

# Organisational Commitment: A Gap Analysis

Surjit Kaur

Research scholar, I. K. Gujral Punjab Technical University, Kapurthala, India

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## ABSTRACT

Organisations are social systems where human resources are the most important factors for effectiveness and efficiency. Organisations are increasingly becoming aware that their employees are their most valuable resource. Looking at the world of work in 21st century and the challenges it brings, it is clear that organisations cannot succeed without having committed employees. Gaining commitment of employees to needed or desired organisational initiatives and to their work, is a challenge faced by many organisations. This paper intends to cover in-depth analysis of research works in the field of organisational commitment and bring out the gaps which would help future researchers to expand this ever growing area of human resource.

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## 1. Introduction

The concept of organisational commitment (OC) has fascinated considerable curiosity as an attempt to understand the intensity and stability of employee dedication to organizations (Eisenberger et al., 1990). Review of conceptual literature on the construct of 'organisational commitment' indicates that this construct can be studied from an attitudinal, behavioral and motivational aspect. Morrow, 1993 viewed that organisational commitment as an attitude reflects feelings such as attachment, identification & loyalty to the organization as an object of commitment. Meyer et al., (1990) defined organisational commitment as an attitude is "characterised by favorable positive cognitive and affective components about the organization".

Best (1994) indicates that organisational commitment as a behavior is evident when "committed individuals enact specific behaviors due to the belief that it is morally correct rather than personally beneficial". Miller & Lee (2001) expressed that organisational commitment is a state of being in which organisational members are bound by their actions and beliefs that sustain their activities and their own involvement in the organization. From motivational point of view, O'Reilly (1989), states organisational commitment is the "individual's psychological bond to the organization, including a sense of job involvement, loyalty and belief in the values of the organization". Further Meyer and Allen (1991) defined organisational commitment as "a psychological state that characterises the employee's relationship with the organization, and has implications for the decision to continue membership in the organization".

First researches on the organisational commitment date back to the 1960s. Wasti (2005) viewed that several alternative models of commitment were proposed in the 1980s and 1990s but Meyer and Allen (1991) model of organisational commitment has gained substantial popularity within these models. Meyer and Allen (1984) initially viewed organisational commitment as two-dimensional, viz. affective and continuance commitment. Meyer and Allen (1984) defined the first dimension, namely affective commitment, "as positive feelings of identification with, attachment to and involvement in the work organisation," and they defined continuance commitment as

"the extent to which employees feel committed to their organisation by virtue of the costs that they feel are associated with leaving". After further research, Allen and Meyer (1990) added a third dimension, normative commitment defined as "the employee's feelings of obligation to remain with the organisation". Thus organisational commitment depicts that an employee remain with an organisation because they 'want to' (Affective Commitment); they 'ought to' (Normative Commitment); and they 'have to' (Continuance Commitment).

The below mentioned studies throw light on the studies with respect to OC, which is a dependent variable in this study.

**Kónya, Matic and Pavlović (2016)** conducted a study to analyse the impact of demographic, job and organisational characteristics on commitment levels of employees working in central European organisations. The study found that gender does not influence OC but tenure, age and education do have an impact on OC. With respect to job characteristics the results indicated that employees working on managerial positions have high commitment levels in comparison to non- managerial positions. Further the results indicated that type of organisation does not have significant effect on commitment of employees.

**Jena (2015)** surveyed 240 workers in ferroalloy industries of Odisha, to assess the organisational commitment with respect to demographic variables (viz. gender, age, marital status, length of service, level of job). This study was an attempt to replicate the findings of previous studies in production sector of an underdeveloped state. The results found that all the demographic variables effect organisational commitment and its dimensions (affective, normative and continuance commitment).

**Sharma and Sinha (2015)** investigated teachers of technical institutes in Haryana with the objective to understand the influence of rank on organisational commitment. They found that organisational commitment increases with rank. The results indicated that gender itself had no affect on organisational commitment. But interaction of gender and rank significantly influenced commitment level of teachers.

