

The Impact of Non-Mandatory Employee Benefits on Organization's Employee Turnover Intention: The Mediating Role of Organizational Commitment

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Abstract: *The purpose of this paper is to analyze the relationship between non-mandatory employee benefits and employee turnover intention. The paper explores the mediating and moderating roles of organizational commitment and organizational justice respectively within the relationship using the Social Exchange Theory. Data was collected from 505 Chinese and Malawian based employees using a questionnaire as the preferred data collection method and structural equation modeling has been utilized to analyze the data obtained from the two regions. The findings indicate that non-mandatory employee benefits implementation and satisfaction has positive impact on organizational commitment constructs and a negative impact on employee turnover intention. The findings also support findings by other scholars that organizational commitment negatively associates with employee turnover intentions. One of the main objectives of this paper was to assess the moderating role of organizational justice in the relationship; the findings however failed to support any significant moderating role of the construct. Findings in this paper illustrate that implementation of non-mandatory employee benefits remains an important strategy to attracting, retaining and motivating employees. Study limitations and future study suggestions are further discussed.*

Keywords: Non-mandatory employee benefits, Organizational justice, Organizational commitment, Turnover intention, Social exchange theory

1. Introduction

A report by the US Department of Labor (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2019) shows that an average of 90% of US based workers had access to benefits such as retirement, medical and life insurances (mandatory benefits). The report also shows that 61% of workers had access to paid vacation benefits and other benefits of this nature were scarcely distributed among private and state organizations. A report by Glassdoor survey in 2016 found that 79% of US employees prefer additional or new benefits rather than an actual pay raise. The United States is one of the most developed economies and thus reference on the topic of employee benefits can be maximized. Study on the rate of implementation of employee benefits (mainly non-mandatory employee benefits) outside the United States and Europe is limited.

The concept of employee benefits involves various non-cash rewards or compensations given to employees within an organization in addition to the normal wages and salaries enjoyed by the employee; a definition according to the US Labor of Statistics. Employee benefits can also be viewed as indirect expenses given to employees by the employer (Klonoski & Robert, 2016). Little research has been carried out concerning employee benefits impact on work attitudes such as turnover intentions through the use of mediating and moderating factors of organizational commitment and organizational justice. So far, research by Jaekwon Ko, SeungUk Hur (2013), Carraher (2011), Tremblay, Sire and Balkin (2000), Willis and Butters (1992) fit in the category of the research being carried out in this paper in that they examined employee benefits influence on certain aspects of employee attitudes.

The impact of employee benefits remains a major topic to be discussed in the human resource management field. The role of employee benefits in the labor market has never been more significant than it presently is. Effects of implementation of non-mandatory employee benefits are assessed in this paper in Chinese (Asian country, China) and Malawian (South east African country, Malawi) based organizations and employees. It is argued in the study of employee benefits that the non-mandatory employee benefits have impact on employee work attitudes and organizational outcomes in terms of turnover intentions, hence the focus in this paper.

This research seeks to tackle the issue on the impact of non-mandatory employee benefits on turnover intentions using organizational commitment as a mediator variable. The issue of turnover in China is a critical issue among human resource management practitioners especially among the young aged employees. Previous literature writes that the turnover rates in China are higher than those in developed countries (Nazir et al., 2016; Hulme, 2006). As of the first part of 2019, Zhongda Consulting Group (a Chinese consulting agency) reports a turnover rate of nearly 10%. On the other hand, little is known concerning the turnover rates of Malawi; this paper will add on the data of Malawian based organizations. The cost of employee turnover is one that cannot be ignored by organizations as it implicates organizational costs by bringing further costs of recruitment, selection and training of new employees whenever turnover occurs.

2. Literature Review

The study and research of employee benefits is of far more importance than initially perceived. This is because employee benefits can assist in elevating job satisfaction

levels and can help to improve organizational commitment (Klonoski & Robert, 2016).

Non-Mandatory Employee Benefits

As is evident throughout this research paper, employee benefits have been classified into two classifications namely: Mandatory and Non-Mandatory Employee Benefits based on the degree of forcefulness by regional or economic zone law and policy in implementing these employee benefits. Employee benefits can be perceived in two categories based on whether the benefit is mandatory by state or country law or freely given (non-mandatorily given) by the employer. The mandatory type of benefit is implemented by organizations by law of the industry, state, country and economic zone. Klonoski, Robert (2016), under the concept of non-discretionary employee benefits (another means of defining employee benefits), suggests that mandatory employee benefits are the kind of organizational practices instructed or mandated by market forces or policy to an organization. The mandatory benefits are viewed as a right by an employee, whereas the non-mandatory benefits (organization-voluntarily given benefits) are seen as incentives to increase employee loyalty and employee job satisfaction (Zhaohong et al., 2014; Zhaohong et al., 2010; Dulebohn et al., 2009; Weathington et al., 2000).

Non-mandatory employee benefits are defined as organizational practices that are not mandated by market forces and policy, these in turn lead to employee's organizational satisfaction and can lead to improved work attitudes such as organizational commitment (Klonoski & Robert; 2016).

