THE RELEVANCE OF ORGANISATIONAL COMMITMENT

The concept of Organizational commitment

Organizational commitment is most often defined as a strong desire to remain a member of a particular organization; a willingness to exert high levels of effort on behalf of the organization; and a definite belief in, and acceptance of the values and goals of the organization\(^1\). In other words, this is an attitude reflecting employees’ loyalty to their organization and is an ongoing process through which organizational participants express their concern for the organization and its continued success and well-being\(^2\). In the opinion of Robbins, Judge and Sanghi, ‘organizational commitment means the degree to which an employee identifies with a particular organization and its goals and wishes to maintain membership in the organization’.

Looked from the above definitions, the organizational commitment has been explained in the four major meanings, namely: (I) Permanence, (II) Preference, (III) Identification and (IV) Performance. The various definitions postulated can be thought of as attitudinal or behavioral definition using one or more of the above meanings.

(i) Permanence A according to Becker (1960) a person can be said to be committed “when we observe him / her pursuing a consistent line of activity in a sequence of varied situations”\(^3\). Industrial sociologists concerned with commitment to the industrial way of life and factory employment have thought of commitment in this sense. In Myer’s view (1998) committed labour force can be said to have developed when worker, no longer look on their industrial employment as temporary’\(^4\). Lambert (1963) used “the intention to remain in factory employment’ as an index of commitment to factory employment’\(^5\). Porter and other (1976) definition of organizational commitment include a strong desire to maintain organizational membership.
as one of the three factors characterizing organizational commitment. Thus, these definitions suggest permanence or willingness to continue membership in an organization as the meaning of organizational commitment.

(ii) Preference: The second concept indicates that the organizational commitment implies preference for one’s organization over others. Sheldon (1971) has used the level to which one positively evaluates one’s organization as an index of such preference. Sharma (1974) and Gupta (1982) have used index which measure one's preference of one's current employing organization over others as indicators of organizational commitment. Such preference occurs due to one evaluating one's organization as better than similar other organizations. This is owing to positive evaluation.

(iii) Identification: A person is said to be committed when he or she accepts and internalizes the goals and values of the organization. Morris (1960) holds that commitment involves both performance and acceptance of the behavior appropriate to the industrial way of life. Though in his definition the focus is on commitment to the industrial way of life, it can be transferred to commitment to the organization. “Linking the identity of the person to the organization” (Sheldon 1971) and strongly believing in and accepting the organizations goal and values (Porter and others 1974) are other ways in which this identifications has been expressed as the meaning of organizational commitment.

(iv) Performance: The term ‘organizational commitment’ has also been used to indicate ‘performance’. Morris definitions (1960) consider performance appropriate to the industrial way of life. Kanter (1968) considers organizational commitment to signify the willingness of social actors to give their energy and loyalty to the organization. Sheldon’s, definition (1971) include the intention to work towards organizational goals as an aspect of organizational commitment. Porter and other’s (1974) include “a willingness to exert considerable effect on behalf of the organization as one of the characteristics of organizational commitment.”
Organizational commitment

Today’s work place is enveloped by the fear of downsizing, loss of job security, overwhelming change in technology, and the stress of having to do more with less... (need to) establish the type of caring, spirited workplace that will ignite employee commitment16.

In the above backdrop, it seems pertinent to know and understand more about the organizational commitment. According R.T. Mowday “a strong desire to remain as a member of a particular organization, a willingness to exert high-levels of effort on behalf of the organization, and a definite belief in, and acceptance of the values and goals of the organization means organizational commitment.17

Robbin, Judge and Sanghi says organizational commitment refers to the degree to which an employee identifies with a particular organization and its goals and wishes to maintain membership in the organization18.

Research studies in the field of organizational behavior in general treat satisfaction and commitment as different attitudes. In the light of the new environment that includes downsizing telecommunity, merger and acquisition, globalizations and diversity, organizational commitment have resurfaced as a very important topic of the study and concern.19

Characteristics of Organizational Commitment:

To understand the concept of organizational commitment fully, it is needed to know the motives of employees who are committed to their organizations. Meyer, Allen and Gellatly have identified three bases of organizational commitment20. These are:

1. Affective commitment: This refers to the employee’s emotional attachment, identification and involvement with the organization.
2. Continuance commitment: This refers to the employee's motive to continue with the organization, because leaving may be costlier and he/she may not be able to afford to it. For example: an employee may not leave the organization because of the loss of the seniority for promotion.

