An Exploratory Study Of Organizational Commitment, Demographic Variables And Job & Work Related Variables Among Employees In Kingdom Of Saudi Arabia

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Abstract

In this study an attempt has been made to find out the significant influence on organizational commitment in Saudi public sector organizations with demographic variables and job and work related variables. The sample consists of 1,022 employees from fifteen different ministries of Saudi Arabia located at Riyadh. Research questions and a set of tools containing demographical variables, organizational commitment, job satisfaction and involvement and other job and work related variables were used to gather the information about the employees. Further, certain questions were also used to verify the null hypotheses. Multiple regression, step wise regression, product moment correlation and percentage methods were used to test the hypotheses and research questions in the study. The results revealed that (i) majority of the employees were found to be neither uncommitted nor committed (ii) demographical variables such as age and found significantly related with organizational commitment (iii) job satisfaction and involvement were found significantly related with organizational commitment (iv) job and work related variables such as participation in decision making , advancement, work condition and grade level were found significantly related with organizational commitment. Suggestions for the improvement of organizational commitment and for future research were also offered.

KEYWORDS: Organizational commitment, age, education, job satisfaction, involvement, Saudi Arabia

Introduction

The age of predictability is over and the age of uncertainty has begun. In today's fast changing environment the future depend upon employees' level of commitment in all types of organizations in the society. Success and prosperity in all aspects of life lie not in machines or patens, but in people who will improvise and invest themselves personally in their organizations.

Unfortunately employees' commitment and attachment to their employing also changed as a result of societal and external environmental changes in the past several decades. The values and attitudes of our predecessors towards social, political, and ideological issues as well as work itself are different from many present values and attitudes. Consequently, employees' work ethic, aspiration levels, commitment and attitudes towards authority have changed dramatically during the past few years.

The shift of employees' values and attitudes towards their jobs and organizations became one of the most significant issues recently addressed by theorists and practitioners .Organizational commitment as a result has become an important and

useful construct in addressing and explaining such dilemmas in organizational research and management practices. Both public and private organizations started paying more attention to the concept of organizational commitment especially when they began facing serious behaviour problems, such as absenteeism, tardiness, turnover and low level of production and effectiveness.

In general, the concept of organizational commitment has received a great deal of attention in western countries. In Saudi Arabia, the concept of organizational commitment has been ignored, especially in the public sector; therefore, conducting such research seems significant and worthwhile. In the proposed research, the concept of organizational commitment would be treated as dependent variable in attempting to account for the causes or antecedents of organizational commitment. An understanding of the antecedents of commitment would lead to identifying organizational practices which influence the level of commitment as experienced by members of the organization.

Review of Literature

The definition of organizational commitment varies in the literature. Prior to the late 1970's there was little consensus about the meaning of organizational commitment (Balfour & Wechsler, 1990).In fact, there were perhaps as many definitions of organizational commitment as the researcher who studied it. Like many concepts studied in the social sciences, organizational commitment has been defined differently by researchers who viewed it according to the perspectives of their various disciplines .For instance, Mowday *et al.* (1982) found ten distinct definitions in different studies on organizational commitment. Brown (1969) believes that organizational commitment occurs 'when an individual accepts influence, because he wants to maintain a satisfying, self defining relationship to another person or group'. Sheldon (1971) however, views commitment as 'an attitude or an orientation toward the organization, which links or attaches the identity of the person to the organization'. Furthermore, Weiner (1992) refers the word commitment as the 'sense of being bound emotionally or intellectually to some course of action'. However, organizational commitment has varied in organizational context and most commonly defined the term organizational commitment by Porter *et al.* (2004) is 'the identification with an organization and acceptance of its goals and values as one's own'. Cole (1979) divided into three components (i) a sense of identification with the organizational mission because of the compatibility and alignment of individual and organizational goals (ii) a sense of involvement reflects the extent to which the employee sees the job as an extension of the self. The organizational value of the involvement is clear, people who are more likely to exert extra effort and be more effective (iii) a sense of loyalty and affection for the organization indicated by unwillingness to leave the organization seeking other opportunity elsewhere. Al Meer (1989) conducted a study first in Saudi Arabia and found that East Asians employees expressed a significantly higher level of commitment to their organization than either the Saudis or the westerners. Furthermore, Westerners results indicated positive significant relationship between level of organizational commitment, tenure and education. Yavas *et al.* (1990) observed that expatriates managers exhibited slightly higher level of commitment than Saudi managers.

