

Exploring Effects of Organizational Commitment on Employee Performance: Implications for Human Resource Strategy

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to examine the impact of three components of organizational commitment (affective, continuance and normative commitment) on performance of police officers in Pakistan. Enhancing organizational commitment among employees is an important aspect as a result of which they perform better. The study was carried out on police officers serving Islamabad Capital Territory Police in Pakistan. Survey questionnaire was personally distributed among 200 low ranked officers. Out of which 155 (n=155) usable questionnaires were received. To test the hypothesis correlation and regression analysis were carried out using SPSS 19.0. Results of the statistical analysis indicated significantly positive effect of organizational commitment components on officers' performance. In the light of findings, recommendations for policy makers and top management of law enforcement agencies are presented; so that in order to yield better performance results they may take measures to improve commitment of their subordinates. The study also adds to the existing literature on organizational commitment-job performance relationship, particularly in context of a developing country i.e. Pakistan.

Keywords: Affective commitment, continuance commitment, normative commitment, Job Performance, Police, Pakistan

1. Introduction

Last five decades research carried out by both academicians and practitioners alike reflects importance of organizational commitment for organizations. Organizational commitment has been extensively studied because of its linkages with performance (Benkhalf, 1997). Many researchers have acknowledged that committed workforce performs better (e.g. Legge, 1995; Guest, 1997; Morrow, 1993). Previously, researchers have found positive correlation between organizational commitment and employee performance (Meyer et al., 1989; Suliman and Lles, 2000). Jaramillo et al. (2005) conducted a meta-analysis comprising of 51 empirical studies and found positive relationship between organizational commitment and job performance. Another research showed that more committed employees have higher tendency to perform well and lower tendency to leave their jobs (Mathieu and Zajac, 1990). Due to increasingly competitive business environment, committed workforce has now become matter of survival for every organization.

Pakistan is a developing country situated in South Asia. Economic indicators reflect poor economic conditions, high poverty and unemployment rate in Pakistan (see Economic Survey of Pakistan, 2011). Major reasons for these problems are terrorism and lack of good governance in some critics view. Moreover, job opportunities in Pakistan's market are rare due to deteriorating condition of industrial sector facing severe energy crisis and inefficient polices of concerned government institutions. Major population of the country is dependent on the services sector and farming/agriculture based businesses (see Pakistan Labour Force Survey 2011). In this situation, public sector jobs are considered secure; therefore job seekers prefer to join government organizations. In this regard, Police department is considered one of respectable professions in Pakistan. However, due to terrorism, police officer's job has become a risk for life. Pakistan Institute for Peace Studies (PIPS) has reported that during the year 2010, 641 officers of armed forces and Law Enforcement Agencies (LEAs) including 183 policemen lost their lives in different terrorist attacks. In this situation, it is inevitable for policy makers of LEAs to use strategic human resource management practices and bring improvements in their performance. In western developed countries researches have been conducted to study the organizational commitment among police officers (e.g. Beck and Wilson, 1997, Metcalfe and Dick, 2000, 2001). However, no prior research has been carried out to study the role of commitment of police officers in Pakistan. The present study addresses this gap and aims at examining the impact of organizational commitment on performance of low ranked officers serving Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) Police in Pakistan. This study has focused on lower level officers because Metcalfe and Dick (2000) examined low commitment among constables (lower ranked officers) and relatively

high commitment among senior police officers in UK. Their findings also raise a need to study further organizational commitment among low ranked officers to find ways of bringing improvements. Moreover, this research will be an addition to existing limited literature on organizational commitment and performance relationship.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Organizational Commitment

Organizational commitment is “the relative strength of an individual’s identification with and involvement in a particular organization” (Mowday et al. 1979, p. 226). Mathieu & Zajac, (1990) performed a meta-analysis and explored that originally organizational commitment was considered to be viewed as behavioral and attitudinal components. However, later on Meyer & Allen (1984) presented a comprehensive model of organizational commitment comprising of three components including affective commitment, continuance commitment and normative commitment. Afterwards several researchers have used three components to study the organizational commitment construct (e.g. Canipe, 2006; Allen and Meyer, 1996; Vanderberghe, 1996; Chen and Francesco, 2003). Meyer & Allen (1991) defined all three components as (i) affective commitment is based on worker’s emotional association, participation and recognition in the organization; (ii) continuance commitment involves costs that employee is likely to bear in case of quitting from organization and (iii) Normative commitment indicates an obligation that an employee perceive to remain in the organization. They further argued that affective, continuance and normative commitment represent employee’s desire to ‘want to’ do the job, ‘need to’ do the job and ‘ought to’ do the job respectively.

