

Organizational commitment: A case in academia

Jayarathna SMDY

Lecturer, Department of Human Resource Management Faculty of Commerce and Management Studies University of Kelaniya Sri Lanka

Abstract

Human resource attributes differentiate significantly from one organization to another. It is a key element of an organization in achieving goals. Human capital becomes one of the key factor of an organizational success. Thus, human resource has become the most important aspect of the organization in achieving the objectives with the highest effectiveness. Hence, organizational commitment has received extensive attention from the researchers due to its significant impact towards the organizational outcomes. The purpose of this study is to investigate the organizational commitment of academics in Sri Lanka. The data were collected from 136 academics of a reputed academic institution in Sri Lanka through a self-administered questionnaire. The level of organizational commitment measured by a measure developed by Allen and Meyer (1990) to measure affective, continuance and normative commitment. The results shows that moderate commitment is exhibited by the academics. This emphasizes that the academic institutions should focus more on developing policies and strategies in enhancing the organizational commitment among the academics where it where it can create good citizens with extra ordinary knowledge.

Keywords: Organizational Commitment, Academics

Introduction

With the immense impact of globalization, there is a huge competition among organizations where they are seeking to achieve the competitive edge. Hence, it has prompt a numerous changes in the workplace. It is indeed that having positive attitude towards the organizations is significant; have loyalty towards the organization and demonstrate commitment, honesty and cooperation with peers to enhance the individual performance as well as the organizational performance. When the employees are satisfied with their work, they display behaviors as organizational satisfaction, commitment, performance, involvement and desire to stay with the organization, which make a difference in the life of the organization. Also a preferable working environment with un-biased processes support to increase the readiness of the employees to perform the task and duties that assigned for them in the organization. Thus, it is important to develop favorable organizational behaviors and a positive working environment to achieve high-performance goals that result in the organizational success.

Thus, organizational commitment in this context highlights as a significant factor where it affects the employees' identification with the organizational goals, likelihood to stay with the job, retain as member of the organization and the level of effort they put to the job and to the organization (Jaramillo, Mulki, & Marshall, 2005; Hartman and Bambacas, 2000; Meyer and Allen, 1997; Van Breugel, Van Olffen, & Olie, 2005) [8, 5, 13, 14]. Organizational commitment is a concept where it is a central part of Human Resource Management Models. The new Human Resource Management models seeks to stimulate high commitment of the employees hence it helps in cultivating positive and proactive behavior which they exhibit their effort levels beyond the contract of employment (Shepherd & Mathews, 2000) [16].

Organizational commitment is the psychological state that symbolizes the employee's relationship with the

organizational and it reduces the probability of the turnover of the employees who works for the organization (Allen and Meyer, 2000) [2]. This concept is very important, as it is associated with desirable outcomes such as, absenteeism reduction, turnover reduction, and enhancing job performance (Jaramillo *et al.*, 2005; Joiner & Bakalis, 2006; Meyer and Allen, 1997) [8, 9, 13]. In addition, organizational commitment has a significant impact on several attitudes and behaviors of the employees such as intention to leave, turnover, punctuality, organizational citizenship behavior, attitudes towards organizational change and job performance (Allen and Meyer, 1997; 2000; Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001; Rego & Cunha, 2008) [13, 2, 12, 15].

Employees with a high commitment attempt to additionally fulfill what is expected from them and they try to achieve the organizational objectives. Also Adeyemo (2007), cited in Faisal & Al-Esmael, (2014) [4] found that Organizational Commitment is a function of job satisfaction. He stated that when employee's needs are met, there is a possibility of demonstrating high level of commitment. Providing personal development opportunities to the employees from the organization, has shown a significant impact on employee's commitment and also employee commitment can be encouraged by identifying and rewarding for growth of personal development. There are some Human Resource practices, which have been found to be favorable for employee commitment such as communication practices, rewards and work life balance practices (Faisal, & Al-Esmael, 2014) [4].

All these facts highlight that organizational commitment is one major attitude relating to work as it helps on improving individual performance ultimately, enhances the organizational performance. However enhancing organizational commitment helps in employees to focus their job well and enhances the psychological attachment toward the job. When the employees are not committed, they tend to get absent, reduce job performance, job satisfaction and

increase the stress level too which lead to deteriorate the health condition of the employees.

