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**IMPACT OF AGE AND LEVEL OF EDUCATION ON ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT****DR. ARTI BAKHSHI****HEAD****P.G. DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY****UNIVERSITY OF JAMMU****JAMMU****ATUL DUTT SHARMA****UGC- RESEARCH FELLOW****P.G. DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY****UNIVERSITY OF JAMMU****JAMMU****DR. KULDEEP KUMAR****LECTURER****DIRECTORATE OF SCHOOL EDUCATION****JAMMU****ABSTRACT**

The present study aimed at exploring the linkages between Allen and Meyer's (1991) three component model of organizational commitment with two demographic variables viz. Age and level of Education, using a field survey on a randomly selected sample of 80 employees working in National Hydroelectric Power Corporation Ltd., a public sector organization in India. Organizational Commitment was measured using revised version of Organizational Commitment Scale by Allen and Meyer (1997). The results of correlation analysis showed that all the three components of organizational commitment-Affective commitment, Continuance commitment and Normative commitment were positively correlated with age but significant correlation was established only between Age and Continuance Commitment. The study showed a negative correlation between Level of education and the three types of Commitment but all of them were insignificant. Hierarchical Regression analyses showed no significant impact of Level of Education on three components of Organizational Commitment. Age showed a significant positive impact on Continuance Commitment among the three components of organizational commitment.

**KEYWORDS**

Affective, Age, Commitment, Continuance, Level of Education, Normative.

**INTRODUCTION**

Organizational commitment is of interest to both behavioral scientists and practicing managers. Committed people are thought to be more likely to remain with the organization and to work toward organizational goal attainment (Mowday, Porter, & Steers, 1982, Ostroff, 1992). Porter and Lawler (1968) viewed commitment as the willingness of an employee to exert high levels of effort on behalf of the organization, a strong desire to stay with the organization, and an acceptance of its major goals and values. Commitment reflects a psychological bond between people and organizations. Organizational commitment involves people's feelings about the organizations for which they work – that is, the degree to which they identify with the organizations that employ them. Morrow (1983) indicated that several but different theoretical foundations have been used to define commitment related concepts with a number of measuring instruments as a result. Despite the lack of consensus on the conceptual and theoretical development of this construct, the concept of Organizational commitment has attracted considerable interest in an attempt to understand and clarify the intensity and stability of an employee's dedication to the organization. Researchers have distinguished between three approaches to study commitment, namely from an attitudinal, behavioral and a motivational perspective. Although several studies have viewed affective commitment as an attitude and continuance commitment as a behavior (Boyle, 1997; McGee & Ford, 1987; Reichers, 1985; Somers, 1993), Allen and Meyer (1990) recognised that the cost involved in leaving an organization may be regarded as a psychological state and therefore view continuance commitment as a component of attitudinal commitment. According to Allen and Meyer (1990, p.1), Organizational commitment consists of a three-dimensional construct defined as follows:

- The affective component of Organizational commitment refers to the employee's emotional attachment to, identification with, and involvement in, the organization.
- The continuance component refers to commitment based on the costs that the employee associates with leaving the organization.
- Finally, the normative component refers to the employee's feeling of obligation to remain with the organization.