Much of the research concerning the causes of commitment have dealt with the personal characteristics of age, education, gender and work ethic .An employees age for instance was found to be positively related to commitment (Angle & Perry,1981;Faerman.1987; Morris & Sherman,1981; Sheldon, 1971; Mathieu & Zajac, 1990 ;Alutto & Vredenburgh, 1977;Grusky,1966;Organ, 177;Dockel, 2003;

Dodd-McCue & Wright,1996; Salami, 2008 ; Azeem,2010; Allen & Meyer, 1993 & Padala ,2011).As an employee get older his level of commitment to that organization increases. It is generally thought that as time goes by employee gradually become attached to their employing organization. Kitchen (1989) expands on hat premise explaining that scarcity of alternative employment for older workers results when many organizations are reluctant to hire older workers whose length of contribution to the organization would necessarily be brief. For these reasons, older workers tens to be more committed. In contrast to age, education has been found to be inversely related to commitment (Angle & Perry, 1981; Faerman.1987; Sherman & Morris 1981, Glisson & Durick, 1988; Padala, 2011).It has been suggested that this inverse relationship may result because of more highly educated individual have higher expectations and needs which the organization may be unable to meet. Consequently highly educated employees become frustrated and unhappy and therefore, uncommitted to the organization, believing that their expectations and needs can be met in other organization. This conclusion is enforced by their belief that their expertise and knowledge enhance their significance and therefore, their chance of obtaining employment elsewhere (Barling et al., 1990).Church (1986) points out that an increase in formal education level leads to a significantly lower level of commitment. According to Lincoln and Kalleberg (1990) education is a key indicator of social position as well as major factor in variations in status and financial rewards. They also state that more education can spell less commitment to work, because of greater opportunities to find fulfilment outside the work role. They add that it may be caused by higher expectations leading to feelings of frustration and unfulfillment outside the work role.

Faerman (1987) states that although it is logical to assume that position in the organizational hierarchy would be positively related to organizational commitment, research results in this area have been inconsistent. On one hand Wesch and LaVan (1981) and Lincoln and Kalleberg (19b5) found significant relationships between the two variables. According to Kitchen (1989) members of the organization who hold higher positions in the hierarchy express higher levels of commitment. Hall et al. (1970) however found no relationship between the two when tenure was held constant in a sample of foresters. Similarly Bruning and Synder (1983) found differences in organizational commitment between supervisors and non supervisors.

Various researchers (Ismail, 1990; Mathieu & Hamel, 1989; William and Hazer, 1986; Manheim, Baruch and Tal, 1997; Salami, 2008; Feinstein and Vondrasek, 2006; Busch, Fallan & Patterson, 1998 and Freund, 2005) report a significant correlation between job satisfaction and the intention to remain with the organization (frequently used as an operational definition of commitment). Price and Mueller (1986) and Mathieu and Hamel (1989) also found support for job satisfaction as an antecedents of organizational commitment. The literature addressing job involvement and organizational commitment has indicated empirical evidence clearly supports the positive relationship between these two variables. Many theorists have argued that the principal reason for the strong link between job involvement and organizational commitment is that each emphasizes psychological identification or an attachment to a specific object; job involvement attaches to the job while organizational commitment attaches the organization (Shih, 1990).It is believed that employee involvement in the organization takes on moral overtones and that the employee's stake extends beyond personal satisfaction. The direct relationship between the two is overwhelming supported in study by Blau (1986), Brook & Price (1989), Shore et al. (1990), Ugur and Kilic, (2009) and Stevens et al. (1978).In fact, Brook & Price

(1989), and Stevens *et al.* (1978) identified job involvement as the second best predictor of organizational commitment. Various studies found related to job involvement and organizational commitment revealed correlations of between job involvement and job satisfaction, job satisfaction and organizational commitment and correlation between organizational commitment and job involvement (Cheloha & Farr, 1980; Gechman & Wiener, 1975; Hall & Schneider, 1972; Mowday, Porter & Steers,1982; Mowday, Steers, & Porter, 1979; Rabinowitz & Hall, 1977; Weissenberg & Gruenfeld, 1968; Wood, 1974).Studies in literature argued and confirmed that job involvement and employee commitment has significant relationship (Janis, 1989; Loui, 1995; Brown, 1996 & Khan *et al.* 2011). Brown (1996) also revealed that very close relationship between job involvement and organizational commitment and considers organizational commitment as outcome of job involvement. After careful examination of these two concepts and based on literature, indicates that organizational commitment and job involvement are experientially different concept and showed diverse features of attachment related to work (Ulrika & Willmar, 2006).

