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The Impact of Organizational Structure on Organizational Commitment: A Comparison between Public and Private Sector Firms in Jordan

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Abstract
This study aims to examine the impact of organizational structure on organizational commitment in public and private sectors firms in Jordan. Three main structural dimensions are included in this research: formalization, centralization (in the form of hierarchy of authority and participation), and standardization. 412 surveys were administrated to 23 public and private firms in Amman and a sample of 239 valid questionnaires were obtained. Results reveal that all structure dimensions are related to organizational commitment in both sectors, except the hierarchy of authority. Among the structure dimensions, formalization exhibits the largest correlation with organizational commitment in public firms, whereas participation has the largest correlation with organizational commitment in private firms. Employee demographic has no impact on either structure dimensions or organizational commitment in either private or public sector. Furthermore, position in either private or public sector does not moderate the relationship between organizational structure and organizational commitment.
Keywords: organizational structure, formalization, centralization, hierarchy of authority, participation, standardization, organizational commitment, Jordan.

1. Introduction

Organizational structure is used by various firms as a control mechanism to affect employee work outcomes, to ensure that the required tasks are performed effectively and efficiently, and to assist the attainment of organizational goals and objectives (Katsikea et al, 2011). Organizational structure describes the internal characteristics of an organization (Daft, 1995). These internal characteristics receive attention since they are critical to organizational failure and success (Zheng et al, 2010; Auh and Menguc, 2007), and one of these is organizational commitment. Organizational commitment will enhance the success of an organization by making employees dedicated to the achievement of its goals (Grawe et al., 2012). The success of any organization can be predicted by its success in raising and maintaining employees' commitment. High levels of commitment contribute to positive attitudes and behaviors in organizations (Chughtai and Zafar, 2006; Sinclair et al., 2005; Shore and Martin, 1989; Srivastava, 2013).

A review of the organizational structure and organizational commitment literature indicates that the vast majority of this literature is from western countries and aims to examine the direct relationship between them. Only a few studies compared the dimensions of organizational structure, and the levels of organizational commitment between different sectors or firms. Little effort was made to explore the relationships of organizational structure with work outcomes in Jordan or other Arab countries (Al-Rasheed, 2003; Marzoq and Mohammad, 2003). The current research aims to add to the empirical studies on organizational structure and organizational commitment in firms from both the private and public sectors in Jordan.

This study will examine the effect of three dimensions (centralization, formalization, and standardization) of organizational structure on organizational commitment among employees in selected firms in Jordan. The aim of this research is to examine the possible mediating impact on the relationship between organizational structure and organizational commitment, depending on whether a firm is in the private or public sector. This study attempts to detect whether structure dimensions and organizational commitment differ among employees working in public and private firms in Jordan.

2. Organizational Structure

Organizational structure is defined as the formal system of authority relationships and tasks that control and coordinate employee actions and behavior to achieve goals in organizations (Jones, 2013). Organizational structure describes the formal arrangement of jobs and tasks in organizations (Robbins and Coulter, 2007); it describes the allocation of authority and responsibility, and how rules and regulation are executed by workers in firms (Nahm et al., 2003).

Most of extant studies on organizational structure focus on centralization, formalization, and standardization. Centralization refers to the concentration of decision-making authority at the upper levels of an organization (Jones, 2013). In a centralized organization, decision making is kept at the top level, whilst in a decentralized organization; decisions are delegated to lower levels (Daft, 1995). Centralization is composed of a hierarchy of

authority and participation (Hage & Aiken, 1967). Hierarchy of authority refers to the concentration of decision-making authority in performing tasks and duties (Jones, 2013). If the employees are allowed to make their own decisions when performing tasks, there is a low reliance on hierarchy of authority (Hage and Aiken, 1967). Participation in making decisions refers to the employee participating in decisions in an organization (Hage and Aiken, 1967). Decentralization is found to be related to many work related attitudes and behavior (Subramaniam and Mia, 2001)

Formalization refers to "the amount of written documentation in the organization" (Daft, 1995: 16). It indicates the extent to which job tasks are defined by formal regulations and procedures (Michaels et al., 1988). These rules and procedures are written to standardize operations in organizations. Standardization is the extent to which employees work according to standard procedures and rules in an organization (Hsieh and Hsieh, 2001). It ensures employees complete their duties and tasks in the required manner, and therefore, ensures that an employee's actions and behaviors are routine and predictable (Jones, 2013), and that similar work activities are performed in a uniform manner at all locations (Daft, 1995). Formalization and standardization are control mechanisms which seek to ensure that employee behaviors contribute to the achievement of goals in organizations. Price (1997) stated that formalization and standardization often coincide; however rules and procedures may not embodied in written document in small organization. When formalization and standardization are extensive in an organization; employees are accountable for their actions, and have no authority to break rules (Jones, 2013).

