

## Understanding Side Bets of Organizational Commitment for Technical Job Holders

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This study investigated the impact of various predictors (Employees' age, length of service, locus of control, perceived job characteristics and perceived organizational structure) on organizational commitment (OC) of technical job holders. 120 technical employees from a public sector organization participated in this study. Multiple linear regression (simultaneous) analysis was carried out in order to estimate the relative impact of various predictors on OC of technical job holders. Results indicated that the perceived adequacy of the organizational structure was the most dominant predictor of OC among technical employees followed by locus of control (internal) and perceived favourable job characteristics. Age and length of service also contributed positively in the total variance of OC, however, their contributions were not found to be statistically significant. The obtained results indicated that in predicting the OC of technical job holders, organizational characteristics were relatively more important as compared to personal characteristics.

**Keywords:** Organizational Commitment (OC), Technical Job, Personal Characteristics, Organizational Characteristics

Employees' commitment towards their organization is extremely important to achieve organizational objectives. Many researchers have found that the psychological bond between employee and employer is an important predictor of work-related attitudes and behaviours (Mathieu & Zajac, 1990; Meyer, Stanley, Herscovitch, & Topolnytsky, 2002; Mowday, Porter, & Steers, 1982; Van Dick, 2004). The concept of OC has been the focus of management and human resources department in many organizations (Idris, 2014). In recent era, after the globalization and advances in computer technology and telecommunication, it has become a challenging task for the managers to attract talents and ensuring an environment where those employees can contribute for a long period of time in the organization (Singh & Gupta, 2015).

Research showed that employees with stronger OC find work more meaningful and are more determined to work well even in difficult situations (Iun & Huang, 2006; Sinclair, Tucker, Cullen, & Wright, 2005). Cohen (2014) has found modest relationship of OC with turnover and

relatively high correlation with organizational citizenship behaviour (OCB), or extra-role behaviour.

OC has largely been studied in the field of organizational behaviour and management. Researchers and professionals equally have studied the concept of OC for more than half a century beginning with its definition. Commitment has been defined as attachment, identification, or loyalty to the entity of the commitment (Morrow, 1993; Robbins & Judge, 2019). Meyer and Allen (1991, 1997), and Meyer and Herscovitch (2001) compiled a list of definitions of OC and analyzed the similarities and differences. They found the "core essence" of commitment as "a force that binds an individual to a course of action that is of relevance to a particular target" (Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001). Although approaches to the definition of OC vary considerably, certain trends are evident. A common theme in the OC with various definitions share is the bond or linking of the individual to the organization.

The larger part of the studies on OC has been based either on social identity theory (e.g.

Demir, 2011; Kang, Stewart & Kim, 2011; Tuna, Ghazzawi, Tuna, & Catir, 2016); or on attitudinal and behavioural commitment to the organization (e.g. Meyer & Allen, 1991; Pei-Lee & Sun, 2012; Proter & Steers, 1973).

#### ***Personal characteristics and OC:***

The relationships between various personal characteristics and measures of OC have probably been more widely studied. Commitment has been shown to be positively related to age (Angle & Perry, 1981; Mathieu & Zajac, 1990; Meyer & Allen, 1984; Morris & Sherman, 1981; Steers, 1977) and tenure (Buchanan, 1974; Meyer & Allen, 1984; Mottaz, 1988; Mowday, Steers, & Porter, 1979; Singhal & Sood, 1981).

Beyond the demographics, the literature suggests that an employee's personality and attribution processes may be an important antecedent to commitment. More specifically, an employee's locus of control may be one such personal antecedent to commitment. In studies, it has been found that there is positive relationship between the personal attribution of internality and OC (Achamamba & Gopikumar, 1990; Spector, 1982).

#### ***Organizational characteristics and OC:***

Relationships of OC with job characteristics and organizational structure are investigated under the category of organizational characteristics. Job characteristics are the various characteristics of the jobs, such as role ambiguity, role conflict, role overload, task significance, autonomy, career scope, skill variety, etc. Much of the research suggests that a negative relationship exists between role conflict or role ambiguity and OC. Morris and Sherman (1981) found role conflict, but not role ambiguity, to be a significant correlate of commitment. Chatterjee (1992) reported a significant negative relationship between global OC scores (Mowday et al., 1982) and role stress (Pareek, 1981) on the one hand and a positive relationship between OC and self-efficacy on the other hand. In their meta-analysis, Mathieu and Zajac (1990) found medium positive correlation (0.207) between skill variety and OC. A study on a sample of sales group revealed that role ambiguity negatively relates to the development of OC during early

employment (Johnston, Parsuraman, & Futrell, 1990; Kline and Peters, 1991).

