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In-Text Citation: (Khan et al., 2013)
To Cite this Article: Khan, I., Nawaz, A., & Khan, M. S. (2013). Determining the Organizational Commitment of Academicians in Public Sector Universities of Developing Countries like Pakistan. *International Journal of Academic Research in Accounting Finance and Management Sciences*, *3*(1), 248–260.

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Determining the Organizational Commitment of Academicians in Public Sector Universities of Developing Countries like Pakistan

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Abstract

The organizational commitment (OC) of academicians in higher education has become critical with the globalization of education. Teachers are the backbone of the process responsible for generating professional workforce for the poverty alleviation and economic development of any country. This role becomes more pervasive in the background of the developing countries (DCs) like Pakistan. The main objective of this 'Review Article' is to explore the main determinants of OC in the perspectives of academicians in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) with a view to construct a 'Theoretical Framework' of the issue, grounded in the current research on the topic. This framework will then be used as a 'Research Model' for the future 'Empirical-study', using a survey of academicians from the Universities of Pakistan.

Keywords: Organizational Commitment, Higher Education, Academicians, Affective, Continuance, Normative Commitment

Introduction

In the current research, the types or dimensions of 'Commitment', regarding the 'Organizational-Commitment' are said to be the emotions, economic needs and the sense of obligation or responsibility. However, none of them alone is sufficiently enough to complete the phenomena of commitment used in any perspective, rather all the three are necessary to complete the story. Each of these aspects is therefore equally important. Any effort to measure the existence or otherwise and the degree of commitment must include the computation of affective, continuance and normative contents of the organizational behavior (Suki & Suki, 2011). This requirement equally applies to the commitment of a University staff (teaching and non-teaching) (Nawab & Bhatti, 2011).

The existing literature provides a reasonable amount of material to develop a theory about what is happening in the area of research on 'organizational commitment' in the higher education institutions (HEI) of the world including the developing countries like Pakistan. The research has already been carried out on the existence of commitment, its consequences and implications for the individual and the institutional productivity (Shirazi et al., 2011). There are several studies on the exploration of linkages between the levels of commitment and the degrees of job satisfaction. Likewise, researchers have also investigated the

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interdependencies between positive (involvement and commitment) and negative (absenteeism, turnover, burnouts) (Dogan & Aydin, 2012). Thus, literature offers a set of variables (working concepts) to construct a theoretical framework or research model that is well grounded in the existing knowledge on the issue (Saifuddin et al., 2012).

In the case of higher education, there are new expectations of the society from the Universities to play leading and catalytic role in the national development by producing state of the art professionals and subject-specialists (Ishfaq et al., 2010). The globalization and public level international connectivity has made higher education a global issue because of shifting from national levels of competition to a worldwide market (Zubair et al., 2012). This role demands updating on several fronts like, providing international level facilities, adoption of ISO standards, digitization of the institutions and so on. However, one of the major update is the 'Organizational Commitment' and the university workforce, particularly the teachers who make the 'Line Management' these knowledge-production entities of a nation. Teachers and supporting staff must be facilitated to update their knowledge and skills, sanctioned by reasonable increases in the economic resources and packages of respect and recognition for the workforce (Islam et al., 2012).

To develop commitment among the faculty staff has some critical consequences and implications for educational institutions. The highly dedicated faculty members are expected to prolong their association with their institutions, they are working presently. Meanwhile, they are likely to do more hard work for their respective institutions. The strongly committed faculty members would have a stronger aspiration to come to their work and pay a meaningful contribution to their respective institutions (Sial et al., 2011). It is widely reported that affectively committed workforce continue working with the loyalty of high degree. Continuance commitment ensures that employees maintain their organizational membership. While those who are normally committed feel obligatory on their part to continue in the organization (Khalid et al., 2012). Thus, motivation and commitment on the part of workers are the important conditions for the accomplishment of the organizational goals (Dogan & Aydin, 2012).