3. Normative commitment: This kind of commitment refers to employee's moral obligation to remain with the organization.

There is considerable research support for these three components of organizational commitment. It also generally holds up across cultures.

**Factors influencing organizational commitment:**

Research studies have listed many factors that may influence employees’ commitment to their organization. Here are some of the important ones:

1. **Job characteristic:** Organizational commitment tends to be high among the employees whose jobs are highly enriched. Since these job characteristics are present in abundance in self-employed job, he is therefore not surprised to find that the levels of organizational commitment are quite higher among self-employed people than those who are employed by organizations.

2. **Job rewards:** Organizational Commitment is influenced much by the type of reward that employees receive from the organization. Research studies have shown that the employee's commitment to their organization is enhanced by the use of profit sharing plan like Employee Stock Option Plan (ESOP).

3. **Availability of alternative job opportunities:** Expectedly, the greater possibilities for finding alternative job, tends the employees to be less committed to the organization and vice versa.
4. **Personal characteristics of employees:** It is found that the employees who have longer tenure with organization have greater organizational commitment than those with shorter stay with the organization. The reason is not difficult to seek. It is one established fact that the longer one serves in an organization the more one is likely have invested in it.

**Calculative and moral commitment:**

Dubin and others (1975) analyses the central life interest and organizational commitment\(^{21}\). Kidron (1978) calls the willingness to remain aspect as calculative commitment\(^{22}\). Incorporation of organizational values and goals into one’s own identity is labeled moral commitment. Separation of commitment into calculative and moral components helps to focus the relevance of value orientation. Thus calculative and moral commitments are similar to the permanence and identification meanings respectively. Calculative commitment is viewed as arising out of the satisfaction of one’s needs, while moral commitment stems from one’s values.

**Passive and active commitment:**

Steers(1977)\(^{23}\) finds weak relationship between commitment and performance. His conclusion is that there is no direct or consistent association existing between commitment and subsequent job performance. The reason put forward by him in this regard is that it may be more meaningful to distinguish between “Passive” and “Active” commitments. Passive commitment is an effective response. A highly committed employee is one who strongly identifies himself with the organization. Active commitment is expressed in terms of behavioral intentions. A committed employee will be willing to exert high levels of effort on behalf of the organization. Passive commitment has components of identification and permanence, meanings - while active commitment resembles only the performance meaning. Passive commitment is just continual membership and active commitment results in behavioral intentions.
Interchangeably used constructs

“Some commitment like concepts, such as organizational identification or organizational involvement, have also appeared in the literature” (Angle and Perry 1981). Organizational identification and organizational involvement are two overlapping concepts. These constructs and organizational commitment have been used interchangeably as their meanings were the same. Weiner (1982) has stated that the identification approach postulates commitment as an attitudinal intervening variable mediating between certain antecedents and outcomes. Commitment is different from involvement. Kanungo (1982) while probing extensively the concept of involvement suggests that involvement is a cognitive state of mind. Whereas commitment an affective state of mind. Job involvement as a specific belief regarding one’s relationship with one’s present job is also different from organizational commitment, which refers to a general attitude towards an organization as a whole. Mowday, Steers and Porter (1979) define organizational commitment as an employee’s desire to remain in an organization, willingness to exert effort on its behalf and belief in and acceptance of the values and goals of the organization. Balaji (1984) consider organizational commitment an affective attitude in which an employee feels emotionally attached to his/her employing organization as a whole.

Focus on commitment

The Focus on commitment implies that employees can be committed to various entities in varying degrees towards their superiors, colleagues, subordinates, management, customers, or trade unions. In an attempt to categorize some of the Foci, researchers drew a line of distribution between those whose commitment is concentrated at lower organizational levels, such as co-workers and superiors and those whose commitment is primarily concentrated on higher levels, such as top management and cognition as a whole. The combined high and low levels of each were identified as four distinct commitment profile as shown in Model.
Model 1
Attachment to supervisor and work group.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Low</th>
<th>High</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Uncommitted</td>
<td>Locally committed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Attachment of top management and organization.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Low</th>
<th>High</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Globally committed</td>
<td>Committed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Four Distinct Commitment Profiles. T.E. Becker and R.S. Billings

Employees having low commitment to their supervisor and co-worker as well as low in commitment to top management and the organization were labeled uncommitted. On the other hand, employees high in commitment to both sets of foci were labeled as committed. The two combinations in between are one, employees highly committed to their top management and organization, but low commitment to their co-workers and their superiors were labeled as globally committed. Two of those employees who had higher commitment to their co-workers and supervisors but low to top management and organization were termed as locally committed.

