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THE IMPACT OF PERSON-ORGANIZATION VALUE CONGRUENCE ON ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT IN A PUBLIC SECTOR ORGANIZATION

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study was to examine the extent to which person – organization value congruence (fit), individual's perception of their personal values and their employing organization's values explain individual's affective, continuance and normative organizational commitment. The research question explored in this study was, "Which of the following best explains affective, continuance and normative organizational commitment: personal values, organizational values or P-O fit?" The value taxonomy developed by McDonald and Gandz was used to measure the independent variables, personal values, organizational values and person – organization value congruence, and Meyer and Allen's affective, continuance and normative organizational commitment scale was used to measure the dependent variables, affective commitment, continuance commitment and normative commitment. The study was conducted on a public sector organization of Delhi NCR. The sample and sample size constituted 32 employees with at least one year of experience in the current organization. The data analysis was done by using descriptive statistics, correlation and linear regression analysis. The findings revealed that organizational values were the best predictor of affective commitment, person – organization value congruence (fit) was the best predictor of normative commitment. The question of which variables best explains continuance organizational commitment remains unanswered.

KEYWORDS

Affective commitment, continuance commitment, normative commitment, organizational commitment, person-organization value congruence.

INTRODUCTION

Over the past two decades, organizations are facing complex challenges. The rapid pace of technological change, deepened globalization, internationalization of business, and drive for quality and shifting social and demographic trends have challenged organizations. The complexity of today's organization demands for various strategic responses. Research indicates that creating a successful workplace requires an organization to concentrate its energies on strengthening employee commitment. In the past, employees joined an organization and stayed until their retirement. But this is not the case today. In fact the organizational environment has created a sense of uncertainty for many employees. The current environment in which organizations function dictates the growing importance of organizational commitment. In response organizations are recognising the benefits that can be gained from attracting, developing and retaining employees whose characteristics match with the characteristics of the organization. Thus more recently, the researchers have shifted their attention towards examining the congruence between characteristics of the individual and characteristics of the organization that have an impact on employees' attitudes and behaviour. (e.g. Chatman, 1989; Meglino, Ravlin & Adkins, 1992).

One fundamental characteristic that both individuals and organizations have in common is 'values'. James Kouzes and Barry Posner (2002) in a study stated that "values make a significant difference in behavior at work" (p. 49). They found that those persons with the greatest degree of clarity of personal values, along with the greatest degree of clarity of organizational values, had the greatest level of commitment to the organization. It is quite easy to generate examples to show that individuals would be more comfortable in an environment that is more consistent with their personal values. For example, imagine an individual who values honesty and integrity in work and whose organization views 'getting the job done at any cost' as the priority, is likely to be less devoted to the organization and possibly less productive. On the other hand an individual who values responsibility and whose organization has accountability as a value is likely to have opportunities to take responsibility, thus achieving one of his/her own values, while also meeting one of the organization's values. Thus aligning individuals' and organizations' values can help to create person – organization fit and increase organizational commitment.

The relationships between person-organization value congruence (P-O fit) and employee attitudes have been extensively studied (Meglino & Ravlin, 1998; Chatman, 1991; McDonald and Gandz, 1991, 1992; Finegan, 2000). However in the Indian Scenario the studies have been limited. Thus this research is an attempt to study the relationship between person-organization value congruence (P-O fit) and organizational commitment among Indian managers.

VALUES

Values are considered a primary component of an organization's culture. Rokeach (1973) defined values as "an enduring belief that a specific mode of conduct or end state of existence is personally or socially preferable to an opposite or converse mode of conduct or end – state of existence". They have been a part of sociological study since the 1920s, but the management researchers have begun to recognise the importance of individual or personal values as a medium for understanding human behaviour only in the last 35 years. Values have a major impact on organizations. They are at the core of personal behaviour, influence the choice we make, the people we trust, the appeals we respond to, and how we invest in our time and resources (England, 1967; Munson & Posner, 1980). Many of the most important decision an organization makes involve personal values of the members (Posner, Randolph, & Schmidt, 1987). Values are believed to have a substantial influence on the affective and behavioural responses of individuals (Locke, 1976; Rokeach, 1973) and at the organizational level are viewed as a major component of organizational culture (O'Reilly & Chatman, 1996; Schein, 1991). The individual uses values to decide what course of action to follow. The management of an organization uses values to decide courses of action within the organization.