The majority of the research on organizational commitment has been pursued by industrial, organizational and professional psychologists (Chughtai & Zafar, 2006). A little research on organizational commitment has been conducted within the educational settings. To develop organizational commitment among the academic staff is significant because employees that are highly committed continue longer, perform better, work more, and get engaged in organizational citizenship behaviors. Teachers who are not committed to their work are expected to put less effort in the classroom as compared to teachers with elevated levels of commitment (Sail et al., 2011). This would affect adversely upon the student learning and success in particular and the standards of education in the country in general. Higher education is not immune to the problem of lower levels of commitment. Educational leaders have increased the emphasis on studies that try to identify factors that affect organizational commitment (Islam et al., 2012).

Organization commitment refers to the employee's emotional attachment to, recognition with, and involvement in the organization. It is generally measured as three dimensional construction comprising of affective commitment, continuance commitment and normative commitment (Samad et al., 2011). It is understood that affectively committed employees prolong working with great loyalty on voluntary basis. Continuance commitment ensures that employees maintain their organizational membership. However those who are normally committed habitually feel obligation on their part to continue in the organization.

The organizational commitment is a strong faith and acceptance of the organizational goals and standards, willingness to exert considerable endeavor on behalf of the organization, and a definite aspiration to continue organizational membership (Shirazi et al., 2011; Saifuddin et al., 2012).

Organizational Commitment in Higher Education
Meaning and Definition

Organizational commitment is stated as the attachment or bonding that individuals form to their employing organizations (Raza & Nawaz, 2011). In the past, organizational commitment has concentrated upon individuals' affective attachment to the organization, despite the fact that it has a number of facets that over shadow the organizational objectives. Meyer and Allen propose that three the components of commitment: affective (desire to continue with an organization as a consequence of the emotional attachment to, recognition with and involvement in the organization, normative (sense of a moral obligation to continue with the organization) and continuance (feeling stuck and continuing because it is too costly to leave), can be built up from the way, the HRM practices are perceived. Commitment is a format that seeks to explain consistencies involving attitudes, values, behavior and involves behavioral choices and implies a negative response of possible alternative courses of action (Eslami & Gharakhani, 2012).

The majority of the research has attributed job satisfaction as an independent and organizational commitment as a dependent variable. Commitment and job satisfaction may be seen in numerous ways. Job satisfaction is a manner of response to a definite job or job-related issues; whereas, commitment is a more comprehensive response to an organization. Thus, commitment should be more consistent than job satisfaction over time and takes longer after one is satisfied with his/her job (Nawab & Bhatti, 2011). How workforce recognize their work environment, can affect employee's commitment, motivation, and performance. It also helps organization to form a competitive edge over its rivals. On the part of an employee, concerning the working environment and its significance is called as psychological work climate (Choong et al, 2012).

Organization commitment refers to the employee's emotional attachment to, recognition with, and involvement in the organization. The aptitude to accomplish the stated aims and objectives in the law depends upon a number of variables from qualitative and quantitative perspectives. They are the administrators in the academic and administrative staff, legislation, financial status, independence, organizational composition and so on (Shirazi et al., 2011). One of the most important elements listed under human resources is the academic staff. One of the several ways to ensure efficiency of the academic staff is to endeavor to enhance the value of their organizational commitment to a higher level (Suki & Suki, 2011). Research asserts that experiences in the psychological environment have both long term and short term effects. In the long term, it can cause stress and health problems while in the short term it can influence the work activities. It is supported by research that a motivational and empowered work environment can influence employee's attitudes toward work positively and can improve work performance. It was stated that specific work activities also induces boredom at work and can cause lack of motivation for the employees (Raza & Nawaz, 2011). Thus, it must be believed during the research on the issues of organizational behavior that an employee's attitude such as job satisfaction and organizational commitment are dependent upon individual's psychological climate experience and the perception of work (Choong et al., 2012).

The Dimensions of Organizational Commitment

Organizational commitment is considered as three dimensional constructions comprising of affective commitment, continuance commitment and normative commitment. Affective commitment is defined as the employee's emotional attachment to the organization; consequently, he or she strongly identifies with the goals of the organization and desires to remain a part of the organization. Continuance commitment is a result of the perception of advantage, associated with staying in and the perception of cost associated with leaving from an organization (Malik et al., 2010). Normative commitment is cumulatively internalized normative pressure to behave according to the organizational objectives and interests. In this context, university teacher's organizational commitment can be viewed as: His or her strong belief in and compliance to the university goals and values; readiness to make use of dedicated hard work on behalf of the university; and strong desire to continue his or her university membership (Daneshfard & Ekvaniyan, 2012).