Organizational Justice

Organization justice stands as the level of perceptiveness to which employees view fairness being received from the organization (Colquitt, 2001). Fairness is elaborated in terms of methods in which certain things or items are given or distributed to the employees within the organization. In the research of employee benefits, organization justice is perceived by organization employees from what they believe to be the fairest treatment from their employers. Organizational justice in this paper also comes in during implementation of employee benefits. Organizational justice during benefit implementation is simply the rate of involvement of employees in employee benefit policy implementation. Employees usually have the mindset that the organization will only look out for its own interests and does not look to invest more on the employees themselves. This mindset, to a certain level can lead to dissatisfaction and poor employee attitudes towards work in terms of work and performance. A phenomenon of dissatisfaction can lead to turnover intentions.

Organizational Commitment

Work attitudes are classified into three dimensions namely; job satisfaction, job involvement and organization commitment (Wang et al., 2014). Organizational commitment is defined as the level to which employees identify and relate with the organization as well as its goal; organizational commitment also shows employee's desire to remain as a member within an organization. Organization commitment is viewed from three dimensions based on

previous literature in this field namely; affective commitment (employee's emotional attraction, attachment and involvement to an organization expressed in his or her willingness to remain within the current organization), normative commitment (obligatory based commitment to an organization) and continuance commitment (acknowledgement of costs associated with departure from the organization thereby propelling an employee to stay within the organization) (Yousef, 2016).

Turnover Intention

Turnover intention is perceived as a deliberate and conscious willingness to depart from an organization (Tett & Meyer, 1993). The concept of turnover is manifest among employees of an organization displaying dissatisfaction with specific aspects of the organization. Employee turnover intentions and employee turnover are highly correlated and it is common practice for most researchers to use turnover intentions as a proxy for turnover (Fernet et al., 2017). Employee turnover intentions are thus an immediate predecessor of the act of turnover. Some of the aspects of which employees are more likely to be conscious about and easily affected with are the material and financial receivables from the organization. Nazir et al. (2016) found out that; organizational rewards have the ability to decrease employee turnover intentions. In the same way, as mentioned by De Gieter & Hofmans (2015), employees' dissatisfaction with financial and material rewards from the organization increases the risk of the employees to leave the organization.

Social Exchange Theory

Through the social exchange theory, it is recognized that an employer's effort to provide a particular benefit or reward to the employee leads to some sort of obligation from the employee to in turn give something back (Blau, 1964). The process of reciprocation is what leads to an employee's displayed effort in hard working, his or her choice to remain with the current organization, and to a degree leads to commitment to the organization. The Social Exchange Theory plays an important role in the studies of employee benefits in that the employee's contentment to a benefit or an array of benefits will lead to that employee's desire to commit to the organization. Scott Snell and George Bohlander in their 15th edition of *Essential of Human Resource Management* book note that employee benefits cover up to 43% of the total payroll costs to employers. Satisfaction with benefits leads to a positive outcome with job satisfaction and negative outcome with turnover intention (Jaekwon et al., 2013). It is argued that normal pay salary given to an employee is not good enough to attract them to the organization, but it is with employee benefits that the attracted employees can be retained within the organization (Carragher, 2011).

The study of employee benefits in China has not reached its peak; in fact, there are still aspects of employee benefits that are yet to be explored. Employee benefits in China have evolved since the Chinese economic reforms in 1978. However there are few studies to draw an overview from in this aspect of research (Zhaohong et al., 2010). The development and study of employee benefits within the Chinese economic system remains of great essence in an economy standing out in top 3 world GDP figures as well as

having a lot of companies in the world Top 500 leading companies or organizations or businesses.

In China, employee benefits are defined as benefits both legally (5+1 social insurance) and non-legally expected benefits cover areas such as social insurance, family-friendly and various flexible types of benefits. In China, state required benefits include: employee pensions, employee work-related injuries, employee maternity insurance cover, employee unemployment and medical insurance covers; these and housing funds as expected in various big cities in China form the 5+1 mandated social insurance. The lack of adequate material on the study of non-mandatory employee benefits within China means that it is a bit challenging to define precisely which type of non-mandatory employee benefits are commonly implemented in Chinese firms. Zhaohong et al. (2010) personally gathered a number of employee benefits implemented in the firms or organizations that she researched on. Collecting objective data is a difficulty in China according to Zhaohong et al. (2014).

Based on the comprehensive literature gathered on employee benefits, some employee benefit can be uniformly identified in different demographic locations, but could be different based on coverage and federal regulation concerning the benefit, this is the case for both Malawi and China. Employee benefits rose from the western countries before advancing in Asia, in countries such as China. Places like Africa, Malawi are some of the areas where the study of employee benefits has not been fully explored as well just as Asia and further study on African nations' employee benefit system and implementation will enrich the study of employee benefits on a global scale. So far, the study of employee benefits seems to have been fervently explored in regions like the United States of America, Canada (North America) and some parts of Europe.