A number of studies have supported the distinctiveness and independence of these three dimensions and provide evidence that they also have unique antecedents (Allen & Meyer, 1990; Boyle, 1997; Eisenberger, Fasolo & Davis-LaMastro, 1990; McGee & Ford, 1987; Meyer, Allen & Smith, 1993; Randall, Dunham, Grube & Castaneda, 1994; Reichers, 1985; Shore, Barksdale & Shore, 1995; Somers, 1993). Furthermore, support has been found for two distinct dimensions of continuance commitment, one based on personal sacrifices involved in leaving the organization, and the second based on limited employment opportunities (McGee & Ford, 1987; Randall, Dunham, Grube & Castaneda, 1994; Somers, 1993). Although reference to the term 'Organizational commitment' describes three very different constructs, a common denominator underlying each construct is the individual's psychological attachment to the organization, and it is therefore this psychological attachment that defines Organizational commitment. The three concepts differ in terms of the link between the employee and the organization. Employees with a strong affective attachment stay with the organization because they want to, those with a strong continuance commitment stay because they need to and those with a strong normative commitment stay because they feel they ought to (Allen & Meyer, 1990; Caldwell, Chatman & O'Reilly, 1990; Meyer, Allen & Smith, 1993). Literature indicates that highly committed employees are more satisfied with their work, perform at levels beyond expectation, are more motivated and experience higher levels of job involvement (Boyle, 1997; Caldwell, Chatman & O'Reilly, 1990; Eisenberger, Fasolo & Davis-LaMastro, 1990). A large percentage of these studies have been based on employee self report measures of commitment. In an attempt to determine managerial perceptions of employee commitment, research has indicated that Organizational citizenship behavior is predictive of manager-rated affective commitment, and that side bets such as age and tenure are predictive of manager-rated continuance commitment (Shore, Barksdale & Shore, 1995). Meyer, Allen and Smith (1993) argued however that commitment is a complex and multifaceted construct, and therefore a multidimensional approach should be taken when studying commitment. Research suggests that employees experience several different commitments to the goals and values of multiple groups, and that where two individuals may be committed to 'the organization', the focus of the two commitments may be entirely different. Individuals may thus be committed in varying degrees to top management, immediate supervisors, peers, customers, unions, their career, occupation or profession (Boyle, 1997; Meyer, Allen &

Smith, 1993; Reichers, 1985). The distinction between different commitment foci may therefore only be of theoretical interest if the same theoretical base is used for operationalising the different foci (Roodt, 1997; Storm & Roodt, 2002)

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Empirical evidence has been produced that demographic variables such as years in organization, age, gender, and level of education can have significant effect on organizational commitment. (Khan, R.M., Ziauddin, Jam, F.A. and Ramay, M. I., 2010; Lok, P. and Crawford, J., 2004; Chen, Z. X., and Francesco, A. M., 2000)

According to career development models (Levinson, Darrow, Klein, Levinson, & MeKee, 1978; Super, 1957) the development and maintenance of OC will differ across career stages as represented by age. In the early career stage, Organizational Commitment varies according to individuals opportunities and the availability of attractive alternatives (Mowday et al., 1982; Rusbult & Farrel, 1983). An individual in the early career stage attempts to become established in a job that interests her or him, but if this job proves inappropriate, he or she are very much willing to choose another. Employees at this stage express greater intention to leave their organization and more willingness to relocate than those in other age groups (Ornstein, Cron, & fiocum, 1989; Ornstein & Isabella, 1990). Based on this, age is expected to be an important determinant of OC in the early career stage. The experiences and opportunities of employees at this stage will vary significantly and will result in different Organizational Commitment levels depending on the alternative employment opportunities. Age has a strong effect on OC of employees at this stage. The career models of Super (1957) and Levinson et al. (1978) hold that the propensity to leave an employer and chosen field of work decreases as one moves into the middle and later stages of employment. People in the middle of their career stage are more interested in developing stable work and a stable personal life and in making strong commitments to work, family, and the community. People in the late stage of their career are in a stage of relative tranquillity. They are more oriented to "settling down" and are less willing to leave the organization or a shift in their work for purposes of promotion. Mowday et al. (1982) argued that levels of commitment developed during the early employment period appear to remain stable. Moreover, increased investments in the form of time and energy make it increasingly difficult for employees to leave their jobs voluntarily. The relative stability of commitment levels along with increased difficulties in leaving the organization weaken the relation between age and OC in the mid and late career stages. Thus, one would predict a weaker relation between age and OC in the mid and late career stages than in the early career stage because very little variation in levels of OC are expected in the later career stages.