Object of commitment: When multiple constructs are used to characterize organizational commitment, there will be lack of clarity and precision. For instance, Buchanan’s conceptualization of organizational commitment comprise of (a) identification (b) involvement and (c) loyalty which indicates organizational commitment, comprising of different constructs with different sub-systems of the organization as objects.30

Kanter proposes three types of commitments: Continuance, cohesion and control, which bind personality system to areas of social system, group relationship and where continuance commitment refers to participating in a system and remaining as its member. Cohesion commitment refers to a
cathetic by which one feels affective ties to one's group and to all its members and control commitment is an evaluation along the lines of good or bad of the legitimacy of the group, the moral righteousness of the group norms, its way of doing things, its authority structure, its goals and the means for their achievement. Hence continuance commitment refers to the permanence aspect, cohesion to the identification aspect, and control to the performance aspect. Kidron's typology has organization and organizational value and goals as the objects. Thus several authors have conceptualized organizational commitment as commitment to different sub systems of the organization.

**Antecedents and outcomes of Organizational Commitment:**

A simple model which focuses on the antecedents and outcomes (consequences) of organizational commitment is given in Model.2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Antecedents</th>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Consequences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Organizational variables</td>
<td>Model</td>
<td>Organizational commitment to the organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal variables</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Sources: Mowday, Porter and Steer. 1982**

Conceptually, organizational commitment has certain causes and effects. The antecedents of organizational commitment can be broadly classified as variable related to the organization and those related to the person. Organizational commitment has several consequences to the organization as well as to the employees. Different studies have discovered several antecedents and consequences of organizational commitment. In this study the focus is laid on the antecedents and outcomes of organizational commitment. Studies designed to ascertain the antecedents of organizational commitment have identified two sets of variables namely: (1) Organisational and (2) Personal.
**Organizational variables:** This study focuses attention on discovering the relationship between organizational commitment and organization related variables. The identified organization related variables include.

2. Organizational structure characteristics like size span of control, centralization, formalization and functional dependence (Stevens, Beyer and Trice 1978).
4. Interpersonal variables like team work and group attitudes (Steers 1977, Welsach and La van 1981).
5. Organizational climate characteristics such as decision making, communication, leadership, motivation and goal setting (Welch La van 1981).

**Personal variables:** There exists the relationship between personal variables and commitment to the employing organization. Adequate person-related variables have been found to be related to organizational commitment. Three frameworks have been used in studying the relationship of organizational commitment with the personal variables. They are investment, exchange and value notions. **Investments notion** denotes that the greater the stake one has in an organization the greater one is likely to be committed to the organization. Investments will produce commitment to the organization, regardless of other features of the person’s relationship to the organization (Sheldon 1971). Variables which have been studied under the investment notion are age, tenure, education, marital status, number of dependants and

**The exchange notion** states that the greater the level to which one’s expectations are met, the stronger is likely to be the one’s organizational commitment. The expectations include the need for achievement and personal importance. (Steers 1977 and Welsach and La Van 1981)

**The value notion** suggests that those with high work ethics tend to express high moral commitment. Work values and professionalism have been studied under this notion. It also shows the destination made between moral and calculative commitment, (Kidron 1988, Welsach and La Van 1981).

**Other personal related variables are**

1. Demographic variables such as age, sex, marital status and professional educational (if any).
2. Career variables like the selection, total number of years of employment, tenure in the organization, number of years of working in the present position, promotion, number of organizations employed before joining the present organization and management level of one’s present position in the hierarchy.

