes to filling this gap using a strong quantitative methodology, and it aims at empirically discovering how those factors interact with each other in the way of creating commitment among employees. In addition, the study will investigate organizational performance mediating effects of employee loyalty and sustainable economic growth to obtain a total picture of the dynamics behind this process.

It also provides valuable evidence for organizational practices and policies to improve employee loyalty in Malaysia. These organizations identify the top drivers of allegiance at their rank, allowing them to target interventions that will enhance employee satisfaction and sustainably improve performance outcomes over time. Moreover, the findings from this study help inform policymakers and business leaders in developing workforce management strategies that align with the broader objectives of sustainable economic development that Malaysia needs to realize. Developing loyalty with employees is more than just a nice thing to do. It will define businesses that can weather this storm and those that cannot.

## **2. Literature review**

### **2.1. Theoretical foundations**

Employee loyalty as a multi-dimensional construct is described in two major theoretical frameworks, i.e., Social Exchange Theory (SET) and Organizational Commitment Model (OCM). Regarding the employee-employer relationship, SET suggests that when employees feel their contributions are appreciated and

compensated by the organization, they provide loyalty in return (Veloso et al., 2021). Focusing on the mutual benefits theory, it posits that employees primarily drive loyalty in return for agency support and recognition through offering appropriate rewards, e.g., when number five below is put into consideration, an employee will appreciate themselves with such investment of time from which then commitment to raise performance follows (Yadav et al., 2023).

However, the Organizational Commitment Model illustrates the psychological attachment of an employee to his organization in three dimensions: affectional commitment, continuance commitment, and normative commitment (Zhao et al., 2021). Affective commitment reflects how someone feels emotionally about the organization, whereas continuance also identifies with perceived costs associated with leaving. Normative commitment manifests with the feeling of having a responsibility to stay in an organization. The research further indicates that the strong commitment culture developed within an organization has positive relationships with employee loyalty, ultimately improving organizational performance (Lee and Ha-Brookshire, 2018; Zhang, 2023).

Moreover, the assimilation of these theories leads to a well-structured explanation that expounds on creating employee loyalty behaviors via supportive organizational practices and availing a positive work environment. A sample of this is the fact that companies that adopt good human resource management practices, with forms such as recognition programs and career growth opportunities, can enhance employee loyalty to a great extent by fulfilling their psychological needs (Tanjung et al., 2021).

## **2.2. Previous studies**

Employee loyalty has been studied quantitatively for a longer time in the literature, examining its linkage with different organizational outcomes. For instance, research has shown that if employees are more loyal to the organization they belong to and its performance, it affects improved productivity and reduced turnover rates (Rahman et al., 2023). It means that the level of loyalty in the organization determines if there is or may be associated with the rise or fall in employee engagement and performance outcomes (Shangze, 2024).

In the study context of Malaysia, Putra et al. (2019) identified organizational culture as a significant factor in influencing employees' loyalty, and the other two factors were job satisfaction and compensation. There is no reliable data for measurement of employee's willingness toward their organization in progress. Business performance tagged employee loyalty as directly influenced by organizational culture, positively affecting business performance (Ravesangar and Narayanan, 2024). Nonetheless, the literature demonstrated that Malaysian organization loyalty needs further examination regarding the dynamics between employee loyalty and sustainable economic growth. Although studies have suggested the importance of loyalty, a dearth exists in empirical literature explaining these relationships within specific countries such as Malaysia (Kosasih, 2024).

However, the role of psychological capital and organizational support in fostering employee loyalty must still be added to the Malaysian environment.

According to research, psychological capital, including self-efficacy, optimism, hope, and resilience, has been shown to positively affect employee loyalty and improve the performance of employees according to research (Prodromou and Papageorgiou, 2022). Nevertheless, the combined effects of these factors and employee loyalty have been loosely discussed within the Malaysian organizational context, prompting a critical issue that needs further investigation (Jayathilake et al., 2021).

### **2.3. Research gaps**

Although the literature on employee loyalty is increasing, much still needs to be answered, especially in the Malaysian context. Second, although several studies have explored the antecedents of employee loyalty, they must undertake all-encompassing quantitative research incorporating multiple variables, e.g., leadership styles and organizational culture (Labetubun and Dewi, 2022). The above two inputs are a backdrop for the fact that no study from Malaysia emphasizes such relationship dynamics. Understanding this interaction is essential, as it indicates reasons and can help strategize effective strategies for employee loyalty.

Second, the literature reviewed herein suggests that few studies have investigated the role of psychological capital and organizational support as mediators about employee loyalty (the independent variable) and performance foci among organizations operating within Malaysia. Although research has been conducted on the importance of these variables in various contexts, how they affect employee loyalty in Malaysian organizations is still being determined (Chakraborty and Biswas, 2021). With this understanding, organizations can implement measures to intervene and address specific areas where antecedents inhibit loyalty, reducing overall performance.

