

The Academician's commitment in the Higher Education Institutions of the Developing Countries like Pakistan: Its Perspectives

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Abstract

Presently, the Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) are facing with a core issue of organizational commitment (OC) among the academicians. It is quite embarrassing for the institutional high ups when the faculty members, due to low commitment level, leave the institutions thus casting a huge financial and academic burden. In the HEIs, the OC holds a prime importance to maintain academic and administrative consistency. In many respects, the longer stay of the academicians in an institution manifests his/her commitment to the institution. In the contemporary scenario, the phenomenon of OC is directly related with the institutional credibility as the competition at every level is high enough. In the developing countries, due to their weak economies, the HEIs cannot afford to hire the faculty on some high packages and other benefits. Resultantly, the faculty members start losing his/her commitment and look for certain other opportunities more lucrative in many respects. In Pakistan, the HEIs are facing an acute problem of lack of commitment level among the academicians due to various socio-economic reasons.

Keywords: Organizational commitment (Affective, Continuance, Normative), HEIs, Pakistan

1. INTRODUCTION

On the Part of an employee, his/her performance level in the institution entirely depends upon the job satisfaction (Samad, 2011). The commitment has a responsive approach in institution and job satisfaction is also multi-faceted in this respect. Job satisfaction is deemed to have a central concept in the organizational and occupational psychology. It clarifies the relationship between the working conditions of the employees on one hand and institutional output on the other (Shirazi et al., 2011). In this regard, the pay packages coupled with the fringe benefits accorded to the employees provide strong basis to develop the sense of belonging. In the same line, the level of self-esteem and contentment is related as well. Resultantly, the profits and other financial gains are also multiplied.

In most of the available research work, the 'organizational commitment' has been declared as a criterion variable while the job satisfaction as a predictor. The commitment and job satisfaction may be analyzed in numerous ways. The 'job satisfaction' is a degree of reaction to a particular work or job-related issues while the commitment is the overall positive feelings or response to the institution (Lambert & Hogan, 2009). Commitment should be more reliable than job satisfaction over the times and gets longer period after one is satisfied with his/her job (Nawab & Bhatti, 2011). How employees recognize their job environment can influence employee's motivation, performance and commitment. It also helps the institution to have a viable edge over its competitors (Choong et al., 2012). The capability to achieve the aims and goals according to the statutes depends upon numerous variables both from the quantitative and qualitative point of view such as in the academic and administrative staff (academicians), economic status, autonomy, legislation and institutional structure etc. (Dogan & Aydin, 2012). The academic staff is one of the most important elements listed under the human resources. The maximum value of the organizational commitment on the part of the academicians will guarantee their efficiency to a higher level.

The academic staff of the university may be highly committed, due to numerous reasons: because of the institution's standards, vision, missions and objectives aligned with those of his/her own (affective). Although leaving may affect his/her status, economic and social benefits (continuance) yet he/she may be committed to the institution due to the sense of responsibility or obligations (normative) (Allen & Meyer, 1990). All of these three types of commitments are independent and is practiced at different stages by all the employees of an institution (Allen & Meyer, 1996). Developing 'organizational commitment' among the academicians in Pakistan has become a grave issue for the universities. Retaining the high profile faculty in terms of their knowledge and experience is like the 'Achilles' heel for the HEIs. On the other hand, the Higher Education Commission (HEC) is also tightening the noose by imposing some very harsh academic restrictions on the both public and private sector's universities (Islam et al., 2012).

2. ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT

The commitment induces a strong feeling of acceptance and adherence to the institution among the employees (Malik et al., 2010). There are many strong reasons, for those who are committed, to stay as much longer as compared to those who have minimum level of commitment. Intrinsically, the committed employees find themselves aligned with the goals and objectives of the concerned institution. The result is that his/her output is at its maximum due to the social, economic and mental stability (Choong et al., 2012). For such employees, leaving of the institution becomes a big question mark due to many implications as the switchover may hamper their professional career and the social status as well. Precisely, each of the three types of commitments i.e. AC, CC and NC are independent and experienced at different levels by all the workforce of an institution (Irfan et al., 2013).

The previous researchers have diverse findings and conclusions about the association between the organizational commitment and job satisfaction. Some of them failed to construct a solid bridge between the organizational commitment and job satisfaction. But, to some others, the job satisfaction is an important predictor of the organizational commitment. There is a group of researchers those who expound that the organizational commitment is an evolutionary process. Its gets developed during the course of time as the employee stays and face certain experiences in the institution. Conversely, the job satisfaction is comparatively a quick response of the employee towards the institution. Collectively, the job satisfaction is perceived as one of the strong determinants of organizational commitment. Therefore, it is probable that well satisfied employees will be more committed to the institution (Saifuddin et al., 2012).