Hypothesis Development

Klonoski (2016) acknowledges the purpose at which employee benefits are given to employees; to increase job satisfaction as well as increase organizational commitment. Further studies by previous researchers including Casper & Harris (2008), Groover & Crooker (1995) suggest that work-life benefits such as day-care services and flex-time (in this research, considered as non-mandatory employee benefits) facilitate organizational attachment by means of increasing organizational commitment. Research by Casper & Harris (2008) quote that previous research supports the implication of work-life benefits (non-mandatory employee benefits) effect on affective commitment. Research by Nazir et al. (2016) within the Chinese context also suggest that organizational rewards through extrinsic rewards which employee benefits were included on the list have positive impact on affective and normative commitment in Chinese public and private-sector employees.

Hypothesis 1: Non-mandatory employee benefits have a positive impact on employee's organizational commitment levels.

In their study on how employee benefits affect staff turnover, Willis & Butters (1992) suggest that asking current employees what kind of benefits (a perceived organizational

justice) suits them will attract employees and various industry workers to the organization and prevent them from leaving. In their research directed at Chinese employees, Nazir et al. (2016) conclude that employee's participation in the organization's decision making has an important impact on employee's organizational commitment, especially towards affective and normative commitment.

Studies by Tremblay et al. (2000), and Greenberg (1996), as well as others in this field indicate that the process carried out in setting up employee benefits is able to produce a robust sense of procedural justice (fairness) from an employee's perspective. Snell & Bohlander (2010) also point out that employees usually view lack of accurate information from the employer or human resource management concerning given employee benefits as a hindrance to fully enjoying particular benefit packages. This dissatisfaction concerning processes leading to employee benefits will most certainly not be helpful in sustaining employee organizational commitment levels.

Tremblay et al. (1998) study links procedural justice, i.e. employee involvement level on decisions, and employee benefit satisfaction. As far as literature on employee benefits is concerned, this paper is one of the few if not early studies explore the role of organizational justice such as procedural justice moderating role towards employee's organizational commitment levels. Employee's satisfaction and perceived fairness on employee benefits leads to a positive impact on organizational commitment levels. In their study on employee retention in healthcare, Perreira et al. (2018) suggest that nurse perceptions on organization's organizational justice influences organizational commitment (affective commitment).

Hypothesis 2: Non-mandatory employee benefits have a positive and strong impact on employee's organizational commitment levels when moderated by organizational justice.

Dick (2011) argues that organizational commitment is important as well as positively related to certain job outcomes; these outcomes include low absenteeism and higher job performance levels. In their study, Nazir et al. (2016) conclude that employee's affective commitment and normative commitment were negatively related to turnover intentions. Many studies including that of De Gieter & Hofmans (2015) support the idea that employee dissatisfaction with certain organizational rewards such as financial rewards only increases the possibility of the employee to leave the organization.

Hypothesis 3: Organizational commitment is negatively associated with employee turnover intentions.

Hypothesis 3a: Affective commitment is negatively associated with employee turnover intentions.

Hypothesis 3b: Continuance commitment is negatively associated with employee turnover intentions.

Hypothesis 3c: Normative commitment is negatively associated with employee turnover intentions.

In their paper on organizational rewards impact towards organizational commitment and employee turnover intention, Nazir et al. (2016) acknowledge that employee's

participation in organizational decisions (in their paper, identified as a form of intrinsic organizational reward) has a positive impact on employees' affective and normative organizational commitment. Wang et al. (2014) also write in their paper on knowledge employee's perception of organizational justice that organizational justice has a positive impact on work attitudes, organizational commitment included. This assumption is also verified in their paper.

In their paper, Silva & Caetano (2014) identify the role of organizational justice's interactional justice strong relationship with work attitudes directed at both the organization and the supervisor. Tremblay, Sire & Balkin (2000) also observe and clarify the role of organizational justice in pay and employee benefit satisfaction and observed varying work attitude effects. In their paper, it was observed that satisfaction with pay and employee benefit driven by organizational justice improves work attitudes, thus organizational commitment's improvement.

From the above line of thought, it is observable that organizational commitment driven by organizational justice is negatively associated with turnover intentions; since it is hypothesized that organizational commitment is negatively associated with employee turnover intention (Dick, 2011; Nazir et al., 2016; De Gieter & Hofmans, 2015). Human resource management literature also identifies the importance of job satisfaction or employee benefit satisfaction impact on turnover intentions. It is assumed that job satisfaction and benefit satisfaction are negatively associated with turnover intention as noted by De Gieter & Hofmans (2015), Williams et al., (2006, 2008) and De Gieter et al., (2008). Al-Zu'bi (2010) also notes a positive association between organizational justice and job satisfaction. Following this, it can be seen that organizational justice is negatively related with turnover intention, hence hypothesis 4:

Hypothesis 4a: Organizational Justice has a positive impact on employee's organizational commitment levels.

Hypothesis 4b: Organizational Justice has a negative impact on employee's turnover intention.

Casper & Harris (2008), Groover & Crooker (1995), Behson (2005) suggest that non-mandatory benefits which was quoted as "work-life benefits" in Casper & Harris study facilitate organizational attachment by lowering employee turnover intentions. The purpose of this study is to assess non-mandatory employee benefits influence on turnover intentions within the Chinese and Malawian context.

Dulebohn et al. (2009) argues strongly that employee benefits result in better firm performance as they are able to help in high quality employee retentions. In their study, they also argue based on the social exchange theory and environment that employee satisfaction with benefits given to them promotes employee commitment to the employer, encourages the employee to remain with the employer.

