



INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF RESEARCH IN COMMERCE, IT AND MANAGEMENT

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IMPACT OF ORGANIZATIONAL CLIMATE, ROLE AMBIGUITY AND ROLE CONFLICT ON ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT AMONG THE FACULTY IN ENGINEERING COLLEGES

DR. T. G. VIJAYA

PROFESSOR

DEPARTMENT OF MANAGEMENT STUDIES

PSG INSTITUTE OF MANAGEMENT

PSG COLLEGE OF TECHNOLOGY

COIMBATORE

R. HEMAMALINI

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR

DEPARTMENT OF MANAGEMENT STUDIES

K. S. RANGASAMY COLLEGE OF TECHNOLOGY

TIRUCHENGODE

ABSTRACT

This paper examines the relationship of organizational climate, role ambiguity and role conflict with organizational commitment. Four dimensions of climate for faculty (considerations, intimacy, disengagement and production emphasis) and three dimensions of organizational commitment (affective, normative and continuance) along with role ambiguity and role conflict were measured on 160 faculty working in Engineering colleges. The results show that all the independent variable (role ambiguity, role conflict and organizational climate) are associated with organizational commitment (normative commitment, continuance commitment and affective commitment). A negative correlation exists between affective commitment and role ambiguity, role conflict. At the same time a positive correlation was found between affective commitment and organizational climate. A possible explanation for this is that some differences were existing among the faculty members with regard to their roles and climate prevailing in the campus which made them show difference in their commitment towards the organization. The result does predict that role ambiguity and role conflict has an influence on affective commitment were by reducing them would increase a better organizational climate into the organization resulting in affective commitment among the faculties.

KEYWORDS

Organisational Climate, Role Conflict, Engineering Colleges.

INTRODUCTION

Human resources management places great emphasis on developing and maintaining a workforce highly committed to the organization. HRM is the set of practices that business uses to ensure that they have an effective workforce in place to meet operational needs. Organizational commitment is a state in which an employee identifies with a particular organization and its goals, and wishes to maintain membership in the organization. Despite often difficult working conditions, faculty must display professionalism and rigour qualities which are demanded from them by means of teaching and research activities. The impact of the work environment on professional attitudes and behavior has long been the concern of behavioral scientists (Aranya and Ferris, 1984). Much of the research involves professions such as engineering, medicine, nursing, social work, and education (Arches, 1991). The research is motivated primarily by the changing environment in which professionals function and the relationship of this environment to the organizational commitment of the individual professional. The objective of this research is therefore to link the emotions felt at work by faculty to their organizational commitment and to the organizational climate, role conflict and role ambiguity that they experience.

Organizational commitment was found to be related to the work related attributes of role conflict and role ambiguity (Joanne Brandt, 2008). The effect of organizational climate, role ambiguity, role conflict have an reflection on organizational commitment in academic setting is not well understood. Universities have placed emphasis on reputation, image, and the quest for research level status; and teaching for collaborative productivity have not been given top priority or advocated as worthwhile (Shulman, 1993). The effect of role conflict and role ambiguity on organizational outcomes such as commitment and retention has received less attention, and was typically conducted in non-academic settings (Meyer & Allen, 1991; Meyer, Allen & Smith, 1993; Mowday, Porter & Steers, 1982). This research explores organizational climate, role ambiguity, role conflict and their effect on organizational commitment to the academic setting of faculty members.

Neumann and Finaly-Neumann (1990) indicated that "Universities need dedicated faculty members who not only join their university, but continue to remain actively involved in innovative research activities; prepare new materials and approaches for teaching; build, assess, and reform academic programs; maintain high levels of academic standards; participate in academic decision making; and work closely and actively with their students". Thornton (1970) explored the relationship between organizational involvement and commitment to the university. Thornton (1970) found that when dimensions of organizational involvement were professional, junior college faculty were committed to both their profession and their school. Therefore, the study on relationships between organizational climate, role ambiguity, role conflict on organizational commitment in faculty would be of great usefulness to the colleges study and universities.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT

The concept of organizational commitment has attracted considerable attention as an attempt to understand the intensity and stability of employee dedication to work organizations. Early researchers of organizational commitment (Becker, 1960; Kanter, 1968) identified that commitment is primarily a function of individual behaviour and willingness of individuals to their organization through actions and choices over time. He described commitment as the tendency to engage in consistent lines of activity, such as intent to stay in the organization. Organizational commitment is the relative strength of an employee's attachment or involvement with the organization where he or she is employed. Organizational commitment is important because committed employees are less likely to leave for another job and are not more likely to perform at higher levels. Commitment has recently been defined as "as force that binds an individual towards a course of action" (Meyer and Herscovitch, 2001). Meyer and Allen (1991) suggested three types of organizational commitment – 'affective' commitment reflects an attitude that centers on emotional identification with the values and goals of the organization whereas 'continuance' commitment is based either on the material benefit to be gained from remaining with the particular company or the anticipated costs and drawbacks of leaving and "normative" commitment remains with an organization because of the feeling of obligation. Organizational commitment is important to researchers and organizations because of the desire to retain a strong workforce.

ORGANIZATIONAL CLIMATE

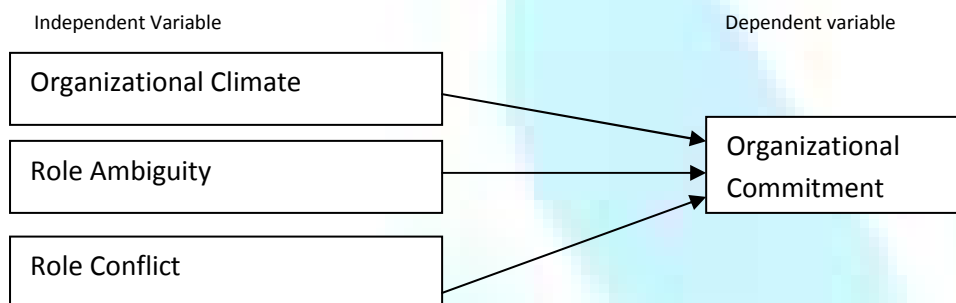
The concept of organizational climate was developed in the late 1930s by the social scientist, Lewin et al (1939). They used social climate term to describe subjective feelings or atmosphere they encountered in their studies of organizations. Organizational climate can be defined as sets of perceptually based descriptions of relevant organizational features, events and process (James and Jones, 1979). These perceptions represent cognitive interpretations of organizational context or situations, and summarize an individual's description of their work experiences (Schneider, 1975). Schneider and Barlett view organizational climate as perceptual as well as an individual attribute. Climate in this approach is viewed as summary or global perception held by individuals about their organizational environment. Regarding participative climate, employees have reported more satisfaction, more interpersonal trust, less role tension, and more organizational commitment when the discrepancies between the desired and actual participation were low (Alutto 1973). Some studies have also found certain aspects of organizational climate to be significantly related to organizational commitment.

ROLE AMBIGUITY & ROLE CONFLICT

Pritchard (1973) define role ambiguity as "uncertainty about the products to produce or their importance for the role and one's evaluation". Other role researchers have similar views of role ambiguity and have defined it as the lack of clear information about job responsibilities and expectations, which are required by the role incumbent for adequate performance of a role (Kahn, et al. , 1964). They argue that role stressors emerge from the social environment created by organizations. They also view organizations as a network of interrelated roles with role senders coming from various places within the organization. Top management, immediate supervisors, co-workers, and team members may all serve the role sending function for a given role incumbent (Kahn et al., 1964). Faced with changing roles, new and varied job responsibilities, and technological advances, a worker or role incumbent finds himself or herself in ambiguous situations. Poorly written or detailed job descriptions, unclear assignments, and mixed message from supervisors can all impact perception of role ambiguity (Huber, 1981).

Role conflict is a condition in which role expectations were contradictory or mutually exclusive. Role conflict and role ambiguity have been the subject of much research over the last few decades. Several theoretical models encompassing these constructs have been developed and empirically tested and two major meta-analyses have been reported (Jackson & Schuler, 1985). A handful of studies have examined the effect of wording factors on measures of role conflict and role ambiguity. Some of these have largely supported the intended substantive factors, while other studies have concluded that method factors predominate (Rizzo et al., 1970).