A. Affective commitment

Affective commitment is the employee's emotional attachment to the organization. As a result, he or she strongly identifies the goals of the organization and desires to remain a part of it. Here the employee commits to the organization because he/she wants to do the same (Adekola, 2012). Employees who are committed to their organization will have a strong desire to remain a member of a particular organization. Employees who have strong affective commitment will be more likely to remain happier in the organization because they want to be so. They will like most to continue to work for the organization when they agree with the organizational goals. To encourage employees' sense of belonging to the organization, companies could empower their employees by focusing upon the four cognitions of psychological empowerment: meaning, competence, self-determination and impact. The organizations must authorize their employees to decide how to complete their tasks relating to their job (Choong et al., 2012).

B. Continuance commitment

The individual commits to the organization for the reason that he/she perceives high costs of losing organizational attachment, including financial losses (such as pension accruals) and social expenditure (friendship ties with co-workers) that would have to be given up. The employee remains a member of the organization on his/her own will (Shah et al., 2010). Continuance commitment develops out of the perceived cost (benefit against loss), and requires that the employee should be aware of these benefits and losses. Continuance commitment is a willingness of employee to stay in an organization because of personal investment in the form of nontransferable investments such as close operational relationships with coworkers, investments after retirement, career investments and acquired job skills which are unique to a particular organization, years of employment in a particular organization, taking part in the community in which the employer is located, and other benefits that make it too costly for one to leave and look for employment elsewhere (Adekola, 2012).

C. Normative Commitment

Normative commitment is a sense of moral obligation to stay with the organization. The individual commits to and remains with an organization because of feelings of obligation. For example, the organization may have invested resources in training of an individual who then

feels a responsibility to put forth endeavor on the job and continue with the organization to 'repay the liability.' It may also reflect an internalized standard, developed before the person joins the organization through family or other socialization processes, that one should be loyal to one's organization. Normative Commitment is the result of employee's feeling of obligation to be a part of the organization (Nawab & Bhatti, 2011). Normative commitment involves employee's perceptions concerning their responsibility towards their place of work. For example, if an organization is loyal to the workers, the employees may reflect higher degrees of normative commitment (Islam et al., 2012). In this context, the university teacher organizational commitment can be viewed as: 1) Firm belief in and acceptance of the university goals and standards; 2) willingness to put forth hard work on behalf of the university; and 3) Strong desire to retain an individual's university membership (Daneshfard & Ekvaniyan, 2012).

2.3. Demographic Impacts on Academicians

"The personal characteristics included in this research were age, marital status, tenure, level of education, trust in university management, and job involvement. Research has shown that age is positively related to organizational commitment" (Chughtai & Zafar, 2006). Research shows that length of service is positively related to the organizational commitment. Although empirical evidence suggests that there is a positive relationship between organizational commitment and tenure. It is still not obvious how this link operates. An individual's length of service with a particular organization increases; he or she may build up an emotional attachment with the organization that makes it hard to switch over the jobs. The consequences of a positive relationship between tenure and organizational commitment might be a simple reflection of the fact that the uncommitted employees may depart an organization, and only those with a high commitment may stay longer (Saifuddin et al., 2010).

Marital status has emerged as a reliable predictor of organizational commitment. Married people were more loyal to their organization than unmarried people. Married people have more family responsibilities and require more stability and security in their jobs; and therefore, they are expected to be more committed to their current organization than their unmarried counterparts. In the light of these findings and details, it was hypothesized that marital status would be positively associated to commitment (Shah et al., 2010). Level of education was likely to have a negative association with organizational commitment. The justification for this prediction is that people with low levels of educations usually have more difficulty to change their jobs and consequently show a greater commitment to their organizations (Saifuddin et al., 2012).