Hence enhancing the organization commitment has been a significant issue in the current world. Thus, this study investigates the commitment of academics. In addition, the researcher is interested in identifying whether the level of the commitment differs with the personnel characteristics of the academics. Hence, this study was conducted to identify the level of commitment of academics, and for the privacy concerns, the name of the academic institution remain anonymous.

Literature review

According to the philosophy of Human Resource Management (HRM), employee commitment is a shared responsibility between line management and the Human Resource function. This is one of the characteristics that differentiate HRM from the traditions of personnel management (Shepherd & Mathews, 2000) [16].

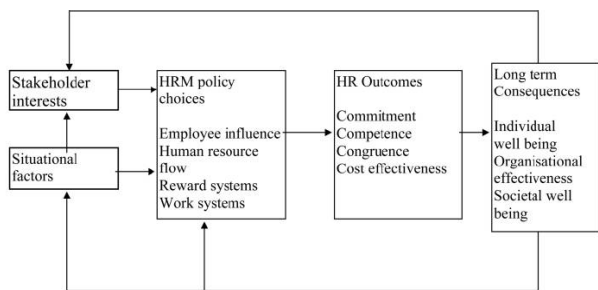


Fig 1: A broad causal mapping of the determinants and consequences of HRM policies Source: Beer, Spector, Lawrence, Mills and Walton (1984)

Figure 01 clearly explains, how the HRM policies are affect by the situational factors and the stakeholders interest, and how this HRM plocies leads to HR outcomes and it highlights the organizational commitment as a HR outcome in this model. This shows that the commitment leads to long term conseques, where it enhances the individual well being, organizational weelbeing and the soceity well being.

When the organizations follow fair policies on distribution of salaries and fringe benefits lead to positive mental state as well positive behaviours. When employees perceived that they are treated unfairly due to unfair intepersonal behaviours, unfair policies and procedures will develop law job satisfaction and commitment of the employees (Faisal & Al-Esmael, 2014) [4].

Organizational commitment signifies a psychological attachment to the organization where the employee works (Joiner & Bakalis, 2006) [9]. According to Allen and Meyer (1990) [1] commitment has three dimesions which are affective, continuance and normative commitement. Affective commitment is defined as the “employee’s emotional attachment to, identification with, and involvement in the organization” and continunace commitment is defined as “commitment based on costs that employees associate with leaving the organization.” Normative commitment is defined as “an employee’s feelings of obligation to remain with the organization.”

Kwon and Banks (2004) [10] found that task identity, task significance, skill variety, autonomy, and feedback which are

characteristics of the job are positively associated with the organizational commitment. Marital status and/or family responsibilities have been associated with organizational commitment (Hrebiniak & Alutto, 1972; Iverson & Buttigieg, 1999) [6, 7]. Academics with increased family responsibilities may possible to select family needs over the organizational needs to resolve the work family conflict (Iverson and Buttigieg, 1999) [7]. Therefore, this have a negative relationship with commitment. Mathieu and Zajac (1990) [11] found that women are more committed to the organization and work than men are. In addition Joiner and Bakalis (2006) [9] found that Support from the supervisors and co-workers is expected to enhance the academic’s commitment towards the job and the organization.

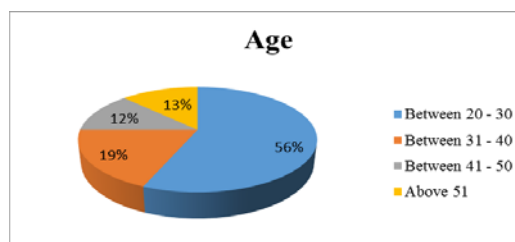
Methodology

The purpose of this study is to identify the organizational commitment of the academics. Rather to establish relationships, the researcher had done a survey to identify the organizational commitment of the academics. This study was conducted in a natural setting where the work proceeds normally. No any artificial or contrived setting was created where none of the variables were controlled or manipulated by the researcher in this study. The data was collected from the individual academics of a reputed academic institution as the unit of analysis of this survey which is individual. Time horizon of this study is one-shot or cross-sectional as the data was collected within 17th to 23rd of August 2015.

