International Multidisciplinary
Research Journal

Indian Streams
Research Journal

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EXPLORATION OF PRIME FACTORS TOWARDS ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT

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Abstract:- To the field of organizational behavior, there is one aspect which has been neglected and which deserves additional empirical study which is on organizational commitment and job satisfaction. They represent possible benefits that may be associated with flexible work hours. Organizational commitment represents an individual's identification with the goals of the organization, how much the individual values membership in the organization and the degree to which they intend to work to attain organizational goals. There has been scant research on possible gender differences in responses to psychological contracts in organizations. Contemporary employees often look for signals that the organization provides for balance between work and family. It is needful that human resource practices, such as flexible work hours communicate that the organization is concerned about employee well-being. Our investigation suggest that these factors may increase levels of commitment and overall satisfaction for both men and women, but that women may be more affected by flexible work hours as well as individuals with child-related responsibilities and multiple commitments.

Keywords: Organizational commitment, Job satisfaction, Gender, Family responsibility.

1.INTRODUCTION

Most studies of professional employees in organizations have argued that professional knowledge is a delicate commodity, not easily controlled by traditional bureaucratic mechanisms, and that conflict between professional and hierarchical authority is almost inevitable (Kornhauser, 1962; Reissman, 1949; Etzioni, 1964; Blau and Scott, 1962; Wilensky, 1956; McKelvey, 1969; Argyris, 1957; Ben-David, 1958). These and other treatments have stressed the conflicting nature and demands of professional and organizational commitments (Gouldner, 1957 and 1958; Blau and Scott, 1962; Wilensky, 1956). In this respect, attention has focused on methods employed by professionals to cope with these conflicts and related organizational pressures (Hall, Schneider, and Nygren, 1970). Although such analyses have provided interesting and valuable contributions to the field of organizational behavior, there is one aspect which has been neglected and which deserves additional empirical study. Little attention has been placed on the empirical determination of variables or conditions, other than perceptions of authority, which can lead to deterioration in organizational commitment among professionals. Neglect of the study of organizational commitment among professionals can be seen by considering the many data dealing with the foundations of professional identification and the conditions of professional socialization prior to organizational life (Becker and Carper, 1956; Vollmer and Mills, 1966; Alutto, Hrebiniak, and Alonso, 1971b; Becker et al., 1961; Lortie, 1959; Schein, 1967) and the paucity of data on the development, processes, and correlates of organizational commitment among professionals after entrance into their employing systems (Hall, Schneider, and Nygren, 1970: 176; Sheldon, 1971; Alonso, 1970). Although the crucial nature of successful integration of individual and organization has been stressed (Likert, 1961; Argyris, 1964; Schein, 1965; McGregor, 1960; Katz and Kahn, 1966) and the sensitive interactions within interdependent, cooperative systems long recognized (Barnard, 1938; Follett, 1942), studies of professionals in organizations have focused on the reactions of professionals to perceptions of organizational encroachments upon their authority Little attention has been placed on the empirical determination of variables or conditions, other than perceptions of authority, which can lead to deterioration in organizational commitment

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2.NATURE OF ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT:

Although less is known about the determinants of organizational commitment than about the processes of professional identification (Hall, Schneider, and Nygren, 1970; Sheldon, 1971), aspects of the existing literature lend themselves to an empirical analysis of commitment phenomena among professionals. One approach is a consideration of organizational commitment in terms of exchange or reward-cost notions (Homans, 1958; Barnard, 1938; Gouldner, 1960). Here, the emphasis is on the bargaining or exchange relationships between the individual and the organization: the more favorable the exchange from the participant's viewpoint, the greater his commitment to the system. In similar terms the more abundant the perceived rewards in relation to costs, the greater the organizational commitment. Becker's notions (1960) refine the simple exchange paradigm by introducing the element of time and the idea of side bets or the investment quality of organizational participation. Becker suggests that the more one has at stake in an organization or, similarly, the more one has accrued and thus could lose by leaving the employing system, the greater the personal commitment to the organization. Under this concept commitment is primarily a structural phenomenon which occurs as a result of individual-organizational transactions and alterations in side bets or investments over time. In line with the structural notion of commitment, length of service or seniority should be positively related to the growth of side bets or investments in the organization. Length of service resources and the development of an (Sheldon, 1971). Examination of the literature,

however, reveals few studies which have dealt with an empirical analysis of length of service and the structural nature of organizational commitment. Grusky (1966) found years spent in the organization. It is suggested that time invested additional organizational rewards. Lee (1971) and Reiss (1955) have discussed the impact of length of service in ways consistent with the investment or sidebet notion of commitment. A recent study of Ph.D. scientists (Sheldon, 1971) has shown that length of service is associated with investments in and commitment to an organization; its finding that the investment mechanism alone is insufficient to produce organizational commitment among men with medium lengths of service, however, is not strictly in keeping with the side-bet notion. Caplow and McGee (1958) have indicated that inter-organizational mobility decreases with seniority, thus implying the development of organizational investments. At least one study (Ritzer and Trice, 1969) has suggested that the side-bet concept of commitment is not a useful one, although there is some indication that the insensitivity of the measure of commitment employed in that study could have contributed to the lack of significance (Alutto, Hrebiniak, and Alonso, 1972).

