

# Top Management Support, Organizational Learning, Innovative Behavior, Employee Commitment and Organizational Performance of Manufacturing Companies in Hai Phong

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## Abstract

Many organizational researchers consider innovative behavior to be an important work related factor (Fex & Spector, 2006). Researchers have found strong links between innovative behavior and organizational performance in the workplace. Jex, Beehr and Roberts (1992) found innovative behavior of employees as direct outcomes of organizational performance. Similarly, innovative behavior has been identified as a major effect for financial outcomes by many researchers (Dewe, 2003). Innovative behavior was found to be another major effect for employee satisfaction (Fox and Spector, 2006). Fox and Spector (2006) identified positive work behavior as a behavioral response caused by innovative behavior of employees (Noe, 2000). Top management support is another highly researched organizational factor that has been found to affect job attitudes and work behavior (Weiss, 2002). Top management support has been found to affect behaviors such as organizational citizenship behavior, absenteeism, turnover, and work performance (Feather & Rauter, 2004). In a HRD related topic, Egan, Yang and Barlett (2004) examined the relationship between top management support and organizational performance and shown that there is a positive relationship between these two variables. The factors discussed above that is organizational learning, top management support, innovative behavior, employee commitment, and organizational performance are the focus of this study. Exploration of these variables was based on a systematic examination of literature, a unique contribution toward elaborating upon the elements impacting organizational performance.

**Keywords:** top management support, organizational learning, innovative behavior, employee commitment, organizational performance, manufacturing companies, Hai Phong

## 1. Introduction

Two organizational factors are the focus of the current study, top management support and employee commitment. In transfer research, while employee commitment has received some attention (Egan et al., 2004), innovative behavior appears to have received attention at all. The potential effects of top management support on organizational performance have already been highlighted. Top management support has been found to affect several work attitudes and behaviors, and has been a major focus area among organizational researchers (Jonge & Lanbergis, 2005). Ganster and Schaubroeck (1991), in a review of ten years of the top management support literature, found more than 300 published articles. No published study examining the influence of top management support and organizational learning on employee commitment and performance was identified. Similarly job satisfaction and its effect on organizational learning have not been sufficiently examined. In addressing the issues identified so far, first, organizational learning researchers need to continue to focus on some of the key situational and individual factors that could potentially influence organizational performance. The objective of the current study was not only to measure important factors that affect organizational performance but also to limit the number of factors and items of measurement in order to keep the overall instrument within an acceptable length. According to Cox (1996), in typical contexts and for optimal results, a survey should not take more than ten to twelve minutes to finish. Thus the length

of the instrument was a key consideration in choosing item sets for this study. In the current study a survey to measure key factors impacting on organizational performance was used.

## 2. Literature Review

**Top Management Support.** Treatment in the literature for TMS is ambiguous and does not agree on a common view of the concept (Dong et al., 2009). The majority argues that TMS is a set of resultant actions arising from the behavior of top managers (Manfreda & Stemberger, 2014). Other argue for managerial perceptions (Leonard-Barton & Deschamps, 1998). Some even argue for both (Basellier & Pinsonneault, 1998), but have failed to attract many followers. This decision further adds to the confusion on the state of the concept. Hence, it becomes obvious that the concept has rarely been studied in adequate depth (Butler & Fitzgerald, 1999). The literature specifies that when top managers extend support, there is a high possibility of achieving better performance at organizational levels (Williams & Ramaprasad, 1996). This study refers across these levels with the intent of understanding the treatment in the literature on the concept of *behaviour* based TMS. The most logical reason for behaviour based TMS to be more popular is the possibility of observing and reporting the actions, either by the top management or the project who are in need of supportive actions. TMS definitions cover a large number of activities that are carried out by the top management. These activities no doubt help improve organizational performance. However, these definitions have not employed theoretical or empirical rigour when compiling definitions. Hence, many researchers tend to initiate and follow many different notions regarding TMS (Dong et al., 2009). Academics are criticized for uncritically accepting theoretical concepts (Donaldson & Preston, 1995). The implication of working with ill-defined concepts is usually unreliable research outcome, as “*concepts are the building blocks of science upon which propositions are based*” (Osigweh, 1989).