**Lichliter (2015)** was of the opinion that to make client services effective, nonprofit leaders need certain strategies to enhance human service assistant's organisational commitment. This need acted as ground for a qualitative study to explore perception of organisational commitment among human service assistants and the experiences that fostered their organisational commitment. From the interview of human service assistants, it was revealed that prior experiences, characteristics, and/or personal circumstances may have influenced their commitment. After joining the organisation, the nonprofit environment provided experiences that impacted their organisational commitment.

**Altindis (2011)** investigated the hospital employees to know the degree of their organisational commitment and motivation and further to study the relationship between these two variables. The study supported the views that organisational commitment of health professionals was crucial factor in determining their level of motivation. The study found that affective and normative commitment predicts intrinsic motivation. Continuance commitment was found less influential on intrinsic motivation. Normative commitment followed by continuance commitment was the most effective factor on extrinsic motivation. Furthermore it was found that affective commitment had the least influence on external motivation.

**Li, Ahlstrom and Ashkanasy (2010)** conducted a multilevel study to investigate affective antecedents of organisational commitment. For this purpose, 230 respondents were surveyed in eight mainland Chinese firms. The findings revealed that organisational commitment increases when an employee frequently experiences feelings of guilt and determination in organisations. The results also highlighted that the increase of intra-group conflict strengthened the negative relation between chaotic emotions (such as fear and upset) and organisational commitment. The study suggested that the overall organisational commitment was related to certain emotions experienced by employees in an organisational setting.

**Popoola (2009)** examined the impact of socio-demographic variables on organisational commitment. The study was conducted on record management personnel in Nigerian Universities. The study concluded that gender, marital status, age and experience had a positive influence on organisational commitment but level of education had negative relation to organisational commitment.

**Martin (2008)** employed a multidisciplinary perspective to explore the most important dimension of organisational commitment (i.e. affective commitment) and to analyse the economic and relational antecedents of the employee's commitment toward the organisation. Affective commitment is determined mainly by interaction among the employees and organisation in the form of participation, and information exchange. It was found that building affective commitment leads to increased level of normative commitment. Among the relational antecedents of commitment, trust, satisfaction and especially the relational norms of flexibility, participation and information exchange significantly enhance affective commitment.

**Salami (2008)** conducted a study among industrial workers in Nigeria to establish the relationship of demographic variables, EQ (emotional quotient), achievement motivation, work role salience and job satisfaction with organisational commitment. The results indicated that demographic factors age, marital status, tenure and educational level significantly predicted organisational commitment except gender. Organisational commitment was found positively related with EQ, work role salience, achievement motivation and job satisfaction.

**Clayton et al. (2007)** in a study examined the relationship of demographic variables viz. age, gender, length of service on organisational commitment of financial planners in Australia. The results revealed that females were found to have a significant higher level of organisational commitment than their male counterparts. Age and job experience were found to have no effect on organisational commitment.

**Kassahun (2005)** conducted a study to assess the level of employee commitment in few industrial units of Delhi and to identify the correlates and antecedents of organisational commitment. The data on these variables was collected from 210 employees working in various organisations. The results revealed that a vast majority (69%) of employees had moderately high degree of commitment. Demographic characteristics (age, tenure, and occupational level) and all organisational practices (autonomy, support, competence development, justice and justice) established a direct association with organisational commitment. The results gave an indication to the managers and people officers that commitment can be enhanced through pro- employee HR practices.

**Meyer et al. (2002)** carried out a meta-analysis of the antecedents and consequences of organisational commitment taking into consideration the studies conducted during the period 1985 to 2000. Based on 155 independent samples it was found that demographic variables had a positive but low correlation with all the three dimensions of organisational commitment (viz. continuance, affective and normative). Perceived organisational commitment was found to have significant positive correlation with POS, transformational leadership, and three forms of justice (viz. distributive, procedural and interactional justice). On the other hand, role related characteristics viz. role ambiguity, role conflict, role overload were found negatively related with organisational commitment. As far as the consequences of commitment were concerned, affective commitment was found to have strongest positive correlation with attendance, job performance, and OCB, followed by normative commitment; but correlation of continuance commitment was either zero or negative with these behaviours. All the three dimensions of organisational commitment were reported to be negatively correlated with withdrawal cognition, turnover intention, and turnover. It was also found that the correlation coefficient of job satisfaction, job involvement, and occupational commitment were stronger with affective commitment in comparison to correlations with continuance and normative commitment.