INDIVIDUAL VALUES

Personal values define what individuals consider intrinsically desirable, and they guide their actions and judgments to these ends. They are aimed at supporting the individual's well-being rather than that of the group or the society. Rokeach (1973) defined individual values as "enduring beliefs through which a specific mode of conduct behaviour or end-state (outcome) is personally preferable to its opposite" (p. 5). *Instrumental* values relate to behaviour such as honesty, creativity, and decisiveness. *Terminal* values refer to outcomes a person strives to achieve, like a comfortable life, happiness, and wisdom.

Personal values have long been considered by social scientists to be important determinants of attitudes and behaviour. The relationships between the personal values and attitude have been extensively studied (Meglino & Ravlin, 1998). Personal values are statements of the ideal (Kluckhohn, 1951) and represent beliefs that particular modes of conduct or end-states of existence are preferable to others (Rokeach 1973). Dawis and Lofquist (1984), and Ronen (1978) viewed values as an integral part of an individual's personality structure, and argued that one's personal value system is a relatively stable and fundamental component of the individual's psychological makeup which influences attitudes and behaviour.

Personal values have a major impact on the organizations. They are the core of personal behaviour; influence the choices we make, the people we trust, the appeals we respond to, and how we spend our time and resources (England, 1967). Many of the most important decisions of the organization are dependent on personal values of the employees (Posner, Randolph, & Schmidt, 1987).

ORGANIZATIONAL VALUES

Values are also a key element of an organisation's culture and its ethics (Brown, 1995; Dickson et al., 2001; Hofstede, 1984; Schein, 1992). At the organisational level there is general agreement that organisational culture involves a set of cognitions that are shared by members; that these cognitions are acquired through social learning and socialisation processes; and that they include values, common understandings, and patterns of beliefs and expectations. Organisational values are the standards to which reference is made for judging acceptable behaviour of relevance to the company, both the behaviour acceptable for the organisation as it interacts with its external environment, and the norms of behaviour for individuals within the organisation. Values are inherent in a firm's mission and goals; its strategies and structure; allocation of resources; codes of practice, policies and procedures; and its actions.

Making business decisions depends on more than just a person's individual value system, but is also shaped and reinforced by the values and behaviours of the organisational culture and climate in which they are made (Hofstede, 1984). McDonald and Gandz (1991) suggested that a company's values impact a wide range of issues within the organization's environment, to include strategic decision-making, corporate ethics, operational decision-making, interpersonal conflict, quality of working relationships, career choice and progressions, and employee motivation and commitment.

PERSON -ORGANIZATION VALUE CONGRUENCE (P-O FIT)

The notion of shared values or person-organisational values fit (P-O fit) has been investigated widely over the past two decades (Cable and Judge 1997; Chatman 1991; Kristof 1996; Meglino et al. 1992; Westerman and Vanka 2005). Rokeach (1973) suggested that the correlation between one's "own values and the perceived values of other persons or groups is a measure of perceived similarity, or of positive or negative identification with (or alienation from) others". Value Congruency or alignment of value systems is said to exist to the degree to which the preferred values of the member for the group or organization, align or correspond with the shared values the member, perceived as constituting the existing shared values system" (Byrtek, 2000). Value congruence as measured in the work environment is "defined as the degree to which an individual employee's personal values (preferences) are congruent with his or her work organization's values (conception of the desirable) as manifested within its culture or subcultures" (McDonald, 1993). Kristof (1996) defined P-O fit as "the compatibility between individuals and organizations and further stated that compatibility between people and organizations can occur when: (a) one provides what the other needs, or (b) similar fundamental characteristics are shared, or (c) both".

Literature shows that there has been a positive relationship between value congruence or person-organization fit and the following: a) organizational commitment (Posner & Schmidt, 1993; Meyer & Allen, 1997; Kalliath, et al., 1999; Suar & Khuntia, 2000; Finegan, 2000; Abbot, et al., 2006; Tyagi & Gupta, 2005); b) organizational effectiveness (Posner & Schmidt, 1993); c) job satisfaction (Herrbach & Mignonac, 2007; Ostroff, et al., 2005; Amos & Weathington, 2008; Kalliath, et al., 1999; Kemelgor, 1982); d) organizational decision making (Liedtka, 1989); and e) intrinsic motivation (Ren, 2010). Researches also show that a negative relationship exists between congruence and employee turnover (Meglino & Ravlin, 1998; McCulloch & Turban, 2007).

ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT AND VALUE CONGRUENCE

The concept of organisational commitment (OC) has occupied a prominent place in organisational behaviour research for many decades and continues to be of interest to researchers and organisations alike. The last 28 years has seen great interest of researchers in studying the concept of OC. The desires of organization leaders to attract and retain a competent, engaged, and loyal workforce have led to these studies.

Mowday et al. (1979) posited that organizational commitment holds greater significance as a variable than job satisfaction because it is a more dependable indication of an employee's identification with and involvement in an organization over the long term. Individuals who are committed to the organization are less likely to leave their jobs than those who are not committed. Individuals who are committed to the organization tend to perform at a higher level and also tend to stay with the organization leading to decrease in turnover and increased organizational effectiveness. (Porter et al., 1974). Thus like personal and organizational values, the concept of organizational commitment have occupied a prominent place in organizational behaviour research and are of great interests to various researchers and organizations.

According to Porter, Steers, Mowday, and Boulian (1974), OC generally could be characterised by three aspects of one dimension. These are (a) a strong belief in, and acceptance of, the organisation's goals and values, (b) a willingness to exert considerable effort on behalf of the organisation, and (c) a strong desire to remain with the organisation and to work hard toward its goals. More recent research has postulated that organisational commitment is a multi-dimensional construct (Allen and Meyer 1990; Allen and Meyer 1996) consisting of affective, continuance and normative commitment and that these constructs develop from different antecedents. Affective commitment refers to an employee's emotional attachment to, identification with, and involvement in a particular organisation. Continuance commitment refers to commitment based on the costs that the employee associates with leaving the organisation. Normative commitment refers to the employee's feelings of obligation to stay with the organisation. Given that values play such an important role in the definition of commitment, it stands to reason that a person whose personal values matches the operating values of the organization would be more committed to the organization than a person whose personal values differed from the organizations.

Researchers suggested that organizations that develop cultures where values are shared are able to deepen the level of employee organization integration and improved employee commitment (McDonald & Gandz, 1992). There is a growing body of literature on relations between P-O fit or value congruence and organizational commitment. Meglino et al. (1989) found increased organizational commitment among employees when there was higher value congruence between the employee and the supervisor. Also, Boxx et al. (1991) found a positive relation between congruence and commitment among transportation department executives. Posner et al. (1985) found that perceived measures of person-organization value congruence were positively associated with organizational commitment. Posner's (1992) results showed that there was a significant positive relation between value congruence and organizational commitment (type of organizational commitment measured was not identified). Ugboro (1993) examined the relation between value congruence and affective commitment and found that they were significantly and positively related. Finnegan (2000) concluded that a person whose values were better matched to those of the organization would have a greater level of organizational commitment.

Despite good reasons that the relationships between person-organization value congruence and organizational commitment have been extensively studied, most of the existing studies have been limited in that the researches: (a) focused mostly on areas outside India (Allen & Meyer, 1996; Wright, 2000) whereas it has been explored that people react differently to values in different cultures; (b) have studied effect of value congruence on academic environment and selective industries such as nursing, sales, manufacturing, accountants; and (c) Most of the studies reviewed has included only one measure of commitment. Consequently, this study will look at the impact of value congruence on all the three measures of organizational commitment (affective, continuance and normative) in Indian scenario with special focus on low to middle level managers of industrial organizations.

THE PRESENT STUDY

The purpose of this study is to ascertain if there is an impact of perceived person – organization value congruence on organizational commitment in Indian public sector organization. When an employee's values match those of an organization – the values are said to be congruent.

As the literature review above points out that, the congruence between personal values and organizational values has been associated with organizational commitment (O'Reilly & Chatman, 1986; Chatman, 1989; Meglino et al., 1989). The focus of this study is to understand the relationship between person – organization value congruence as multidimensional independent variable and organizational commitment as multidimensional dependent variable in a public sector organization. These relationships have been explored on employees with at least one year experience in that organization. There is a fundamental research question that this study seeks to answer:

“Which of the following best explains the affective, continuance and normative commitment: personal values, organizational values, person – organization value congruence or a combination of these?”

Several hypotheses were evolved from these questions:

H1: When personal values, organizational values and person-organization fit are simultaneously modeled as predictors of affective organizational commitment, P-O fit will be the most significant predictor among these.

H2: When personal values, organizational values and person-organization fit are simultaneously modeled as predictors of continuance organizational commitment, P-O fit will be the most significant predictor among these.