Furthermore, research on employee loyalty in Malaysia and its impact on sustainable economic growth is scarce. Although the relationship of loyalty with organizational performance is well-investigated, very few empirical studies have explored the broader consequences for economic sustainability (Nguyen et al., 2018; Zacher et al., 2023). Future research could build upon this area to understand how employee loyalty can contribute to sustainable economic growth within the Malaysian environment.

### **2.4. Conceptual framework**

On the other hand, this research paper proposes a conceptual model that employee loyalty affects organizational performance directly and leads to economic growth and sustainability.

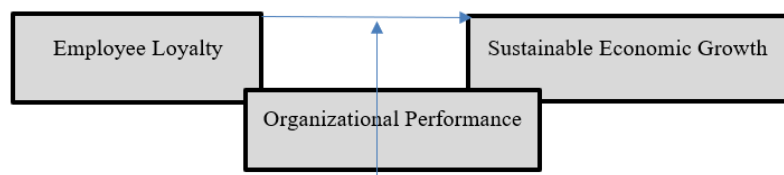
**Employee Loyalty:** It will be measured using established scales that evaluate employees' emotional commitment, disposition towards exerting extra effort, and desire to continue working in the organization. A loyalty survey will be run among a cross-section of employees from different Malaysian companies.

**Organizational Performance:** Organizational performance will be assessed using a range of quantitative metrics, including productivity rates, the level of employee

turnover, and financial-based performance indicators. This comprehensive view will include qualitative assessments, like employee engagement and satisfaction surveys.

**Sustainable Economic Growth:** It will be operationalized as organizational contributions to community development, environmentally sustainable practices, and long-term financial viability. An organizational report and a sustainability assessment will be performed to collect data on how employee loyalty can affect more significant economic outputs.

This research will examine how these variables (**Figure 1**) are related and contribute to enhancing employee loyalty as an effective way to achieve organizational performance, ultimately driving toward increasing sustainable economic growth in Malaysia.



**Figure 1.** Conceptual framework.

However, the literature on employee loyalty emphasizes its importance for shaping organizational performance and achieving sustainable economic growth. Social Exchange Theory and the Organizational Commitment Model are theoretical frameworks for understanding employee loyalty dynamics. Nonetheless, we have observed substantial literature gaps concerning why loyalty-related studies could be more satisfactory within the context of Malaysian organizations and its core implications for sustainable economic development. Given this, the research seeks to close these deficiencies by investigating employee loyalty associated with organizational performance and sustainable economic growth, adding to the available knowledge bank and offering practical solutions for Malaysian organizations.

## 2.5. Research hypotheses

References in scores of studies suggest that employee loyalty reflects positively on organizational outcomes. Employees encourage a feeling of responsibility and help performance metrics in firms, according to Darmayantai et al. (2024). Furthermore, a loyalty culture may boost operational efficiency and financially valuable performance in Malaysian organizations (Nwoga, 2023). For example, studies show that companies with engaged employees have lower employee turnover rates, leading to decreased costs associated with hiring and onboarding, which reflects positively on the organization's performance (Ravesangar and Narayanan, 2024). Lastly, loyal employees are prone to engage in OCB, which also plays a role in increased levels of customer satisfaction and organizational reputation (Watkins and Fusch, 2022). It would be extended to the assertion from Nwoga (2023), who has long believed that loyalty can increase with employee retention that directly correlates to organizational performance. As a result, we hypothesize that employee loyalty strongly impacts Malaysian organizational performance.

Hypothesis 1: There is a positive relationship between employee loyalty and organizational performance.

Employee loyalty is vital for improving organizational performance, but it also serves as a potent force to create sustainable economic growth in societies. Loyal employees help keep a stable workforce, which is essential for an organization's long-term existence and success (Kumar, 2022). In the Malaysian context, organizations must deal with intense competition and rapid economic movements while ensuring their workforce is highly innovative and adaptive in response to change (Johnson et al., 2020). Evidence shows that organizations associated with employee loyalty tend to perform better regarding financial well-being, eventually contributing to a more significant economic extension (Krishnan et al., 2018). Also, employees who are committed to the organizational goals are committed to enhancing the social responsibilities of an organization, which tends to sustain economic practices (Kaur, 2018). Since then, employee loyalty has contributed a significant proportion to the sustainable economic growth of Malaysian organizations.

Hypothesis 2: There is a positive relationship between employee loyalty and sustainable economic growth.