The study is done with the help of administrative questionnaires, which prepared according to the measures of dimensions. Seven point scale was used to weight from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The questionnaire was a standard questionnaire which developed by Allen and Mayer and there are three dimensions to be tested in the questionnaire which measure the overall commitment. They are; Affective commitment, Continuance commitment and Normative commitment. The questionnaires were distributed among 150 academics and 14 questionnaires were returned. So, the response rate was 91%. The data was analyzed through using the Microsoft Excel software package.

Data Presentation and Analysis

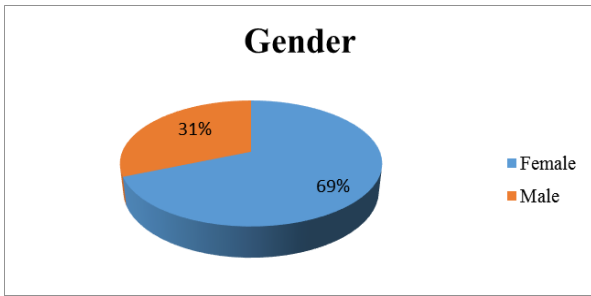
Analysis of the Personal Details



Source: Survey Data

Fig 2: Age Distribution of the Respondents

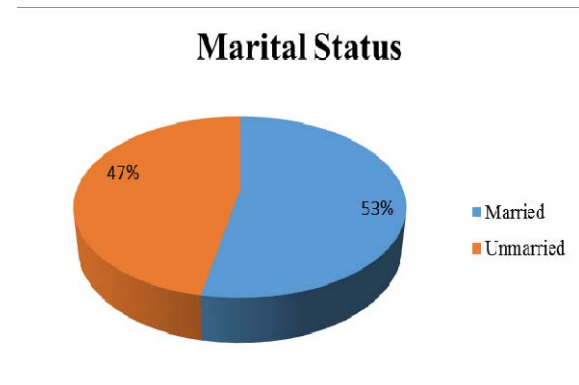
Out of 32 respondents, 56% were between 20-30 age category, which is the majority and 12% of the respondents were between 41-50 age category which is least number of respondents. More details are depicted in figure 02.



Source: Survey Data

Fig 3: Gender Distribution of the Respondents

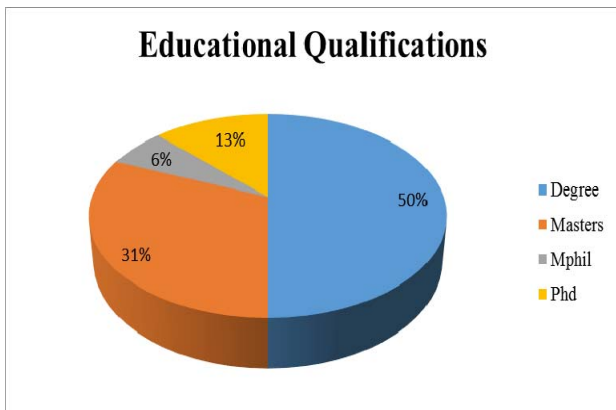
According to figure 03, 69% of the respondents were female which is the majority and 31% respondents were male.



Source: Survey Data

Fig 4: distribution of the Marital Status of the Respondents

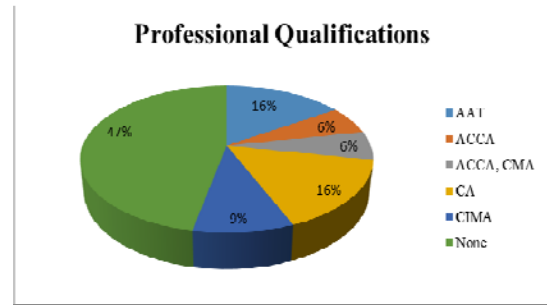
As figure 04 shows, 53% of the respondents were married and 47% of the respondents were unmarried.