Till now, the available literature provides sufficient, if not comprehensive, material to build a sound theory based upon strong research about 'what is happening in the field of research on job satisfaction (JS), organizational commitment (OC) and its impact on the intention to leave (ITL) in the HEIs around the globe as well as in the developing countries (DCs). There are many studies on the existence of commitment with the job regarding the positivity and negativity e.g. job satisfaction and then its impact on the switchovers (Irfan et al., 2013). The implications in this regard for the employee and for the institutional productivity are very prominent as well. There are many studies those which investigate the association between the levels of commitment and that of job satisfaction (Saqib et al., 2014). Therefore, the literature offers a set of variables (working concepts) to frame a theoretical structure that provides standard and comprehensive information on the topic under discussion.

3. DIMENSIONS OF ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT

3.1 Affective commitment

In fact, the affective commitment is an unwritten agreement between the employee and the employer. Higher is the affective commitment, parallel to it the input on the part of the employees also goes high (Allen & Meyer, 1990). The ITLs and the resultant switchovers are also managed by the affective commitment implicitly. The studies reveal that the employees with higher affective commitment have longer stay in the institution due to their own will. The factor of optimism is also quite glaring by the employees those who are devoted and professionally consistent in their concerned institutions. On the other hand, the less committed employees are lethargic in their performance which cast poor impression upon the working environment of the entire institution. The affective commitment has certain very strong links with the present globally interlinked market which is very sensitive and responsive towards the organizational behavior. In this regard, the permanent faculty has a very strong standing as far as the academic credibility of the institution is concerned in the higher education (Irfan et al., 2013).

3.2 Continuance commitment

In the continuance commitment, the employee assumes that the social and the financial losses are much greater as compared to the benefits in case he/she changes their institution. In the switchovers, the level of performance is highly affected as well. As, the working environment and the conditions entirely change, the worker feels uncomfortable to adapt. The attitudes of the bosses and the co-workers also counts a lot during the probation period of an employee who is newly inducted. Therefore, deviation from the continuance commitment causes embarrassment for an employee to get settled, professionally and socially in the new working format (Riaz et al., 2010). As the rolling stone gathers no mass, most often the concerned employee has to face such difficulties those which cannot be brought into account prior to the switchovers (Irfan et al., 2013).

3.3 Normative commitment

In the higher education institutions (HEIs) the commitment level among the teachers can be gauged by their efficiency in the class room to the best contentment of their students, their working relationship with their colleagues and subordinates and above all, their submission to the rules and regulations as furnished by the university. The HEIs play a fundamental responsibility in the uplift of the economic status of any country. In this regard, the academic institutions are the major supplement in every socio-economic sector being the only origin of the workforce (Irfan et al., 2013). Only the committed academicians can deliver and produce highly qualified and skilled manpower which is a key to the success of not only the HEIs but it also boosts the national exchequer

as well.

4. ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

The professionalism is the only spirit behind the organizational commitment. In Pakistan, it is direly needed to establish a training institute where some highly experienced professionals may be engaged those who can promote organizational commitment in those teaching professionals who are aspiring to pursue their career in the teaching profession. The phenomenon of the organizational commitment has a strong bracket with the employee's demographics, his/her social surroundings and last but not the least is the working environment in which he/she renders his/her services (Malik et al., 2010). Consequently, in a conducive atmosphere, the policy makers find their job much easier to frame and implement such policies which can enhance the social and academic status of the institution.

The employee's emotional attachment, recognition and contribution in the institution refers to the organizational commitment. This phenomenon is three dimensional which consist of affective, continuance and normative contents of the commitment (Samad, 2011). The affective commitment (AC) is that the workforce voluntarily continues working with great loyalty and devotion. The continuance commitment (CC) ensures that workforce maintain their membership with the institution due to some associated costs. However, in normative commitment, the individual usually show responsibility or to be morally bound to continue in the institution. The organizational commitment is a stronger belief which leads to the acceptance of the aims and standards of the institution. Consequently, the employee willingly exerts his/her efforts to an extent on behalf of the institution and strives to sustain his/her membership in the institution (Irfan, Nawaz, & Saqib, 2013).

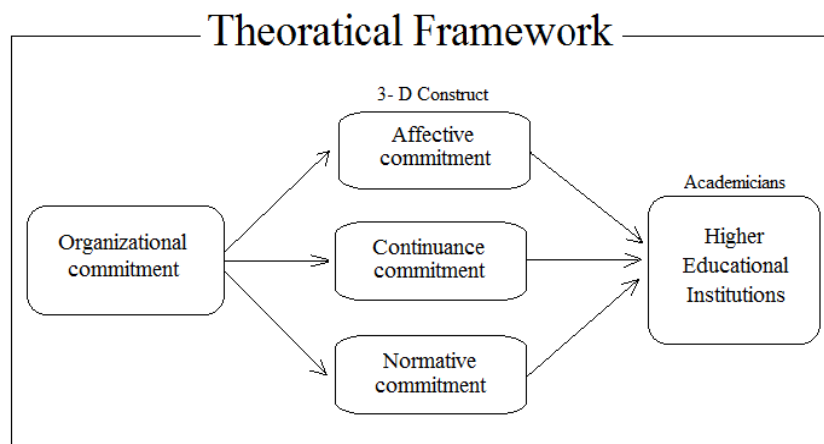
According to the authentic findings in the literature, it can be concluded that some flexible and smooth working conditions, adequate salary packages and quality are important predictors of organizational commitment in the faculty of Pakistan's public sector universities (Saiduddin et al., 2010). The teachers working in such conditions show their devotion and loyalty towards their institution to their level best. It is a matter of simple understanding that the level of JS is directly related to the socio-economic status of the teachers which is further strongly bonded to their commitment level (Mudor, 2011). The creativity and participation among the students can only be enhanced if and only if they are groomed by some very committed teachers at every level. The policy makers and the academic leaders in this regard should take fundamental actions for the most favorable conditions of extrinsic and intrinsic rewards for work to make their employees highly committed and satisfied to reap the benefits of organizational behaviors (performance & motivation) (Khalid et al., 2012).

5. ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT IN HEIs OF PAKISTAN

The investment in the education sector in Pakistan is not up to mark. While only the education can bring about some very remarkable and lasting changes in the socio-economic spheres of any country. In Pakistan, the policy makers still find them in an embarrassing position while planning about the organizational commitment (Sial et al., 2011). The lack of commitment by the teachers directly affects their efficiency in the classroom. Consequently, the participation level of both the teachers and the students falls below the standard, bringing down the status of the institution along. The institution cannot achieve its aims and objectives and loses its credibility which enhances the ITL among the teachers. Therefore, promoting commitment among the academicians' is an important institutional goal to achieve a sustainable academic development (Saifuddin et al., 2012).

Generally, the researchers have emphasized to analyze different parameters affecting the job commitment of an employee in the public sector universities. The present situation has been entirely changed with the establishment of private universities. Along with, the process of hiring the faculty members also got changed. The private sector offers exorbitant salary packages and allied benefits to the skilled and qualified teachers. This phenomenon has changed the whole profile of the employment strategies. To acquire and maintain their social and economic status, the faculty members always seek for the suitable jobs. This study is related with the different dimensions of the organizational commitment, the personal attributes and its impacts on the ITL.

Figure 1.1 Theoretical framework



6. DISCUSSIONS

The academicians, their commitment to the institution and the university itself falls on the same line regarding the subject under consideration. The academic staff must be facilitated to update their knowledge and polish their capabilities. It is possible only when supported by the institution financially (Nawaz & Saifuddin, 2010). The phenomenon of commitment is well thought as job-related feelings, which reflects the individuals' professional involvement and plan to put his/her efforts in the institution. In this point of view, the organizational commitment is defined as a psychosomatic attachment to the institution by which the employees comprehensively shows their contribution in the work. The concept of the institutional engagement is defined as some ideologies, norms and standards, shared philosophies, suppositions, prospects, approaches and attitudes regarding the institutions. The shared attitudes, meanings and standards form the nucleus of the institutional culture which provides a base of the employee's attitude (Balay&Ipek, 2010).

The literature has examined the 'organizational commitment' in the recent research regarding the organizational psychology and organizational behavior through two popular approaches i.e. commitment related feelings and commitment related behaviors/attitudes. Likewise, in determining and manipulating the organizational outcomes, the organizational commitment has also been identified as a crucial factor as it is very important for overall performance of the organization, quality and productivity (Choong et al., 2011). The workforce who is committed to their institution would have an aspiration to continue institutional membership. If the employees agree with the institutional goals and wish to stay in the institution then they will continue to work for the institution and do not respond any offers as such. On the other hand, the employees may desire to leave the institution if they are intrinsically attached and involved in the institutional pursuits (Shah et al., 2010).

The organization requires the well committed workforce to attain their aims and objectives in a well-organized and effective manner. The organizational commitment involves employee's psychosomatic state that makes them more dedicated to their organization and their job. Generally, the organizational commitment has two aspects; Firstly their treatment with the employees according to certain legal and moral codes. Secondly, it relates to the employee's psychosomatic state that makes him/her more committed and dedicated towards the organization. Since, it is difficult to predict about a committed employee when he/she has been treated unequally, unethically and illegally (Judeh et al., 2011). The positive attitudes like organizational commitment, involvement and interest in the job is the result of job satisfaction. In any kind of institution, the graph of job satisfaction of an employee fluctuates between two extremes i.e. the satisfaction and dissatisfaction from his/her job. On the scale of two extremes, where does an employee stands, depend upon the different contextual and job related factors. The job satisfaction is a global issue and a multi-dimensional research is available to help the institutions in comprehending the matters relating JS and thus resolving them accordingly (Sattar et al., 2011; Irfan et al., 2013).

7. CONCLUSION

The faculty member's decisions as to whether to stay in the institution may be more influenced by their affective attitudes towards the institution called the affective commitment. The employee's perception about his/her best professional career affects the organizational commitment as well. Among them, the employees, those who are idealist regarding their professional status, find it very difficult to accommodate and sustain themselves due to their priorities which cannot be materialized by their employer because of the prevailing socio-economic conditions. The professional environment and the socio-economic status of the employee act as a catalyst in inducing the ITL and causing switchover among the employee as the both factors carry a great deal of nuisance value for the concerned person. The job satisfaction matters a lot on the part of the employee and on the other

hand the output of the institution is the main concern of the employer.

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