**The outcomes of organizational commitments**

As in the case with job satisfaction, there are mixed outcomes of organizational commitment. Both early and more recent research summarizes do show support of a positive relationship between organizational commitment and desirable outcomes such as high performance, low turnover and low absenteeism. There is also evidence that employee commitment relates to other desirable outcomes, such as the perception of warm, supportive organizational climate and being a goal team member willing to help. Yet, as with satisfaction there are some studies that do not show strong relationships between commitment and outcome.
variables\textsuperscript{38} and others where there are moderating effects between organizational commitment and performance. For example one study found a stronger relationship between organizational commitment and performance for those with low financial needs than for those with higher ones\textsuperscript{39}, and another study found that the more tenure the employees had on the job and with the employing organization, the less impact their commitment had on performance\textsuperscript{40}. Also a study found that commitment to supervisors was more strongly related to performance than was commitment to organizations\textsuperscript{41}. Those and a number of other studies indicate the complexity of an attitude such as commitment\textsuperscript{42}. However most researchers would agree that the organizational commitment attitude as defined here may be a better predictor of desirable variables than job satisfaction\textsuperscript{43} and thus deserves management’s attention.

The concept of job satisfaction

Job satisfaction is one of the most extensively researched concepts in organizational psychology. The term job satisfaction was brought to lime light by Hoppock (1935)\textsuperscript{44} etymologically the term job satisfaction is a combination of two words, ‘job’ and ‘satisfaction’. The words job, work, occupation and position have generously been used interchangeability, whereas ‘satisfaction’ is related to the fulfillment of needs. Thus job satisfaction may be a resultant feeling of satisfaction which the employee achieves of gains from his job what he expects from it to satisfy his/ her needs. According to Hoppock (1935)\textsuperscript{45} job satisfactions is a combination of psychological, Physiological and environmental factors that makes a person to admit, I am satisfied with my job”. It has also been defined as the end state of feeling.” It is an important dimension of moral and not moral itself.

There are three important dimensions to job satisfaction discussion. These are, 1. Job satisfaction being an emotional response to a job cannot be seen. A s such, it can only be inferred. 2. Job satisfaction is often determined by how satisfactorily outcomes met or exceed ones expectations. 3. Job
satisfaction represents an employee’s attitudes towards five specific dimensions of the job: pay, the work itself, promotion opportunities, supervision, and co-workers. Further, job satisfaction has been a very fertile topic for the organizational commitment researchers. As such, there has been a prodigious volume of research on job satisfaction. Researchers have identified several factors that make employees satisfied or dissatisfied with jobs, and these factors fall into two broad variables: (1) Those relating to the organization and (2) Those relating to the personal characteristics of the employees themselves as shown in the table.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organizational Determinants</th>
<th>Individual Determinants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pay</td>
<td>Age</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work itself</td>
<td>Gender</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of Supervision</td>
<td>Status and Seniority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working conditions</td>
<td>Marital status</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Thus, the concept of job satisfaction is a comparison with one covering attitudes of an employee’s towards various job factors.

Bullock (1952) views job satisfaction as an attitude which results from a balancing summation of many specific likes and dislikes experienced in connection with the job.

Smith (1955) considers job satisfaction as an employee’s judgment of how well his job has satisfied his various needs.

Blum & Naylor (1968) are of the view that job satisfaction is the result of various attitude possessed by an employee related to the job and to the many specific factors on the job.
Locke (1970)\textsuperscript{69} states it as “the pleasurable emotional state resulting from the perception of one’s job as fulfilling one’s important job values, provided these values are comparable with one’s needs”.

Hezberg, Mansur and Snyderman (1959)\textsuperscript{50} have challenged the conventional concept of job satisfaction which states that the satisfaction and dissatisfaction are two ends of a continuum with neutral position midway, where the individual is neither satisfied nor dissatisfied.

Generally, morale refers to the attitude of the workers and relates to group while job satisfaction is an individual’s feeling which could be caused by a variety of factors. It is governed to a large extent by perception and expectations men/women work to satisfy their needs and being aspired or extent their work-life to fulfill these needs.

For job satisfaction, there should exist an accord between the perception of how much the job can provide and how much one aspires to get and the extent to which these needs are actually fulfilled.

