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A Study of Relationship between Demographical Variables, Organizational Structure and Social Interaction with Organizational Commitment among Employees of Saudi Arabia

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Abstract

The purpose of the present research paper is to investigate the relationship between demographical variables, organizational structure and social interaction with organizational commitment among public sectors employees working in Saudi Arabia. The sample consisted of 1,022 employees from different fifteen ministries of Saudi Arabia located at Riyadh. Research questions and a set of tools containing demographical variables, organizational commitment, organizational structure variables and social interaction variables were used to gather the information about the employees. Multiple regression and product moment correlation methods were used to test the hypotheses and research questions in the study. The results reveal that (i) demographical variables such as age, marital status and number of dependents were found significantly related with organizational commitment while, education was found significant but inversely related with organizational commitment. (ii) Organizational structure dimensions such as centralization and formalization were found significantly related with organizational commitment (iii) social interaction facets such as supervisory behavior and relationship with co-workers were found significantly related with organizational commitment. The implications of these findings suggest for the improvement of organizational commitment by using several human resource aspects to motive them for better performances.

Keywords: *Commitment, demographical variables, organizational structure, social interaction.*

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1. 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. Hence, organizational commitment becomes 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 behavior 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.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The concept of organizational commitment varies in the literature and there was little consensus about the meaning of organizational commitment (**Balfour** and **Wechsler**, **1990**; **Beckeri** *et al.* **1995**; **Meyer** and **Allen**, **1991**; **Dunham** *et al.* **1994**). **Mowday** *et al.* (**1982**) found ten distinct definitions in different studies on organizational commitment. **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'.
Much of the researches concerning the causes of commitment have dealt with the personal characteristics such as age, education, number of dependents and marital status. An employee's age for instance was found to be positively related to commitment (**Angle** and **Perry**,**1981**;**Faerman, 1987**; **Morris** and **Sherman**,**1981**;**Mathieu** and **Zajac**, **1990**; **Dockel**, **2003**; **Dodd-McCue** and **Wright**, **1996**; **Salami**, **2008**; **Azeem**, **2010**; **Allen** and **Meyer**, **1993; Padala**, **2011**).As an employee gets older his level of commitment to that organization increases. In contrast to age, education has been found to be inversely related to commitment (**Angle** and **Perry**, **1981**; **Faerman, 1987**; **Morris** and **Sherman**, **1981; Glisson** and **Durick**, **1988**; **Padala**, **2011**).
Another demographic factor, marital status has been found to be significantly related to organizational commitment (**Dodd- McCue** and **Wright**, **1996**; **Mannheim** *et al.* **1997** and **Morrow**, **1993**). It was found that married and separated persons were committed to organizations more than were single persons (**Kawakubo**, **1987**).Researchers found that married persons must support their families and usually have more responsibilities than single persons, therefore, the former are committed (**Faerrman ,1987**; **Ismail, 1990**; **Lincoln** and **Kalleberg**, **1990**; **Oliver**, **1990**; **John** and **Taylor**, **1999**; **Tsui** *et al.*,**1994**; **Bowen** *et al.*,**1994**; **Qiao,** *et al.*, **2009** and **Salami**, **2008**).Very few studies have been initiated to see the relationship between number of

dependents and organizational commitment. **Davis** (**1981**) and **Kawakubo** (**1987**) indicate that a positive correlation exists between number of dependents and organizational commitment.
In decentralization, employee participation in decision making is encouraged at more levels in the organization. Decentralization helped innovations and improves democratic decision-making 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** and **Jones**, **2008**). Decentralization has been shown to have positive relationships with organizational commitment (**Scott-Ladd** *et al.*, **2006** and **Badr** and **Nour**, **2011**). Formalization is typically defined as the degree to which rules and procedures within a system are specified and followed (**Pough** *et al.*, **1968**). It has been found that employees with more written rules and procedures felt more committed to the organization than employee who had fewer written guidelines (**Morris and Sherman**, **1981**; **Reyes**, **1990** and **Hoy** *et al.* **2001). 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**) and **Loui** (**1995**) found significant relationships between the two variables. **Loui** (**1995**) reported positive relationships with organizational commitment. It is noted that co-workers relationship with organizational commitment has been lessen studied by researchers. Study conducted by **Kawakubo** (**1987**) and **Hsu** (**2000**) found positive relationship between co-workers and commitment. Moreover, the participative and reward behaviors 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** *et al.*, **1994**). Research in these areas has involved top management (**Becker** and **Billings**, **1993**; **Hunt** and **Morgan**, **1994**), participatory management (**Dunham** *et al.*, **1994**), supervisors (**Becker**, **1992**; **Becker** ***et al.***, **1996**).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 (**Robbins**, **2003**; **Kristin**, **2005**; **Liao** *et al.*, **2008** and **Weng** *et al.*, **2010**). 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.