H3: When personal values, organizational values and person-organization fit are simultaneously modeled as predictors of normative organizational commitment, P-O fit will be the most significant predictor among these.

A. RESPONDENTS

The population of the study was a public sector organization of Delhi region. The sample consisted of 32 employees from the organization that had at least one year of experience in that organization. The respondents had more number of males (19%) and less females (13%). The sample employees were maximum in the age group of 25 and below years (12) followed by 26 – 35 age group (7%) and 6% of the respondents were of age group 36 – 45 years. More than half of the respondents were married (20%), while 12% were unmarried respondents. The respondents had an equal balance of Postgraduates (16%) and Graduates (16%). This implies that the respondents had high literacy levels.

B. MEASURES

The variables in the study were all measured at the individual level of analysis. The dependent variables in this study were affective organizational commitment, normative organizational commitment, and continuance organizational commitment. The independent (predictor) variables in this study were personal values, organizational values and person-organization value congruence.

Individual and Organizational Values

Each value of McDonald and Gandz's (1991, 1992) taxonomy of values was rated on a 7-point scale. The 24-item McDonald and Gandz taxonomy of values is a revised version of Rokeach's (1973) list of values, designed for use in the business context (McDonald & Gandz, 1991). McDonald and Gandz's research among human resource professionals confirmed the validity of their list of values in the business community. The rank order instrument has a test-retest reliability of .76, with an inter-rater reliability of .77. Details of the convergent and discriminant validity are available in McDonald (1993).

Organizational Commitment

This research study used the Three Component Model of Employee Commitment Survey, originally developed by Meyer and Allen (1991, 1997) to measure affective, continuance and normative commitment. The original version of the instrument included a total of 24 items, with 8 items in each scale. The revised version (Meyer, Allen & Smith, 1993) contained 18 items, six for each scale, and will be used in this research. The instrument uses a 7-point Likert-type scale, with responses ranging from “strongly disagree” (1) to “strongly agree” (7). The scale has been widely used in the field and has median reliabilities across many studies of .85 for affective commitment, .73 for normative commitment and .79 for continuance commitment (Allen & Meyer, 1996). A detailed discussion of the construct validity of this scale is found in Allen and Meyer (1996).

C. PROCEDURE

Questionnaires were distributed and collected personally by the researcher from first to middle level managers of the organizations. Respondents were assured that their responses were completely confidential and anonymous, and that no individual responses would be shown to any member of the organization.

For the respondents to understand the meaning of values, their definitions were provided to the participants. Participants were asked to rate the value taxonomy twice, first with respect to how important a given value is to the respondent himself or herself, and second, in terms he or she perceives value's importance to their respective organization. Values were rated on a seven point Likert scale with categories ranging from 'not very important' (1) to 'very important' (7). Participants also completed Meyer and Allen's commitment scale.

DATA ANALYSIS

Descriptive Statistics were calculated on personal values, organizational values, overall value base of the organization, person organization value congruence (fit) and affective, continuance and normative commitment of the employees.

TABLE 1: DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
PV	5.5625	.50022	32
OV	5.0313	1.11808	32
ACS	4.9297	1.19388	32
CCS	4.2461	.95803	32
NCS	3.9219	.78786	32
TOTAL VALUE BASE	5.2969	.73737	32
P-OFIT	.1671	.34803	32

Through the mean value it can be concluded that personal values and organizational values are high in organizations which together counts for higher overall base of the organization. Also it is seen that affective commitment scale is highest in organization followed by continuance commitment and normative commitment.

A. CORRELATION

A correlation matrix was generated for all the variables. Significant correlations were expected to exist between the dependent variables, the three forms of commitment, but they were treated separately in subsequent analysis to be consistent with the precedent. Several of the independent variables were examined for the correlation, which was found.

TABLE: 2 CORRELATIONS

		PV	OV	ACS	CCS	NCS	POFIT
Spearman's rho	PV	1.000					
	OV	.658(**)	1.000				
	ACS	.389(*)	.711(**)	1.000			
	CCS	-.178	-.215	-.243	1.000		
	NCS	.083	.402(*)	.287	-.251	1.000	
	POFIT	.268	.656(**)	.598(**)	-.134	.357(*)	1.000
		.138	.000	.000	.465	.045	.

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

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

Person-organization fit was measured indirectly as the correlation between individual's perception of their own values and individual's perception of their employing organization's values.