3. Organizational Commitment

Organizational commitment is being increasingly considered as a critical variable in work-related behavior and attitudes (Meyer et al., 2002), and is therefore, receiving considerable attention from researchers and authors. Organizational commitment reflects the attitude of employees towards the entire organization. It refers to the relative strength of an employee's identification with a particular organization (Mowday et al, 1982).

Organizational commitment has three main traits:

1- A strong acceptance and belief of the organization's aims and values.
2- A strong intent to remain with the organization,
3- Willingness to exert an additional significant effort to ensure the success of the organization, and
4- A strong intent or desire to remain with the organization (Mowday et al., 1982).

Organizational commitment improves performance and productivity (Meyer et al., 2002), organizational citizenship behaviors, job satisfaction and motivation (Chughtai & Zafar, 2006; Cooper-Hakim & Viswesvaran, 2005; Tella et al, 2007), and reduces turnover and absenteeism (Cooper-Hakim & Viswesvaran, 2005). Organizational commitment was also found to be affected by many organizational factors such as organizational justice (Chughtai & Zafar, 2006), supervision, pay, and demographic factors (Azeem, 2010), and organizational structure (Abdul Hameed et al., 2012; Nava et al., (2011). Although organizational commitment has different types, most studies focus on affective organizational commitment because it is most closely associated with previous work outcomes and organizational factors (Grawe et al, 2012). The current study follows the previous research and focuses only on the affective form of organizational commitment.

4. Organizational Structure and Work Related Outcomes

Research has confirmed that organizational structure is related to work attitudes and behavior in organizations (Subramaniam et al, 2002).The focus of this study is on the impact of organizational structure on organizational commitment; therefore, a review of the related literature that links organizational structure and work outcomes will be discussed.

Subramaniam et al, (2002) examined the relationship between decentralized structure and organizational commitment in the Australian Hotel Industry. They found that centralization had a positive relationship with organizational commitment. Similarly, Auh and Menguc (2007) investigated the roles formalization and centralization play on customer orientation within leading industrial production firms. The results indicated that, with regard to customer orientation, centralization had a negative effect while formalization was found to have a positive effect.

Nahm et al. (2003), investigated the correlation between various structural dimensions and the performance of the plant, and practices of time-based manufacturing practices in manufacturing firms. Results revealed that hierarchy layers, formalization, and the level of horizontal integration have a positive impact on decision-making and communication. The practices of time-based manufacturing are affected by communication and the locus of decision-making.

Abdul Hameed et al., (2012), investigated the impact of ten organizational factors on information technology adoption. Among these factors were three structural dimensions: formalization, centralization, and organizational size. Results indicated that neither formalization nor centralization were related to information technology adoption, while organizational size was found to have a moderate relationship with information technology

adoption.
Schminke et al., (2002), investigated the effect of organizational structure (centralization, formalization, size, and vertical complexity) and fairness perceptions. Results indicated that centralization, formalization, and organizational level exert a strong effect on perceptions of organizational justice. Finally, organizational level moderated many of the relationships between structural dimensions and organizational justice.
Zeffane (1994) explored the relationship between management style (formalization and standardization), centralization, and organizational commitment in public and private sector firms in Australia. Results showed higher commitment among employees in private firms. Furthermore, management style was perceived differently among employees in private and public firms.
On the basis of previous literature, the following hypotheses are proposed:
Hypothesis 1: Organizational structure (centralization, hierarchy of authority and participation, formalization, and standardization) will be positively related to organizational commitment in public and private sectors firms.
Hypothesis 2: Organization structure will not differ between firms in the public and private sectors.
Hypothesis 3: Organizational commitment will not differ between firms in the public and private sectors.
Hypothesis 4: the relationship between organizational structure dimensions and organizational commitment will be moderated by a firm's sector; that is, either public or private. Specifically, these relationships will be stronger in public sector organizations.

