

The various facets of Organizational Commitment.

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Abstract:

The study of Organizational commitment has gained commendable importance during the last two decades. The study is an initiative to capture and present the important links, from the origin of OC to the benefits and implications it has to the organization as well as to the individual. The study also tries to unfold the reasons for the same and make suggestions based on past research

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What the organizations care about the most is the retention and motivation of their most important resource. Greater is the level of organizational commitment lesser is the worries of the management. Ahamad et.al. (2010) studied the relationship of organizational commitment to that of turnover intention of 114 call center personnel in Pakistan and found increased OC can reduce turnover intention among employees. The study of organizational commitment hence becomes even more essential. Organizational Commitment has been studied from different perspectives for past few years. The existence of cultural differences has always been researched and has dominated the studies related to organizational commitment (Singh, Bhagat and Mohanty, 2011; Markovits, Davis and Dick, 2007). Markovits, Davis and Dick (2007) studied the Greek private and public organizations highlighting the differences in the job-related attitudes. Their findings revealed that organizational commitment was significantly higher in public organizations than in private which was in contrast with the findings of Anglo-studies. Singh, Bhagat and Mohanty (2011) recently have found that pay satisfaction has a positive relation with Organizational Commitment. Interestingly the study also found that there exist a high correlation between age, position and tenure (the time factor). However, it was found that the relation between pay satisfaction and normative commitment was positively moderated for employees low in masculinity / femininity and those in power distance. Organizational commitment has been found to differ across generations. Commitment towards organization (Generation X) as contrasted to commitment towards individual managers (idealistic values and human spirit) is exhibited by Generation Y employees (Alexander and Sysko, 2009). Commitment of modern generation is in terms of the quality of work done and accomplishment thereof; commitment for

this group of cohort cannot be defined in terms of tenure or number of years spent (Evangelista et. al., 2009). A low labour turnover does not ensure committed workforce. Employees with continuance commitment will reflect retention and not productivity (Nehmeh, 2009; Guha and Chimote, 2012).

All the three forms of Organizational commitment have been studied in the light of different organizational level and individual level forces. The multidimensionality (Johnson, Groff and Taing, 2009) of the construct has been tested only in a few studies. Multiple level of commitment may exist and interact at the same time, depending on the nature of outcomes (Johnson, Groff and Taing, 2009). The study described three models namely compensatory model, synergistic model, and competition model (for details see Johnson, Groff and Taing, 2009). When any one commitment namely affective, continuance or normative are found to be high to bring about favorable focal outcomes i.e. non-discretionary and focal attitudes and behaviors, compensatory model is said to exist. In case of synergistic model high level of multiple commitments draw favorable outcomes which are discretionary in nature. Unlike compensatory and synergistic model, in case of competitive model the existence of high level of multiple commitments produce conflicting effects.

One study on Affective Commitment by Krishna (2008) found a positive and significant relationship between affective commitment and organizational learning. Krishna concluded that learning subsystems like environmental interface, action / reflection, meaning and memory and dissemination and diffusion can be used for producing organizational commitment. Organizational commitment ensures not only lesser employee turnover, job satisfaction and better performance but also extra role behavior. Extra role behaviors are actions performed by the employees voluntarily attending meetings, maintaining the work environment and work desk clean. This kind of behavior is termed as organizational citizenship behavior. Sharma, Bajpai and Holani (2011) studied 200 managerial and non-managerial personnel from both public and private sectors working in different departments. They found that employees who exhibited OCB were more satisfied with their job and the level of satisfaction differed with the level of OCB. Therefore, it can be drawn that

Proposition 1a: OC shares a strong relationship with OCB.

However in a study based on Turkish primary school teachers it was found that OCB exhibited was different by teachers having affective commitment and those having continuance commitment (Yilmaz and Cokluk-Bobeoglu, 2008). Teachers having affective commitment had a better perception and exhibited more OCB. Another study by Myer and colleagues found a strong positive relation of affective commitment followed by normative commitment with job performance and OCB. However, continuance commitment shared a negative rather weak relation with both job performance and OCB (Myers et.al. in Gill et.al, 2011). Therefore it can be proposed that

Proposition 1b: OCB is mostly performed by employees with affective and normative commitment.

Hence it can be derived that committed employees will bear a positive attitude towards the organization and indulge in less pro-social or deviant work behavior (DWB). Gill et.al. (2011) confirmed that affective commitment can reduce DWB as they found a negative but significant relation between the two. Not surprisingly and consistent with previous findings it was assumed that employees with higher continuance commitment will engage in more DWB and hence such commitment will have a positive relation with DWB. Surprisingly though, they found the existence of positive relation (however it was not significant).

Proposition 1c: Employees performing DWB will have a high continuance commitment.

Organizational commitment may vary among employees depending on there work status (regular and part time), person organization fit and also gender. Seong et.al (2011) studied a sample of 1044 Korean employees in large, medium and small sized private firms. He found that though work status affected OC among male workers, in case of female no such significant difference was found. Another significant finding of the study was the person to organization fit (P-O fit) as a mediator of the relationship between work status and OC. Therefore it can be deduced that a person satisfied with his organization will be more committed and hence will continue longer with the organization. Another dimension of such relationship can be explained

by the choice of career a person makes during his initial years. Recent study by Sokro et.al found that employees who made right choice of career were satisfied with there job and performed better as compared to there counterparts. Therefore it can be deduced that

Proposition 2a: People who make good career choices are likely to be more committed

The Connection:

The study of OC is incomplete without understanding the concept of Psychological Contract. It is also said that OC has evolved from the theory of Psychological contract (Shore and Tetrick, 1994). Employees tend to develop an understanding and certain views about the organization to which they are a part. Such understanding relates mostly to the terms and conditions and the exchange agreement which are built on mutual understanding. The perception of such contract is built on the interaction with the members of the organization and the organizations’ culture. The existence of psychological contract helps in reducing insecurity, helps build a healthy employment relation and also shapes the behavior of the individual to match the organizational needs and goals (Van de Ven). Therefore the concept of Psychological contract¹ (Schein 1980 as cited in Shore and Tetrick, 1994) should be considered by the contemporary organizations. Failure on the part of the organization to execute the obligations (transactional and relational obligations) may lead to discontentment and dismay among the employees which may upset their performance as well as relationship towards the organization.

Table1: The Invisible Connection

Organizational Commitment	Psychological Contract	Benefits		Withdrawal
Affective	Relational	Job Satisfaction	Extra role	Job Change

¹ Schein(1980) described it as a perception of exchange relationship between individual and the organization. It is also termed as promissory contract.

Normative	Transactional		behavior, OCB	
Continuance	Violation of contract	Job Dissatisfaction	DWB	Job change or Career change

Deducing from the above literature the relationship among OC, psychological contract, job satisfaction and performance can be represented as above. Affective and normative commitment originates mostly from relational and transactional psychological contract leading to job satisfaction and better performance in the form of extra role behavior and OCB. In case the employee feels disdained by the act of the organization there is a change in commitment which the employee undergoes resulting in job dissatisfaction leading to negative or deviant work behavior. Under such circumstances it can be suggested that the employee opts for a change in job or in extreme cases a change in career.

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