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Organizational Commitment: A Comprehensive Study

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Organizational commitment is one of the most investigated constructs in organizational research. Organizational commitment has become a highly researched job attitude in recent years. One reason that commitment is so well studied is that the impact of commitment is associated with work outcomes such as turnover, absenteeism, performance, motivation, and job withdrawal behaviours. Organizational commitment has a strong association with intent to leave, employee retention, and job performance in many organization. Hence the basic purpose of this article is to provide a review of literature pertaining to organizational commitment (OC) research. Being a literature review, the article is primarily qualitative in nature. Findings suggest that organizational commitment is an important parameter which affects productivity and hence must be included in organisational planning and its effects.

Keywords: Commitment; Affective; Normative; Continuance; Motivation; Satisfaction

Introduction

The focus of this study is on organizational commitment. Organizational research dates back to the 1950s. Organizational theorists including Saunders (1956),Becker (1960), Etzioni (1965), Kanter (1968), and produced seminal research on the concept of organizational commitment. These studies all suggested that organizational commitment is a large multivariate construct. Although it may elude precise definition, organizational commitment has been shown to be important to improving organizational effectiveness and retention.

Organizational commitment among employees has been an addressed in various scholarly works, including those by Riketta (2005), Fiorito et al. (2007), and Edwards and Peccei (2010). These scholars have taken different approaches to issues related to what causes differences in organizational commitment among employees and how these differences impact employee performance, recruitment, and retention.

The first conceptualization of organizational commitment traces back to Becker's (1960) side-bet theory. According to Becker (1960), workers enter into an unspoken contract with their organization in which exchanges, or side-bets are made. Even though researchers have moved away from Becker's (1960) original conceptualization of organizational commitment, the link that he describes between commitment and turnover is still evident in modern theories (e.g., Meyer & Allen, 1991, three component model). Additionally, most modern scales incorporate the side-bet component on some level in the form of continuance commitment (Meyer & Allen, 1991), and more recently, the economic exchanges sub-component of continuance commitment (McGee & Ford, 1987; Hackettet. al., 1994; Meyeret. al., 1990; Somers, 1993; Taing et al., 2011). Side-bet theory had some merit; it ignored the affective component inherent in commitment (Mowdayet. al., 1979; Porteret. al., 1974). According to this new conceptualization, organizational commitment was defined as a strong belief in and acceptance of the organization's goals and values, a willingness to exert considerable effort on behalf of the organization, and a strong desire to maintain membership in the organization.

More recently, organizational commitment has been studied with respect to other concepts such as careers, organizations, norms, identification, morals, work, job involvement, security "side-bets," affect, psychological ownership, and so forth (Pierce & Geyer, 1991; Porter et al., 1974; Powell & Meyer, 2004; Liou& Cheng, 2008; Wagner, 2007). The majority of research in this area has been derived from the perspectives of organizational psychology and sociology and has focused on retention and turnover (Mathieu &Zajac, 1990; Mowday et al., 1979; Price & Mueller, 1981).

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Review of literature

There are a number of definitions for organizational commitment; there are some commonalities in the various definitions. Mowdayet. al., (1982) defined organizational commitment as "the relative strength of an individual's identification with and involvement in a particular organization". Other researchers have defined organizational commitment as the psychological attachment that individuals develop toward an organization (Fiorito et al., 2007; Wright & Kehoe, 2007).