Source: Survey Data

Fig 5: Distribution of the Educational Qualifications of Respondents

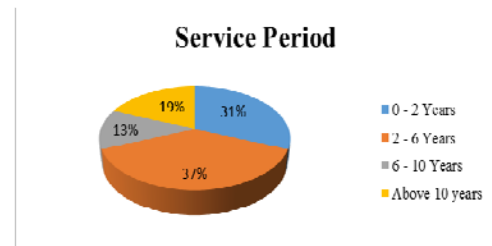
Figure 05 depicts the Distribution of the Educational Qualifications of Respondents. 50% of the respondents were degree holders where 31% of the respondents have obtained the masters degree. There were 6% of Pphil holders and 12% were Phd holders.



Source: Survey Data

Fig 6: Distribution of the Professional Qualifications of Respondents

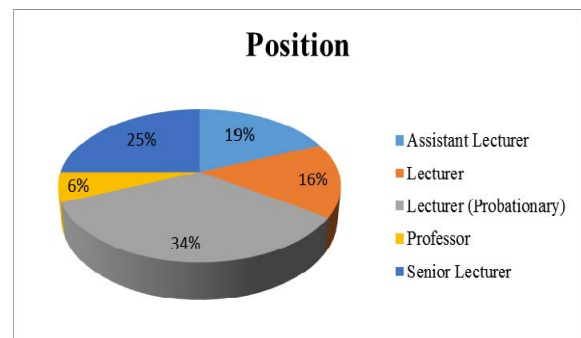
As the figure 06 shows, majority of the respondents does not possess professional qualifications (47%). 16% of the respondents have obtained AAT (Association of Accounting Technicians of Sri Lanka), and CA (Chartered Accountants of Sri Lanka) and 6% of the respondents have obtained both ACCA (Association of Chartered Certified Accountants) and CMA (Certified Management Accountant). 6% of the respondents have obtained AAT and 9% have obtained CIMA (Chartered Institute of Management Accountants)



Source: Survey Data

Fig 7: Distribution of the Service Period of Respondents

The figure 07 shows the Distribution of the Service Period of Respondents. 37% of the respondent's service is 2 – 6 years, which is the majority where 13% were, possess 6-10 years' service period. Out of 32 respondents 31% were between 0-2 years and 19% were above 10 years.



Source: Survey Data

Fig 8: Distribution of the Position of Respondents

Figure 08 shows that 34% of the respondents were Lecturer (Probationary) which was the majority. 25 % of the respondents were Senior Lecturers, 19% were Assistant Lecturers, 16% were Lecturers and 6%, which was least, were Professors.

Analysis of the Organizational Commitment

The survey data of organizational commitment were analyzed according the personal details, dimensions of organizational commitment and the overall commitment of the respondents.

Analysis According to Personal Details

Table 1: Organizational Commitment According to Age

| Age | Mean Value |
|-----------------|------------|
| Between 20 - 30 | 3.85 |
| Between 31 - 40 | 3.86 |
| Between 41 - 50 | 4.21 |
| Above 51 | 4.56 |

Source: Survey Data

As the table 01 depicts respondents in the all age groups have showed a moderate level organizational commitment. However, when the age increases the level of organizational commitment has increased. The mean value of the commitment between 20-30 age group is 3.85 and the mean value of the age group above 51 is 4.56 which shows that, they are more commitment towards the organization when the age is increased.

Table 2: Organizational Commitment According to Gender

| Gender | Mean Value |
|--------|------------|
| Male | 4.10 |
| Female | 4.32 |

Source: Survey Data

When considering the organizational commitment between male and female, both the groups possess a moderate level organizational commitment. But when considering the mean values there is a slight more high value of commitment of female rather male.

Table 3: Organizational Commitment According to Marital Status

| Marital Status | Mean Value |
|----------------|------------|
| Married | 4.11 |
| Unmarried | 4.14 |

Source: Survey Data

As table 03 shows, both married and unmarried respondents have showed a moderate level of organizational commitment and there is no any significant difference between both groups.

Table 4: Organizational Commitment According to Educational Qualifications

| Educational Qualifications | Mean Value |
|----------------------------|------------|
| Degree | 4.12 |
| Masters | 3.93 |
| Mphil | 4.33 |
| Phd | 4.54 |

Source: Survey Data

According table 04, Master degree holders possess a low level of commitment rather the others. Phd holders possessing commitment which is much higher than the moderate level (mean value = 4.54), which means that they are more committed than the other respondents are. Degree holders and

Mphil holders possess a moderate level of organizational commitment.