**Innovative Behavior.** Cognitive psychology (Neisser, 1967) help explain the mental processes by which individual interact with other people and the embedded environment. Social cognition theory (Fiske & Taylor, 1984) has been developed to specifically explain the individual behavior in this person-environment interaction. This theory introduces the idea of knowledge structures: mental models are ordered in such a way as to optimize personal effectiveness within given situation. In this dissertation, cognitions are defined as the managers’ or entrepreneurs’ mental reflections of a certain phenomenon, namely, the process of innovation. Cognitive studies explore the cognitive processes that lie behind strategic choices. As a complement of the theory of rational choice, cognitive science has attempted to explain why or how economic decisions happen in an uncertain and subjective world (Kahneman, Slovic, & Tversky, 1982; Simon, 1957; Smircich & Stubbart, 1985). As thinking drives strategy-making, managerial cognition resides at the core of the strategic management process (Stubbart, 1989). Managers take strategic action intentionally to respond to the changing environment. Managerial cognitive structures shape firm strategies for growth because the management team’s conceptualization and employment of the firm’s resource base influence the direction of expansion. Managers pursue competitive actions and deploy resources in a way that is consistent with their mental models of the firm’s capabilities and with the competitive threats that they believe it faces. The determinants of the growth and direction of a firm are the productive capabilities that are engendered by resources interacting with managerial cognitive frameworks instead of the actual resources themselves (Porac, Thomas, Wilson, Paton & Kanfer, 1995).

**Organizational Performance.** This section discusses the notions of organizational performance in the literature. Organizational performance is considered the dependent variable. It is shown that TMS affects the outcome of organizations. Hence, in order to proceed with the thesis, it is next necessary to illustrate how different notions were considered when selecting the most appropriate organizational performance or the dependent variable. In general, the literature identifies two popular notions when discussing the organizational performance (Savolainen et al., 2012). The first group identifies achieving the goals as success (Agarwal & Rathoder, 2006) while the second group identifies this as organizational performance (Barclay, 2008). It is difficult to determine if one notion is preferred above the other, as some refer to these terms interchangeably (Gemino et al., 2007). Few others say that positive organizational performance will lead to success (Hong, 2011), others do not report a direct connection (Turnern & Muller, 2004). For the purpose of this research, both success and organizational performance notions were looked at in some detail.

Both success and organizational performance are report as multi-dimensional, some of which are similar across performance and success notions. Organizational performance descriptions in the literature are usually segregated into two dimensions following which further sub-dimensions are indentified. “*Organizational performance, which describes how well the development process has been undertaken*” (Nidumolu, 1995) and the “*product performance, which describes the performance of the system actually delivered to users*” are two main dimensions (Nidumolu,

1995). The concept of success was the first to appear in the literature and scholars claim that the first initiatives towards a definition of success were seen in the 1970's (Davis, 2014) and early 1980's (Muller & Jugdev, 2012). Organizational performance was a phenomenon that followed, possibly as a progression of the early knowledge. When considering both organizational performance and success notions on outcome, most agree that an organization has to meet the requirements about time, cost and scope. Other researchers have added more dimensions to supplement these. Most studies still include the requirements as part of success.