Under social exchange, merely providing employee benefits is not good enough to influence employee turnover intentions. This is because, based on individual analysis, it might be possible that other employers whether or not

within the same industry are capable of providing non-mandatory employee benefits, therefore provision of the non-mandatory employee benefit itself will not be good enough to retain the employee. There is need for the employee to see value in the given benefit, there is need for the employee to appreciate such kind of benefits. The act and process leads to improved organizational commitment, in turn, organizational commitment is negatively related turnover intentions. However, for the purpose of this study, a direct analysis is carried out on non-mandatory employee benefit impact on employee turnover intentions for better comparison and analysis. This therefore leads to hypothesis four below:

Hypothesis 5: Non-mandatory employee benefits have a negative impact on employee turnover intentions

3. Research Methodology

Procedure

Data was collected in two countries in this research namely; Malawi and China. Collection of data in Malawi was done from late July 2019 to late August 2019. During this time, at least 15 organizations in Malawi were contacted and visited for the research. Organizations were registered and legal entities found to implement national labor policies. Questionnaires were physically handed over to organization's human resource and were collected from the human resource management upon completion. A total of 205 questionnaires out of 350 distributed questionnaires were collected from both public and private organizations in Malawi in various sectors such as banking, insurance, micro-finance and other finance industrial organizations which were selected from a random sample; providing a response rate of 59%. Participants were full-time professional level employees fitted in both managerial and non-managerial positions within the organizations. The organizations and participants were assured of response confidentiality that the data would not be used for any other purpose other than academic purpose.

Collection of data in China was done from early September 2019 to late October 2019. The questionnaire was firstly translated from English to Chinese by various multilingual scholars, the translated questionnaire underwent a pilot study to examine whether indicators were understood clearly from the participants point of view. After making a few changes to the Chinese questionnaire, it was distributed to participants within the public and private sectors of employment. A total of 300 questionnaires were gathered, this includes both electronic questionnaires (online survey) which was a main channel of questionnaire distribution in China and printed copies. 204 questionnaires were gathered via the online distribution channel (questionnaires were randomly distributed to full-time professional level employees) and another 96 copies were collected as physical copies out of 150 distributed questionnaires giving the response rate of 64% for the physical copies. Participants in China were also full-time professional level employees both in managerial and non-managerial positions within organizations ranging in different sectors such as health, education, banking, insurance, manufacturing, and more. Participants were assured of response confidentiality.

Data collection in China was rather more direct and support was obtained from individuals as well as organizations.

Measures

Variables in this section are measured on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1= strongly disagree to 5= strongly agree except for the demographic variables in this particular study.

Non-Mandatory Employee Benefits (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.871$): Three items were derived from a scale from the Pay Satisfaction Questionnaire (PSQ) by Heneman & Schwab (1985).

Organizational Justice (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.928$): Organizational justice is classified into three sub-classes namely: Distributive, Procedural and Interactional Justice. The Organizational Justice Scale is drawn from instruments of the three sub-classes of the concept but has been analyzed as one (a whole) for the purpose of this study. Ten instruments related to the distributive, procedural and interactional justice variables were taken from Al-Zu'bi (2010) and are measured on a 5-Point Likert Scale.

Organizational Commitment (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.924$): Classified into three sub-groups namely: Affective, Continuance and Normative Commitment. Using recognized organizational commitment instruments by (Allen and Meyer, 1990), as well as suggested editions from Jaros (2007), a 5-Point Likert Scale is derived to satisfy the nine-item scale on various sub-groups.

Turnover Intentions (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.889$): Three instruments are derived from the official TIS-6 questions by Gert Roodt, (2004), this is a popular instrument used in the assessing employee turnover intentions.

Demographics: This study comprised the following demographics: gender, age, education level, work tenure and choice (multi-selection) of non-mandatory employee benefits received. Based on Secret (2000), as supported by Dulebohn et al. (2009), it was proposed in Secret's paper that the total list of non-mandatory employee benefits (which were referred to as work-life benefits in the paper) is long but this type of employee benefits can however be summed up into four primary categories of benefits namely: flexible time arrangement, leave allowance, employee well-being schemes and dependent care services. In this paper, a similar concept is extended to recognize a list of non-mandatory employee benefits belonging to any of the four proposed categories.

The listed non-mandatory employee benefits are added in the questionnaire for demographic purposes to identify frequencies in provision of either category. The list comprised options as follows: daily flexible time hours,

flexible time varying day to day, job sharing arrangement (with other employees), working from home (tele-working), sick pay, study leave pay, study/career development leave, paid tuition for further education, paid holidays, festive gifts, health examination coverage, health insurance, life insurance, annual bonus, annual work leave, parental work leave, work-related transport subsidies, work-time meal subsidies, children's/relative's education pay, profit sharing, additional certificate rewards, career counseling, company vehicle, travel incentives, sports and social activities/facilities, accommodation and leisure activities during work time (a total of 26 choices).