FIGURE 1: THEORETICAL MODEL OF THE RESEARCH



METHOD

The present study used quantitative survey method to collect the data. Few engineering colleges were taken for survey. The faculties address were collected from the college master roll randomly and 300 questionnaires were distributed among the selected members, out of which only 160 were found to be valid usable at the response rate of 89%. Questionnaire packets included measures of organizational commitment, role ambiguity, role conflict and organizational climate. The participant's belong to various disciplines as well as various designations of the college performing different roles.

MEASURES

Organizational commitment was measured using a revised version of the Meyer and Allen in Multidimensional Model of Organizational Commitment (1991). Meyer and Allen's Multidimensional Model of Organizational Commitment (Allen & Meyer, 1997) provided the foundation for this research. The Multidimensional Model of Organizational Commitment proposes that organizational commitment consists of three dimensions: (1) affective, (2) continuance, and (3) normative. Each of these dimensions of organizational commitment identified different consequences for employee behavior. The antecedent variables to organizational commitment intention chosen for this study included organizational and personal characteristics examined through demographic data obtained from the participants. The instrument contained six items for affective commitment, continuance commitment and normative commitment with seven point scale for measuring the respondents level of agreement with each statement (from 1- strongly disagree to 7- strongly agree). The reliability coefficient (Cronbach α) for this scale was 0.90. Organizational climate consists of ten items for consideration climate, disengagement climate, intimacy climate and production emphasis climate with seven point scale for measuring the respondents level of occurrence with each statement (from 1- even almost never occur to 7- even almost always occur). The reliability coefficient (Cronbach α) for this scale was 0.75. Role status variables chosen to examine in this study were role ambiguity and role conflict. The instrument contained six items for role ambiguity and role conflict with seven point scale for measuring the respondents level of satisfaction with each statement (from 1- very false to 7-very true). The reliability coefficient (Cronbach α) for this scale was 0.84.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Descriptive statistics on the variables of the study is furnished in Table 1. The demographic variable denotes that the average number of years in their respective college is 5.3 years with total average experience being 8.25 years. The average age group of the faculty is 37 year.

TABLE 1: DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

Variables	N	Mean	SD
Demographic variable			
No.of years in this college	160	5.30	3.576
Total experience	160	8.25	7.459
Age	160	37.5	2.891
Role status			
Role ambiguity	160	5.55	3.542
Role conflict	160	4.29	6.106
Organizational Climate			
Consideration	160	3.58	8.932
Intimacy	160	3.40	6.707
Disengagement	160	2.99	4.700
Production emphasis	160	3.59	6.991
Organizational commitment			
Affective commitment	160	3.86	3.057
Continuance commitment	160	4.42	5.194
Normative commitment	160	4.68	6.468

Among the above three factors, role status has got the highest mean score 4.29. In this study role status variable chosen to examine were role ambiguity and role conflict. Role ambiguity has got the highest mean score of 5.55 which means that faculty members are not clear with their roles. Role conflict has got the mean score of 4.29, it represents that more conflict exist among the faculty members which might also be considered as one of the reasons for low commitment among them towards their work. Organizational commitment has the next highest mean score of 4.38 which should be highly valued in any organization. The organizational commitment of the faculty member in engineering college is good at the same time not too much encouraging as its value falls only slightly above the neutral point. Among the sub-factors of organizational commitment, the normative commitment has the mean score value of 4.48 highest above the other two. Normative commitment arises from an individual sense of obligation to the organization and reflects the degree that one's value and belief conform to those of the organization (Meyer & Allen, 1997). Continuance commitment has the mean score of 4.42 which is second highest score in the sub-factor of organizational commitment. Employees with continuance commitment perform only as required to keep their jobs (Meyer & Allen, 1997). This shows that faculty performs their work just for the sake of retaining their job. Affective commitment has the mean score of 3.86 which indicates faculties have very less job satisfaction among them. An affective commitment among employee improves the operational aspects of the organization. Such improvement include greater job satisfaction and involvement, as well as increase job performance (Marrow, 1993 ; Meyer & Allen, 1997). On the whole organizational commitment is very moderate or just slightly above the neutral value among the faculty members of engineering college. Organizational climate has the least mean score of 3.39 which represents the moderate climate prevailing in the institutions. Among the sub-factors of organizational climate, consideration and production emphasis sub-factor has the mean score of 3.58 and 3.59, which shows that output reproduced out of the work and the consideration for the faculty member in the organization is moderate. The study thus represents that when consideration for faculty member from management is moderate, same would be the production emphasis given by the faculty to the work. The sub-factor intimacy has the mean score of 3.40, shows that management intimacy and trust towards faculty members is also low. Disengagement has the least mean score with 2.99 which shows that they is a great disconnect between the understanding and communication of the faculty members with the management. The study clearly shows that moderate organization commitment exist in the organization because of more role conflict and disengagement among the faculty members which leads to a poor working climate inside the organization.

ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT (AFFECTIVE, CONTINUANCE & NORMATIVE) AND THE THREE INDEPENDENT VARIABLES (ROLE AMBIGUITY, ROLE CONFLICT & ORGANIZATIONAL CLIMATE

Ho1: There is no significant relationship between organizational commitment and role ambiguity, role conflict, organizational climate.

Ha1: There is significant relationship between organizational commitment and role ambiguity, role conflict, organizational climate.

TABLE 2: CHI-SQUARE

Variables	Affective Commitment		Continuance Commitment		Normative Commitment	
	Chi-square value	Significance	Chi-square value	Significance	Chi-square value	Significance
Role Ambiguity	5.110	.000**	7.917	.000**	7.985	.000**
Role Conflict	7.517	.000**	1.042	.000**	1.175	.000**
Organizational climate	1.563	.052*	2.140	.000**	2.585	.000**

*Highly significant at 5% level of significance p<=.05

** Highly significant at 1% level of significance p<=.01

Table2 shows that all the variables are (p<=.01) highly significant with organizational commitment, therefore rejecting the null hypothesis. The Chi-square test revealed the significant relationship between the commitment and all the other independent variables (role ambiguity, role conflict & organizational climate) of the faculty member. From the table significance level (.000) has been achieved, this means chi-square test is showing a significant association between the above variables at 99% confidence level. Thus the organizational commitment and role ambiguity, role conflict and organizational climate are associated significantly with each other.

CORRELATIONS OF VARIABLES

This study was mainly concerned with the investigation of the relationship between organizational climate dimensions with organizational commitment. The organizational climate is an important variable that has been found positively correlated with employee's commitment (Ekvall, 1996). Literature of Ahmed and Alvi, 1987; Neumann et al, 1990; Steers, 1977; Decottis and Summer, 1997 suggest that there is a positive and significant relationship between organizational climate and employee's commitment. A correlation test was carried out; it was observed that among the dimensions taken for the study most of them were correlated with the dependent variable organizational commitment.

TABLE 3: CORRELATES OF ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT WITH ORGANIZATIONAL CLIMATE – ROLE AMBIGUITY- ROLE CONFLICT

Factors	OCC	OCI	OCD	OCP	RA	RC
AC	.336**	.285*	.395**	.298*	-.252**	-.306**
CC	.369 **	-.143	-.198*	.170*	-.361**	-.271*
NC	.283 **	.023	.016	.251**	.136	-.059

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

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

(Note: OCC –Organizational climate consideration, OCI - Organizational climate intimacy, OCD - Organizational climate disengagement, OCP - Organizational climate production emphasis, RA- role ambiguity, RC – role conflict , AC- affective commitment, CC- continuous commitment and NC – normative commitment.) Table 3 presents the correlation between the variables in the study. A negative correlation and significant relationship exists between affective commitment and role ambiguity with (r = - 0.252, p <0.01) and role conflict with (r = - 0.306, p<0.01). Role ambiguity and role conflict are negatively correlated to affective commitment (Meyer & Allen, 2001). Therefore, it represents that the role ambiguity or role conflict has a direct affect on the affective commitment of the faculty in an organizational performance. A strong positive and significant correlation was found between organizational affective commitment and organizational climate. A positive relationship exists between continuance commitment and organizational climate consideration (r = 0.369, p<0.01) and organizational climate production emphasis (r = 0.170, p<0.05). The strong negative but significant correlation was found between organizational climate disengagement (r =-0.198, p<0.05). This finding is compatible with the previous results of productivity (Litwin et al , 1973) and commitment (Laschinger , 2001) and strong for bottom line performance(Stringer, 2002). A high level of organizational climate disengagement in the work setting has high levels of organizational continuance commitment. A positive relationship exists between normative commitment and organizational climate consideration (r = 0.283, p<0.01) and organizational climate production emphasis (r = 0.251, p<0.05). Interestingly, role ambiguity and role conflict are negatively correlated with affective commitment but not with continuance and normative commitment. Therefore the set hypothesis (There is significant relationship between organizational climate, role ambiguity, role conflict and organizational commitment) is partially supported by the data. Role ambiguity, role conflict, and organizational climate significantly (p ≤ .05) influenced all dimensions of organizational commitment.

DEMOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS

GENDER

Data analysis on the relationships between the gender demographic characteristic and the dependent variable organizational commitment used t-test for independent samples. This technique is appropriate when dealing with characteristics represented by two groups. Table 4 summarizes the difference between the genders.

TABLE 4: ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT AND GENDER

	t	df	Sig.(2 tailed)
Affective organizational commitment	97.734	159	.000
Continuance organizational commitment	63.277	159	.000
Normative organizational commitment	54.968	159	.000

Table 4 t-tests for all the three forms of commitment result in significance value lesser than .05 which means that there is significant relationship between all the three forms of commitment and gender.

AGE, EDUCATIONAL LEVEL, DESIGNATION AND TENURE

Ho2: There is no significant relationship between faculty age, educational level, designation or tenure, and faculty affective commitment.

Ha2: There is a significant relationship between faculty age, educational level, designation or tenure, and faculty affective commitment.

Ho3: There is no significant relationship between faculty age, educational level, designation or tenure, and faculty continuance commitment.

Ha3: There is a significant relationship between faculty age, educational level, designation or tenure, and faculty continuance commitment.

HO4: There is no significant relationship between faculty age, educational level, designation or tenure, and faculty normative commitment.

Ha4: There is a significant relationship between faculty age, educational level, designation or tenure, and faculty normative commitment.

The relationship between the three forms of commitment and age, educational level, designation & tenure was investigated using one-way Analysis of variance (ANOVA) because these variables are measured on more than two levels. Table 5 shows the result of the analysis between affective, continuance and normative commitment and demographic variable.

TABLE 5: ANOVA BETWEEN ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT AND DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES

Demographic variable	Affective Commitment		Continuance Commitment		Normative Commitment	
	F value	Significance	F value	Significance	F value	Significance
Age	6.974	.000	3.372	.020	5.107	.002
Educational level	4.497	.013	8.233	.000	3.052	.029
Designation	4.072	.008	6.268	.000	3.178	.026
Tenure	6.506	.000	6.753	.000	7.705	.000

The relationship between the three forms of commitment and demographic variables (age, educational level, designation and tenure) shows some difference between the groups. The F-test with a significance value (p<.05) shows that there is a significant differences somewhere between the groups. Therefore all the values are highly significant rejecting the null hypothesis Ho2, Ho3 and Ho4. It is to be concluded that there exist a significant relationship between faculty age, educational level, designation or tenure, and faculty organizational commitment. Personal characteristics of age, organizational tenure, and position tenure have been demonstrated to be correlated to all dimensions of organizational commitment (Meyer & Allen, 1991; 1997).

CONCLUSION

The study of faculty organizational commitment in academic setting is characterized by increasing changes in colleges. There is a greater emphasis on efficiency, flexibility and productivity. Colleges must be able to adopt more quickly and more easily changing conditions and expectations. Higher education is becoming a big business, with increasing pressure to obtain research funding and maintain high standards of teaching and learning. Faculty commitment to the university also provided important consequences for the faculty and the university. While this paper found evidences for the correlates of role ambiguity, role conflict, organizational climate in organizational commitment, cautions in interpreting the results is warranted since there are limitations to the study’s findings. Although the measurement of the independent and dependent variables are separated, the presence of bias due to common methods, that is, using a self evaluation instrument to measure all the variables is ruled out. Furthermore, a declarative instrument relying on participants’ memory was used, which may have caused hindsight bias. Faculty retention is especially important in schools and colleges. The teaching profession is facing a serious shortage of qualified faculty. Understanding commitment in the work place would make the faculty happier and more productive teachers and researchers. The identification of faculty to their organization with greater commitment can create a large driving force in performance.

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