### 3. Research Method

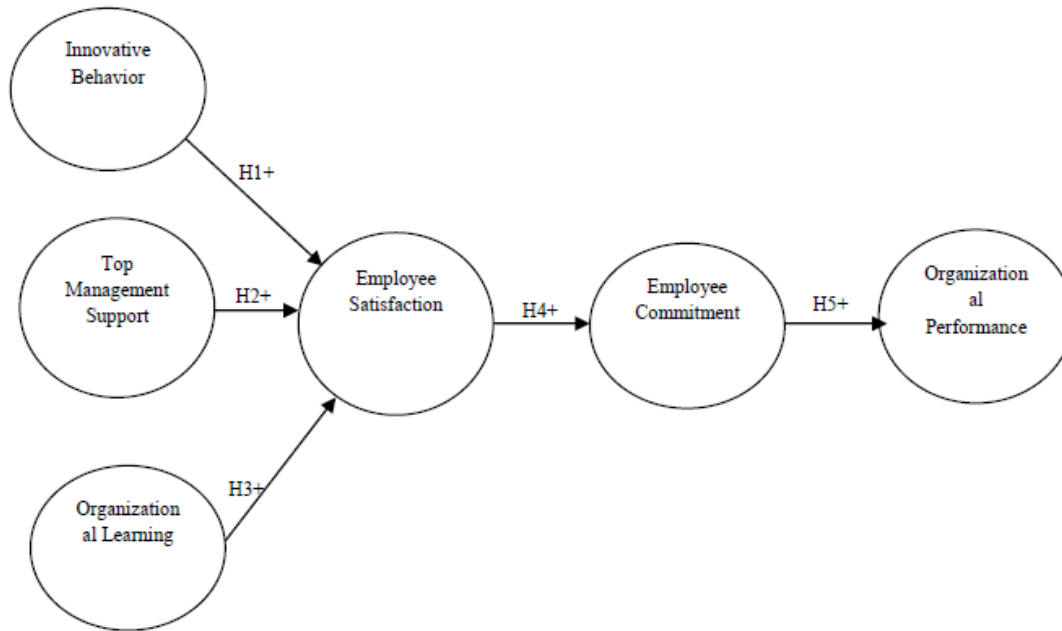


Figure 1. Research model

The research hypotheses can be integrated to form a set of structural equations. The following abbreviations are used for simplicity: innovative behavior (IB), top management support (TMP), organizational learning (OL), employee satisfaction (ES), employee commitment (EC), and organizational performance (OP). So, the structural model can be represented as:

$$ES = \gamma_1(IB) + \gamma_2(TMS) + \gamma_3(OL) + \zeta_1$$

$$EC = \gamma_4(ES) + \zeta_2$$

$$OP = \gamma_5(EC) + \zeta_3$$

H1: There is a positive relationship between innovative behavior and employee satisfaction

H2: There is a positive relationship between top management support and employee satisfaction

H3: There is a positive relationship between organizational learning and employee satisfaction

H4: There is a positive relationship between employee satisfaction and employee commitment

H5: There is a positive relationship between employee commitment and organizational performance

### 4. Research Results

Regarding revenues, it is recognized that the revenue of the surveyed organizations was reasonable stable from the year 2012 – 2014. In the total sample, about 37% of organizations had VND 11-100 billion in revenue, nearly 30% had VND 101 – 500 billion, about 17% had less than VND 10 billion, and remaining organizations had more than VND 500 billion.

We implemented an extensive review of the literature and initially adopted many of the scales validated in the literature. These pilot scales were reviewed by four managers who had been involved in strategy initiatives in their companies, and five academicians, whose expertise is in organizational behavior. Several revisions were made based

on the experts' comments/feedback. A brief version of the survey instruments is provided in Appendix. As shown, the questionnaire consists of 21 items. Among the 21 items, 4 items are designed to measure Innovative Behavior; 3 items for Top Management Support; 5 items for Organizational Learning; 2 items for Employee Satisfaction; 4 items for Employee Commitment, and 3 items for Organizational Performance. In this survey, each survey respondent was asked to rate his or her perception of and experience on a seven-point Likert scale.

A Vietnamese scholar translated the final version of the questionnaire into Vietnamese. Another researcher, who is fluent in both Vietnamese and English, translated the Vietnamese version back into English to ensure consistency between the English and Vietnamese versions. Then, two scholars who are Vietnamese-English bilingual examined both the Vietnamese and the English versions independently and validated that the translation was accurate and consistent. This revised questionnaire was pre-tested and the scale items were further refined based on their comments and suggestions.

In this study, we attempted to identify a group of factors that would lead to organizational performance by companies in Hai Phong. In order to collect data from companies in Hai Phong, 600 questionnaires were sent out. Each company received 5 questionnaires. There were a total of 120 companies. Among 600 questionnaires sent out, 511 questionnaires were returned and usable, resulting in a response rate of 85.17%.