5. Methodology and Measure

5.1 Population and Sample

The study population consisted of twenty three firms from both the private and public sectors) located in Amman, the capital of Jordan. Private firms included food manufacturing, banks, health services, insurance, and telecommunication, while public firms included government ministries and public firms. Questionnaires were distributed by the author and a team of researchers to a contact manager at each of the selected firms. Each of the contact persons were asked to distribute them randomly to the participants. A total of 412 questionnaires were distributed equally in private and public firms and confidentiality was assured to all participants. Of the 412 questionnaires distributed, 362 were returned. 23 questionnaires were found to be not useful to the statistical analysis, leaving a total of 239 usable questionnaires, which forms a final response rate of 58%. Table 1 shows the participants' demographic variables.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of Demographic Variables

Category		Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	114	47.3
	Female	125	52.7
Education	Diploma and Secondary School	68	28.5
	Undergraduate (Bachelor)	136	56.9
	Postgraduate (Masters or PhD)	35	14.6
Age	20-29 years	106	44.4
	30-39 years	98	41
	40-50 years	28	11.7
	More than 50 years	7	2.9
Job Level	Manager	61	25.5
	Head of Division	73	30.5
	Subordinate	105	44
Length of tenure	Less than 5 years	104	43.5
	5-10 years	76	31.8
	More than 10 years	59	24.7
Organization Sector (for employees)	Public	136	56.9
	Private	103	43.1

Of the respondents, 47.3 % were male, and 52.7 % were female. 28.5 % had Diploma or Secondary School certificate. 56.9 % had Undergraduate Degree, and 14.6 % had Postgraduate Degrees. 85.4 % of the respondents were 39 years old or less, 11.7 % were 40 - 50 years old, and only 2.9 % were more than 50 years old. Regarding their position within the company, 25.5 % of the respondents described as Manager, 30.5 % were the Head of Division, and 44 % were subordinates. The length of tenure at the present place of employment was less than 5 years for 43.5 %, from 5-10 years for 31.8 %, with 24.7% of the respondents having been employed for more than 8 years by the current employer. Finally, 56.9 % of the respondents were from public organizations, and 43.1 % were from private organizations.

5.2 Measurement

The measurement of this research was developed by revising previous literature related to dimensions of organizational structure and organizational commitment. On the basis of this revision, formalisation was

measured using a scale developed by Podsakoff *et al.* (1993). Standardisation was measured using a scale developed by Hsieh and Hsieh (2001). Centralization in the form of hierarchy of authority and participation was measured using a scale developed by Hage and Aiken (1967) and used by Schminke *et al.* (2000). This scale consisted of nine items (five items to measure hierarchy of authority and four items to measure participation). Organisational commitment was measured by using the Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (Mowday *et al.*, 1979). Cronbach's alpha values for formalization (0.77), standardization (0.82), hierarchy of authority (0.68), participation (0.84), and organizational commitment (.88), are acceptable (Hair et al, 2003).

6. Results

Table 2 presents the correlation, mean, and standard deviation for research variables. As indicated in the table, the means of the study variables were higher for private firms when compared to public firms. The exception was for hierarchy of authority, which was higher in public firms (M = 3.51) than that in private firms (M = 3.28). All means of study variables had med-point levels.

Table 2. Correlations, Means, and Standard Deviations for Research Variables in Public Organizations

Variables		Mean	SD	1	2	3	4
1- Formalization	Public	2.99	0.74	-	-	-	-
	Private	3.16	0.67				
2- Standardization	Public	3.17	0.65	0.46**	-	-	-
	Private	3.29	0.70	0.44**			
3- Hierarchy of Authority	Public	3.51	0.81	0.04	0.029	-	-
	Private	3.28	0.75	0.36**	0.23**		
4- Participation	Public	2.44	1.03	0.11	0.33**	0.08	-
	Private	2.71	0.99	0.33**	0.22**	0.12	
5- Commitment	Public	3.03	0.50	0.28**	0.25**	0.04	0.30**
	Private	3.06	0.56	0.36**	0.21**	0.06	0.25**

Test of hypothesis 1.

A- Centralization in the form of Hierarchy of Authority and Participation and Organizational Commitment.

Results shows that organizational commitment is not related to Hierarchy of Authority (Centralization) in public sector firms (r = 0.04) and private sector firms (r = 0.06). This result therefore does not support hypothesis 1 with regard to Hierarchy of Authority.

Results in Table 2 indicate that participation shows a medium positive correlation (r = 0.30) with organizational commitment in public sector firms, while participation has a small positive correlation with organizational commitment in private sector firms (r = 0.25), providing support for Hypothesis 1 with regard to Participation.