3. OBJECTIVES

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, 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 demographical variables, organizational structure variables and social interaction dimension in the present study.
This research study was developed to answer the following questions:

1. To what extent do demographic variables influence employees' commitment to their relationship?

2. To what extent do organizational structure variables influence employees' commitment to their relationship?
3. To what extent do relationships in the workplace influence employees' commitment to their relationship?

4. HYPOTHESES

On the basis of retrospection of the literature reviewed and objectives of the present study the following three null hypotheses has been formulated:

H_{O1}.There is no significant relationship between organizational commitment and demographical variables (i.e., age, education, marital status and number of dependents).

H_{O2}.There is no significant relationship between organizational commitment and organizational structure variables (e.g., centralization and formalization).

H_{O3}.There is no significant relationship between organizational commitment and social interaction variables (e.g., supervisory behavior and relationships with co-workers).

5. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

5.1. Sample

The sample of the present study was 1022 employees from different fifteen ministries of Kingdom of Saudi Arabia located at Riyadh.

5.2. Tools Used

The following tools were used to gather the information from participants in addition to research questions:

5.2.1. 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'. 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.

5.2.2 Demographic variables

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

5.2.3. Centralization

The Centralization Scale developed by **Hage** and **Aiken** (**1969**) (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 their studies the authors reported an alpha coefficient of .86 (cited in **Cook** *et al.*, **1981**).

5.2.4. Formalization

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.

5.2.5. 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.' 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.

5.2.6. 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 (cited in **Cook** *et al.*, **1981**), and four items were introduced by the researcher to measure the level of support among employees. The relation 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).

5.3. Statistics

By keeping in mind the present study objectives multiple regression and product moment correlation methods were used to test the hypotheses and research questions in the study.

6. ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

The total 1600 questionnaires were sent to the employees of fifteen ministries 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 collected data put into statistical analyses for concrete results which has been presented in different tables for results and discussion.

Table -1: *Showing Relationship between Demographic Factors and Organizational Commitment*

Sr.No.	Variables	r-value
1.	Age	.15**
2.	Education	-.12**
3.	Marital Status	.07*
4.	Number of dependents	.15**

*Significances are two tailed: *p<.05, **p < .01*

It is evident from Table-1 that demographic factors such as age(r=.15, p< .01), marital status (r=.07, p< .05) and number of dependents (r=.15, p< .01), were found positively related with organizational commitment. While education (r=-.12, p< .01) was found to be inversely related to commitment though significant.

Further, probing the research question it was observed that demographic factors were tested together using multiple regression to determine their influence on commitment as a group, R^2 =.07 indicating that 7% of the variation in organizational commitment is explained by the set of

Socio-demographic factors. Analysis also showed F=19.05 and the significance F=.000.Because significance F is less than .05, and then R^2 is significantly different from 0. Thus, the set of demographical variables is significantly related to organizational commitment.

Multiple R=.26	R^2=.07	F=19.05*

** p < .01*

However, the above findings supported the research question related to demographic factors that relationship existed in most of the cases are positively but education found to be significantly negatively related with commitment. Therefore, the proposed null hypotheses H_{O1} have been rejected based on the findings.

Table-2: *Showing Relationship between Organizational Structure Variables and Organizational Commitment*

S. No.	Variables	r-value
1.	Centralization	.25**
2.	Formalization	.33**

*** Significances are two tailed p < .01*

The result shown in Table-2 reveals the relationship between organizational structure variables and organizational commitment. The facets of organizational variables such as centralization (r=-.25, p< .01) and formalization (r=.33, p< .01) were found to be significantly related with organizational commitment.

To investigate the research question, multiple regression test indicates that R^2 =.20 indicating that 20% of the variation in organizational commitment is explained by the set of organizational structure variables. Result also revealed F=123.57 and the significance F=.000.Because significance F is less than .05, and then R^2 is significant different from 0.As a result the set of organizational structure variables are significantly related to organizational commitment.

Multiple R=.44	R^2=.20	F=123.57*

** p < .01*

However, these findings supported the research question related to organizational structure variables that relationship subsisted in both the cases were found positively and significantly related with organizational commitment. Therefore, the proposed null hypotheses H_{O2} have been rejected in the present study.

Table-3: *Showing Relationship between Social Interaction Dimension and Organizational Commitment*

S. No.	Variables	r-value
1.	Supervisory behavior	.35**
2.	Relationships with co-workers	.27**

*** Significances are two tailed p < .01*

It has been observed from Table-3 shows the relationship between social interaction dimension and organizational commitment. The dimensions of social interaction such as supervisory

behavior (r=-.35, p< .01) and relationships with co-workers (r=.27, p< .01) were found to be significantly related with organizational commitment.

