Abstract

Organizational commitment has profound effects on employees’ performance and intention to leave. High commitment is often associated with increased productivity, performance and lower turn over. Organizational scientists strive to understand the components of commitment and their differential forms in order to analyse the relationships between these commitment forms and the antecedents or work outcomes. This paper proposes a conceptual framework inspired by Allen and Meyer three-component (1991) model. A detailed discussion of the relevant literature is provided. Antecedent variables that are deemed to be suitable for the Saudi Arabian culture are suggested. In addition, the theoretical justification for the conceptual framework integration is discussed. 700 survey questionnaires in 16 Saudi ministries in two cities Riyadh and Jeddah were distributed. Results of confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) appear to confirm our hypotheses and indicate a consistency with those documented in the literature.

Key words: Organizational commitment (OC), Affective commitment (AC), Normative commitment (NC), Continuance commitment (CC), Saudi Arabia.

1. Introduction

Organizational commitment is a psychological construct that has been studied over the last forty years (Powell and Meyer, 2004). Recent research in developed and developing countries shows that one of the major effects on employee’s performance and productivity is their commitment to the organization (Mowday et al. 1982; Allen and Meyer, 1990; Hackett et al 1994; Herscovitch and Meyer 2002; Al Kahtani, 2004; Shaw et al. 2003; Yousef, 2000). In modern society, relationships between employees and their organizations have become imperative in the workplace. Research has found that these types of relationships affect not only employees but also the companies as a whole (Meyer et al, 2001; Wu & Cavusgil,2006). Such consequences can be negative, for instance: high turnover, low productivity and absenteeism. On the other hand, positive
consequences can be: good attendance, participation and low turnover. (Abbott et al, 2005). Moreover, practicing managers and behavioural scientists have been influenced by organizational commitment in recent years (Mowday et al., 1982) and given it increased attention for it is the base of numerous positive and negative occupational impacts. Although most practitioners are inclined to associate high commitment with increased productivity and lower turnover, organizational scientists strive to understand the component of commitment and their differential forms in order to analyse the relationships between these commitment forms and the antecedents or work outcomes (Allen and Meyer, 1997; Meyer and Schoorman, 1992; Meyer and Meyer, Stanley, Herscovitch, & Topolnytsky, 2002). Despite the importance of organizational commitment (OC) for the success of organizations, the large majority of the organizational behaviour literature is mainly confined to the study of OC in developed countries. There is however, a dearth of studies of OC in Saudi Arabia. There is also little understanding of the relationship between OC, intention to leave the organization, and In role behaviour and organizational citizen behaviour OCB, (Yousef, 2000; Al Kahtani, 2004, Cohen, 2007). In addition, little is known regarding the antecedents that affect the organizational commitment in this context.

Given the need to improve understanding of this area, this paper attempts to use Allen and Meyer three components model to better predict and explain of the type of organizational commitment in the public sector in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia; assess the levels of organizational commitment of the Saudi employees, and the personal, structural and cultural dimensions effects on employees’ commitment; and, investigate the effects of the different types of commitment on In role behaviour and organizational citizen behaviour.

2. Aim, research question and hypotheses

The purpose of the present study is to examine the effect of several antecedent variables factors that influence the three components of organizational commitment among Saudi public sector employees. The study will also examine the influence of organizational commitment on several organizational outcomes such as In role behaviour, organizational citizen behaviour (OCB), and intention to leave. Moreover, to provide an analysis of the
demographic, management experiences, and cultural dimension that shape organizational commitment in the Saudi Arabian public sector.

To provide a scientific formulation of the aim of the study the primary research question is posed: **What are the levels of affective, continuance, and normative commitment among public sector employees in SA?**

To arrive at satisfactory answer to the primary research question, the research will consider the following hypotheses:

**Hypothesis 1:** There is a significant difference between public employs according to their organisational level.

**Hypothesis 2:** Training (opportunity for learning) is positively related to organizational commitment AC more than CC or NC.

**Hypothesis 3:** Management communication is positively more related to AC than CC or NC.

**Hypotheses 4:** Bureaucratic arrangements are positively related to CC, particularly the high-sacrifice sub component than to AC or NC.

**Hypothesis 5:** Cultural dimensions of power distance, uncertainty avoidance, collectivism/individualism, and masculine/feminine relate more positively to (NC) than (AC) or (CC).

**Hypothesis 6:** AC relates (positively) more to performance, organizational citizenship behaviour (OCB: OCBO and OCBI), than NC or CC.

**Hypothesis 7:** There is no relationship or negative relationship between CC and In role performance (IRB), organizational citizenship behaviour (OCB: OCBO and OCBI).