Organizational structure is the morphology or shape of an organization. It is the observable or tangible aspects of an organization. Among the more tangible aspects of an organizational structure are size, work rules and policy (formalization), roles, number of levels in the organizational hierarchy and the extent of centralization. Bateman and Strasser (1984), Morris and Steers (1980), and Stevens et al. (1978) examined correlations between organizational centralization and OC and suggested that perceived decentralization is likely to be associated with participative decision making and increased commitment levels through greater employee involvement. Bateman and Strasser (1984) found a strong association between leader's reward behaviour and commitment. According to Stumpf and Hartman (1984), a decision-making process that encourages member participation or a communication process which keeps the individual informed with respect to valued aspects of the organization may affect felt responsibility and role involvement and, therefore, commitment (Salancik, 1977).

#### ***Predictors of OC across the Jobs:***

The literature based on a quantitative summary of findings (Mathieu & Zajac, 1990) argues that while most research has considered simple linear relationships, there is a need for a research that explores which moderators affect the relationships between OC and its antecedents. Mathieu and Zajac (1990) found that the possibility of moderator effects could not be ruled out for almost all of the 48 correlates of OC examined in their meta-analysis. But surprisingly, one finds little empirical research and few proposed conceptual models of any moderating effects on the relationships between OC and its predictors. OC theory and models (Becker, 1960; Mowday et al., 1982; Ritzer & Trice, 1969) suggest that type of occupation can moderate OC-determinant relationships.

Despite the vast amount of research on employees' OC, we still do not know very much about the factors that explain the phenomenon. An explanation of this phenomenon could be that

factors affecting employees' commitment to the organization are not only complex but they are also intertwined with each other. Few studies have tested complex pattern of relationships among antecedents of OC in context to different type of jobs. Indeed, employee attachment and commitment can be associated not only with organization, but also other 'referents' such as types of job, position, family, immediate superior and so on. Also, these 'referents' have a significant impact on employees' OC.

### **Objectives of the Present Study:**

This study purports to examine the impact of various predictors of OC among technical employees. From a practical perspective, if OC-determinant relationships vary across the jobs, attempts to increase levels of OC should differ correspondingly. This understanding may allow for more effective organization orientation and training programmes and would provide organizations with more accurate explanations about the behaviour of employee on the job. Based on available studies and theoretical framework following hypothesis was formulated:

Perceived favourable organizational characteristics (job characteristics and organizational structure) would be relatively more effective as compared to the personal characteristics (age, length of service and locus of control) in predicting OC of the technical employees.

## **Method**

### **Sample**

The study was conducted in a well-known steel plant of India. The sample consisted of 120 male employees working in technical job. The participants' age ranged from 23 years to 58 years with an average of 39.35 years (SD = 9.89). The participants in average possessed the work experience of 13.33 years (SD = 9.09) in the range of 1 to 34 years.

### **Measures**

Including the socio-demographic information on age, gender, and length of service; data on organizational commitment, locus of control, perceived job characteristics and perceived organizational structure were procured

administering questionnaires. The languages preferred by the participants were English and Hindi. Accordingly, the questionnaire was kept in two languages: English and translated into Hindi by dual language experts by back-translated method to ensure the validity of the translation.

**Organizational Commitment Questionnaire**: This 15-items questionnaire (Mowday, Steers, & Porter, 1979) was used to measure the degree to which participants feel committed to the employing organization. All items represent statements to which the participant responds on 7-point Likert-type scales, ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree". The wording of six items is reversed in an attempt to reduce response set bias. Highest and lowest scores on this scale are 105 and 15 respectively. The internal consistency of the instrument as measured by coefficient alpha (Cronbach, 1951) ranged from .82 to .93, with a median of .90 across the four time periods.

**Locus of Control Scale**: The 36 items locus of control scale (Hasnain & Joshi, 1992) was used in this study. Participants responded to the items in terms of three categories- 'Always', 'Sometimes' and 'Never'. The items that reveal internal locus of control were treated as positive and items that reveal external locus of control were treated as negative. Out of 36 items, 16 were positive and 20 were negative items. The scoring on negative items was done in a reverse order. The highest score on this scale is 72 and the lowest is 0. Since the positive items are related with internal locus of control, higher the score on the scale the more internally oriented the individual will be. The scale has well established psychometric properties.

**Job Characteristics Scale**: This scale was developed to assess the extent of various characteristics of the jobs, such as role ambiguity, role conflict, role overload, role significance, job autonomy, monetary gain and career scope (Suman & Srivastava, 2009). The scale consists of 20 items, in which 8 items are negatively phrased and reverse-scored. All items are to be responded on a five-point scale- 'strongly agree', 'Agree', 'Uncertain', 'Disagree' and 'Strongly disagree'. Score on this scale varies from 20 to 100. The psychometric properties of the job characteristics scale are well established.

**Organizational Structure Scale:** A 21-items scale containing structural features of the organization was prepared to assess the extent of prevalence and adequacy of the major characteristics of organizational structure, such as size, formalization, departmentalization, centralization, vertical and horizontal differentiation and span of control (Suman, 2014). In this scale 8 items are negatively phrased and reverse-scored. All items are to be responded on a five-point scale- 'strongly agree', 'Agree', 'Uncertain', 'Disagree' and 'Strongly disagree'. Score on this scale varies from 21 to 105. The psychometric properties of the organizational structure scale are well established.