By keeping our objective to test hypotheses with the help of research question, multiple regression test indicates that R^2 =.39 indicating that 39% of the variation in organizational commitment is explained by the set of social interaction variables. Results also revealed F=91.60 and the significance F=.000.Because significance F is less than .05, and then R^2 is significantly different from 0 establishing the social interaction variables are significantly related to organizational commitment.

Multiple R=.39	R^2=.15	F=91.60*

** p < .01*

However, the above findings supported the research question related to social interaction variables that relationship existed in both the cases were found positively and significantly related with organizational commitment. Therefore, the proposed null hypotheses H_{O3} have been rejected based on the findings.

7. DISCUSSION

Demographic variables as whole was found to have a significant relationship with organizational commitment (R^2=.07).On the basis of results demographical variable age was found significantly related with organizational commitment (**Angle** and **Perry**, **1981**; **Morris** and **Sherman**, **1981**; **Dodd-McCue** and **Wright**, **1996**; **Dornstein** and **Matalon**, **1998**; **Salami**, **2008** and **Azeem**, **2010**) supported the findings. As age increased individual opportunities for alternate employment become more limited. This decrease in options value of the present employer, thereby, leading to increased psychological attachment **Mowday** *et al.* (**1982**). Another reason may be that more education can spell less commitment to work, because of greater opportunities to find fulfillment outside the work role. They add that it may be caused by higher expectations leading to feelings of frustration and non-fulfillment of outside the work role.

On the other hand, education has been found to be inversely related to organizational commitment (**Angle** and **Perry**, **1981; Padala**, **2011**) .The result indicates that more educated people may often have higher expectation which organizations may be unable to meet.

Marital status is also significantly related to organizational commitment. It was found that married and separated persons were committed to organizations more than were single persons (**Kawakubo**, **1987**; **Lincoln** and **Kalleberg**, **1990**; **Oliver**, **1990; Tsui** *et al.*, **1994** and **Salami**, **2008**).The result may be attributed that married persons need to support families member and usually have more responsibilities than a single person might lead to have higher level of commitment.

Even though, research has been limited regarding the relationship between numbers of dependents and organizational commitments indicate that there is a positive correlation between them.

The organizational structure dimension was found to account for 20% of the organizational commitment (R^2=.20) among respondents of this study. Both centralization and formalization contributed to this significant positive relationship with organizational commitment .These results are consistent with the findings of **Klenke** (**1982**), **Morris** and **Sherman** (**1981**) and **Reyes**

(**1990**). In decentralization, employee participation in decision-making is encouraged and foster employees awareness, will feel more involved and satisfied with their job leading to organizational commitment (**Ugboro**, **2006**; **Kanter**, **2004** and **Badr** and **Nour**, **2011**).

Morris and **Sherman** (**1981**) indicate that increased formalization may influence of organizational commitment by facilitating both job and role clarity. **Reyes** (**1990**) suggests that since highly commitment employees, by definition work hard to accomplish organizational goals, the presence of written rules and procedures may help to ameliorate otherwise ambiguous situations and thereby, provide means to achieve those goals.

In this study, social interaction dimension accounted for 15% of organization commitment of respondents. Both variables of this dimension, supervisory behavior and co-workers' relationships have significant positive relationships with organizational commitment. These results are agreement with **Fink** (**1992**), **Ismail** (**1990**), **Kawabuko** (**1987**) and **Morris** and **Sherman** (**1981**). The positive relationship between supervisory behavior and organizational commitment in this study indicates that the participation and reward behaviors directly affect the employees of organizational commitment. **Ismail** (**1990**) indicates that supervisory behavior plays a significant role influencing the work group's job environment (e.g., high cooperation, harmonious working relationships). Work experience (e.g., motivating pleasant), as an important factor affecting organizational commitment is to large extent influenced by the work environment. **Decotiis** and **Summers** (**1987**) indicated that supervisory behavior could allow for increased interaction and communication between supervisors and subordinates.

The positive correlation between co-workers' relationships and organizational commitment, in this study is supported by **Kawabuko** (**1987**) and **Lin** and **Lin** (**2011**).The study indicates that one may leave an organization because of an uncomfortable relationship with others. **Fink** (**1992**) suggested that friendly co- workers tend to be one of the most important sources of satisfaction and as a result of commitment to the organization.

8. CONCLUSION

On the basis of results obtained the following conclusions have been drawn:

- Demographical variables such as age, marital status and number of dependents were found positive and significantly related with organizational commitment.
- Education as a demographical variable was found significant but inversely related with organizational commitment.
- Centralization and formalization as the organizational structure variables were found significantly related with organizational commitment.
- The facets of social interaction variables, supervisory behavior and relationships with co-workers were found significantly related with organizational commitment.

9. SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The present research finding has contributed to contemporary areas of organizational behavior & 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. 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 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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