Table 5: Organizational Commitment According to Professional Qualifications

| Professional Qualifications | Mean Value |
|-----------------------------|------------|
| AAT | 4.02 |
| ACCA | 4.29 |
| ACCA and CMA | 2.83 |
| CA | 4.44 |
| CIMA | 4.61 |

Source: Survey Data

When considering the organizational commitment according to professional qualifications, respondents who possess both ACCA and CMA qualifications possess least organizational commitment (mean value = 2.83) which shows that they are not much committed to the organizations. CIMA holders possess higher commitment (mean value = 4.61) than the other respondents, which is the highest. All the other respondents possess moderate commitment towards the organization except the respondents who possess both ACCA and CMA.

Table 6: Organizational Commitment According to Service Period

| Service Period | Mean Value |
|----------------|------------|
| 0 - 2 Years | 4.06 |
| 2 - 6 Years | 4.21 |
| 6 - 10 Years | 3.56 |
| Above 10 years | 4.42 |

Source: Survey Data

As table 06 shows people who work for the institute above 10 years have developed higher organizational commitment (mean value = 4.42) than the others have. But people 6-10 years' service possess the least commitment that the others. Respondents who possess 0-2 years' service and 2-6 years also possess a moderate level of organizational commitment as the others.

Table 7: Organizational Commitment According to Position

| Position | Mean Value |
|-------------------------|------------|
| Assistant Lecturer | 4.28 |
| Lecturer (Probationary) | 4.50 |
| Lecturer | 3.54 |
| Senior Lecturer | 4.37 |
| Professor | 4.29 |

Source: Survey Data

When considering the organizational commitment according to the respondent's positions, all the respondents possess a moderate level of organizational commitment. However, out of all, lecturer's possess a low level of commitment (mean value = 3.54) compared to others. Lecturer (Probationary) possess a higher level of commitment (mean value = 4.5) compared to other positions. However, senior lecturers and professors possess a moderate level of organizational commitment.

Analysis of Organizational Commitment According to Dimensions

Table 8: Organizational Commitment According to Organizational Commitment Dimensions

| Dimension | Mean Value |
|-------------|------------|
| Affective | 4.06 |
| Continuance | 4.14 |
| Normative | 4.16 |

Source: Survey Data

When considering the dimensions of the organizational commitment, there is no any significant difference among them. All the respondents possess a moderate level of organizational commitment and there is no any significant difference to be identified among the affective, continuance, and normative commitment.

Analysis of Overall Organizational Commitment

Table 9: Overall Organizational Commitment

| Variable | Mean Value |
|---------------------------|------------|
| Organizational Commitment | 4.12 |

Source: Survey Data

The overall organizational commitment of the respondents is in a moderate level as the mean value is 4.12.

Discussion

Organizational commitment of the respondents were reported in a moderate level and there is no any significant difference identified between the affective, continuance and normative dimensions if organizational commitment.

In this survey, it was found that though the level of commitment is in a moderate level of all respondents, when the age increases the respondents have showed a high commitment rather than the commitment which showed by the young people. Mathieu and Zajac (1990)^[11] found that age is positively related to organizational commitment. Female has showed a higher commitment than male. Accordingly, Mathieu and Zajac, (1990)^[11] found that women are more committed to the organization and work than men are, but in this study there is no any significant difference found between the organizational commitment level of married and unmarried respondents.

Considering the educational level of the respondents, Master degree holders possess a low level of commitment where Phd holders possessing the highest commitment among the other respondents; as they are getting more privileges than the others, they are committed to the organization. Degree holders and Mphil holders possess a moderate level of organizational commitment. As the master degree holders are the beginners, they might getting chances to work with the other institutes, which might be the reason for a low commitment and Phd holders are the most senior and recognized academics in the institute. Thus they are more psychologically attached to the organization than others. Hence, level of education was negatively related to organizational commitment (Kwon & Banks, 2004)^[10]

Those who possess professional qualifications have also showed a moderate level commitment, but people who possess

more qualifications have showed lower commitment than others have. CIMA qualifiers showed highest commitment than ACCA, AAT, and CA holders. The respondents who worked for the organization above 10 years showed a higher organizational commitment than the others did. As a person worked for an organization for a longer time, it automatically creates a psychological attachment towards the organization. That will enhance the satisfaction as well and the loyalty towards the organization and it reduces the absenteeism and turnover (Shepherd & Mathews, 2000)^[16].