2.2 Job Performance

Considerable research has been carried out in past to explore ways to improve employee performance (e.g. Borman & Motowidlo, 1993; Park et. al, 2003; Tessema & Soeters, 2006). Kahya (2009) indicated that job performance has been studied as an important variable in industrial and organizational psychology literature. Campbell (1990) defined the job performance as behaviors executed in line with the set objectives of the organization. Borman & Motowidlo (1993) explored these behaviors as task and contextual or citizenship performance behaviors. Task performance includes behaviors which an employee performs to accomplish tasks given to him by his supervisor or behaviors associated with core technical activities of the organization (Borman & Motowidlo, 1993). Whereas, contextual or citizenship performance includes behaviors which establishes the organizational social and psychological context and help employees to perform their core technical or task activities (Borman & Motowidlo, 1993). Job performance evaluation results are useful to take decisions on employee remuneration package, promotion, training for performance improvement, retention and termination (Piercy et al., 1998).

2.3 Organizational Commitment-Performance Relationship

Researchers have carried out various studies to examine relationship between organizational commitment and performance. Findings of the previous studies have given varied results. Some have found positive relationship between organizational commitment and performance (e.g. Bashaw and Grant, 1994; Kalleberg and Marden, 1995; Benkhoff, 1997; Suliman and Lles 2000; Meyer et al., 2002) while others have examined very weak, negative or insignificant relationship between the two (e.g. Leong et al., 1994; Wright, 1997; Mathieu & Zajac, 1990). This variation in results is due to the way commitment has been conceptualized (Benkhoff, 1997).

For instance, Somers & Birnbaum (1998) conducted a research to examine the relationship between work related commitment and job performance. After in depth review of literature they explored previously studied five types of work related commitment behaviors including job commitment, organizational commitment, work group commitment, career commitment and work values commitment.

Similarly, employee performance measurement has also been considered a difficult process (Ostroff, 1992; Angle & Lawson, 1994; Campbell et al., 1993). Employee performance can be measured by different ways like employee self perceived evaluation, supervisor evaluations, peers/coworkers evaluation or objective ratings. Benkhoff (1997) assessed that researchers have mostly measured performance subjectively because acquiring objective data is difficult.

Somers & Biernbaum (1998) further contended that “because the terms ‘commitment’ and ‘performance’ have been used in different ways, it is important to specify how these constructs are defined in any given study”. Keeping in view their argument, the present study is limited to examine relationship between three components model of organizational commitment and self rated or perceived employees’ performance.

2.3.1 Relationship between affective commitment and employees’ performance

Literature is evident that out of three commitment components, affective commitment has been mostly studied in past (Brunetto and Farr-Wharton, 2003). Many previous researchers have found positive relationship between

affective commitment and employee performance (e.g. Meyer and Allen, 1996; Luchak & Gellatly, 2007; Hackett et. al, 1994; Caruana et al. 1997; Meyer et al.1989; Meyer et. al 2002). Therefore, we have sufficient evidence to presume that:

H1: Affective commitment has significant and positive association with job performance of police officers in Pakistan.

2.3.2 Relationship between continuance commitment and employees' performance

Continuance commitment ensures employee's bond with the organization based on the costs associated with leaving the organization (McGee and Ford, 1987), for example pension plans, seniority benefits, family concerns. In past, researchers have examined positive impact of continuance commitment on employee's job performance. Suliman and Lles (2000) carried out a research on full time employees working in three companies of industrial sector in Jordan and explored that continuance organizational commitment has positive association with employee job performance. Furthermore, Khan et al. (2010) also conducted a research on employees working in oil and gas sector of Pakistan and examined positive and significant relationship ($r=0.218$, $p<0.001$) between these two variables. In view of the same, it can be hypothesized that:

H2: Continuance commitment contributes positively towards enhancing performance of police officers in Pakistan.

2.3.3 Relationship between normative commitment and employees' performance

Literature provides evidence that continuance organizational commitment of employees positively effects their performance (Suliman and Lles 2000; Khan et al., 2010). In Pakistan, Mehmud et al., (2010) also examined significant and positive relationship between these two constructs ($r=0.597$, $p<0.001$) among employees serving WAPDA, KPK (a public sector organization). Therefore, it can be safely hypothesized that:

H3: Normative commitment has significant and positive relationship with performance of police officers in Pakistan.

3. Research Model

Insert Figure. 1: Research model about here

4. Research Methodology

4.1 Population

This study focused to examine the impact of organizational commitment on employee's job performance. For the purpose, all low ranked police officers with titles of Constables, Head Constables (HCs) and Assistant Sub-Inspectors (ASIs) of Islamabad Capital Territory Police were considered as population.