Other role-related variables can be important to the development of organizational commitment among professional employees. One is professional role conflict. Examples of role conflict among professional employees abound in empirical research conducted in a host of organizational settings (Kornhauser, 1962; Argyris, 1957; Wilensky, 1956; Ben-David, 1958; Reissman, 1949). Most of these studies, consistent with the thoughts of Kahn et al. (1964) and Hall and Lawler (1970), define role conflict as the opposition of any combination of role pressures. Whereas, pressure the experience of a force or influence, is not inherently bad, conflict or stress representing the opposition of forces or influences can negatively affect individual-organizational interactions and presumably, organizational commitment. Authors have also argued that a lack of tension and ambiguity in the performance of organizational roles could be properly regarded as an organizational asset (Likert, 1961; Bennis, 1962, Kornhauser, 1965). It can similarly be argued that the existence of role tension and uncertainty results in the increased attractiveness of extraorganizational alternatives (Alutto, 1969) and, consequently, decreased commitment to the work organization. Finally, according to March and Simon (1958), an employee's perception of the desirability of leaving the organization is directly a function of the level of satisfaction with the work role. Dissatisfaction with

factors such as organizational reward policies or rates of organizational advancement (Lee, 1971) could therefore result in a lessened commitment to the employing organization. If there are few empirical data denoting the structural or role-related nature of organizational commitment, there is even less research on the personal and background characteristics of professional employees which might be related to organizational involvement (Hall, Schneider, and Nygren, 1970). Although some recent research has revealed that demographic factors and other personal variables are important to organizational orientations (Patchen, 1970; Hall, Schneider, and Nygren, 1970), what is lacking is research which identifies the result of interactions between personal and organizational determinants of organizational commitment. That is, current research which neglects the interactive effects of personal and organizational variables is probably understating the complexity of the commitment process. Existing data treating the occupational commitments of professionals suggest personal variables which might be important to the development and maintenance of a professional's organizational orientation. Background factors such as father's occupation have been shown to affect professional commitment (Werts, 1967 and 1968, White, 1967; Colombotos, 1962 and 1963). Colombotos' finding (1962) of a direct relationship between a family's socioeconomic status and commitment to professional norms, for example, suggests that commitment to an employing organization also can vary as a function of blue- versus white-collar origins. The conclusion of Walker and Guest (1952), Chinoy (1955), and others (Warner and Low, 1947) that blue-collar workers do not perceive the employing organization as a major source of rewards and satisfactions appears consistent with that contention and implies that professional employees from such backgrounds could be socialized against organizational involvement.

Sex and marital status have been discussed most frequently in relation to occupational commitments and career patterns (Hrebiniak, 1971; Alonso, 1970; Werts, 1968; White, 1967; Bock, 1967). These two variables, however, can also affect the organizational commitments of professional employees. In exchange terms married or separated individuals, especially women, see higher costs attached to leaving an organization than single, unattached individuals. Similarly, diffierential expectations associated with sex, marital, and occupational roles can affect the comparison level of alternatives of the individual (Thibaut and Kelley, 1959). Age is another personal variable that can affect perceived alternatives. It can reduce the attractiveness of individuals to other organizations, thus reducing mobility (Caplow and McGee, 1958; March and Simon, 1958). Moreover, as in the case of length of service, age implies the accrual of investments which can enhance the attractiveness of the employing system and increase commitment to it. Parsons (1964) suggests that the work orientations and behavior of individuals result from the interaction of personality and organizational factors. Two personality characteristics that could be related to the level of organizational commitment are interpersonal trust and authoritarianism. Levels of interpersonal trust, for example, reveal the extent to which individuals see their social environment as benign, cooperative, or friendly (Hrebiniak, 1971). The less an organization is seen in these terms, the less is likely to be the commitment to it. Other studies have suggested that interpersonal trust can be important for the structure of social systems and the attitudes and behaviors of participants within them (Nedd, 1971; Almond and Verba, 1963). Varying levels of authoritarianism indicate potentially different reactions to rule-oriented systems, as well as divergent perceptions regarding the legitimacy of organizational control of professional employees (Sweney, 1971; McGee, 1955; Beloff, 1958). Another variable potentially important to organizational commitment is the intention of employees to seek advanced formal education (Blau and Scott, 1962; Grusky, 1966). The desire for additional education could imply professionalism or cosmopolitanism (Gouldner, 1957 and 1958) while the lack of that desire could suggest more locally-directed orientations. Finally, role conflict, role tension, or father's occupation, sex, marital status, interpersonal trust, authoritarianism, or role related ones.