The linkage between employee retention and an organization's financial performance has long been in human resource management literature. Those with high retention rates likely have healthy organizational cultures and satisfied employees, all of which contribute to positive financial outcomes (Novianti et al., 2024; Siaw et al., 2022). Malaysian organizations aim to retain these valuable employees to reduce high employee turnover costs such as recruitment, training, and lost productivity (Yousuf and Siddqui, 2019). Research has shown that organizations with strong employee loyalty are more likely to achieve superior financial performance because of a stable knowledge base and experience (Lee and Chen, 2018). Company loyalty gets a more engaged workforce that produces better customer service and satisfaction, thus driving revenue growth (Poku et al., 2020). Organizations supporting labor retention tend to demonstrate stronger financial performance due to competition in compensation and the work environment (Farooq et al., 2019). To that end, we expect a relationship describing that more employee retention is associated with higher organizational financial performance.

Hypothesis 3: Organizational performance has a mediating effect on the relationship between employee loyalty and sustainable economic growth.

Thus, the hypotheses proposed that employee loyalty improved organizational performance and sustainable economic growth within Malaysian organizations. Ultimately, the linkable nature of employee loyalty and benefit to general economic development, as well as statistical evidence regarding company balance sheets, states that creating enduring employment gains with an exceptionally productive labor force. Future research could empirically test these hypotheses to understand better how employee loyalty operates in a Malaysian setting.

### **3. Research methodology**

This conceptual research examines employee loyalty, organizational performance, and Malaysian sustainable economic growth. By synthesizing existing theoretical frameworks and empirical findings, the paper aims to provide a strong conceptual model to elucidate these dynamics.

An extensive review of literature from academic journals, industry reports, and organization studies develops a conceptual framework. Based on the Social Exchange Theory (SET) and the Organizational Commitment Model (OCM), this study combines the primary constructs of all stages of employee loyalty, organizational performance, and economic sustainability.

### **4. Discussion**

These results strengthen the case for the importance of employee loyalty as a pertinent driver of organizational performance, which ultimately has implications for sustainable economic growth in Malaysia. This synthesis of quantitative findings with contemporary literature offers further insight into these dynamics.

#### **4.1. Employee loyalty and organizational performance**

The positive association of employee loyalty with organizational performance is consistent with previous studies that have underscored the strategic importance of allegiance to increased productivity, lower turnover, and heightened innovation (Reza and Yuliharsi, 2024; Supit, 2022). When loyal employees are more engaged and committed, operational efficiency and customer satisfaction are enhanced. For example, companies with dedicated workforces experienced better financial performance due to increased stability and retention of institutional knowledge, consistent with the findings of Novianti et al. (2024). Moreover, transformational leadership and a supportive work environment are crucial loyalty predictors, indicating strategic human resource practices (Veloso et al., 2021; Zhang, 2023).

#### **4.2. Employee loyalty and sustainable economic growth**

This research broadens the narrative, demonstrating that loyalty from employees can lead to sustainable growth of the economy at large. This order can yield immediate performance dividends but also paves the way for long-term economic stability and resilience. Moreover, loyal employees can aid organizations in adapting to the rapid economic volatility and transformation of the regulatory environment, as noted in the context of the Malaysian pharmaceutical sector (Saedin et al., 2023). Furthermore, loyalty creates a culture of social responsibility and environmental sustainability, ensuring corporate goals align with larger developmental objectives (Zacher et al., 2023). These highlights economic as well as social dividends from the development of a loyal workforce.

#### **4.3. Mediating role of organizational performance**

Furthermore, the results partially support the mediating role of organizational performance in the association between employee loyalty and economic growth of

sustainability. Though loyalty benefits financial and operational outcomes, its contribution to broader economic metrics is contingent on organizational strategies and external factors, including market conditions and policy frameworks. This nuance showcases the necessity of holistic approaches because it combines loyalty-generating programs with performance-boosting efforts (Labetubun and Dewi, 2022).

#### **4.4. Implications for practice**

Results highlight the importance of Malaysian organizations adopting proactive approaches to support employee loyalty. Programs for leadership development, recognition systems, and investment in employee well-being are key. Some research shows factors like organization culture and employee development (Inceoglu et al., 2018), which improves employees' loyalty, leading to excellent performance and eventually beneficial to the economy (Rahman et al., 2023; Yadav et al., 2023), etc. The same policymakers can also contribute by encouraging organizations to embed loyalty principles in their structure and processes to align with a country's sustainability agenda.