4. Findings & Results

Table 1 gives the demographic variables statistics for this research; figure 2 is a figure illustrating the distribution of non-mandatory employee benefits in Malawi and China. A total of 3630 responses or selections were made regarding non-mandatory employee benefits enjoyed by the employees in their organizations within the sample size. Out of this number, a total of 306 employee respondents (8.43% of 100%) selected Annual Work Leave which takes the largest proportion from the total. The lowest proportion is shared by both Child/Relative Education Pay/Support and Profit Share both at 0.63% in Malawian and Chinese organizations.

The table 2 gives the research study variables' correlation levels; it is to be observed that Turnover intention is negatively (a negatively large strength of association) associated with all other constructs in the model.

Table 1: Demographic Variable Statistics

		Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	235	46.5
	Female	270	53.5
	Total	505	100.0
Age	18 to 25 Years	98	19.4
	26 to 35 Years	279	55.2
	36 to 45 Years	91	18.0
	46 to 55 Years	35	6.9
	56 Years Above	2	.4
	Total	505	100.0
Education	High School & Below	17	3.4
	Vocational or Technical	74	14.7
	Bachelor's	251	49.7
	Master's	126	25.0
	Doctorate	4	.8
	Other	33	6.5
Total	505	100.0	
Tenure	Below 5 Years	295	58.4
	5 to 10 Years	120	23.8
	11 to 15 Years	32	6.3
	15 Years Above	58	11.5
	Total	505	100.0

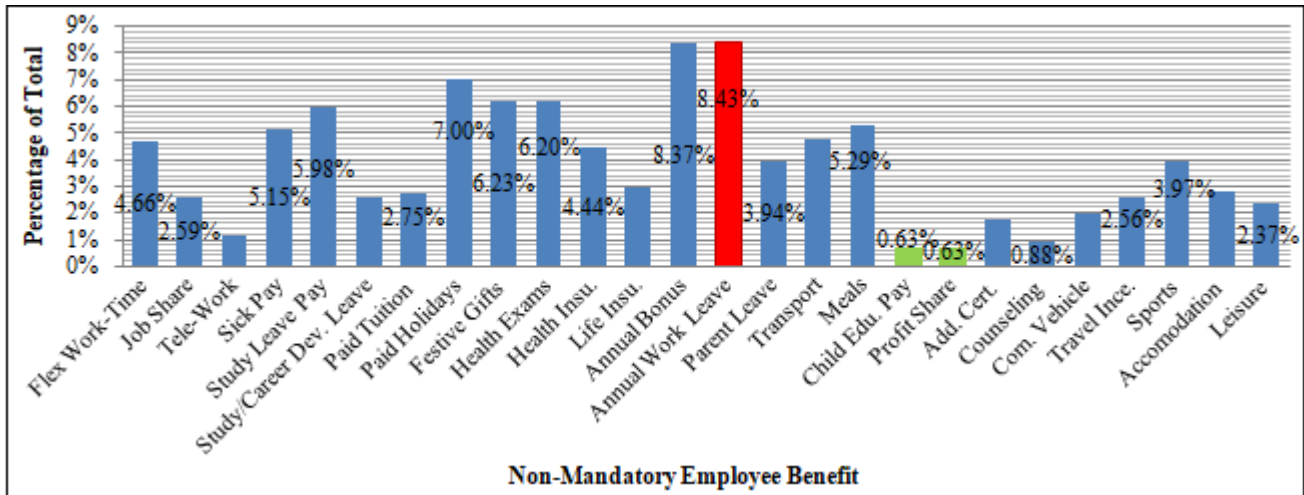


Figure 1: Non-Mandatory Employee Benefits Proportion Description

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics & Correlation Coefficients among Study Constructs

Variable	Mean	SD	EB	OJ	AC	CC	NC	TI
EB	3.3195	1.09554						
OJ	3.1150	0.91788	.665**					
AC	3.2020	1.08892	.516**	.571**				
CC	3.0719	1.08922	.506**	.568**	.659**			
NC	3.0185	1.01797	.536**	.622**	.695**	.710**		
TI	2.8337	1.14109	-.640**	-.642**	-.625**	-.580**	-.622**	

- a. **. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
- b. Unless otherwise noted, bootstrap results are based on 1000 stratified bootstrap samples
- c. Note: **EB**-Attitude Towards Non-Mandatory Employee Benefit; **OJ**-Organizational Justice; **AC**-Organizational Commitment-Affective Commitment; **CC**-Organizational Commitment-Continuance Commitment; **NC**-Organizational Commitment-Normative Commitment; **TI**-Turnover Intentions; N=505

Reliability and validity is measured using the Average Variance Extracted (the portion of the data explained by every construct or latest variable. Per Fornell & Larcker (1981), AVE values greater than 0.50 shows that the model converges with satisfactory result. Internal consistency value is measured using Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability (CR, also Dillon-Goldstein's - rho). The Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability are implemented in evaluating the sample's free of bias and group reliability. According to Hair et al., (2014), values of 0.6 and 0.7 of the Cronbach's Alpha are said to be fitting for exploratory studies. Reliability values of 0.7 and 0.95 which are given as the threshold for internal consistency in most literature. For Composite Reliability, values of 0.7 and 0.9 are said to be satisfactory (Hair et al., 2014). Field (2014) points out the following criteria for values: greater than 0.9=excellent, between 0.7 and 0.9=good and values between 0.6 and 0.7=acceptable. As noted by (Fornell & Larcker, 1981), the threshold usually implemented for all factor loadings is to be greater than 0.7, this is considered as a good and fitting factor loading although others have argued that slightly lower loadings are also acceptable.