3.ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT AND JOB SATISFACTION:

Organizational commitment and job satisfaction represent possible benefits that may be associated with flexible work hours. Organizational commitment represents an individual's identification with the goals of the organization, how much the individual values membership in the organization and the degree to which they intend to work to attain organizational goals (Mowday, Steers and Porter, 1979). Job satisfaction is the overall summary evaluation a person makes regarding his/her work environment (Weiss, Dawis, England and Lofquist, 1967). A broad range of personal characteristics, job characteristics, group-leader relations, organizational characteristics and role states have been examined in the literature as antecedents to organizational commitment (cf. Mathieu and Zajac, 1990, for a meta-analysis of antecedents, correlates and consequences of organizational commitment). Job satisfaction has been positively correlated with organizational commitment (Mowday et al., 1979) and recent

research has indicated a causal relationship between these two constructs (Vandenberg and Lance, 1992). For example, Williams and Hazer (1986) report that job satisfaction is an antecedent to organizational commitment in an investigation employing structural equation methodology. With respect to individual and organizational outcomes, research has shown that organizational commitment is positively related to performance (Aranya, Kushnir and Valency, 1986) and negatively related to turnover (Mathieu and Zajac, 1990; Porter, Steers and Mowday, 1974) and turnover intentions (Williams and Hazer, 1986). In addition, organizational commitment has been shown to be positively related to participation, power, teamwork and professionalism (Welsch and LaVan, 1981). Mathieu and Zajac (1990) suggest that gender may impact employee's perceptions of the workplace and their attitudinal reactions to the organization. They also suggest that gender may impact whether individuals become more committed to organizations that offer various kinds of opportunities such as flexible work hours. Family-oriented programs may be more salient to women who must balance work and family demands and consequently, face more work-family conflicts than men (Greenhaus, Parasuraman, Granrose, Rabinowitz and Beutell, 1989). Gender theory suggests that most women are socialized to view their primary role as within the family (Baugh, 1990). Also, women's experiences in the workplace such as discrimination and sex-role stereotyping may reinforce the relative importance of the family role over the work role (Kanter, 1977; Terborg, 1977). Thus, women are expected to have different responses to work than men in terms of organizational commitment and job satisfaction when family-responsive policies are offered. Women may develop different psychological contracts with organizations than men. They may be more committed and satisfied with work when they perceive that their organization offers policies that are consonant with the family role, in comparison to men. Flexible work hours may enable women to better balance the conflicting demands between work and family roles (Frone, Russell and Cooper, 1992). Research has indicated that women have retained primary responsibility for home and family duties, in addition to being employed full-time (Hoschild, 1989; Bielby and Bielby, 1988). Hence, the perception that the organization supports them in their need to manage both their career and their family may increase their feelings of organizational commitment and morale (Rousseau, 1995). As more women have entered the workforce, the natures of benefits offered to employees have changed. Today, on-site day-care centers, parental leave and flexible work hours are often part of the psychological contracts offered to employees. In response to such contract 'packages' (Rousseau, 1995), employees may be more satisfied and connected to the organization. Flexible work hour benefits may be an important element in an individual's decision to work for a particular organization. Sims (1994) notes that human resource personnel will have to offer innovative employment options to attract and retain younger employees. Maximizing employees' sense of control over their lives and their changing needs is a goal addressed by flexible work hour systems. Therefore, we expect interaction effects for gender and flexible work hour policies with respect to organizational commitment and job satisfaction. Women should be more likely to report higher levels of organizational commitment and job satisfaction than men when they perceive that a family-responsive policy is present in their organization than when it is not. We hope to fill a gap in the current research on women in management by examining the differential effects of a family-responsive policy (i.e. flexible work hours) on the organizational commitment and job satisfaction of females and males using a matched sample design (Sekaran, 1990). This study considers gender, family responsibility and flexible work hours are the key factors that affect organizational commitment & job satisfaction.