Numerous studies have been conducted among the public and private sector employees between organizational commitment and participation indecision making indicates significant positive influence on organizational commitment. This study is supported by previous literature (Church, 1986; Ismail, 1990; Porter *et al.,* 1974; Steven *et al.,* 1978; Williams & Hazer, 1986& Padala, 2011).

Literature related to work condition showed significantly related with organizational commitment. Literature reviewed reveals that a better working condition and infrastructure facility provides satisfaction among the employees and hence, employees' commitment also enhances to their organization. Balfour and Wechsler (1990) indicate that poor physical conditions of work contribute to negative feelings and that unfavourable setting is unlikely to produce a sense of affiliation and commitment. A significant positive relationship exists between advancement and organizational commitment (Fink, 1992; Lin, 1989 & Lincoln and Kalleberg, 1990).Employees enjoying greater job rewards and advancement are more committed to their organization. Fairness of promotion and advancement has proven to be much more powerful variables in explaining organizational commitment.

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Objectives of the Study

The literature on the Saudi public sector, to the knowledge of the researcher, has indicated that the concept of organizational commitment has been rarely investigated. Such a shortage of research on this concept represents a major gap in both the field of organizational behaviour and that of public administration; thus making a critical and empirical analysis on the concept of organizational commitment seems to be appropriate and pertinent research. However, the primary goal of the proposed study would be to concentrate on identifying significant factors that may influence the commitment of public employees in the Saudi bureaucracy. To achieve the objective, the researcher has grouped antecedents of organizational commitment with demographical variables and job and work related variables.

Research Questions

This research study was developed to answer the following questions:

1. To what extent do demographic variables influence employees' commitment to their relationship?

2. To what extent do job and work related variables influence employees' commitment to their relationship?

3. What is the level of employee's commitment to their employing organization?

4. What variables have the most influences on the employee's level of commitment to their organization?

Hypotheses

On the basis of retrospection of the literature reviewed and objectives of the present study the following two null hypotheses has been formulated:

HO1.There is no significant relationship between organizational commitment and demographical variables (i.e. age and education)

HO2.There is no significant relationship between organizational commitment and work related variables (e.g. job satisfaction, advancement, participation, working conditions and job involvement)

METHOD

Sample

The sample of the present study was 1022 employees from different fifteen ministries of Kingdom of Saudi Arabia located at Riyadh.

Tools Used:

The following tools were used to gather the information from participants in addition to research questions:

1. Organizational commitment: The most widely used instrument to measure organizational commitment questionnaire (OCQ) developed by Mowday et al. (1979).The OCQ is a 14 statement instrument which uses a 7 –pint scale ' strongly disagree to strongly agree' .It consists of items pertaining to the subject's perception regarding his/her loyalty and identification with the organization, acceptance of organizational values and goals and willingness to exert extra effort to achieve organizational goals. The OCQ has had high reliabilities when used with non English speaking respondents. Luthans *et al*. (1985) reported that the OCQ versions in Japanese and Korean have high reliabilities of .94 and .87 respectively.

2. Demographic variables: The demographic data information sheet was used to collect information on the participant's age and education.

3. Job Satisfaction: A six item scale –four adapted from the General Job Satisfaction Scale developed by Hackman and Oldham (1975) and two adapted from the Overall Job Satisfaction Scale developed by Camman et al(cited in *Cook et al*. ,1981) was used to measure job satisfaction. The authors of booth scale reported an overall internal reliability coefficient of .77 for each scale.

4 .Job Involvement: Job Involvement was measured by scale developed by Lodhal and Kejner (1965).This scale consists of twenty items on a four point rating scale ranging from 1=strongly agree to 4= strongly disagree. However by keeping realm of the present study, only ten items were used for the sake of consistency with rest of questionnaires, and given 5 point rating scale to choose their answers.

5. Opportunity for Advancement: Three items o a four point likert scale ranging from 1= not at all true to 4= very true were used to evaluate opportunity for advancement .These items are adopted from a promotion sub scale of the facet specific job satisfaction scale developed by Quinn and Stainers (Cited in Cook *et al.*, 1982).The reliability of the scale was found to be .92.

6. Partcipation in decision making: Participation was measured by six items adopted from sub scales from three different participations scale. These are: two items from the Supervision Scale developed by Cammann et al. (1979) and Seashore et al. (1982); three taken from the Role Ambiguity, Role Overload and Nonparticipation Scale developed by Beehr *et al*. (1976); and one item from the Task Goal Attributes Scale developed by Steers (1973) (Cited in Cook *et al.,* 1981).The alpha coefficient for these sub scales are .76, .62 and .72 respectively.