**Hypothesis 8:** In-role performance, organizational citizenship behaviour (OCBO and OCBI) are (positively) related to NC more than to CC.

**Hypothesis 9:** AC, CC, and NC negatively related to intention to leave.

3. **Conceptual Framework**

The conceptual framework is depicted in figure 1. It contains the three components of organizational commitment, which is presented by Meyer and Allen’s Multidimensional Model of Organizational Commitment (Allen & Meyer, 1997).
Mediation forms of fit take into account indirect effects. Some variables (depicted as $x_2$ in figure 2) do have a direct impact on the dependent variable $Y$, but rather modulate the effect of other independent variables $x_1$ on the dependent variable $Y$. Perfect fit occurs when the influence of the independent variable $x_1$ (e.g., work experiences) on the dependent $Y$ (e.g., performance) take place through the mediating $x_2$ (e.g., OCB created by the antecedents). In path analysis, a commonly used statistical technique for mediation forms of fit, the fit is considered as a statistically significant indirect effect (Gerdin and Greve, 2004).
4. Research Methodology

The developed conceptual framework developed needs to be validated empirically. The research consists of two aspects: descriptive aspect and an analytic aspect. The descriptive aspect attempts to understand behaviour of employees and analytical aspect tries to explain the reasons of these forms as an answer of the main question. This is quantitative research using only questionnaires as a research method.

5.1 Questionnaire development

The research instrument adopted to conduct the collect data necessary for empirical research. The selected items are mainly adapted from prior studies to ensure content validity. To ensure the content validity of the scales, the items selected must ‘represent the concept about which generalizations are to be made’ Bohmstedt (1970). Appropriate modifications are introduced when the need arise to fit the nature of the organizational commitment measures specific to the Saudi context. Before the actual data collection, a pilot study in Saudi Arabia was conducted in the period between 2\textsuperscript{nd} of November 2007 and 15 of January 2008. The pilot study aims at obtaining high level of content validity (Jackson, 1970); also to ensure that the instructions questions, and scale items are clear. The pilot-test was conducted in the same type of people who were used in the main study (e.g. public sector employees). Employee responses were obtained on a 5-point response scale; ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

The questionnaire was originally written in English. Translation of original English language version of the questionnaire into Arabic was accomplished through a multi-stage translation and back translation procedure. This procedure was similar to that described by Brisilin (1983).

5.2 Sample description

The research is conducted on a random sample of employees based at different organizational levels (senior managers, managers, and supervisors, which will present top managers and middle management, staff from low levels such as coordinators or writing desk employees) who work for different ministries. 700 questionnaires were distributed
in 16 government ministries located in the two largest cities of the Kingdom of Saudi-Arabia: Riyadh and Jeddah; between 15 of January 2008 and 29 March 2008. 425 of the respondents returned the questionnaire; that is a 60% response. The completed ones were 397. This is indeed a good response rate that far exceeds what the expected rate of response.

5.3 Data Analysis

After the data collection, the following types of data analysis have been undertaken. The analysis of the responses is carried out with the aid of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Data analysis is still in progress. Therefore in this section we only report on the work done on the confirmatory factor analyses (CFA).

CFA provides evidence of a three-component structure of organizational commitment as conceptualized by Meyer and Allen (1991). The AC, CC, and NC components and the two sub components (low alternative CCLo and High sacrifice CCHi) of CC were identified.

It is expected that structural equation modeling (SEM) will enable a successful validation the conceptual model.

CFA results from analysis of the survey data reveal that organizational commitment is indeed multidimensional. This is congruent with the aim of the study, which is to examine the multidimensional nature of organizational commitment of Saudi employees context. Though the results are preliminary that are indeed very encouraging in that they appear to confirm our hypotheses and indicate a consistency with those documented in the literature.

6 Conclusion and future work

A systematic analysis of organizational commitment and demographic and structural factors that influence organizational commitment in Saudi Arabia has been conducted. The research is conducted on a random sample of employees based at different organizational levels (senior managers, managers, and supervisors, which consist of top and middle management and staff from low levels such as coordinators or clerical
employees) who work for different ministries. A very good response rate that far exceeds what the expected rate was obtained.

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Future work, which is still progress, will focus on structural equation modeling (SEM) to validate the conceptual model. SEM will elicit the relationships between constructs with multiple measurement items and permits testing the measurement characteristics of constructs. In addition, SEM will also allow for multiple simultaneous directions of casualty, and distinguishes direct effects from the indirect effects and the total effects of an explanatory variable on each dependent variable.

References