4.GENDER AND THE PSYCHOLOGICAL CONTRACT:

There has been scant research on possible gender differences in responses to psychological contracts in organizations (Rousseau, 1995). An examination of research on gender differences in organizational commitment is not conclusive, however (Mathieu and Zajac, 1990). Some studies report that women are more committed than men (Angle and Perry, 1981; Baugh, 1990; Gould, 1975; Grusky, 1966; Hrebiniak and Alutto, 1972) and others suggest that women are less committed than men (Aranya et al., 1986; Chusmir, 1982; Euchs, 1971; Graddick and Farr, 1983). Still others report no gender differences in organizational commitment (Fry and Grenfeld, 1980; Cromie, 1981; Stevens, Beyer and Trice, 1978; Bruning and Snyder, 1983). One of the criticisms of research that has previously examined gender-related differences in the study of job attitudes has been the lack of control for the effects of demographic variables such as age and level of education (Lefkowitz, 1994). In a study of a heterogeneous group of 832 men and women, Lefkowitz (1994) found that many gender-related differences in job reaction and dispositional variables such as job satisfaction disappear when differences in perceived job characteristics, age, tenure, education, income, and occupational level were controlled. He concludes that studies involving the examination of gender differences should control statistically or procedurally for the effects of demographic variables. We agree with this noted limitation of research on gender-related differences, and follow the suggestion of Sekaran (1990), that matched samples are an effective research design for researching such differences.

5.FAMILY RESPONSIBILITY AND THE PSYCHOLOGICAL CONTRACT:

Attitudes have changed regarding employees' willingness to sacrifice family for work (Rodgers, 1992). Today's employees often look for signals that the organization provides for balance between work and family

(Osterman, 1995). Guzzo and Noonan (1994) suggest that human resource practices, such as flexible work hours communicate that the organization is concerned about employee well-being. Such practices have been considered part of the psychological contract offered to employees. Flexible work hours may be offered as part of the human resource benefit 'package' offered to employees or negotiated one-on-one with one's supervisor. In either event, the employee may reciprocate with increased loyalty and work performance. Also, the perception of having flexible work hours may enhance the employer-employee 'bond' and increase job satisfaction. Rousseau (1995) suggests that a recent trend in psychological contracting is increased negotiation regarding work and family issues for both women and men. As more women have entered the U.S. workforce creating an increase in dual-career families, the expectations that employers will assist or be flexible regarding work-family conflicts has also increased. Thus, flexible work hours may be viewed as part of the psychological contract for employees that have family responsibilities. Employees who stand to benefit from family responsive programs may hold more positive attitudes toward the organization (Crooker and Grover, 1993). Therefore, employees who have children and are confronted with work and family demands may prefer having a choice of work hours associated with flexible work hour programs and may feel more attached to the organization for offering these policies. This attachment should be reflected in feelings of organizational commitment and job satisfaction. Beauvais and Kowalski (1993) found that '... the more salient one's family role, the more likely one would engage in family-supportive behaviors' (p. 10). Thus, having children at home represents a level of family responsibility and the following hypothesis is proposed.

6.INFERENCE:

Inference of this study of flexible work hours and employee attitudes among women and men indicate that family-responsive policies offered by employers may affect work-related attitudes of employees. Specifically, the existence of flexible work hour programs can be significantly related to organizational commitment and job satisfaction of female managers. Female managers will have higher levels of organizational commitment and job satisfaction working for an organization include flexible work hours in their psychological contract. The offering of such family-responsive policies may represent an organizational culture which is supportive of families and shows sensitivity to career-family demands. Our understandings are in agreement with those of Beauvais and Kowalski (1993) who found that individuals who perceived their organizational culture to be supportive of employees' involvement in the family domain experienced lower levels of work-family conflict. Thus, organizations may be able to play a more active role in reducing work-family conflict and improving employee attitudes by creating a family-friendly environment. Further research on the effects of family responsive policies and organizational culture appears to be a fruitful area for future research. It is also noteworthy that the perceptions of existence of the policy can significantly associated with higher organizational commitment, regardless of whether or not the employee undergo some training program.

7.CONCLUSION:

The results of this study have practical implications for organizations interested in implementing family-responsive policies. It is appealing that the gender, family responsibility and flexible work hours are the key factors that affect organizational commitment & job satisfaction. Given the literature demonstrating the outcomes associated with high levels of organizational commitment (Mowday et al., 1979), family-responsive policies such as flexible work hours may also reduce absenteeism and turnover (Kush and Stroh, 1994). Our investigation suggest that these factors may increase levels of commitment and overall satisfaction for both men and women, but that women may be more affected by flexible work hours as well as individuals with child-related responsibilities and multiple commitments. It is hoped that these perspectives encourage further investigations and applications of family-responsive policies in organizations, especially in light of the increasing trend of women in the workplace and the challenge facing organizations to retain talented, hard-working and committed employees.

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