Organizational Commitment of University Academicians in Developing Countries

Workforce become committed to their organization when (a) they hold and have conviction concerning the mission and standards of the their organizations (b) they are mutually ready to put forth their dedicated hard work in the achievement of their organizational goals, and (c) they have strong desire to carry on serving in their organizations. Commitment is a partisan or affective attachment to the aims and standards of an organization, to one's role in relation with these aims and standards and to an organization for its own sake (Shah et al., 2010). According to the cost-benefit approach; commitment is a consequence of the perception of benefit associated with staying in and the perception of cost related with leaving from an organization. According to the normative approach it is the aggregate internalized normative pressures to perform in a way which meets organizational objectives and interests (Mudor & Tooksoon, 2011).

The workforce who is committed to their organizations may easily believe and adhere to the organizational objectives and goals (Malik et al., 2010). Individuals may become loyal to an organization for many reasons: an individual may continue with an organization because the organization standards, missions, and goals aligned with his/her own; another person may continue with the same organization because leaving may impact his/her reputation, benefits, or social networks; so far another may be committed to the organization due to a sense of obligation. "Each of these three commitments –affective, continuance, and normative –are independent types of commitment experienced at different levels by all individuals of an organization" (Choong et al., 2012).

Teachers' commitment is the level of psychosomatic affection to the profession of teaching, which may take three forms: Affective, Normative and Continuance. Affective Commitment is the consequence of employee's emotional affection with the organization and Continuance Commitment is the consequence of cost associated with leaving the organization and Normative Commitment is the consequence of employee's sense of obligation to be a part of the organization (Dogan & Aydin, 2012). Commitment brings decline in absenteeism, reduce turnover, development in performance and increase in profitability etc. Commitment can moreover be judged by investigating the degree of abrasion and the cause for it, or by asking the teachers whether they will decide to choose this profession the present day again or not. Some results from related studies indicate that teachers with great potential leave their teaching profession earlier than others and primary pre service teachers to be more committed than secondary pre service teachers (Islam et al., 2012).

Few researchers have the opinion that if employees are satisfied with organizational environment i.e. reward and leadership, than they will be more committed with their organizations. The reward cannot be ignored because this factor influence on employees commitment, job satisfaction, turnover and employees performance (Mojtahedzadeh et al., 2011). The reward has positive relationship with job satisfaction and commitment. It is also reasonable that certain demographical factors (marital status, gender and job experience) influence on job satisfaction and teachers commitment with their organizations (Lew, 2011).

Literally numerous studies have been conducted to identify factors concerning the development of organizational commitment. For instance, research has shown that commitment has been positively related to individual characteristics such as age, tenure in a particular organization, and marital status and negatively related to the employee's level of education (Saifuddin et al., 2010). In addition, commitment has been found to be related to such job characteristics as job autonomy), feedback and work challenge and certain job experiences such as job security, promotion opportunities, training and mentoring

opportunities, and helpful and considerate leadership. Finally, research studies have shown that commitment is influenced by the perceptions of organizational integrity (Adekola, 2012).

The majority of the research on organizational commitment has been done by industrial organizational and professional psychologists. Inadequate research on organizational commitment has been conducted within the educational set up. The center of the existing study is to identify the antecedents and consequences of organizational commitment among Pakistani university teachers. Developing the organizational commitment among the academicians are significant because, as mentioned earlier, employees that are highly committed continue longer, do better, miss less work, and engage in organizational citizenship behaviors. These results can be generalized to the teachers as well. Teachers who are not committed to their place of work are likely to put less effort in the classroom as compared to teachers with high levels of commitment. This would negatively influence student learning and achievement in particular and standard of education in the country in general (Mojtahedzadeh et al., 2011).

Organizational Commitment of Academicians in Pakistan

Pakistan is a developing country where education is very important factor, if the nation wants to be in the list of the developed nations. Our educational sector is far behind and needs lots of development regarding the faculty members. One of the main reasons for the lack of teacher's commitment and job satisfaction is compensation that is being offered to them (Malik et al., 2010). By identifying the impact of compensation, teacher's commitment can be increased and their degree of satisfaction could be enhanced. However, a few studies have addressed the role of different job dimensions on organizational commitment of the teachers, particularly in the context of public sector universities in Pakistan (Saifuddin et al., 2010).