Annexure

Table 1: Historical Evidence of Organisational Commitment

Kanter (1972)	She defines organizational commitment as the willingness of social agents to dedicate their force and loyalty to social systems.
Porter et al. (1974)	In their approach, organizational commitment is the relative attachment between the identity of the individual and the organization. In this approach, organizational commitment is characterized by three factors: 1. Faith in and acceptance of the organization's values and goals 2. Willingness to focus effort to help the organization 3. A desire to maintain organizational membership
Hall (1977)	Organizational commitment as a multi-dimensional notion which entails: the desire to maintain membership in an organization, faith in accepting the organization's values and goals, and the willingness to exert considerable efforts for the organization
Mitchell (1978)	The concept of commitment is a main topic in the writings on management; It is a principle fundamental value of an organization, and employees are evaluated by this criterion, i.e. Organizational Commitment
Mowday, Porter, and Steers (1982)	Organizational commitment has a negative relationship with the tendency to turnover.
O'reilly and Chatman (1986)	Job satisfaction has a positive relationship with job performance.
O'reilly (1989)	Organizational commitment is the psychological bond and attachment to the goals and values of an organization for the sake of the organization itself and not for some instrumental values as a means of reaching other different goals.
Allen and Meyer (1990)	In their opinion, organizational commitment is a psychological status which expresses a type of willingness, obligation, or need to continue working in an organization, and encompasses three dimensions: Affective Commitment, Continuance Commitment, and Normative Commitment.
Jaros, S. J., Jermier, J. M., Koehler, J. W., & Sincich, T. (1993)	He mostly considers organizational commitment as an approach, and defines it as a high tendency to stay in the organization, extra effort for the organization, and strong faith in accepting the values and goals of the organization.
Saruqi (1997)	Organizational commitment is a kind of affective attachment to the organization. The employees strongly believe that they are taking their identity from the organization; they are involved in the organization, are participating in its activities, and enjoy their membership.
Harrison and Hubbard (1998)	They acknowledge the basic factors in forming the personnel's commitment. The findings of their research indicate that the personnel's dreams and expectations and the job challenges that managers design, have a fundamental role in increasing organizational commitment.
Zangaro (2001)	Managers should try to maintain the personnel's commitment and loyalty to the organization; to achieve this end, they have to involve the personnel in the process of decision-making and provide them an acceptable level of job security to increase their sense of commitment and loyalty.
Swailes (2002)	He refers to the advantages and privileges personnel lose by leaving an organization. This commitment is derived from social and economic factors, and represents the personnel's knowledge of the merits of staying and demerits of leaving an organization.
Manion (2004)	Organizational commitment is a type of emotive commitment. It refers to emotive bonds, the individuals' identification with, and the personnel's involvement in the organization that results from a sense of commitment to the organization and reflects the degree of compatibility of the personnel's values and beliefs with those of the organization.
Lynn, M. R., Redman, R. W. (2005)	The sense of commitment and responsibility cannot be trusted easily Unless the organization instructs the personnel & before their formal joining to the organization in a way that they can think and act based on the goals and values of the organization.
Carpenter-Song et al. (2007)	Commitment is an integral part in offering quality services, and an emotional reaction showing good attitude toward the work.

Farzad, Nahavandi, and Caruana (2008)	Organizational commitment is an approach to the employees' loyalty to the organization, and is a continual process. Researches show that organizational commitment leads to favourable organizational achievements such as fewer turnovers, better performance, less absence, less job stress, and more active involvement in the organizational affairs.
Liou (2008)	Organizational commitment is an approach which is limited by time and place. It is achieved through the interactive processes which start with the individuals' acceptance of the values and goals of the organization. Organizational commitment gives the individuals the motive to take part in the activities of the organization, and an intense desire to maintain their good relation with the organization.
WeiBo, Kaur, and Jun (2010)	Conceptual and operational development of organizational commitment affects the perception and degree of other types of commitment such as commitment to work and job, commitment to the working group, and even influences coherence of the work itself.