Table 3: Confirmatory Factor Analysis

	Factor Loading	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Employee Benefits Attitude		0.871	0.874	0.700
att1	0.857			
att2	0.919			
att3	0.721			

Organizational Commitment		0.924	0.923	0.572
aff1	0.720			
aff2	0.789			
aff3	0.787			
cont1	0.712			
cont2	0.725			
cont3	0.771			
norm1	0.706			
norm2	0.870			
norm3	0.707			
Organizational Justice		0.928	0.928	0.563
oj1	0.712			
oj2	0.828			
oj3	0.817			
oj4	0.712			
oj5	0.734			
oj6	0.715			
oj7	0.713			
oj8	0.754			
oj9	0.744			
oj10	0.763			
Turnover Intention		0.889	0.890	0.730
turnover1	0.889			
turnover2	0.864			
turnover3	0.807			

In this study Smart PLS software was used to analyze the Structural Equation Model. A tool that used to measure the degree to which unseen/unmeasured samples are likely predicted by a model is the Pearson's coefficients (R²). Cohen (1988) suggests values of 2% have a small effect; values of 13% have a medium effect and values above 26%

as having a large effect for social and behavioral sciences. To obtain the Cohen's Indicator (f^2), the model's constructs are included or excluded one at a time to evaluate the usefulness of each construct in the adjustment model. Per Hair et al., (2014), values of 0.02, 0.15 and 0.35 are said to be small, medium, and large respectively. For the mediated and moderated model, affective, continuance and normative commitment R^2 adjusted values are 0.425, 0.422 and 0.534 respectively. The turnover intention R^2 adjusted value is 0.662.

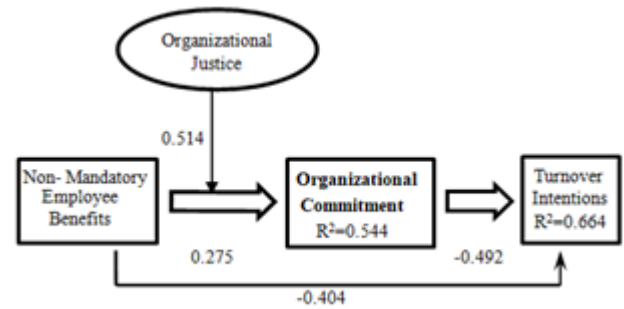


Figure 2: Results from Final Model

Table 4: Path Coefficients and Hypothesis Tests

Hypothesis	Path	Regression Weights	T Statistics	P Value	Result
H1	Non-Mandatory Employee Benefits → Organizational Commitment	0.275	3.835	0.000	Supported
H2	Organizational Justice Moderating Effect → Organizational Commitment	0.017	0.377	0.706	Unsupported
H3	Organizational Commitment → Turnover Intention	-0.492	9.430	0.000	Supported
H3a	Affective Commitment → Turnover Intention	-0.236	5.048	0.000	Supported
H3b	Continuance Commitment → Turnover Intention	-0.107	2.263	0.024	Supported
H3c	Normative Commitment → Turnover Intention	-0.186	3.401	0.001	Supported
H4a	Organizational Justice → Organizational Commitment	0.514	7.777	0.000	Supported
H4b	Organizational Justice → Turnover Intention	-0.253	5.381	0.000	Supported
H5	Non-Mandatory Employee Benefits → Turnover Intention	-0.539	10.039	0.000	Supported

Figure 2 is an illustration of the estimations of constructs standardized path coefficients. The results and properties of causal paths between various constructs (standardized path coefficients) are revealed in figure 2 and table 5:

From table 4, it is observed that non-mandatory employee benefits have a positive impact on organizational commitment thereby supporting H1 ($p < 0.001$). A separate model was generated comprising of the three dimensions of organizational commitment to observe the employee benefits impact on them individually in a mediated-moderated model. The results were statistically significant at ($p < 0.001$) for affective, continuance and normative commitment. Organizational commitment and all its dimensions of affective, continuance and normative commitment were found to be negatively associated with turnover intention thereby supporting H3 and H3a ($p < 0.001$); H3c ($p < 0.01$) and H3b ($p < 0.05$). Organizational justice was found to be positively associated with organizational commitment and negatively associated with turnover intention ($p < 0.001$) thereby supporting H4a and H4b. H5 is supported at $p < 0.001$. H2 recognizes the moderating role of organizational justice into the model but it has been unsupported in this research.

