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   NEED/IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY

   STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

   OBJECTIVES

   HYPOTHESES

   RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

   RESULTS & DISCUSSION

   FINDINGS

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INFLUENCE OF ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE, SOCIAL INTERACTION AND DEMOGRAPHICAL VARIABLES ON ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT: AN EMPIRICAL ASSESSMENT OF TWO LEVELS OF EMPLOYEES OF SAUDI ARABIA

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ABSTRACT

The Study investigates the influence of organizational structure, social interaction and demographic variables on organization commitment among employees, selected from various ministries of Saudi Arabia. This was for the purpose of ascertaining the most influential variables on employees' commitment to organizational goal achievement in Saudi Arabia. The sample consisted of 1,022 employees of Saudi Arabia located at Riyadh. Research questions and instruments containing organizational commitment, organizational structure variables, social interaction variables and demographical variables were used to gather the information about the employees. Multiple regression and step wise regression methods were used to analyze the data. The results revealed that (i) organizational structure dimensions such as centralization and formalization and supervisory behaviour and co-worker relationships as the social interaction dimensions were found most significant influential variables with organizational commitment in both the levels of employees (ii) education was found to be most significant factor in low level employees whereas, education and age were found to be significant affect with organizational commitment in middle level of employees as demographical variables. The implications of these findings discussed to increase the level of commitment of employees to their organization.

KEYWORDS
Commitment, organizational structure, social interaction, education, age.

INTRODUCTION

The age of predictability is over and the age of uncertainty has begun. In today's fast changing environment the future depend upon employees' level of commitment in all types of organizations in the society. Success and prosperity in all aspects of life lie not in machines or patens, but in people who will improvise and invest themselves personally in their organizations.

Unfortunately employees' commitment and attachment to their employing also changed as a result of societal and external environmental changes in the past several decades. The values and attitudes of our predecessors towards social, political, and ideological issues as well as work itself are different from many present values and attitudes. Consequently, employees' work ethic, aspiration levels, commitment and attitudes towards authority have changed dramatically during the past few years.

The shift of employees' values and attitudes towards their jobs and organizations became one of the most significant issues recently addressed by theorists and practitioners. Organizational commitment as a result has become an important and useful construct in addressing and explaining such dilemmas in organizational research and management practices. Both public and private organizations started paying more attention to the concept of organizational commitment especially when they began facing serious behaviour problems, such as absenteeism, tardiness, turnover and low level of production and effectiveness.

In general, the concept of organizational commitment has received a great deal of attention in western countries. In Saudi Arabia, the concept of organizational commitment has been ignored, especially in the public sector; therefore, conducting such research seems significant and worthwhile. In the proposed research, the concept of organizational commitment would be treated as dependent variable in attempting to account for the causes or antecedents of organizational commitment. An understanding of the antecedents of commitment would lead to identifying organizational practices which influence the level of commitment as experienced by members of the organization.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The definition and concept of organizational commitment varies in the literature. Prior to the late 1970's there was little consensus about the meaning of organizational commitment (Balfour & Wechsler, 1990; Beckeri, Randal, and Riegel, 1995; Meyer and Allen, 1991 and Dunham *et al* .1994).In fact, there were perhaps as many definitions of organizational commitment as the researcher who studied it. Like many concepts studied in the social sciences, organizational commitment has been defined differently by researchers who viewed it according to the perspectives of their various disciplines .For instance, Mowday *et al.* (1982) found ten distinct definitions in different studies on organizational commitment. Brown (1969) believes that organizational commitment occurs 'when an individual accepts influence, because he wants to maintain a satisfying, self defining relationship to another person or group'. Sheldon (1971) however, views commitment as 'an attitude or an orientation toward the organization, which links or attaches the identity of the person to the organization'. Furthermore, Weiner (1992) refers the word commitment as the 'sense of being bound emotionally or intellectually to some course of action'. However, organizational commitment has varied in organizational context and most commonly defined the term organizational commitment by Porter *et al.* (2004) is 'the identification with an organization and acceptance of its goals and values as one's own'.