Organizational Commitment: Different Perspectives

Organisational Commitment and Behavioural Perspective

Two distinct perspectives on the concept of organizational commitment have emerged: behavioral (Aluttoet. al., 1973; Blauet. al., 2003) and attitudinal (Etzioni, 1965; Kanter, 1968; Belschak, F. D., & Hartog, D. N.,2010).Mowday et al. (1979) defined organizational commitment primarily in terms of an attitudinal approach. From their perspective, organizational commitment is "the relative strength of an individual's identification with and involvement in a particular organization that is characterized by three factors: 1) a strong belief in and acceptance of the organization's goals and values, 2) a willingness to exert considerable effort on behalf of the organization, and 3) a strong desire to maintain membership in the organization" (p. 226). Weiner and Vardi (1980) viewed the concept more from a behavioural perspective and referred to organizational commitment as one's persistence in making sacrifices for the good of the organization. Organizational commitment from a behavioural perspective describes a person's preoccupation with the organization as evidenced by personal time devoted to organizational activities. These authors contended that their definition does not exclude the possibility that a person is committed to other aspects of the environment, such as family and friends, nor does it mean that an individual will display all three of these attributes (Zangaro, 2001). More generally an employee displaying less of these attitudinal or behavioural attributes in terms of his or her employing organization may be more likely to leave and be at greater risk of turnover (Price, 2009).

Organisational Commitment and Motivation

Loyalty is related to commitment although it is usually considered to be one sided. Loyalty does involve the feeling of attachment but does not assume that both sides are loyal (Zangaro, 2001). Motivation is related to commitment but it also involves self gratification. When goals are met, the motivation can stop. Motivation is similar to the more calculative forms of commitment; motivation to commit is based on a calculation that no better options exist. Some theorists suggest that bi-directional communication is an essential component in developing organizational commitment among staff (Price & Mueller, 1981; Wagner, 2007).

Organisational Commitment and Satisfaction

Satisfaction with communication with one's supervisor is also related to moral forms of commitment (Jernigan & Beggs, 2005). Here the organization is seen as understanding the needs, goals, and values of the employee while the employee views himself as understanding the needs, goals, and values of the organization. According to Moye (2003), organizations characterized by open communication tend to be innovative and demonstrate high levels of collaboration and trust. Open communication is seen as an integrative mechanism that strengthens commitment to the organization. Work is viewed as a trade between effort and loyalty in exchange for material and social rewards (March & Simon, 1958; Mowday, 1998).

Organisational commitment and Perceived Organisational support

Employee's perceptions of an organization's commitment and support for them are viewed as an antecedent to their commitment to the organization (Eisenbergeret. al., 1986). Hutchison and Garstka(1996) suggested that employees' commitment to the organization is based, in part, on their perception of the organization. Several studies have shown a positive relationship between perceived organizational support and organizational commitment (Hutchinson, 1996) and affective commitment (Eisenbergeret. al., 1990;

Shore & Wayne, 1993). When behaviours are rewarded with treatment that indicates to the employee that she or he is valued by the organization, commitment is strengthened. Perceived organizational support is distinguishable from organizational support (Mowday et al., 1979).

Organisational Commitment and Communication

Hutchinson (1996) argued that administrators must communicate commitment to their employees as an antecedent to employee perceptions of administrator support and commitment. According to the literature, antecedents of organizational commitment include personal characteristics, work experiences, and job characteristics. Communication is a theme among many of these antecedents. According to Zangaro (2001), "when an organization communicates honestly and openly, builds a trusting relationship, and offers a sense of belonging to an employee, the organization will increase the likelihood of retaining a morally committed employee" (p. 14). Consequences of organizational commitment include lower levels of intent to leave, increased retention, better attendance, and higher job productivity (McNeese-Smith, 1995; Price, 2009).

Type of Organisational Commitment

Allen and Meyer (1996) presented organizational commitment as multidimensional and containing affective, continuance, and normative components. Their conceptualization suggested that employees either "wants to," "need to," or "feel they should" remain in an organization (Meyer & Allen, 1997). Affective commitment involves the emotional (Kanter, 1968) or attitudinal (Sheldonet. al., 2003) attachment of people to the organization. Continuance commitment is related to a balancing of the costs of leaving an organization and the benefits of staying. This component matches Becker's side-bet theory (Becker, 1960; Kanter, 1968). Normative commitment is related to internalized pressures to act in ways that comport with organizational goals and interests. This component suggests that employees feel a moral need to stay in the organization. Meyer and Allen (1997) argued that these dimensions capture different aspects of the multifaceted construct of organizational commitment and that the gestalt of commitment emerges.