7. Physical Working Conditions: The physical working conditions were measured by three items adopted from the 'Physical Work Conditions' sub scale of the Index of Organizational Reactions (IOR).The physical work conditions sub scale contains six items and is reported to have a median internal reliability is .90 (Cited in Cook *et al.,* 1981).

Statistics

By keeping in mind the present study objectives multiple regression, step wise regression, product moment correlation and percentage methods were used to test the hypotheses and research questions in the study.

Validity and Reliability

Validity and reliability of the present study was established through pilot study to indicate that the instrument was applicable to the research objectives.

Procedure

The total 1600 questionnaires were sent to fifteen ministries employees of Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and finally researcher received 1022 filled questionnaires from the respondents. To maintain ethics of research, permission has been taken from higher official by providing detail about the nature of the study and assured of confidentiality and informed them that this study will be used for academic purpose. The participants were allowed to take their own time to complete the questionnaires. The questionnaire were translated into English to Arabic for better understanding of items with the help of experts in both the areas of languages and also provided mobile numbers to the respondents to call for help in understanding any ambiguous points or items. The collected data put into statistical analyses for concrete results which has been presented in different tables for results and discussion.

Results

Table -1 Showing level of employees' range of organizational commitment to their organization.

Sr.No.	Range of Commitment	No. of employees	Percentage
1.	Uncommitted (1-2.5)	191	18.7
2.	Neutral (2.51-3.49)	473	46.3
3.	Committed (3.5-5)	358	35
Total		1,022	100

Table-1 finding showed that the level of commitment of Saudi public employees was found to be indifferent i.e. 473 (46.3%) neither uncommitted nor committed to their organization. Out of the total 1,022 were participated in this present investigation, 358 (35%) were found to be committed whereas, 191 (18.7%) were found to uncommitted to their organization.

Table -2 Showing correlations between demographic variables and job and work related variables with organizational commitment.

Sr.No.	Variables	r-value
1.	Age	.15**
2.	Education	-.12**
3.	Job Satisfaction	.62**
4.	Participation in decision making	.54**
5.	Job Involvement	.50**
6.	Advancement	.49**
7.	Work Condition	.45**
8.	Grade Level	-.11**

** Significance are two tailed $p < .01$

It has been observed from Table-2 that demographic variables age is positively related ($r=.15$, $p< .01$) to organizational commitment and education were found to be significantly related to commitment but negatively ($r= -.12$, $p<.01$) which means more education the employee have the lesser their commitment to their organization. Whereas, all the variables of job and work related variables found to be significantly related with organizational commitment (job satisfaction $r= .62$, $p<.01$; participation in decision making $r=.54$, $p<.01$; job involvement $r= .50$,$p<.01$; advancement $r=.49$, $p<.01$; work condition $r=.45$, $p<.01$ and grade level $r=.02$, $p<.01$).

Further, probing the research question it was observed that demographic variables were tested together using multiple regression to determine their influence on commitment as a group, $R2 =.07$ indicating that 7% of the variation in organizational commitment is explained by the set of demographical variables. Analysis also showed $F=19.05$ and the significance $F=.000$.Because significance F is less than .05 , then $R2$ is significant different from 0.Thus the set of demographical variables is significantly related to organizational commitment.

Multiple R=.26	R22=.07	F=19.05*

* $p < .01$

However, the above findings supported the research question related to demographical variables and job and work related variables which indicate that relationship existed in most of the cases are positively but education and years at grade level found to be significantly negatively related with commitment. Therefore the proposed null hypotheses HO1 & HO2 have been rejected based on the findings.

Table -3. Showing the most influential variables on commitment of an employees by using stepwise regression analysis.

Sr.No.	Variables	Mult. R	R2	F	B
1.	Job Satisfaction	.62	.39	617.44*	.62
2.	Advancement	.69	.47	434.23*	.31
3.	Job Involvement	.72	.52	346.59*	.24
4.	Participation in decision making	.73	.53	281.72*	.17
5.	Education	.74	.54	234.38*	-.10
6.	Job grade level	.74	.54	198.30*	.08
7.	Work conditions	.74	.55	172.08	.07

* $=P< .001$

The result of Table-3 indicated that the variables which influence employee commitment the most are job and work related, with one exception, the fifth most influential factor which is a demographic variable. Job satisfaction and advancement head the list with work condition at the bottom. These seven variables account for 55% of the employees' commitment to their organizations.