Due to fast pace of changes in every spheres of life in the present contemporary world forced to acquaint to get the new knowledge pertaining to growth of the economy ,human resources are responsible to increase the efficiency and effectiveness in the performance of their works .Therefore, organizational structure is a way to carry out the responsibility and power are allocated, and work procedures are carried out, among organizational members (Blau, 1970; Dewar and Werbel, 1979; Germain, 1996; Gerwin and Kolodny, 1992; Ruekert et al., 1985; Walton, 1985). In decentralization, employee participation in decision making is encouraged at more levels in the organization. This foster employees awareness of how their positions are interrelated with others and according to Church (1986), will increase ego involvement and result in higher levels of commitment. When employees are in a position of high functional dependence, they will view their personal success as directly related to the success of others. Decentralization helped innovations and improves democratic decision-making, fosters responsiveness among employees, and enhances the ability of lower organizational levels to influence senior management increased the level of job satisfaction, therefore, job satisfaction lead to commitment (Vedamanickam ,2001;Kanter,2004;McNulty and Ferlie,2004; Khandwalla and Mehta.2004;Samaratunge ,2003 and George & Jones, 2008). Decentralization has been shown to have positive relationships with organizational commitment (Pare, Tremblay, & Lalonde, 2000; Scott-Ladd, Travaglione, & Marshall, 2006). Employee empowerment is also reported to be positively and significantly correlated with commitment (Ugboro, 2006).Recently Badr & Nour (2011) found significant positive relation among organizational commitment and the factors of organizational culture including management support and organizational identity.

Formalization is typically defined as the degree to which rules and procedures within a system are specified and followed (Pough *et al.,* 1968).Mowday et al. (1984) found that formalization was related to commitment. It has been found that employees with more written rules and procedures felt more committed to

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the organization than employee who had fewer written guidelines (Morris and Sherman, 1981; Michaels, 1988; Reyes, 1990; Hoy *et al.* 2001). With respect to organizational commitment, Klenke (1982) stated that formalization tends to provide a basis for identification with the organization.

Faerrman (1987) states that although it is logical to assume that position in the organizational hierarchy would be positively related to organizational commitment, research results in this area have been inconsistent. On one hand Wesch and LaVan (1981) and Lincoln and Kalleberg (1990) found significant relationships between the two variables. Loui (1995) reported positive relationships with organizational commitment. More specifically, perceived trust in the supervisor, an ability to be involved with the job, and feelings of job satisfaction were major determinants of organizational commitment. Similarly Bruning and Synder (1983) found differences in organizational commitment between supervisors and non supervisors. It is noted that co-workers relationship with organizational commitment has been lessen studied by researchers. Study conducted by Buchanan (1974), Kawakubo (1987) and Hsu (2000) found positive relationship between co-workers and commitment. Moreover, the participative and reward behaviours of supervisor will reduce the levels of role conflict and role ambiguity among subordinates therefore, will increase the employees level of commitment (Jackson, 1983; Ismail, 1990; Dunham, Grube, & Castaneda ,1994). According to Kitchen (1989) members of the organization who hold higher positions in the hierarchy express higher levels of commitment. Research in these areas has involved top management (Reichers, 1986; Becker & Billings, 1993; Hunt & Morgan, 1994), participatory management (Dunham, Grube, & Castaneda, 1994), supervisors (Becker, 1992; Becker, Billings, Eveleth, & Gilbert, 1996), and supervisory feedback (Dunham, Grube, & Castaneda, 1994).

Trust in the leaders and co-workers affect the rate of job satisfaction, while the relationship between the leaders and the subordinates reveals the level of confidence, trust, and respect from the subordinates to the leaders (Liou, 1995; Robbins, 2003; Kristin, 2005; Liao et al., 2008; Kao, 2008; Weng et al., 2010). By consolidating the above discussion, we can infer that co-workers' relationship affects job satisfaction and job satisfaction affects organizational commitment. Most recently Lin and Lin (2011) observed that job satisfaction is indeed an intervening variable to the relationship between co-workers' relationship and organizational commitment, but the intervening effect is only partial.