Table 1. The results of reliability analysis for the construct innovative behavior

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Squared Multiple Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
IB_1	14.99	10.313	.652	.452	.861
IB_2	14.68	9.727	.742	.553	.827
IB_3	14.78	8.941	.733	.585	.832
IB_4	15.02	9.333	.774	.612	.814

It should be noted that Cronbach's alpha for Innovative Behavior is 0.87, and Cronbach's alpha if each item of the construct deleted is less than 0.87. Thus, the reliability of this construct is very high ( $0.87 > 0.7$ ) and all the 4 items are remained for further analysis.

Table 2. The results of reliability analysis for the construct top management support

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Squared Multiple Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
TMS_1	10.33	4.205	.719	.518	.809
TMS_2	10.10	3.458	.746	.557	.778
TMS_3	10.21	3.641	.724	.525	.797

It should be noted that Cronbach's alpha for Top Management Support is 0.854, and Cronbach's alpha if each item of the construct deleted is less than 0.854. Thus, the reliability of this construct is very high ( $0.854 > 0.7$ ) and all the 3 items are remained for further analysis.

Table 3. The results of reliability analysis for the construct organizational learning

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Squared Multiple Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
OL_1	19.63	19.496	.750	.589	.863
OL_2	19.54	19.724	.764	.626	.860
OL_3	19.66	19.555	.784	.620	.855
OL_4	19.48	20.093	.766	.599	.860
OL_5	19.79	19.834	.622	.403	.895

It should be noted that Cronbach's alpha for Organizational Learning is 0.896, and Cronbach's alpha if each item of the construct deleted is less than 0.896. Thus, the reliability of this construct is very high ( $0.896 > 0.7$ ) and all the 5 items are remained for further analysis.

Table 4. The results of reliability analysis for the construct employee satisfaction

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Squared Multiple Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
ES_1	5.04	1.461	.748	.560	.
ES_2	5.15	1.433	.748	.560	.

It should be noted that Cronbach's alpha for Employee Satisfaction is 0.856, and Cronbach's alpha if each item of the construct deleted is less than 0.856. Thus, the reliability of this construct is very high ( $0.856 > 0.7$ ) and all the 2 items are remained for further analysis.

Table 5. The results of reliability analysis for the construct employee commitment

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Squared Multiple Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
EC_1	15.39	10.290	.802	.659	.878
EC_2	15.37	10.311	.800	.652	.879
EC_3	15.38	10.354	.795	.637	.880
EC_4	15.35	10.282	.773	.607	.888

It should be noted that Cronbach's alpha for Employee Commitment is 0.908, and Cronbach's alpha if each item of the construct deleted is less than 0.908. Thus, the reliability of this construct is very high ( $0.908 > 0.7$ ) and all the 4 items are remained for further analysis.

Table 6. The results of reliability analysis for the construct organizational performance

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Squared Multiple Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
OP_1	10.20	5.825	.697	.486	.800
OP_2	10.48	5.348	.713	.509	.782
OP_3	10.44	5.047	.729	.532	.768

It should be noted that Cronbach's alpha for Organizational Performance is 0.845, and Cronbach's alpha if each item of the construct deleted is less than 0.845. Thus, the reliability of this construct is very high ( $0.845 > 0.7$ ) and all the 3 items are remained for further analysis.

#### 4.1 Results from Testing the Structural Model

Using Mplus to test the structural model with the following codes:

```
variable: names are IB_1 IB_2 IB_3 IB_4
          TMS_1 TMS_2 TMS_3
          OL_1 OL_2 OL_3 OL_4 OL_5
          ES_1 ES_2
          EC_1 EC_2 EC_3 EC_4
          OP_1 OP_2 OP_3;
model: f1 by IB_1@1 IB_2 IB_3 IB_4;
       f2 by TMS_1@1 TMS_2 TMS_3;
```

```

f3 by OL_1@1 OL_2 OL_3 OL_4 OL_5;
f4 by ES_1@1 ES_2;
f5 by EC_1@1 EC_2 EC_3 EC_4;
f6 by OP_1@1 OP_2 OP_3;
f4 on f1 f2 f3;
f5 on f4;
f6 on f5;
output: standardized;
    
```

The following are the results:

Number of Free Parameters 71

Loglikelihood

H0 Value -13228.985

H1 Value -12919.946

Information Criteria

Akaike (AIC) 26599.971

Bayesian (BIC) 26900.753

Sample-Size Adjusted BIC 26675.389

( $n^* = (n + 2) / 24$ )

Chi-Square Test of Model Fit

Value 618.078

Degrees of Freedom 181

P-Value 0.0000

RMSEA (Root Mean Square Error Of Approximation)

Estimate 0.069

90 Percent C.I. 0.063 0.075

Probability RMSEA <= .05 0.000

CFI/TLI

CFI 0.948

TLI 0.940

Chi-Square Test of Model Fit for the Baseline Model

Value 8689.220

Degrees of Freedom 210

P-Value 0.0000

SRMR (Standardized Root Mean Square Residual)

Value 0.037

STANDARDIZED MODEL RESULTS

STDYX Standardization

Two-Tailed

		Estimate	S.E.	Est./S.E.	P-Value
F1	BY				
	IB_1	0.712	0.024	29.624	0.000
	IB_2	0.824	0.017	48.169	0.000
	IB_3	0.788	0.020	40.352	0.000
	IB_4	0.847	0.016	54.074	0.000
F2	BY				
	TMS_1	0.847	0.015	56.104	0.000
	TMS_2	0.794	0.019	41.762	0.000
	TMS_3	0.799	0.018	43.478	0.000
F3	BY				
	OL_1	0.805	0.018	44.984	0.000
	OL_2	0.829	0.016	50.973	0.000
	OL_3	0.837	0.016	53.407	0.000
	OL_4	0.822	0.017	49.146	0.000
	OL_5	0.676	0.026	25.892	0.000
F4	BY				
	ES_1	0.829	0.016	51.341	0.000
	ES_2	0.854	0.015	58.578	0.000
F5	BY				
	EC_1	0.861	0.013	64.032	0.000
	EC_2	0.841	0.015	56.774	0.000
	EC_3	0.838	0.015	55.676	0.000
	EC_4	0.823	0.016	51.071	0.000
F6	BY				
	OP_1	0.812	0.019	42.417	0.000
	OP_2	0.804	0.020	40.915	0.000
	OP_3	0.794	0.020	38.996	0.000
F4	ON				
	F1	-0.030	0.161	-0.187	0.852
	F2	0.537	0.187	2.876	0.004
	F3	0.469	0.058	8.036	0.000
F5	ON				
	F4	0.929	0.011	80.799	0.000
F6	ON				
	F5	0.879	0.017	51.426	0.000
F2	WITH				
	F1	0.946	0.014	68.211	0.000
F3	WITH				
	F1	0.758	0.025	30.628	0.000
	F2	0.817	0.022	37.577	0.000

## Intercepts

IB_1	4.278	0.141	30.353	0.000
IB_2	4.506	0.148	30.502	0.000
IB_3	3.889	0.129	30.044	0.000
IB_4	4.063	0.135	30.192	0.000
TMS_1	5.266	0.171	30.875	0.000
TMS_2	4.603	0.151	30.559	0.000
TMS_3	4.640	0.152	30.580	0.000
OL_1	3.697	0.124	29.858	0.000
OL_2	3.909	0.130	30.062	0.000
OL_3	3.821	0.127	29.981	0.000
OL_4	4.120	0.136	30.237	0.000
OL_5	3.252	0.111	29.317	0.000
ES_1	4.306	0.142	30.372	0.000
ES_2	4.173	0.138	30.277	0.000
EC_1	4.314	0.142	30.378	0.000
EC_2	4.341	0.143	30.396	0.000
EC_3	4.339	0.143	30.395	0.000
EC_4	4.242	0.140	30.328	0.000
OP_1	4.478	0.147	30.485	0.000
OP_2	3.930	0.131	30.081	0.000
OP_3	3.799	0.127	29.960	0.000