4.2 Questionnaire

A survey questionnaire was designed for data collection. The questionnaire was divided in two parts. Part-I included questions inquiring demographics of the respondents (gender, marital status, education, rank, job category and length of service). Part-II comprised of questions inquiring organizational commitment and perceived job performance of participants. All three components of organizational commitment (affective commitment, continuance commitment, and normative commitment) were measured using scale developed by Meyer et al. (1993). Measuring scale for each component consisted of six items. To measure the perceived employee performance three items scale developed by Teseema and Soeters (2006) was used. Five point Likert Scale was used to measure the responses (1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=neither disagree nor agree, 4=agree, 5=strongly agree). Reliability analysis indicated that Cronbach's alpha value for scale of affective commitment was 0.811, continuance commitment was 0.746, normative commitment was 0.801 and for employees' perceived performance was 0.812. All scales showed good reliability level.

4.3 Sample and Data Collection

Convenience sampling technique was used to collect the data quickly and economically. The survey method was adopted and questionnaires were personally administered to increase the response rate. Participants were requested through a covering letter to answer all survey questions fairly and based on their personal opinions. Furthermore, they were assured that their all responses will be kept confidential. A letter issued by a senior ranked officer of ICT police requesting all participants to cooperate with the researchers and respond to all survey questions based on their own judgments regardless of what is departmentally acceptable was also enclosed. Total 200 questionnaires were distributed among low ranked police officers including Constables, HCs and ASIs. Out of which 155 completed and usable questionnaire were received back yielding 77.5%

response rate.

4.4 Statistical Tests

SPSS version 19 was used to statistically analyze the data. Correlation and regression analysis were carried out to determine the relationship between independent (affective commitment, continuance commitment, normative commitment) and dependent variables (employee performance).

5. Research Findings

5.1 Demographics

The demographics of participants volunteered in this study in terms of gender, marital status, education, rank, job category and length of service were as mentioned below:

Out of total 155, 118 respondents were males (76.1%) and 37 were females (23.9%). Marital status statistics shows that 50 respondents were single, 91 were married, 9 were divorced/separated and 5 were widow/widowers. This describes that single, married, divorced/separated and widow/widowers were 32.3%, 58.7%, 5.8% and 3.2% respectively. As per qualification, 33 participants were matriculate (21.3%), 38 were intermediate (24.5%), 58 were graduates (37.4%) and other 26 were Masters (16.8) degree holders. Rank wise, 83 were Constables (53.5%), 23 were Head Constables (14.8%) and others 49 were ASIs(31.6%). As per job category, 25 participants were traffic sergeants (16.1%), 49 were engaged in providing security (31.6%), 53 were from investigation (34.2%) and remaining 28 were involved in police administration (18.1%). As per length of service, 53 respondents had less than 07 years tenure (34.2%), 60 below 15 years (38.7%), 16 less than 20 years (16.8%) and remaining 26 had served their organization for more than 20 years (16.8%). However, demographical statistics of respondents have not been used in this study for data analysis.

5.2 Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics including mean, standard deviation, range, minimum, and maximum values of all study variables are reflected in Table 1.

Insert Table 1 about here

5.3 Correlation Analysis

Pearson correlation analysis was carried out to determine the relationship between independent and dependent variables. Results of correlation matrix are presented in Table 2.

Insert Table 2 about here

The results in Table 2 indicates significant and positive relationship between affective commitment (AC) and employee performance (EP) ($r = 0.471$, $P < 0.01$). Continuance commitment (CC) also relate to EP significantly and in positive direction ($r = 0.265$, $p < 0.01$). The direction of relationship between normative commitment (NC) and EP is also positive and statistically significant ($r = 0.395$, $p < 0.01$). Out of all depending variables AC has most strong correlation with EP, which is 47.1% followed by NC and CC with 39.5% and 26.5% respectively. Interesting aspect in correlation analysis is that all dependent variables are also positively correlated to each other.

5.4 Regression Analysis

Regression analysis was carried out to test hypothesized statements and determine the extent to which independent variables effect EP. The results of regression analysis are reflected in Table 3 below.

Insert Table 3 about here

In Table 3, standardized beta coefficient values indicates that one unit increase in AC, CC and NC will increase EP by .393, .190 and .343 respectively. In the overall regression model, value of adjusted R square is 0.359, which describes variance of 35.9% in EP because of independent variables (i.e. AC, CC and NC). The model is significant with $p < 0.01$ and $F = 29.705$. Thus, regression analysis validates results of correlation between variables presented in Table 2 above. The results also show that AC has strongest significant impact on EP with followed by NC and CC respectively. On the basis of statistical results it is concluded that components of

organizational commitment have significant and positive relationship with employee performance. Moreover, statistical results also support our first, second and third hypothesis that affective, continuance and normative commitment contribute positively and significantly towards increasing performance of police officers in Pakistan. Therefore, all three hypotheses (i.e. H1, H2 and H3) of this study are accepted.