Education sector plays a crucial role in the development of any nation. In Pakistan, the education sector is gaining significance as the practitioners have realized that investment in this sector could bring prosperity to the country. The major problem faced by the universities in Pakistan is lack of organizational commitment of their faculty members. This has resulted into lack of awareness of the teachers towards accomplishment of University's goals, not imparting adequate knowledge to the students, resulting in low participation of students and significance of education and last but not the least, switchover of the University faculty members (Sial et al., 2011).

Teachers may be committed to the University for many reasons: because of the organization's values, missions, and goals aligned with his/her own (affective); because leaving may impact his/her prestige, benefits, or social networks (continuance); yet another may be committed to the organization due to a sense of obligation (normative). Each of these three commitments is independent, experienced at the different degrees by all employees of an organization (Islam et al., 2012). In Pakistan, developing organizational commitment among teachers has become critical for the universities. Possession of high quality faculty, especially PhDs is one of the most significant factors used by the Higher Education Commission (HEC) of Pakistan to evaluate the performance and standards of universities (Adekola, 2012).

As the network of the private sector universities has widening, the demand for the competent teachers has increased. Consequently the universities are now looking for some brilliant teachers and are willing to pay them very attractive salaries packages. This is likely to make it harder for the universities to keep hold of their academic staff. As a result of these

changes in the Pakistani educational sector, universities will have to make efforts to create a framework that would facilitate them to attract new talent and retain their best teachers (Chughtai & Zafar, 2006). Secondly, as discussed above, teachers who are committed to their respective institutions are to be expected not only to stay with the institution but are also expected to emphasis upon their work towards its achievement and are therefore likely to be better performers than the uncommitted teachers. Thus developing commitment among the academicians has become a prominent factor to achieve the organizational goal (Saifuddin et al., 2012).

Teacher is the pivot in the educational system holding some very essential responsibilities. The overall performance of universities depends upon their teaching workforce and ultimately their degree of commitment and job satisfaction (Malik et al., 2010). Thus understanding of their behaviors and attitudes needs more attention in organizations. Generally Faculty members feel a sense of responsibility towards their job. In an era of competitive edge, knowledge capital must be retained in order for the organization to continue productive and responsive to the desires of its stakeholders. The literature suggests that individuals become committed to organizations for a diversity of causes, including an affective involvement to the standards of the organization, a realization of the costs included quitting the organization, and a sense of obligation to the organization (Saifuddin et al., 2010).

In the light of above evidence, it is argued that type of work, salary and excellent supervision are important indicators of organizational commitment of the Pakistani public sector university faculty (Saifuddin et al., 2010). It was also found out that they were greatly satisfied with their supervisors, co-workers, rewards, work-itself and opportunities of development in their universities. Common sense confirms that higher education is not immune to the problem of teachers' low degree of job satisfaction and organizational commitment which could result into unfavorable economic and non-economic outputs such as high exit rates, condensed teaching effectiveness and academic development of the students. Consequently policy makers and academicians should take necessary actions for the best provision of intrinsic and extrinsic job rewards to make their employees greatly satisfied and committed to reap the benefits of improved motivation, performance and organizational citizenship behaviors (Khalid et al., 2012).

Discussions

Contemporary education has changed and developed fundamentally due to cultural, social and political changes. It places education under intense scrutiny by the public and private stakeholders who question the system's ability to accomplish its goals of teaching basic skills, developing standards, preventing dropouts, and producing prolific employees (Saeed et al., 2011). Such an incredible responsibility requires highly satisfied and committed academicians who wish to do their job with willingness (Khalid et al., 2012). Universities are very important organizations in an educational system because they are supposed to assume the primary and leading role in the way to social advancement. They should also renovate their systems and conditions from the point of view of the developments taking place both socially and globally (Dogan & Aydin, 2012).

With the emergence of private sector universities, the demand for brilliant teachers has increased, and universities are ready to pay them attractive compensation packages. This is making it difficult for the universities to maintain their academic staff in the Pakistani education sector particularly in the public sector universities (Suki & Suki, 2011). The teachers who are committed to their respective institutions are more likely not only to stay with the

institution but also put forth more hard work on the behalf of the organization (Mudor &
Tooksoon, 2011). Thus developing commitment among the academic staff is a considerable
and prominent organizational goal. Committed employees may easily accept and adhere to
the organizational objectives (Daneshfard & Ekvaniyan, 2012).