**Cohen (1992)** proposed two different models (viz. member model and organisational model) to study the variation in the relationships between OC and its antecedents on the basis of occupational groups. Member model covers personal variables; and organisational model consist of role related, structural and experience variables. The sample consisted of white collar (professional and non- professional) and blue collars employees. It was found that personal antecedents affect employees in low status occupations more than those in higher status occupations. Gender, tenure, marital status, education and motivation, were found to have stronger relationships with OC for nonprofessional white collars and blue collar than for professional white collars. Investments and fewer employment avenues are important to the OC of nonprofessionals than to professionals. High effect of income on the OC of professional respondents was an indication that extrinsic rewards can be important factors for OC of professionals. This showed that organisations should different ways for increasing the commitment of different occupational groups.

**Allen and Meyer (1990)** conducted a study with the two purposes. One was to provide prelude evidence regarding conceptual and empirical distinction among affective, continuance and normative commitment. The second purpose was to study the relationship of components of organisational commitment with their antecedents. The results of the study suggested that all the three components of commitment can be reliably measured. The results found goal difficulty, goal clarity, role clarity, job challenge, management receptiveness, peer cohesion, feedback, organisational dependability, equity, participation, as the antecedents of affective commitment; pension, education and alternatives as the antecedents of continuance commitment.

**Mathieu and Zajac (1990)** undertook a meta-analysis of the antecedents, correlates, and consequences of organisational commitment. Significant correlations were found with many antecedents of organisational commitment. Individual characteristics (viz. age, gender, educational qualification, tenure, personal competence, work ethic and occupational level) were found to be significantly predicting OC. Job characteristics (viz. task autonomy and challenge) found to be significant contributor in commitment building. Characteristics of group-leader relations (viz. group cohesiveness, initiator structure, and leader contemplation) were found to be significant predictors of OC. Organisational Characteristics (organisational size and centralization) and role characteristics (viz. role ambiguity, conflict, and overload) were also found to be significant. Motivation, stress, job involvement,

occupational commitment, and union commitment significantly correlated with organisational commitment. Consequences of organisational commitment included turnover, intention to leave, intention to search, and perceived job alternatives.

## 2. Gap In Literature

Review of Literature was done with the purpose to study the research work in the field of organisational commitment and the following research gaps have been found.

Review of Literature has highlighted that Meyer et al., (1993) model of commitment has been widely used by the researchers. Altindis (2011); Colakoglu et al. (2010); Poon (2012) and many others have used this model in wide range of studies pertaining to health, IT, manufacturing, education, banking and Insurance sectors etc.

Kaur (2015) and Kaur (2011) have used Meyer and Allen model in their studies pertaining to Indian Banking sector. Purang (2011) has used this model in a multinational service organisation based in India. Jha (2011) used in IT sector of India. Zaitouni et al., 2011 used in banking sector of Kuwait; Abdullah and Ramay (2012) used in banking sector of Pakistan.

Organisational commitment as construct has been studied in relation to job security and work environment (Abdullah and Ramay, 2012); performance evaluation, timely feedback, promotion, justice and equity (Akhtar et al., 2013) prior experiences, personal characteristics (Lichliter, 2015); culture (Manetje and Martins 2009), emotional intelligence (Jayaweera, 2005); organisational support (Tumwesigye, 2010), organisational justice (Jepsen and Rodwell, 2012; Purang 2011).

Researchers have also studied OC in relation to demographic variables but the results are contradictory. There are studies viz. Jena, 2015; Cohen, 1992 which concluded that demographic variables influence OC and its dimensions. But Meyer and Allen (1991) found that demographic variables do not influence OC.

## 3. Conclusion

The above mentioned studies have highlighted that OC has been found to be impacted by number of factors such as psychological empowerment, job security performance evaluation, justice, equity, personal characteristics, culture and emotional intelligence. Studies of OC in relation to demographic variables are contradictory. Therefore, there is a need to conduct more research in the field of organisational commitment with special focus on Indian employees.

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