### Procedure

With the permission of competent authority from the organization, respondents were requested to complete the questionnaires and return back to the researcher. In case of less educated employees, the researcher asked them the questions and the replies were jotted down in the questionnaires. Subjects were informed that participation was voluntary and were assured of confidentiality of responses. Out of 300 employees who were given the questionnaires, complete filled-in questionnaires were procured from 120 (40%) employees.

### Results

Multiple linear regression analysis (simultaneous) was carried out in order to examine the relative importance of various personal and perceived organizational characteristics, as well as their joint contribution in the total variance of OC of the employees

engaged in technical jobs. The obtained results have been presented in following table.

The results presented in the table indicate that various personal (such as, age, length of service and locus of control) and organizational (i.e., job characteristics and organizational structure) characteristics jointly predicted 65.3% of the total variance in OC ( $R^2 = .653$ ;  $F = 42.90$ ,  $p < .01$ ). The standardized regression coefficients ( $S\beta$ ) indicate the relative contribution of various personal and organizational characteristics in predicting OC of technical job holders.

Examination of the standardized regression coefficients suggest that the perceived adequacy of the organizational structure was the most dominant predictor of OC ( $S\beta = .270$ ) followed by locus of control (internal) ( $S\beta = .264$ ) and perceived favourable job characteristics ( $S\beta = .255$ ). Age and length of service also contributed positively in the total variance of OC, however, their contributions were not found to be statistically significant. Overall this pattern of finding suggested that in predicting the OC of technical job holders, organizational characteristics were relatively more important as compared to personal characteristics. The results supported the formulated hypothesis that perceived favourable organizational characteristics would be relatively more effective, as compared to the personal characteristics, in predicting OC of the technical employees.

### Discussion

The present study made an attempt to examine how and to what extent personal and organizational characteristics are effective in determining the OC of employees in technical

**Table. Results of Multiple Linear Regression Analysis (Simultaneous) Using Personal and Organizational Characteristics as Predictors and OC as Criterion in Technical Job Holders (N = 120)**

Predictors	Unstandardized Coefficients		$S\beta$	$R^2$	F
	B	Std. Error			
Age	.452	.335	.222	.653	42.90**
Length of Service	.158	.356	.072		
Locus of control	.416	.116	.264**		
Job characteristics	.397	.112	.255**		
Organizational structure	.406	.112	.270**		

\*\* $p < .01$



job. In the present analysis, it has been found that perceived organizational characteristics (such as, job characteristics and organizational structure) and locus of control had significant positive impact on OC of the technical job holders. The impact of the predictors in decreasing order of efficiency was organizational structure, locus of control and job characteristics. However, it was noted that age and length of service had no significant effect on OC of this group of employees. The obtained results indicate that organizational structure had highest impact on OC of the technical job holders and barring locus of control, other personal characteristics were not found to have significant impact on OC of this group of employees. The results enable us to conclude that perceived adequacy of the organizational structure and favourable job characteristics play significant role in determining OC of the technical employees.

Organizational structure plays an important role in OC. Bureaucratic structures tend to have a negative effect on OC. Zeffanne (1994) indicates that "the removal of bureaucratic barriers and the creation of more flexible structure are more likely to contribute to the enhancement of employee commitment both in terms of their loyalty and attachment to the organization".

The sample of technical job holders studied in the present research were drawn from the Steel Plant, which is a production organization and employees working in this type of unit have stipulated targets to achieve. Competition exists between different departments of the production unit and there is proper reward system to recognize the achievements of the employees. This type of work environment creates professionalism among employees. Researchers (e.g., Angle & Perry, 1983) have often argued that the actions that underlie the commitment process occur at the organizational end of the individual-organization linkage for professionals. A prospective member brings needs and goals with him to an organization and agrees to supply his skills and energies in exchange for organizational resources capable of satisfying these needs and goals. Specific expectations exist on the side of both parties and, to the extent that there is a balance or match between what the organization provides and the

members' expectation, the members' satisfaction appears to be maximized (Cohen, 1992).

The obtained results indicate that employees' skills and performance, particularly of technical job holders, to achieve organizational objective efficiently could better be compensated through adequate organizational characteristics. In many Indian organizations monetary benefit and other incentives are largely based on employees' length of service. Management in these organizations believes that employees' bonding to the organization could be ensured through monetary benefit and other incentives. The findings obtained in this study may improve the organization orientation and provide organizations with more accurate explanation about the positive and extraordinary behaviour of employees on the job.

The studies cited above support our research finding and underline the importance of organizational characteristics in comparison to personal characteristics in determining the commitment of the technical job holders.

#### **Limitations of the study:**

The data were collected from a production-oriented organization, replicating this study in other organizations will help in determining the validity of results. Also, due to hazardous nature of job in the Steel Plant, females were found very less in number and therefore excluded from the sample. Hence, caution must be exercised in generalizing the findings.

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