Much of the research concerning the causes of commitment have dealt with the personal characteristics of age, education, number of dependents ,marital status , gender and work ethic .An employees age for instance was found to be positively related to commitment (Angle & Perry,1981;Faerman.1987; Morris & Sherman,1981; Sheldon, 1971; Mathieu & Zajac, 1990 ;Alutto & Vredenburgh, 1977;Grusky,1966;Organ, 1977;Dockel, 2003; Dodd-McCue & Wright,1996; Salami, 2008 ; Azeem,2010; Allen & Meyer, 1993 & Padala ,2011).As an employee get older his level of commitment to that organization increases. It is generally thought that as time goes by employee gradually become attached to their employing organization. Kitchen (1989) expands on hat premise explaining that scarcity of alternative employment for older workers results when many organizations are reluctant to hire older workers whose length of contribution to the organization would necessarily be brief. For these reasons, older workers tens to be more committed. In contrast to age, education has been found to be inversely related to commitment (Angle & Perry, 1981; Faerman.1987; Morris & Sherman, 1981, Glisson & Durick, 1988; Padala, 2011).It has been suggested that this inverse relationship may result because of more highly educated individual have higher expectations and needs which the organization may be unable to meet. Consequently highly educated employees become frustrated and unhappy and therefore, uncommitted to the organization, believing that their expectations and needs can be met in other organization.

OBJECTIVES OF THE PRESENT STUDY

Based on the retrospection of the literature, the researcher found that the concept of organizational commitment has been rarely investigated among the employees working in Saudi public sectors .Thereby, shortage of research on this concept represents a major gap in both the field of management and behavioural sciences, thus making a critical and empirical analysis on the concept of organizational commitment seems to be appropriate and relevant research. However, the primary goal of the proposed study would be to concentrate on identifying significant factors that may influence the commitment of public employees in the Saudi bureaucracy. To achieve the objective, the researcher has grouped antecedents of organizational commitment with organizational structure variables, social interaction dimensions and demographical variables in the present study among two levels of employees. In the present investigation the main purpose is to see the most influential variables on organizational commitment by using research questions and set of tools and verified with the results

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This research study was developed by researcher to answer the following questions:
1. What variables have the most influence on the employees' level of commitment to their organization?
2. Are there any differences or similarities between the two occupational levels (low and middle) employees in terms of influential variables that influence organizational commitment?

METHODOLOGY
SAMPLE
The sample of the present study was 1022 employees from different fifteen ministries of Kingdom of Saudi Arabia located at Riyadh.
TOOLS USED
The following tools were used to gather the information from participants in addition to research questions:

1. Organizational commitment: The most widely used instrument to measure organizational commitment questionnaire (OCQ) developed by Mowday et al. (1979).The OCQ   is a 14 statement instrument which uses a 7 –pint scale ' strongly disagree to strongly agree' .It consists of items pertaining to the subject's perception regarding his/her loyalty and identification with the organization, acceptance of organizational values and goals and willingness to exert extra effort to achieve organizational goals. The OCQ has had high reliabilities when used with non English speaking respondents. Luthans *et al*. (1985) reported that the OCQ versions in Japanese and Korean have high reliabilities of .94 and .87 respectively.

2. Centralization: The Centralization Scale developed by Aiken and Hage (cited in Price, 1972) was used to measure this variable. The scale consists of two sub scales known as 'Hierarchy of Authority' containing five items and 'Participation in Decision Making' which is comprised of four items. In this study Hierarchy of Authority sub scale was used to assess the locus of authority in Saudi public organization. In their studies the authors reported an alpha coefficient of .86 (cited in Cook *et al.,* 1981).

3. Formalization: Six items adopted from the fifteen items. Formalization Scale developed by Hage and Aiken (1969) were used to measure formalization. The Formalization Scale consists of five sub scales which define the following sub constructs: job codification, rule observation, rule manual, job description and specificity of job description. The scale in general, has an acceptable level of reliability ranging from .76 to .85.