Through the correlation analysis it can be concluded that there is high degree of correlation between personal values and organizational values which means that increase in positive personal values count for positive increase in organization values. Therefore, high fit between personal values and organizational values.

B. REGRESSION ANALYSIS

Primary hypothesis testing employed regression analysis. To find out the best predictor of affective commitment among personal values, organizational values and P-O fit a linear regression analysis was calculated.

TABLE: 3 SUMMARY OF LINEAR REGRESSION MODEL PREDICTING AFFECTIVE ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT

Variables	R- Square	df	Beta Coefficients	Significance
PV	.216	31	.465	.007
OV	.676	31	.822	.000
P-O FIT	.359	31	.599	.000

This table depicts that organizational values best predicts the affective organizational commitment followed by P-O fit and personal values as R-Square value and beta coefficients are highest for organizational values. Thus this analysis does not support hypothesis one which says that P-O fit will be the best predictor of affective organizational commitment.

Since there is no correlation between continuance commitment and any of the values as well as person organization value congruence, therefore regression analysis cannot be conducted for continuance organization commitment. Hence hypothesis two which says that P-O fit will be the best predictor of continuance commitment stands invalid.

Similarly to find out the best predictor of normative commitment among personal values, organizational values and P-O fit a linear regression analysis was calculated.

TABLE 4: SUMMARY OF LINEAR REGRESSION MODEL PREDICTING NORMATIVE ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT

Variables	R- Square	df	Beta Coefficients	Significance
PV	.003	31	.053	.774
OV	.081	31	.285	.114
P-O FIT	.150	31	.387	.029

This table depicts that P-O fit best predicts the normative organizational commitment followed by organizational values and personal values as R-Square value and beta coefficients are highest for P-O fit. Thus this analysis supports hypothesis three which says that P-O fit will be the best predictor of normative organizational commitment.

DISCUSSION

Unlike much of the previous work looking at person-organization fit and organizational commitment, the present research was able to examine the relationship between person – organization value congruence as multidimensional independent variable and organizational commitment as multidimensional dependent variable. This study has provided some insight into the personal values of public sector employees, and their perception of their organization's values, the levels of P-O value congruence and the relationship between these individual and organizational values and organizational commitment. The correlation analysis depicted high degree of correlation between personal values and perception of organizational values which means that increase in positive personal values count for positive increase in organization values. Therefore, high fit between personal values and organizational values.

It was proposed that P-O fit will be the best predictor of affective organizational commitment among personal values, organizational values and person-organization fit. The results showed that organizational values best predicted the affective organizational commitment followed by P-O fit and personal values. It was also proposed that P-O fit will be the best predictor of normative organizational commitment among personal values, organizational values and person-organization fit. This hypothesis was supported as P-O fit best predicted the normative organizational commitment followed by organizational values and personal values.

The data for continuance commitment suggest a very different pattern from either normative or affective commitment. Surprisingly there was no correlation between continuance commitment and any of the values as well as person organization value congruence. Therefore, the findings in this study should not be generalised without validation on a much larger and broader sample.

LIMITATIONS

This study was designed specifically to address the stated research hypothesis and therefore has some inherent limitations with regard to the generalizability of its findings. By its methodology and design, there are inherent limitations in the present study. The present study was limited to managers of one public sector organization, thus the findings of the study cannot be generalized. Moreover, none of the primary independent variables explained statistically significant amount of variance in continuance organizational commitment. However, this does not mean that it can be concluded that no relationships exist between P-O fit, personal values, organizational values and continuance commitment. The effects of these relationships, if they do exist, may be too small in size to have been detected with the sample size of this study.

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE FUTURE RESEARCH

This study has revealed several implications for the future research related both to incremental and empirical contribution of this study. First of all, the replication of this study with a larger, more diverse, random sample, longitudinal approach would alleviate the major limitations of this study. Going beyond the

incremental contribution, future research should explore whether or not additional components of organizational commitment exists, and if so, how they relate to important organizational behavior outcomes.

CONCLUSION

In sum, while there are limitations in the present study, they do not undercut the main findings with respect to person – organization fit. The findings of the study indicate that when personal values and organizational values are congruent normative component of organizational commitment is higher and when organizational values are higher than affective component of organizational commitment is higher. In totality the findings suggest that organizational values are the best predictors of affective commitment, person – organization value congruence (fit) was the best predictor of normative commitment.

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