6. Discussions

This empirical research was carried out to determine the effects of organizational commitment on job performance of low ranked police officers in Pakistan. This study was the very first empirical examination of these two constructs for police officers in Pakistan. Data was collected through a questionnaire from low ranked officers of ICT Police and statistical tests were applied to test the hypothetical statements. In the light of statistical results, it transpired that role of organizational commitment has significant effects for a police officer's performance in Pakistan. The findings indicate the simultaneous effect of affective, continuance and normative commitments on job performance of police officers is significantly positive and those officers who have strong commitment in all three dimensions can perform better. These results are in line with some of previous studies (e.g. Suliman and Lles 2000; Khan et al., 2010; Mehmud et al., 2010) who found positive impact of three components of organizational commitment on performance of personnel in different work settings. However, results also contradict with findings of few researchers who found that continuance commitment among employees correlate negatively with their performance (e.g. Meyer et al.'s 1989; Cropanzano et al. 1993). This implies that LEAs can acquire better performance results by attaching employees for affective commitment, increasing sunk costs for employees if they leave organization for continuance commitment and increasing their obligation level for building normative commitment.

The research study invites attention of top management and policy makers of LEAs to take measures to enhance police officers' performance through increased commitment level. Improved employee performance results is aim for every organization, therefore this study has highlighted three components of organizational commitment as important factor which can contribute towards performance improvement of police officers.

7. Study Limitations and Directions for Future Research

Despite examining role of organizational commitment in police officers' job performance in detail, this study has some limitations which should be addressed in future researches. For instance, this research was carried out without any funding/financial support; therefore data was gathered only from ICT Police. Hence, results cannot be generalized for all LEAs in Pakistan. Future researchers should draw large sample size and collect data from officers of provincial police departments as well as from other LEAs to enhance external validity of the research. The study can also be extended to other public and private sectors to increase validity of the results. To establish causal relationship between study variables future researchers should examine longitudinal studies. Furthermore, future researchers should focus on other important variables like human resource management practices (compensation management, performance appraisal, promotion practices, etc) to determine their effect on employees' performance.

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Annexure

Figure 1: Research Model

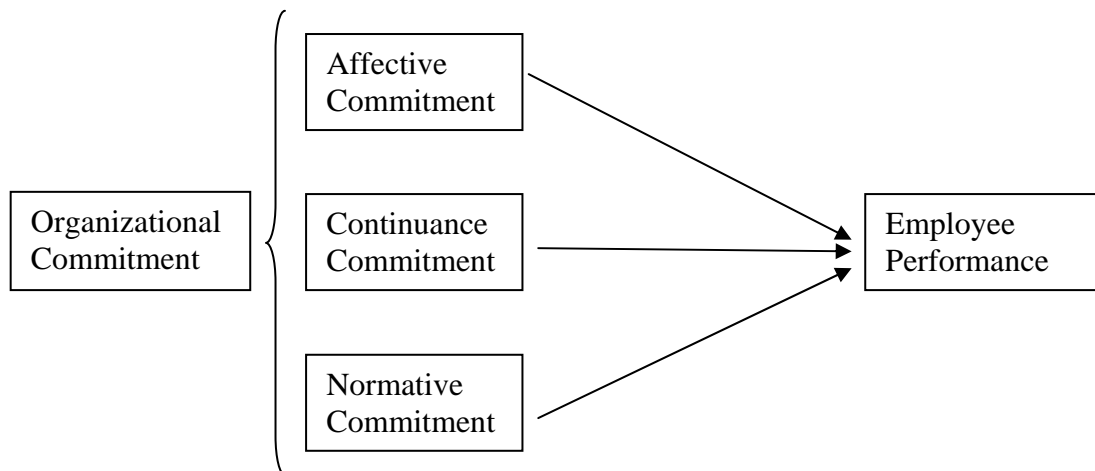


Table 1. Descriptive statistics

Descriptive Statistics							
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum	Range	Sum	N
Employee Performance	2.92	.647	2	4	3	453	155
Affective Commitment	2.83	.452	2	4	2	439	155
Continuance Commitment	3.23	.557	2	4	2	500	155
Normative Commitment	3.07	.505	2	4	2	476	155

Table 2. Correlation Analysis

	EP	AC	CC	NC
Employee Performance (EP)	1	.471**	.265**	.395**
Affective Commitment (AC)	.471**	1	.180*	.126
Continuance Commitment (CC)	.265**	.180*	1	.010
Normative Commitment (NC)	.395**	.126	.010	1

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 3. Regression Analysis

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	-.734	.400		-1.835	.068
Affective Commitment	.562	.095	.393	5.945	.000
Continuance Commitment	.221	.076	.190	2.902	.004
Normative Commitment	.440	.083	.343	5.280	.000

Dependent Variable: Employee Performance

Overall model: F=29.705; p<0.001; R square=0.371 , Adjusted R square= 0.359