As employees age their level of commitment towards their employing organisations increases. Research (Dunham, Grube & Castaneda, 1994) indicates a significant relationship between organisational commitment and age. Similarly, researchers (Meyer & Allen, 1997; Cramer, 1993; Lok & Crawford, 1999; Loscocco, 1990; Luthans, 1992; Mowday et al., 1982; Sekaran; 2000) support the findings that the relationship between organisational commitment and age is significant.

Some theorists postulate that, as individuals age, alternative employment opportunities become limited, thereby making their current jobs more attractive (Kacmar et al., 1999; Mathieu & Zajac, 1990; Mowday et al., 1982). Other proponents hypothesise that older individuals may be more committed to their organisations because they have a stronger investment and a greater history with the organisation than do younger employees (Harrison & Hubbard, 1998; Kacmar et al., 1999).

Hellman (1997) held that younger employees are generally likely to be more mobile and to have lower psychological investments in the organisation. The older employees become, the less willing they are to sacrifice the benefits and idiosyncratic credits that are associated with seniority in the organisation.

Research indicates an inverse relationship between organisational commitment and an individual's level of education; however, the results are not always the same (Luthans et al., 1987; Mowday et al., 1982).

A number of researchers maintain that the higher an employees level of education, the lower that individual's level of organisational commitment (Luthans et al., 1987; Mathieu & Zajac, 1990; Mowday et al., 1982). The negative relationship may result from the fact that highly qualified employees have higher expectations that the organisation may be unable to fulfil and hence they are willing to join different organizations.

Chusmir (1982) maintains that there is a positive relationship between commitment and educational qualifications, and level of education may be a predictor of commitment, particularly for working women. However, the level of education does not seem to be consistently related to an employee's level of organisational commitment (Meyer & Allen, 1997).

Higher levels of education are postulated to enhance the possibility that employees can find alternative employment which may reduce their levels of commitment. McClurg's (1999) research found that highly educated employees had lower levels of organisational commitment. This is supported by other findings (Luthans et al., 1987; Mowday et al.).

More educated individuals may also be more committed to their profession. As a result, it would become difficult for an organisation to compete successfully for the psychological involvement of these employees (Mowday et al., 1982). Because, according Mathieu and Zajac (1990), more highly qualified individuals have a greater number of alternative work opportunities. However, Billingsley and Cross (1992) didn't find any support for a relationship between education and commitment.

## HYPOTHESES

- 1) There will be a significant impact of age and level of education on Affective commitment.
- 2) There will be a significant impact of age and level of education on Continuance commitment.
- 3) There will be a significant impact of age and level of education on Normative commitment.

## METHODOLOGY

### SAMPLE

A sample of 80 employees working in NHPC in Jammu Province (J&K) was selected for the study. These employees represented the hierarchy from the Head of the Department to Senior Supervisor level, working in GM Secretariat, HR, Finance, Township, Mechanical, Electrical and Medical departments.

### VARIABLES

Predictor variable: Age and Level of Education

Criterion variable: Organizational Commitment (Affective Commitment, Continuance Commitment, Normative Commitment)

### MEASURES

Organizational commitment Questionnaire: Affective, Normative, and Continuance commitment were measured with the Organizational commitment Questionnaire developed by Meyer and Allen (1997). This revised Questionnaire has 18 items. Employee responses were obtained on a 7-point Likert-type scale where 1 = *strongly disagree* and 7 = *strongly agree*. Reliability (Coefficient alpha values) ranged from .77 to .88 for affective commitment (ACS), from .65 to .86 for normative commitment (NCS), and from .69 to .84 for continuance commitment (CCS) (Allen & Meyer, 1990a; Cohen, 1996, 1999; Cohen & Kirchmeyer, 1995; Hackeet et al., 1994; Meyer & Allen, 1997; Meyer, Irving, & Allen, 1998; Somers, 1995; Somers & Bimbaum, 1998).