## Variances

F1	1.000	0.000	999.000	999.000
F2	1.000	0.000	999.000	999.000
F3	1.000	0.000	999.000	999.000

## Residual Variances

IB_1	0.493	0.034	14.380	0.000
IB_2	0.322	0.028	11.415	0.000
IB_3	0.380	0.031	12.341	0.000
IB_4	0.283	0.027	10.661	0.000
TMS_1	0.283	0.026	11.093	0.000
TMS_2	0.369	0.030	12.202	0.000
TMS_3	0.361	0.029	12.307	0.000
OL_1	0.352	0.029	12.205	0.000
OL_2	0.312	0.027	11.576	0.000
OL_3	0.299	0.026	11.374	0.000
OL_4	0.325	0.027	11.815	0.000
OL_5	0.543	0.035	15.407	0.000
ES_1	0.312	0.027	11.656	0.000
ES_2	0.271	0.025	10.874	0.000



EC_1	0.259	0.023	11.188	0.000
EC_2	0.292	0.025	11.736	0.000
EC_3	0.298	0.025	11.820	0.000
EC_4	0.323	0.027	12.186	0.000
OP_1	0.341	0.031	10.965	0.000
OP_2	0.353	0.032	11.151	0.000
OP_3	0.370	0.032	11.433	0.000
F4	0.132	0.021	6.217	0.000
F5	0.138	0.021	6.443	0.000
F6	0.227	0.030	7.551	0.000

It should be noted that the model fit the data well:  $\chi^2_{(181)} = 618.078$ , root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) = 0.069, standardized root mean square residual (SRMR) = 0.037, Tucker-Lewis index (TLI) = 0.940, and comparative fit index (CFI) = 0.948. The coefficients representing the relationships specified in the model are shown in Figure 2.

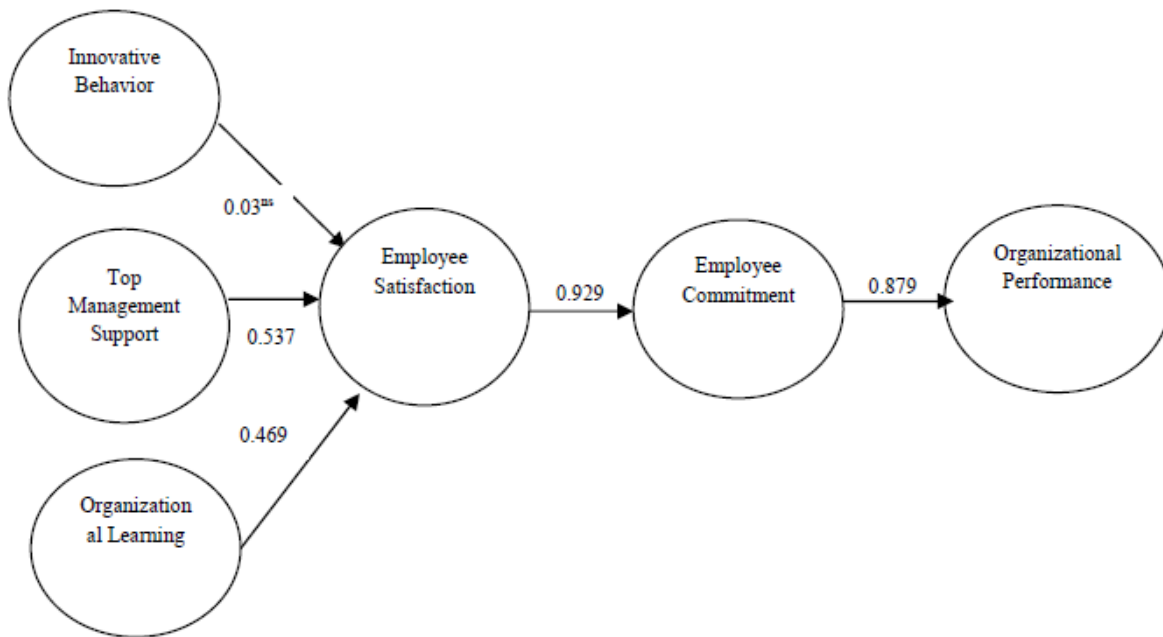


Figure 2. Results from testing the structural model

Table 7 summarizes the hypothesis test results. Such results are based on the parameter estimates, t-values, and signs of the parameter estimates. Based on these parameter estimates, t-values, and signs of the parameter estimates, four hypotheses were statistically supported by the data while Hypothesis 1 was not statistically supported by the data. The four hypotheses which were statistically supported by the data are TMS → ES; OL → ES; ES → EC; and EC → OP.