Academics have several privileges than other professions. They are get a better salary, flexible working hours, chance to work with other organizations, higher reputation and opportunity for the educational advancement but yet they shows a moderate commitment to the organization.

Conclusion

This survey has found that the organizational commitment of the academics is in a moderate level. Academics are knowledge workers. They generate and disseminate the knowledge to the world. So that the always are in search of knowledge. Not only that academics give their support for the national development, support the government in policy decisions. Nevertheless, they support the private sector in enhancing their competitive edge to compete with the globalization. Hence, the academics are commitment to their job but they are not psychologically attached with the organization. As the academics get chances to work with the external world, they get massive opportunities to work with which tend to perform their job well but not loyal with the organization, they work.

This study is subject to a number of potential limitations. The outcomes of this study may not be able to be generalized to other universities since the organizational culture may be very different in other universities. So that the future researchers can take the samples from different universities and conduct this survey and make the findings more generalized. Not only that to identify the different cultural values, this study can be conduct in an international nature where the academics hold different cultural values. Finally, this study did not examine the antecedents and the consequences of organizational commitment. Further research can be develop in broader view that incorporates both antecedent and consequences of commitment.

References

1. Allen NJ, Meyer JP. The measurement and antecedents of affective, continuance and normative commitment to the organization. *Journal of occupational psychology*. 1990; 63(1):1-18.
2. Allen NJ, Meyer JP. Construct validation in organizational behavior research: The case of organizational commitment. In *Problems and solutions in human assessment*. Springer US., 2000, 285-314.
3. Beer M, Spector B, Lawrence PR, Mills Q, Walton R. *Managing human resources*, Free Press, New York, 1984.
4. Faisal MN, Al-Esmal BA. Modeling the enablers of organizational commitment. *Business Process Management Journal*. 2014; 20(1):25-46. doi:10.1108/BPMJ-08-2012-0086
5. Hartmann LC, Bambacas M. Organizational commitment: A multi method scale analysis and test of effects. *The*

- International Journal of Organizational Analysis. 2000; 8(1):89-108.
6. Hrebiniak LG, Alutto JA. Personal and role-related factors in the development of organizational commitment. *Administrative science quarterly*, 1972, 555-573.
 7. Iverson RD, Buttigieg DM. Affective, normative and continuance commitment: can the 'right kind' of commitment be managed. *Journal of management studies*. 1999; 36(3):307-333.
 8. Jaramillo F, Mulki JP, Marshall GW. A meta-analysis of the relationship between organizational commitment and salesperson job performance: 25 years of research. *Journal of Business Research*. 2005; 58(6):705-714.
 9. Joiner TA, Bakalis S. The antecedents of organizational commitment: the case of Australian casual academics. *International Journal of Educational Management*. 2006; 20(6):439-452. doi:10.1108/09513540610683694
 10. Kwon IG, Banks DW. Factors related to the organizational and professional commitment of internal auditors. *Managerial Auditing Journal*. 2004; 19(5):606-622. doi:10.1108/02686900410537748
 11. Mathieu JE, Zajac DM. A review and meta-analysis of the antecedents, correlates, and consequences of organizational commitment. *Psychological bulletin*. 1990; 108(2):171.
 12. Meyer JP, Herscovitch L. Commitment in the workplace: Toward a general model. *Human resource management review*. 2001; 11(3):299-326.
 13. Meyer JP, Allen NJ, Allen NJ. *Commitment in the workplace*. Sage Publications, 1997.
 14. Van Breugel G, Van Olffen W, Olie R. Temporary liaisons: The commitment of 'temps' towards their agencies. *Journal of Management Studies*. 2005; 42(3):539-566.
 15. Rego A, Cunha MP. Workplace spirituality and organizational commitment: an empirical study. *Journal of Organizational Change Management*. 2008; 21(1):53-75. doi:10.1108/09534810810847039
 16. Shepherd JL, Mathews BP. Employee commitment: academic vs practitioner perspectives. *Employee Relations*. 2000; 22(6):555-575. doi:10.1108/01425450010379199