5. Discussions

The main aim and objective of this research was to analyze the impact of non-mandatory employee benefits on employee turnover intention. Despite the recognition of employee benefits as important elements in organizations human resource management, there have been few studies carried out to elaborate the impact and importance of such benefits on organizational outcomes by researchers (Zhaohong et al., 2010; Zhaohong et al., 2014; Dulebohn et al., 2009). Outside the United States of America and the United Kingdom, there has been fewer studies carried out on employee benefits in areas like Africa as well as Asian countries like China (Zhaohong et al., 2010; Zhaohong et al.,

2014; Dulebohn et al., 2009); thus the absence of abundant reliable literature in the study of employee benefits in these areas. Zhaohong et al. (2010) also supports other scholars before her in pointing out the study of employee benefits mainly focuses on an individual level; thus in the purpose of this research has been to broaden that perspective. The findings in this paper are mainly consistent with Nazir et al. (2016), Ko & Hur (2013), De Gieter & Hofmans (2015), Casper & Harris (2008), Wang et al., (2014) and Tremblay et al. (2000).

According to H1, non-mandatory employee benefits are found to have a significant and positive influence on organizational commitment and its three dimensions namely: affective, continuance and normative commitment in the Malawian and Chinese context. This result is in line with findings by Grover & Crooker (1995), Nazir et al. (2016) and Casper & Harris (2008). The first two authors however looked into the impact of employee benefits as a whole whereas this research takes a different course in this particular study by focusing solely on non-mandatory employee benefits and minimal attention to mandatory or compulsory sort of employee benefits. Casper & Harris (2008) take a similar approach in their study on work-life benefits and organizational attachment. Under this same context, the author was not able to find any paper studying and analyzing any sort of employee benefits within the Malawian context. The result from hypothesis one is therefore important and can be useful to Malawian human resource management practitioners. The result of this hypothesis finding is also significant and practical in real-world situations as identified by the f^2 which is above moderate/medium rating.

Regarding H3, H3a, H3b and H3c, a negative relationship/association is depicted between organization commitment and its three dimensions to employee turnover intention in the Malawian and Chinese context. These results are consistent with those of Newman et al., (2011)

and Nazir et al., (2016) in the Chinese context. These results also correspond with numerous literatures in the study of organizational commitment individual dimensions on turnover intention. Organizational commitment, which is identified as an individual's emotional attachment to the organization prompting him or her to be aligned with processes within the organization. Organizational commitment reduces incidents of absenteeism, stress, consistent complaints and retaliatory intentions from employees. In contrast to an employee's desire to leave the organization, when an employee feels emotionally attached to the organization, he or she is less likely to leave the organization. Study by Zhaohong et al. (2010, 2014) indicated that an employee's willingness to stay within the organization increases productivity. It is worth noting that among the three organizational commitment dimensions, affective commitment value has a significant practical value or significance whereas both continuance and normative commitment failed to reach values to support practical significance.

About *H4a* and *H4b*, these results are consistent with findings by others in the human resource management literature including Nazir et al. (2016); Wang et al. (2014); Silva & Caetano (2014) and Tremblay, Sire & Balkin (2000) on organizational justice's positive impact on organizational commitment. The results from hypothesis 4b are consistent with Ko & Hur (2013); Choi (2011) and Ruben (2009). Perceptions of organizational justice are viewed as the employee's perception of fairness received from the organization. The results are quite practical in that when employees' view decisions and policies implemented by the organization to be fair, then he or she is likely to be attached to the organization, thereby achieving employee organizational commitment. An employee who is perceived to be attached to the organization is less likely to leave the organization. Ko & Hur (2013) write that in some particular situations, organizational outcomes alone are not enough to ensure satisfaction and attachment from the employee; they argue that the process in which the organizational outcomes are implemented is as well important and valuable to the employee. Aspects of organizational justice specifically procedural justice which is perception of justice in the process in which policies are implemented; indicate that employees are mindful and affected by the manner in which policies are implemented in an organization. To some extent, the perception of organizational justice by the employee can lead to employee contentment even when organizational outcomes are not as favorable to them, this occurs when organizational justice has been established from the employee's perspective. Using the social exchange theory, it is believed that an employee's perception of fairness from the organization will prompt him to reciprocate effects mostly exhibited via employee's work attitudes. This is the direct impact of organizational justice towards organizational commitment and employee turnover in this research.

As for *H5*, results of this finding are consistent to those by Ko & Hur (2013); Lee & Hong (2011); and Kim & Wiggins (2011) concerning non-mandatory employee benefits impact on turnover intention. Previous literature in the human resource management study have focused on the impact of

employee benefits as a whole including both traditional and family-friendly (referred to as non-mandatory employee benefits in this paper) benefits. However the relationship between traditional employee benefits and employee turnover intention is not one that can be directly drafted. Previous literature, supported by Ko & Hur (2013) note that traditional employee benefits themselves are not negatively associated with turnover intention. This is due to the perception that traditional employee benefits are mandated by law or national policies to all organizations within a particular industry, hence any individual can get these benefits wherever they choose to find employment; they argue that this effect is not binding to an employee to be attached to an organization. On the contrary, an organization's effort to reach out to the needs of employees within an organization or to reach out to aspects that directly impact employees' lives such as a particular set of employee benefits will improve employee work attitudes as employees' feel valued by the organization and can lead to emotional attachment to the organization. This is supported by the social exchange theory in that an organization's effort is received and results in reciprocation thereby improving work attitudes and reducing chances of employee turnover intention.