Table 7. Summary of the hypothesis test results

Hypothesis	Causal path	Path coefficients (y)	t-Value	Hypothesis supported
H1	IB → ES	0.03	0.188 <sup>ns</sup>	No

H2	TMS → ES	0.537	2.876 <sup>***</sup>	Yes
H3	OL → ES	0.469	8.036 <sup>***</sup>	Yes
H4	ES → EC	0.929	80.799 <sup>***</sup>	Yes
H5	EC → OP	0.879	51.426 <sup>***</sup>	Yes

*Legends:* IB, innovative behavior; TMS, top management support; OL, organizational learning; ES, employee satisfaction; EC, employee commitment; OP, organizational performance.

ns: not significant.

<sup>\*\*\*</sup> Significant at  $p < 0.01$  level.

Specifically, employee satisfaction was significantly influenced by top management support ( $\gamma_2 = 0.537, p < 0.01$ ); employee satisfaction was significantly influenced by organizational learning ( $\gamma_3 = 0.469, p < 0.01$ ); employee commitment was significantly influenced by employee satisfaction ( $\gamma_4 = 0.929, p < 0.01$ ); and organizational performance was significantly influenced by employee commitment ( $\gamma_5 = 0.879, p < 0.01$ ). Therefore, Hypotheses H2, H3, H4, and H5 are supported.

## 5. Conclusion

The factors discussed above that is organizational learning, top management support, innovative behavior, employee commitment, and organizational performance are the focus of this study. Exploration of these variables was based on a systematic examination of literature, a unique contribution toward elaborating upon the elements impacting organizational performance. We implemented an extensive review of the literature and initially adopted many of the scales validated in the literature. These pilot scales were reviewed by four managers who had been involved in strategy initiatives in their companies, and five academicians, whose expertise is in organizational behavior. Several revisions were made based on the experts' comments/feedback. A brief version of the survey instruments is provided in Appendix. As shown, the questionnaire consists of 21 items. Among the 21 items, 4 items are designed to measure Innovative Behavior; 3 items for Top Management Support; 5 items for Organizational Learning; 2 items for Employee Satisfaction; 4 items for Employee Commitment, and 3 items for Organizational Performance. In this survey, each survey respondent was asked to rate his or her perception of and experience on a seven-point Likert scale. Descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation, and reliabilities of the scales utilized to evaluate the relevant constructs are implemented. In addition, a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was implemented to further assess the measurement model. Such analysis was based on a covariance matrix derived from the indicators.

In this study, we attempted to identify a group of factors that would lead to organizational performance by companies in Hai Phong. In order to collect data from companies in Hai Phong, 600 questionnaires were sent out. Each company received 5 questionnaires. There were a total of 120 companies. Among 600 questionnaires sent out, 511 questionnaires were returned and usable, resulting in a response rate of 85.17%. As much, this study is conducted at an individual unit of analysis. The sample was selected (who will be examined) based on the requirement of in-depth information, with this in mind the entire population of employees from companies in Hai Phong were surveyed. This study therefore applied a purposive non-probability sample, examining the entire sample available instead of a sample based on probability or random sampling. As previously mentioned, an important facet of quantitative research is that it should be generalizable to a wider population. To be able to generalize, the sample selected should be representative or typical of the population being examined. Particularly, the organizations selected need to be representative. Specifically, employee satisfaction was significantly influenced by top management support ( $\gamma_2 = 0.537, p < 0.01$ ); employee satisfaction was significantly influenced by organizational learning ( $\gamma_3 = 0.469, p < 0.01$ ); employee commitment was significantly influenced by employee satisfaction ( $\gamma_4 = 0.929, p < 0.01$ ); and organizational performance was significantly influenced by employee commitment ( $\gamma_5 = 0.879, p < 0.01$ ). Therefore, Hypotheses H2, H3, H4, and H5 are supported.

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