4. Supervisory Behavior: The Supervisory Behavior Description Questionnaire (SBDQ) developed by Fleishman (cited in Cook *et al.,* 1981) was used to measure supervisory behavior. The scale consist of two sub scales 'Consideration' and 'Initiating Structure' and contains forty eight items designed to measure ' Individuals' leadership behavior through the descriptions from those who they supervise.' However, in the present study, only 12 items were used to measure the supervisory behavior in the Saudi public sector. The internal reliability coefficient for consideration and structure were found .92 and .68 among supervisor whereas, for non supervisor internal reliability coefficient for both sub scale were .98 and .78 respectively.

5. Relations with co workers: The variable, relations with co workers was intended to measure the degree to which employees are friendly and supportive of one another. Seven items were used in this study; three items were adopted from the 'Relations with Co Workers' sub scale of the facet Specific Job Satisfaction Scale and four items were introduced by the researcher to measure the level of support among employees. The relations with co workers sub scale has a relatively adequate level of reliability (alpha .61) and a high level of reliability for the complete scale (alpha .92) (cited in Cook *et al.,* 1981).

6. Demographic variables: The demographic data information sheet was used to collect information on the participant's age, education, marital status and number of dependents.

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STATISTICS

By keeping in mind the present study objectives multiple regression and step wise regression methods were used to verify the research questions in the study.

PROCEDURE

The total 1600 questionnaires were sent to fifteen ministries employees of Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and finally researcher received 1022 filled questionnaires from the respondents. To maintain ethics of research, permission has been taken from higher official by providing detail about the nature of the study and assured of confidentiality and informed them that this study will be used for academic purpose. The participants were allowed to take their own time to complete the questionnaires. The questionnaire were translated into English to Arabic for better understanding of items with the help of experts in both the areas of languages and also provided mobile numbers to the respondents to call for help in understanding any ambiguous points or items. The collected data put into statistical analyses for concrete results which has been presented in different tables for results and discussion.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

TABLE -1 SHOWING IMPORTANT INFLUENTIAL VARIABLES OF THE ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE DIMENSION ON ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT IN LOW LEVEL OF EMPLOYEES

Sr.No.	Variables	Mult. R	R^2	F	B
1.	Formalization	.28	.08	23.90*	.31
2.	Centralization	.36	.13	20.17*	.22

*P< .001

Table-1 represents two variables, formalization and centralization constitute the organizational structure dimension .The results of stepwise regression indicates that both the variables significantly influence the organizational commitment. These results shows that combined, formalization and centralization account for 13% of the organizational commitment of low level employees. The results might be highlighted that empowerment, participation in decision making and building confidence lead to affect the commitment level in their organization. The finding has been supported by Ugboro (2006) and George & Jones (2008).

TABLE -2 SHOWING IMPORTANT INFLUENTIAL VARIABLES OF THE ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE DIMENSION ON ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT IN MIDDLE LEVEL OF EMPLOYEES

Sr.No.	Variables	Mult. R	R^2	F	B
1.	Formalization	.36	.13	104.14*	.39
2.	Centralization	.47	.22	99.80*	.31

*P< .001

Table-2 indicates that formalization and centralization found most significantly influential variable on organizational commitment and stepwise regression indicates that combined, formalization and centralization account for 22% of the organizational commitment of middle level employees. The result might be discussed in the light of literature available that organizational culture, identification, higher management support, written rules and procedures, job feedback, job independence and job variety lead to influence the level of commitment to the organization (Pare, Tremblay, & Lalonde, 2000; Scott-Ladd, Travaglione, & Marshall, 2006; Badr & Nour,2011 and Mousavian & Shahamat, 2011)

TABLE -3 SHOWING IMPORTANT INFLUENTIAL VARIABLES OF THE SOCIAL INTERACTION DIMENSION ON ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT IN LOW LEVEL OF EMPLOYEES

Sr.No.	Variables	Mult. R	R^2	F	B
1.	Supervisory Behaviour	.3	.09	28.44*	.24
2.	Co-worker Relationship	.36	.13	20.20*	.20

*P< .001

Supervisory behaviour and co-worker relationships represent the social interaction dimension. Stepwise regression test results indicate that both variables affect the organizational commitment of low level employees, but supervisory behaviour is slightly more significant and combined, supervisory behaviour and co-worker relationships account for 13% of the organizational commitment of low level employees. The result might be attributed that high cooperation, harmonious working relationships, good working conditions, motivations and proper guidance affect the level of organizational commitment (Fink, 1992; Griffin, 1988 and Ismail, 1990).