Highly committed teachers are more willing to go above and beyond the call of duty for
their respective institutions, that is, they can perform organizational citizenship behaviors
more frequently which increases the effectiveness of the educational institutions (Shah et al.,
2010). The universities, which seek to retain their faculty members by building strong
organizational commitment, are in a better position to benefit from dedicated, motivated,
and reliable academicians (Shirazi et al., 2010). Researchers who conducted a faculty survey
at a higher education institution identified professional development and compensation
packages as the most important factors for the organizational commitment, job satisfaction
and ITL (Nawab & Bhatti, 2011).

Figure 1. Schematic diagram of the theoretical framework
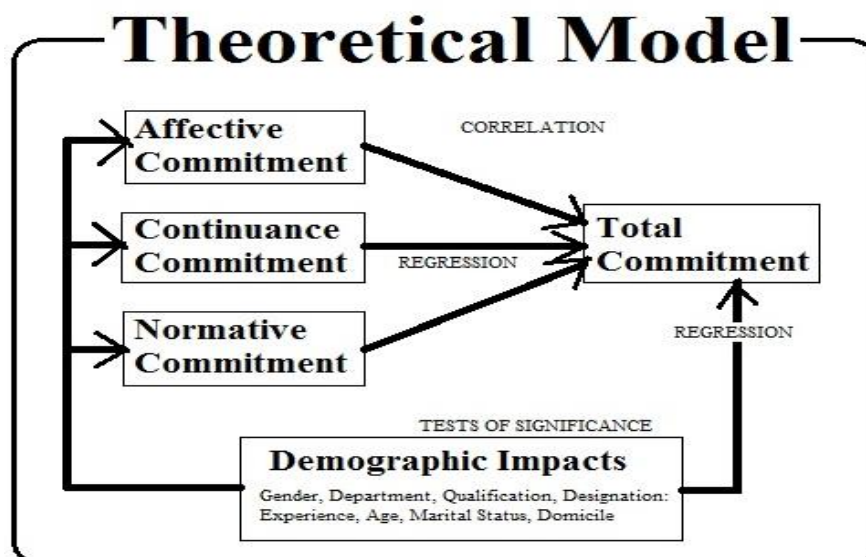
Conclusions & Future Work

Like any other country, Pakistani government is the largest employer of the country.
The success of economy depends upon how effectively its government organizations are
functioning. The success of organizations eventually depends upon the public sector
employees. The highly satisfied, motivated and committed employees and their performance
for the organizations would be highly efficient and effective (Raza & Nawaz, 2011). The role
of the Universities is very significant in an educational setting and the education itself can be
regarded as another organization in a society. While universities should assume the primary
and most important role in the way to social growth, they should also renovate their systems
and conditions from the point of view of the developments taking place both socially and
globally. Each and every organization is established with the goal of materializing a set of
definite objectives and aims (Dogan & Aydin, 2012).

A lot of previous researchers have reported mixed findings on the association between
job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Some researchers found no significant
relationship between job satisfaction and organizational commitment. But, other researchers
note that the job satisfaction was a significant forecaster of organizational commitment.

While some have argued that job satisfaction have quick affective reactions to the job. However commitment to the organization develops more slowly after the individual forms more comprehensive valuations of the employing organization, its standards, and expectations and one's own future in it. Therefore, job satisfaction is considered as one of the determinants of organizational commitment. It is thus expected that highly satisfied workforce will be more committed to the organization (Saifuddin et al., 2012).

It is also concluded that employees are the actual resources for the organizations and to satisfy the customers, organizations must satisfy their employee's needs. Customer's satisfaction and organization's performance is the result of its employee's satisfaction. Teachers are the workforce of the educational organizations and their satisfaction can promote teaching and research quality. So, teacher's requirements must be satisfied to achieve the quality in the educational sector and research (Lew, 2011). Teacher's commitment to the teaching profession plays a very important role in determining whether he/she remains in this profession or not. Teachers commitment is the result of Personal characters like, marital status, gender, educational level, Job related characteristics like work or job, perceived organizational support, relations with his or her coworkers and job involvement. A large study at United States revealed that female and married women having children are more committed and are likely to stay in this profession (Choong et al., 2012).

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