Moreover, probing the research question it was observed that job and work related variables were tested together using multiple regression to determine their influence on commitment as a group, R2 =.54 indicating that 54% of the variation in organizational commitment is explained by the set of job and work related variables. Further,F= 67.52 and the significance F=.000.Because significance F is less than .05 , then R2 is significant different from 0.Thus the set of job and work related variables is significantly related to organizational commitment.

Multiple R=.74	R2=.54	F=67.52*

$* p < .01$

Discussion

The present investigation finding showed that the level of commitment of Saudi public employees was neither uncommitted nor committed to their organization. It indicates that most of the employees are not concern with the people, customers and performance. Those who are committed to their organization attributes that goal and result oriented whereas, uncommitted employees might not be considered as the member of organization and not putting himself in any hard work activities to produce better results. It is means that highly committed employees wish to remain with their employing organizations (Mowday, Porter & Steers, 1982).

On the basis of results demographical variable age was found significantly related with organizational commitment (Angle & Perry, 1981; Morris & Sherman, 1981;Dodd-McCue & Wright,1996; Morrow,1993; Dornstein and Matalon,1998; Salami, 2008 and Azeem ,2010) supported the findings.

On the other hand education has been found to be inversely related to organizational commitment (Angle & Perry, 1981; Steers, 1977 & Padala, 2011) .The result indicates that more educated people may often have higher expectation which organizations may be unable to meet.

Satisfaction showed positively related with organizational commitment in the present study. This results linking job satisfaction and organizational commitment is consistent with other researcher (Curry *et al.,* 1982; Ismail,1990; Martin & O'Laughlin, 1984; Porter *et al.,* 1974; Mannheim,Baruch & Tal, 1997;Feistein & Vondrasek ,2006; Yousef, 2000 and Azeem, 2010)

Analysis of the data indicates that participation indecision making has a significant positive influence on organizational commitment. This study is supported by previous literature (Church, 1986; Ismail,1990; Porter *et al.,* 1974; Steven *et al.,*1978; Williams & Hazer ,1986& Padala, 2011).These studies indicate that as subordinates participate more in supervisory decisions related and important to their job ,they feel more satisfied ,involved and committed to their organization.

The relationship between involvement and organizational commitment in this study was significantly positive. The direct relationship between the two is in fact overwhelmingly supported by previous studies (Eisenberg *et al.,* 1983; Hollenback *et al.,*1984;Shih, 1991; Steven *et al.,*1978). Many theorists have argued the strong link between job involvement and organizational commitment, because both psychological identification and attachment to a certain subject; job involvement attaches to the specific job and organizational commitment attaches to the organization. Therefore,

individuals with higher job involvement will have the same attitude toward organizational commitment.

A significant positive relationship exists between advancement and organizational commitment in the present study. This finding also has been reported in studies by Fink (1992), Lin (1989) and Lincoln and Kalleberg (1990).Employees enjoying greater job rewards and advancement are more committed to their organization. Fairness of promotion and advancement has proven to be much more powerful variables in explaining organizational commitment.

Work condition and grade level showed significantly related with organizational commitment. Literature reviewed reveals that a better working condition and infrastructure facility provides satisfaction among the employees and hence, employees' commitment also enhances to their organization. However, higher the grade level are also indicated about commitment because they are more results oriented and understanding of organization opportunities and challenges leads to greater level of involvement and satisfaction to their organization.

Conclusion

The following conclusion can be drawn from the analysis of results:

- Majority of the employees were found to be neither uncommitted nor committed.
- Age, the demographical variable emerged as significantly related with organizational commitment.
- Education as a demographical variable was found significant but inversely related with organizational commitment.
- Job satisfaction and involvement were found significantly related with organizational commitment.
- Other job and work related variables such as participation in decision making , advancement, work condition and grade level were found significantly related with organizational commitment.

Suggestions for Future Research

The present investigation has contributed to contemporary areas of organizational behaviour and is valued for academicians, researchers and management practitioners. By keeping several aspects of research in mind, the researcher has also given some suggestion for future research. This study has been widely investigated with male and in Riyadh area only, so it is suggested to study with other sample and cities to determine research to probe whether the result are applicable to Saudi public sector employees. It is also suggested to use other instruments and research questions to probe the Saudi public sector employees' commitment level to their organization in different parts of the country. On the basis of findings it is necessary to design policies for greater level of organizational commitment.

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