TABLE -4 SHOWING IMPORTANT INFLUENTIAL VARIABLES OF THE SOCIAL INTERACTION DIMENSION ON ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT IN MIDDLE LEVEL OF EMPLOYEES

Sr.No.	Variables	Mult. R	R^2	F	B
1.	Supervisory Behaviour	.37	.14	144.16*	.33
2.	Co-worker Relationship	.41	.17	60.07*	.17

*P< .001

Similarly Table-4 represents the social interaction dimension i.e. supervisory behaviour and co-worker relationships .The results of stepwise regression indicate that supervisory behaviour and co-worker relationships significantly influence the organizational commitment of middle level employees, with supervisory behaviour again being slightly more significant. The above results indicate that supervisory behaviour and co-worker relationships account for 17% of the organizational commitment of the middle level employees. The result might be interpreted that supervisory behaviour could allow for increased interaction and communication between supervisors & subordinates and friendly co- workers affect the level of commitment in their organization. Hsu (2000) and Lin & Lin (2011) supported the findings.

TABLE -5 SHOWING IMPORTANT INFLUENTIAL VARIABLES OF THE DEMOGRAPHIC DIMENSION ON ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT IN LOW LEVEL OF EMPLOYEES

Sr.No.	Variables	Mult. R	R^2	F	B
1.	Education	.28	.08	23.25*	-.28

*P< .001

Table-5 indicates that out of four variables that constitute the demographic dimension (age, education, marital status, and number of dependents), only education found most influential variables on organizational commitment among low level of employees. Further, the result shows that education account for 8% (R^2= .08) of the organizational commitment of employees in low level categories .The result might be explained based on previous findings that low level employees having apprehension in mind that scope of other job is less and more responsibilities lead to influence the level of commitment (Angle & Perry, 1981; Steers, 1977 and Padala, 2011).

TABLE -6 SHOWING IMPORTANT INFLUENTIAL VARIABLES OF THE DEMOGRAPHICAL DIMENSION ON ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT IN MIDDLE LEVEL OF EMPLOYEES

Sr.No.	Variables	Mult. R	R^2	F	B
1.	Education	.23	.05	39.27*	-.18
2.	Age	.28	.08	29.46*	.17

*P< .001

Table-6 shows the middle level employees, education and age both proved to be the most influential variables on organizational commitment, with education still holding a slight edge in significance. Statistical data explain 8% of organizational commitment of middle level employees. As age increased individual opportunities for alternate employment become more limited. This decrease in options value of the present employer, thereby, leading to increased

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psychological attachment Mowday *et al.* (1982).Moreover Morris and Sherman (1981) discovered that older workers, less educated employees, and employees with greater sense of competence had higher levels of organizational commitment.

CONCLUSION

On the basis of results, following conclusion can be drawn;

- In the organizational structure dimension, centralization and formalization significantly affect the organizational commitment of both low and middle level employees.
- Supervisory behaviour and co-worker relationships as the social interaction dimensions have a significant relationship with organizational commitment in both the categories of employees.
- Education is the most influential variable affecting the organizational commitment of low level employees
- Education and age both found to be most significantly influential variables on organizational commitment.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The present research finding has contributed to contemporary areas of organizational behaviour & development and is valued for researchers, academicians, consultants and management practitioners. By keeping several aspects of research in mind, the researcher has also given some suggestion for future research. This study has been widely investigated with male and in Riyadh area only, so it is suggested to study with other sample and cities of Saudi Arabia to determine research to probe whether the result are applicable to Saudi public sector employees. Further it also recommended using different instruments and research questions to investigate the Saudi public sector employees' commitment level to their organization in different parts of the country. On the basis of findings it is necessary to design policies for greater level of organizational commitment. Orientation, training, participation in decision making process, fairness, clarity of roles and responsibilities, timely promotion, intrinsic and extrinsic rewards, explicit code of conducts and other human resource aspects must be taken into consideration to enhance the level of organizational commitment of the employees in the organization.

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