Lastly, *H2* describing the moderating effect of organizational justice on the relationship between non-mandatory employee benefits and organizational commitment provide one of the most interesting and eye-catching findings of this study. For the purpose of this study, the author was determined to find out whether the relationship between non-mandatory employee benefits and organizational commitment will be strongly supported or boosted once perceptions of organizational justice were included. Based on the findings of this paper, there seems to be a positive effect in the relationship between the employee benefits and organizational commitment when organizational justice is included as the moderator variable, but when this effect was tested, it appeared statistically, theoretically and practically insignificant. The effect size of the moderating effect was also very small such that it could be ignored. These results are inconsistent and contrast with findings by Ko & Hur (2013) which revealed that procedural justice moderates the relationship between satisfaction with employee benefits and job satisfaction and turnover intention. These results are different from what was expected in this study in that it was assumed that organizational justice moderating effect should strengthen the relationship between the employee benefits with organizational commitment as well as turnover intention; this is not the case however for the findings in this paper.

6. Theoretical & Practical Implications

The findings support the concept of the social exchange theory in that provision of non-mandatory employee benefits by the organization/employer leading to satisfaction with the benefits by the employee leads to a reciprocation by the employee to commit to the organization and less desire to leave the organization. Employee's departure from the organization is a costly phenomenon in that the cost of finding a suitable replacement, the cost of training, and the time needed for adjusting and other factors are seen as a

setback to the organization. The study has contributed to the literature of organizational commitment and turnover intention in that non-mandatory employee benefits and organizational commitment have indicated an improvement in organizational commitment levels in Malawian and Chinese context. This study also increases the literature in the turnover intention field via the role of affective, continuance and normative commitment negative association to turnover intention. Some literature on organizational commitment has focused on one or two dimensions of the construct and its impact on other constructs, this study however adds to the literature by observing all three dimensions of organizational commitment and their impact on turnover intention.

This study adds to the overall human resource management literature by considering the role of organizational justice in employee turnover intentions. The study suggests that perceptions of organizational justice do not boost or strengthen the impact of organizational commitment as a mediator variable (can be considered to have an impact, but the impact is very small and thus insignificant).

Through the findings in this study, human resource management practitioners can consider implementing non-mandatory employee benefits in their organization to bring satisfaction in order to improve employee's affective, continuance and normative commitment. Human resource practitioners are to be aware that employee's perceptions of organizational justice in the process of distributing and sharing the non-mandatory employee benefits as well other policies within the organization also have a significant impact on employee's attachment to the organization as employee's feel a part of the organization and feel considered by their employer. Employers can consider involving employees via labor unions in the decision making processes within the organization and also granting them the liberty to inquire on policies implemented in the organization.

Regarding the management in public and private sector organizations in Malawi and China, the findings give practical advice and suggestions on how the organization can improve employee organizational commitment levels and reduce turnover especially in Chinese organizations where initial turnover levels are moderately high due to employee's dissatisfaction with certain aspects of the organization. The findings are useful for the Malawian context in that considering the country's economic situation, non-mandatory employee benefits can be a complementary item to the rising cost of life and considerably moderate inflation rate. Malawian organizations can use employee benefits as a means of attracting employees, retaining employees and motivating them as it is a common occurrence in the Malawian context for employees to complain about salary/wage or payment levels not catching up to cost of living; non-mandatory employee benefits can help fill in this gap.

7. Limitation and Future Research

The cross sectional data stands as limitation in this research since aspects of this research could be progressive. Another vivid approach to this research could involve time series

data where organizations firstly without any non-mandatory employee benefits are assessed then over time after the implementation of the benefits, re-assess the organization and its current employees to see whether the non-mandatory employee benefits had an impact on the employee's work attitude. Another limitation of this research is that it was carried out in organizations of differing industries especially in the Chinese data sample, whereas for the Malawian data it was in a uniform industry. The difference in industry law and policy has an impact on both mandatory and non mandatory employee benefits being implemented. Therefore, to attain much realistic and defined result, future researchers can assess non-mandatory employee benefits within uniform industries per time and perhaps carry out a comparative study from one industry to the other.

Another limitation to this study could also be that the data collected from China and Malawi was not uniform, with China having a slightly higher number of registered participants in the survey whereas Malawi has a moderately lower number of participants in the survey due to failure to access organizational employees meeting this criteria. The list of non-mandatory employee benefits given in this research was derived from an accumulation of "commonly recognized" employee benefits through previous literature in the field, books as well as updated human resource news on the subject. As mentioned in the paper, employee benefits vary from region to region based on national, state, industrial policies, it is therefore slightly challenging to come up with a list of commonly identified non-mandatory employee benefits because some of the benefits might not be non-mandatory in other regions or areas.

8. Conclusion

The purpose of this particular study was to study the role of non-mandatory employee benefits on employee turnover intentions mediated by work attitude organizational commitment in Chinese and Malawian context. The study also sought to find out the effect of organizational justice in this relationship and to assess whether organizational justice played a moderating role in the overall model. This is one of few studies in the human resource management that has defined the scope of the employee benefits and focused on non-mandatory employee benefits impact which are benefits that are believed to possess real impact on work attitudes. As far as the literature goes, this is one of the first studies on employee benefits on Malawian context.

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