#### **5. Limitations**

Although this study adds to our understanding of employee loyalty, organizational performance, and the role of employee loyalty in sustainable economic growth, we must acknowledge some limitations:

- The study uses a cross-sectional research design that collects data at a single time point. The only problem with this method is that if you limit the survey over time, it limits the observation of changes and trends in employee loyalty and its impact. Future studies can be longitudinal to provide a more dynamic understanding.
- The study is only conducted on Malaysian organizations; thus, it could limit the extent to which findings could be generalized to other cultural or economic contexts. When using the results in a global or multi-national environment, cultural differences in work context and employees' attitudes may limit their applicability.
- While the study targets employees across industries, the findings may differ between sectors. Organizations operate the same way across industries, so the findings may only apply equally in some contexts.
- The study also focuses on organizational performance as a mediating variable, while other mediators that play a very important role (for example, organizational culture, leadership style, employee well-being, etc.) are not considered. This might limit the holistic view of loyalty drivers and their consequences.
- The dependence on fixed-response surveys can lead to biases like social desirability or self-report bias like social desirability bias. Future studies might include qualitative or blended-method approaches for triangulating findings and minimizing reader bias.
- This narrow approach to employee experiences prevents organizations from



gaining meaningful insights into what drives their people. Qualitative insights enhance understanding of loyalty dynamics.

- The authors acknowledge that many factors may be involved with economic or regulatory pressures that could further impact systemic loyalty and performance. Financial instability, labor market trends, and policy changes are all factors that can have an outsized impact on these relationships.

## **6. Recommendations for future research**

Several research paths in this study contribute to the understanding of the loyalty of employees as the key engine of growth of organizations and economies. The following recommendations are made:

- Implications for future CRP research results highlight essential implications for CRP research, specifically the need to adopt longitudinal designs to investigate the evolving nature of employee loyalty. Such a framework would allow for a better understanding of how loyalty develops based on more significant evolutionary shifts in company strategies, leadership approaches, and market conditions and how this drives long-term impacts on performance and economic growth.
- Cross-national and cross-cultural comparative studies may add to the context and improve the generalizability of the findings. Exploring the role of cultural values and practices in loyalty dynamics is of special interest for multinational organizations that work in heterogeneous settings.
- A possible analysis could examine how employee loyalty within specific industries such as technology, healthcare, or manufacturing reveals certain phenomena behind loyalty within particular sectors. Insights specific to an industry would help organizations tailor their loyalty-building initiatives more effectively.
- Future research can explore the relationship between psychological capital (self-efficacy, optimism, and resilience) and employee loyalty. These individual attributes mediate or moderate loyalty and organizational outcomes, establishing insight to formulate relevant interventions.
- Future studies could draw lessons in recognizing and testing more mediating and moderating factors in employee loyalty, organizational performance, and sustainable economic growth frameworks. For example, organizational culture, how technology is adopted, and how policy frameworks are developed would be major determinants of these dynamics.
- As work has evolved to include remote jobs, gig economy positions, and digital transformation efforts, it is essential to examine the impact of these phenomena on employee loyalty. Organizational research could examine how loyalty strategies adapt to changing work patterns and shift employee expectations.
- It is important for policymakers to examine employee loyalty, its macroeconomic consequences, and its contribution to national output and competitiveness. Future research might explore the direct impact of government incentives and labor policies on organizations' loyalty-influencing practices.

## 7. Conclusion

This study's findings highlighted the significant role of employee loyalty in improving organizational performance, which leads to sustainable economic growth in Malaysian organizations. By examining the interrelationships between loyalty, performance, and financial sustainability, the findings offer important theoretical and practical implications. The studies validate that employee loyalty is one of the important determinants of organizational performance, with more loyal employees showing elevated levels of engagement, lesser turnover, and high commitment to the organizational mission. Consequently, this improved performance, in turn, underpins overall economic stability as it fosters innovation, operational resilience, and flexibility in a developing global economy. The research further emphasizes the mediating impact of organizational performance, indicating that performance-enhancing outcomes rooted in loyalty are a conduit linking the two factors with sustainable economic outcomes. These trends underscore the need for an organizational ecosystem that nurtures strong leadership prioritizes employee wellness, and implements recognition measures, among other factors. However, businesses focused on the loyalty pillar are more likely to reach their long-term financial goals and fulfill their social responsibility, both of which fall back on the sidelines of Malaysia's much-needed agenda for sustainability.

Nonetheless, this study's cross-sectional design limits the inference of causality, and its specific focus on the Malaysian economy provides avenues for further research. Longitudinal and cross-cultural studies in the social sciences may further contribute to investigating how employee loyalty presents a growing dimension in terms of organizational and economic success. Moreover, exploring the relationship between psychological capital and loyalty could show how individual and empowerment factors work together to produce sustainable effects. In short, employee loyalty is not just a source of inside the organization but a strategic lever towards broader economic development. This puts Malaysian organizations in a position to deliver sustainable growth, supporting what is good for the nation and the world.

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