## RESULTS

Table 1 lists the Description, means and standard deviations for the variables. The correlations provided some initial support for one of our hypotheses. In support of Hypothesis 2, Continuance Commitment was positively correlated with Age ( $r = .369, p < .01$ ) (Table 2) but not with the other predictor variable i.e. Level of Education. Hypothesis 1 and Hypothesis 3 were not supported, as the results came out to be insignificant. To test the hypotheses, hierarchical regression analysis was performed. At the initial stage, the First variable i.e. Age was entered into the equation. Next, Level of Education as the second Predictor variable was added. The percentage of variability accounted by Age was 0.5% (R square), while the Level of Education variable didn't increase the variability as it was found to be the same as 0.5% in case of Affective Commitment as Criterion Variable. In case of Continuance Commitment, percentage of variability shown



by age was 13.6% (R square), while the education raises it up to 17.4%, a small increase. The percentage of variability shown by Age against Normative commitment was found to be 0.2% which was raised up to 3.6% by the level of education.

Education as one of the predictor variable shows no significant impact on any of the three types of organizational commitment. Age (Table 4) has a significant impact on Continuance Commitment ( $\beta = .369$ ,  $p < .05$ ). Current results suggest that only Age predicts the Organizational commitment in general and Continuance commitment in particular to some extent, thus confirming the partial validity of Hypothesis 2, as Education is not showing any impact on Continuance Commitment. But the impact of Age and Level of Education on Affective and Normative Commitment was found to be insignificant, rejecting the Hypothesis 1 and Hypothesis 3.

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This study found that Age has an impact on Organizational commitment, specifically Continuance Commitment, which is consistent with the finding of Harrison & Hubbard, (1998) and Kacmar et al., (1999) that older individuals may be more committed to their organisations because they have a stronger investment and a greater history with the organisation than do younger employees. There are various studies which have established a relationship between Age and Organizational Commitment (Dunham, Grube & Castaneda, 1994; Meyer & Allen, 1997) but very few have studied the relationship of Age with its three dimensions. Current study showed a negative correlation between Level of education and the three types of Commitment but no correlation is significant. This study revealed that Level of education doesn't predict Organizational Commitment as it is showing no significant impact on the Commitment, which is consistent with the study of Meyer & Allen, (1997) and Billingsley & Cross (1992).

One of the limitations of this research is the sample size which was not too large. The larger sample size will provide more confidence in the results as large sample includes more variety in age groups and education and thereof, reliable generalizations.

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**TABLES**

**TABLE 1: DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS OF PARTICIPANTS (N =80)**

Variable	Description	M	SD
Age	Years	49.2500	5.94170
Education	0 = Undergraduate 1 = Graduate	.4000	.49299
Organisational Commitment	18 items	82.9375	10.19226
Affective Commitment	6 items	27.1000	5.49015
Continuance Commitment	6 items	27.6500	4.37513
Normative Commitment	6 items	28.1875	4.95318

Note. M = mean; SD = standard deviation

**TABLE 2: PEARSON CORRELATIONS**

	Age
Affective Commitment	.071
Continuance Commitment	.369**
Normative Commitment	.042

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

	Level of Education
Affective Commitment	-.006
Continuance Commitment	-.216
Normative Commitment	-.187

**TABLE 3: MULTIPLE REGRESSION ANALYSIS (AFFECTIVE COMMITMENT)**

Model	R	R Square
1.	.071	.005
2.	.071	.005

1 = Age, 2 = Level of Education

Model	Beta	Sig.
Age	.071	.534
Level of Education	-.001	.991

**TABLE 4: MULTIPLE REGRESSION ANALYSIS (CONTINUANCE COMMITMENT)**

Model	R	R Square
1.	.369	.136
2.	.417	.174

1 = Age, 2 = Level of Education

Model	Beta	Sig.
Age	.369	.001*
Level of Education	-.194	.065

**TABLE 5: MULTIPLE REGRESSION ANALYSIS (NORMATIVE COMMITMENT)**

Model	R	R Square
1.	.042	.002
2.	.189	.036

1 = Age, 2 = Level of Education

Model	Beta	Sig.
Age	.042	.710
Level of Education	-.185	.103

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