B- Formalization and Organizational Commitment

The Pearson Correlation shows a small positive correlation (r = 0.28) between formalization and organizational commitment in public firms, and medium positive correlation (r = 0.36) between formalization and organizational commitment in private firms, providing support for Hypothesis 1 with regard to Formalization.

c- Standardization and Organizational Commitment

The results show that standardization has a small positive correlation with organizational commitment in both public (r = 0.25) and private firms (r = 0.21), providing support for Hypothesis 1 with regard to Standardization

Test of Hypothesis 2.

Hypothesis 2: Organization structure will not differ between firms in the public and private sectors.

An independent sample t-test was used to compare employee scores from public and private organizations with regard to the dimensions of organizational structure included in this study.

Table 3. Unrelated T Test Comparing Organisational Structure in Public and Private Firms

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variance		t-test for Equality of Means				
	F	Sig.	T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference
Formalization							
Equal variance assumed	0.347	0.557	-1.822	207	0.070	-0.17925	0.09838
Equal variance not assumed			-1.825	205.885	0.069	-0.17925	.09823
Standardization							
Equal variance assumed	0.751	0.387	-1.367	207	0.173	-0.17925	0.09344
Equal variance not assumed			-1.365	204.806	0.174	-0.17925	0.09354
Hierarchy of Authority							
Equal variance assumed	0.749	0.482	2.058	207	0.041	0.22309	0.10840
Equal variance not assumed			2.060	206.529	0.041	0.22309	0.10828
Participation in decision making							
Equal variance assumed	1.207	0.273	-1.872	207	0.063	-0.26305	0.14049
Equal variance not assumed			-1.874	206.164	0.064	-0.26305	0.14040

Results in Table 3 did not reveal a significant difference [T = -1.822, p = 0.07] between employees from public firms (M = 2.99, St.d = 0.74) and employees from private firms (M = 3.16, St. d = 0.67) in formalization scores, providing support for Hypothesis 2 with regard to Formalization.

Results in Table 3 did not reveal a significant difference [T = -1.367, p = 0.173] between employees from public firms (M = 3.17, St.d = 0.65) and employees from private firms (M = 3.29, St. d = 0.70) in standardization scores, providing support for Hypothesis 2 with regard to Standardization.

Findings in Table 3 showed a significant statistical difference at the P < 0.05 level for employees from public firms (M = 3.51, St.d = 0.81) and employees from private firms (M = 3.28, St. d = 0.75) in hierarchy of authority scores [T = 2.058, P = 0.041]. It can be proposed that public firms are more centralized than private firms because they have more authority layers. This result did not support Hypothesis 2 with regard to hierarchy of authority.

Results in Table 3 did not show a significant difference [T = -1.872, p = 0.063] between employees from public firms (M = 2.44, St.d = 1.03) and employees from private firms (M = 2.71, St.d = 0.99) in participation in decision making scores, providing support for Hypothesis 2 with regard to participation.

Test of hypothesis 3

Hypothesis 3: There will be no difference in organizational commitment between public and private firms.

Table 4. Unrelated T Test Comparing Organisational Commitment in Public and Private Firms

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variance		t-test for Equality of Means				
Organizational commitment	F	Sig.	T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference
Equal variance assumed	0.013	0.908	-0.432	207	0.666	-0.02888	0.06687
Equal variance not assumed			-0.432	206.164	0.666	-0.02888	0.06678

An independent sample t-test was conducted to compare the scores for employees from public and private firms on organizational commitment. Results in Table 4 do not reveal a significant difference [T = -0.432, p = 0.666] between employees from public firms (M = 3.03, St.d = 0.50) and employees from private firms (M = 3.06, St. d = 0.56) in organizational commitment score, providing support for Hypothesis 3.

Hypothesis 4: firm sector (public or private) will moderate the relationship between organizational structure dimensions and organizational commitment. Specifically, these relationships will be stronger in public sector organizations.