**The concept of motivation**

Motivation interacts with and acts in conjunction with other mediating process, and the environment. Motivation is a hypothetical construct that is used to help explain behavior; it should not be equated with behavior. In fact, while recognizing the “Central role of Motivation”, many of today’s organizational behavior theorists “think it is important for the field to reemphasize behavior.”\textsuperscript{51}

William G. Scott (1977), “motivation means a process of stimulating people to action to accomplish desired goal”.

As per C.B. Mamoria (1975) motivation is a willingness to expand energy to achieve a goal or reward. It is a force that activates dormant
energies and sets in motion the action of the people. It is the function that kindles a burning passion for action among the human beings in an organization.\textsuperscript{52}

According to Dubin R. (1974) motivation is the complex force starting and keeping a person at work in an organization. To put it differently, motivation starts and maintains an activity along a prescribed line. Motivation is sometime that moves the person to perform action and continues him/her in the course of action already initiated.\textsuperscript{53}

Human motives are internalized goals within individuals. It cuts across all topics of industrial psychology. “Motivation is a Latin word meaning to move” thus motivation encompasses all those pressures and influences that trigger, channel and sustain human behavior. People are complex and they are uniquely different. What motivates one perform may not motivate another. Most successful managers have learned to understand the concept of human motivation and are able to use that understanding to achieve higher standards of subordinates’ work performance.\textsuperscript{54}

Burton and Thakur (1995) have suggested that a manager’s primary task is to motivate others to perform the task of the employed organization at high levels. He must find the keys to get his subordinates to come to work regularly and on time, to work hard, and to make positive contribution towards the effective and efficient achievement of organizational objectives.\textsuperscript{55}

Thus motivation really comprises all the internal urges which are disliked as desires, wishes drives etc., which make a person strive for doing a thing. It is what makes people to do things.

\section*{IV. The concept of Performance Appraisal}

Performance Appraisal is an objective assessment of an individual’s performance against well defined bench marks.
The objective of performance appraisal may vary from culture to culture, organization to organization and in the same organization from time to time. The broad objectives of performance appraisal according to Monappa and Saiyadain (1978) are:

1. Identifying the training needs.
2. Identifying the employee for salary increase, promotion, transfer, lay-off or termination of service.
3. Motivating employee by showing them where they stand.
4. Establishing a data bank or appraisal to help in taking personal decision.

Wendell French (1973) performance appraisal is “the formal, systematic assessment of how well employees are performing their jobs in relation to established standards, and the communication of that assessment to employees.”

According to B. Flippo (1980) “performance appraisal includes all formal procedures used to evaluate personalities and their contributions and potential of group members in a work organization. It is a continuous process to secure information necessary for making correct and objective decisions on employees.”

Cumming (1972) states that “the objectives of performance appraisal schemes can be categorized as either evaluative or developmental. The evaluative purpose have a historical dimension and are concerned primarily with looking back at how employees have actually performed over given time period, compared with required standards of performance. The developmental, future-oriented performance appraisal is concerned, for example, with the identification of employees training and developmental needs and the setting of new targets”.

Dale, S. Beach (1980) says that “it is the systematic evaluation of the individual with respect to his or her performance on the job and his or her potential for development.”
Yager (1981) has stated that performance appraisal is the process through which an individual employee’s behavior and accomplishment’s for a fixed time period are measured and evaluated. It is a systematic and objective way of judging the relative worth or ability of an employee in performing his task.61

Randall, S. Schuler(1981) more comprehensively says that “performance appraisal is a formal, structured system of measuring and evaluating an employee’s job related behaviours and outcomes to discover how and why the employee is presently performing on the job and how the employee can perform more effectively in the future so that the employee, organization and society all benefit.”62

Dale Yoder (1982) says that “performance appraisal includes all formal procedures used to evaluate personalities and contributions and potentials of group members in a working organization. It is a continuous process to secure information necessary for making correct and objective decisions on employees.”63

Under this background it is concluded that commitment is an attitude of the employees, and this is influenced by many other factors like job satisfaction, motivation, morale and performance appraisal system and this in turn can influence the performance of the employees in any organizations, an attempt is made in the next chapter to evaluate the levels of the organizational commitment prevalent among the employees of the Cooperatives in the UT of Pondicherry and its impact on their performance. Keeping this objective in mind, to find out the need for such a study or any gaps in the earlier studies an attempt is made in the following pages to review the earlier studies.
REFERENCES