Affective Organizational Commitment: Affective commitment (AOC) involves an emotional attachment to, involvement in, and identification with one's organization, all of which are based on a desire to belong. Affective organizational commitment arises from the perception of positive social exchanges between the employee and organization. These exchanges are typically based on ones perceptions of support (Eisenbergeret. al., 1986; Shoreet. al., 2006) and fairness (Cohen-Charash& Spector, 2001; Colquitt et. al., 2001). AOC is the most widely studied base of commitment because it tends to be the best predictor of work criteria (e.g., job performance and withdrawal) relative to the other commitments (Meyer et al., 2002).

Continuance Organizational Commitment: Lastly, continuance commitment (COC) is derived from the perceived costs of leaving, including the loss of desired investments and few job alternatives. Paralleling the social exchanges that underlie AOC, COC is linked to employee–organization economic exchanges (Shore et al., 2006). Becker (1960) laid the groundwork for the concept of COC with his side-bet theory. This theory states that commitment results from the accumulation of economic investments or side-bets that would be lost if the employee discontinued membership in the organization.

Normative Organizational Commitment: Normative commitment (NOC) derives from a perceived obligation to maintain membership, which is grounded in a sense of morality. Normative organizational commitment is thought to result from early socialization experiences with one's culture and family (Meyer & Allen, 1997). Like AOC, it has been found to relate favourably to many work attitudes and behaviours. The high correlations that have been observed between AOC and NOC have, however, led some researchers to question the usefulness of NOC (Cohen. A., 1992). In spite of this, research still favours the distinct nature of AOC and NOC (Meyer et al., 2001).

Impact of Organizational Commitment

Several researchers have noted that organizational commitment has a strong relationship to employee performance and productivity (Bryson & White, 2008; Fiorito et al., 2007; Wright & Kehoe, 2007). Chew and Chan (2008) observed that when employees are committed to the organization, they can devote their time and effort to working on different roles within the organization. This increased concentration frequently results in increased effort and productivity from the employees. Gelade, G. Aet. al., (2006) has presented the argument that organizational commitment

results from the process of building employee trust in an organization. When employees have trust in an organization, they are not influenced by decisions to look for other jobs, and consequently they have fewer distractions that might affect their performance.

According to Stearns, S. C., & D'Arcy, L. P. (2008), employees who have high levels of organizational commitment will tend to exert more effort in pursuit of the organization's goals and will identify more with the organization's goals. Wright and Kehoe (2007) proposed that human resource management within organizations should be tasked with measuring the levels of organizational commitment among employees. Chew and Chan (2008) also proposed that employee's turnover intentions and rates could be an indication of their levels of organizational commitment. The main premise of the cited literature is that building organizational commitment is crucial step that can result in improved employee performance and productivity (Bryson & White, 2008; Chew & Chan, 2008; Fiorito et al., 2007; Wright & Kehoe, 2007).

Conclusion

In the light of available literatures, it was found that organizational commitment is a critical element of staff retention and highly associated with intent to leave and actual turnover (Larrabee et al., 2003; Perrow, 2000; Porter O'Grady, 2001; Price, 2009; Price & Mueller, 1981; Stearns & D'Arcy, 2008; Wolf et. al., 1994). Thus, this particular component must be duly recognised within organisational construct and must be a component of organisational short .and long term planning, its execution to ensure retention and long term association with employees. This will in turn eventually ensure the ultimate productivity and overall profit of the organisation. Organizational commitment is also influenced by culture, gender, group diversity, commitment profiles, and organizational information. Management communication, opportunity for learning, and work schedule flexibility are also associated with organizational commitment which is a large multivariate construct containing many components and types of commitment. Organization is made up of various groups and that each employee will have a different conceptualization of the organization based on their group affiliation. This also impacts the degree of psychological attachment felt by employees. Our intention was to provide an overview of the OC research by presenting the systematic and comprehensive review of related articles. Significant antecedents and outcomes of OC are determined. The fundamental antecedents are knowledge sharing, perceived justice, motivation, perceived organizational support and the outcomes of OC are job performance, job satisfaction, organizational citizenship behaviour, turnover intensions and absenteeism.

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