Table 5. Hierarchical Regression for Formalisation, Standardisation, Participation, Organization Sector, and their Interactions Predicting Organizational Commitment

Organizational Commitment					
Organizational structure dimensions	B	R^2	ΔR^2	Δ F	Sig. Δ F
Formalization	0.213**	0. 099	0. 099	22.851	0.000
Organization Sector	-0.019				
Formalization* Organization sector	0.214**	0.100	0.001	0.021	0.884
Standardization	0.236**	0.056	0.061	12.244	0.000
Organization Sector	-0.005				
Standardization* Organization sector	0.236**	0.056	0.000	0.013	0.910
Participation	0.131**	0.078	0.078	14.582	0.000
Organization Sector	-0.006				
Participation* Organization sector	0.132**	0.078	0.000	0.008	0.929

Note: hierarchy of authority did not enter the equation because it was not related to organizational commitment (hypothesis 1).

This hypothesis was tested by conducting a hierarchical regression analysis. In Step 1, organizational commitment was regressed for each of the organisational structure dimensions (formalisation, standardisation, and participation) separately. In Step 2, organization sector (the moderator) was entered, and in Step 3, the organisational structure dimensions and moderator interaction term were entered. Table 5 shows the results of the regression analyses.

Table 5 demonstrates that formalisation (β = 0.213, P = 0.000), standardisation (β = 0.236, P = .000, and participation (β = 0.131, P = 0.000) were related to organizational commitment but organization sector was not (P > 0.05). However, the relationships between organisational structure dimensions (formalisation, standardisation, and participation) and organizational commitment were not moderated by firm sector. Firm sector did not make a significant contribution to the explained variance in organizational commitment made by formalisation (P > 0.05), standardisation P > 0.05 and participation (P > 0.05). These results failed to provide support for Hypothesis 4.

7. Discussion

This study investigated the impact of organizational structure dimensions on organizational commitment in selected private and public firms in Amman. Specifically, it predicted that these structural dimensions would positively affect organizational commitment. The results supported these predictions with regard to formalization, standardization, and participation. These findings are consistent with previous research (Subramaniam et al, (2002; Auh and Menguc, 2007; Nahm et al., 2003). A possible explanation to the findings of this research is that the employees in Jordan, in both private and public firms prefers organizations characterized by written rules and documents. Furthermore, it seems that employees prefer to follow standard operating procedures that tell them how to fulfil their duties, and to participate in decision making.

The results indicated that the structural dimensions, formalization, standardization, and participation do not differ between employees from private and public firms. These firms had moderate levels of formalization, standardization, and hierarchy of authority and lower levels of participation. This result is inconsistent with Zeffane (1994). Furthermore, organizational commitment did not differ between employees from firms in the private and public sectors. Employees from both private and public firms showed a moderate level of commitment toward their firms. This result is inconsistent with Zeffane (1994). This indicates that the culture of the both employers and employees in both sectors (private and public) is similar. This, in turn, reflects the way firms are designed, and mirrors the types of firms in Arab countries, which are formalized, standardized, and centralized (Marzoq and Mohammad, 2003).

The results of this research demonstrate that a firm's sector (public or private) does not moderate the relationship between dimensions of organizational structure and organizational commitment. A firm's position (either public or private sector) did not make a significant contribution to the relationship between the dimensions of organizational structure and organizational commitment. Furthermore, these relationships did not change significantly in either sector. These results may be explained by stating that employees in both sectors had relatively similar expectations with regard to the dimensions of organizational structure. This may be due to the organizational culture of employees in Arab countries who prefer an organizational structure which clearly and predictable (Hofstede, 2001).

The results of this research have managerial implications. They provide further evidence that organizational structure affects employee' attitudes in private and public firms in Jordan, and suggest that managers in both private and public sectors who aim to increase employee' commitment should design the structure of their organizations to achieve high level of written rules and regulation. They also should depend on clear standards

and criteria when performing tasks and duties. Further, managers should allow employees to participate in decisions making, and in formulating work regulations and standards. Another implication is for those companies who intend to invest in Jordan; they should design their organization on the basis of high levels of formalization (written procedures and regulations), standardization (standards and criteria) and different levels of centralization (high or low) to increase employee' commitment in their firms.

Theoretically, the findings of this research contribute to the knowledge of the relationship between organizational structure and organizational commitment in public and private firms in Jordan. These results should assist in demonstrating the type and level of organizational structure that enhances employee' commitment in organizations. Future studies should examine the role of employee' culture in the relationship between the dimensions of organizational structure and employee attitudes and behavior in organization in Arab countries. Specifically, culture may change these relationships by making them positive or negative. Furthermore, future studies should also examine the impact of other dimensions of organizational structure, such as size and complexity, on job related attitudes and behavior. Future research should also focus upon whether the results of this study are similar across public and private sector organizations in other Arab countries.

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