Demographic Characteristics & Organizational Commitment:Studying Interaction Effect among School Teachers

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DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS & ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT: STUDYING INTERACTION EFFECT AMONG SCHOOL TEACHERS

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ABSTRACT

Organizational commitment is one of the most researched areas in behavioral studies. As commitment to an organization is the backbone for any effectively functioning organization, commitment has received a very special attention by practitioners in an organization. Age, organization tenure and gender are antecedents to organizational commitment. This paper studies commitment with relation to gender, age and organization tenure among private school teachers in Lucknow, India. The study also looks into the interaction effect of gender with age and organizational tenure in understanding commitment. Analysis of data is conducted with statistical tools like independent t test, one way ANOVA and two ways ANOVA. The results show that there is no significant difference among gender, age groups and grouping by tenure with regard to commitment scores. But both the interaction effects are significant. Results are elaborated upon in the discussion section. Limitations, managerial implications and future research areas are also discussed.

The concept of organizational commitment has matured and finds acceptability and adoration in the literature on industrial and organizational psychology (Cohen, 2003).Organizational behaviour in the workplace has been greatly linked to organizational commitment in many researches. (Porter et al., 1974).

Among all forms of commitment, organizational commitment 'is currently enjoying widespread popularity' (Griffin and Bateman, 1986, p. 166). Though individuals can be committed to an array of foci (Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001; Reichers, 1985), like occupations (Meyer et al., 1993),unions (Fullagar, Gallagher, Clark, & Carroll, 2004), career (Blau, 1985a) organizational commitment is the most evolved of all constructs (Morrow & McElroy, 1986).

Key Words: *Organizational commitment, organization tenure, gender, age, interaction effect.*

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As a construct, OC occupies paramount position between employer and employee and covers numerous elements and conceptual points (Loi et al., 2006). Wren (2005) asserts that OC as a construct has matured since Weber's assertion related to motivation and organizational efficiency. This is obvious by the large number of studies that have explored the affiliation between OC and its antecedent sand consequences. (e.g. Mathieu and Zajac, 1990; Mowday, Porter and Steers, 1982). Not only OC has far greater influence on important work behaviors but it is grounded in solid theory, has a broad focus and can play an integrative role. (Griffin and Bateman, 1986, p. 166). Scholars (e.g., Cohen, 2007; Mowday, Steers,& Porter, 1979; Rusu, 2013c.) in the field of organizational commitment have outlined two major facets in conceptualizing organizational commitment: behavioural and attitudinal. There has been a perennial debate on whether organizational commitment is a behaviour or attitude. Is commitment essentially related to and understood as behaviour or it is how employees feel and think about the organization?

Organizational commitment is a explained by employees' positive inclination and dedication to their organization. According to Steer (1977) it explains the degree to which the employee identifies and involves himself with the organization. Porter et al. (1974) defines commitment as "an attachment to the organization, characterized by an intention to remain in it; an identification with the values and goals of the organization; and a willingness to exert extra effort on its behalf" (p. 604). Arnold (2005) sees organizational commitment as "the relative strength of an individual's identification with and involvement in an organization" (p.625).

Dimensionality of Organizational Commitment

Homan (1958) proposed an exchange theory in which organizational commitment is the result of the exchange relationship between the individual and the organization. March and Simons (1958) inducement – contributions theory also indicate towards an exchange relationship.Carrying and improving this approach further Becker (1960) put forward the element of time and the concept of side-bets to the exchange paradigm. Becker's (1960) side-bet theory is considered as one of the earliest endeavour to understand commitment to know why people engage in what he termed as "consistent line of activity" (p. 33).The theory holds that individuals have some latent investments or stake also called side-bets by him. These side-bets are very dear to the individual as they entail certain cost which does not allow the individual to leave the organization. Disengagement with the organization becomes very difficult and a zero-sum game. Becker related commitment to individual behaviour which is influenced by economic gains, which was later known as continuance commitment in the literature on commitment.

Subsequently employee retention was refereed not only to economic gains, but rather to emotive influence. The affective dependence school described commitment as a kind of attitude-centred rather than "economic-contract". Employee's retention was significantly seen as a result of affective influence. Porter et al.(1974) hence considered organization commitment as a uni-dimensional concept based on the affective commitment. Mowday (1998) observes that scholars have changed the common thinking of organizational commitment as a uni-dimensional construct to a wider multi-dimensional concept (p. 389-390). Most of the experts in the field of OC have accepted OC as a multidimensional concept and OC is now not treated as a one-dimensional construct (Rusu, 2013c).

The Three-Component Model of organizational commitment (Meyer & Allen,1991) has earned generous acclaim since its origin (Wasti, 2005).The organizational commitment model advanced by Meyer & Allen (1991) effectively harmonize the approaches by Becker (1960), Porter et al. (1974) and Mowday, Steers & Porter (1979) by incorporating three components; affective commitment, continuance commitment, and normative commitment. The complementarity of attitudinal and

behavioural commitment is intrinsic in Meyer and Allen's (1991) formulation of their multidimensional model.

According to Meyer and Allen (1991) commitment has three distinctive psychological states –emotional (affective) commitment, continuance commitment and normative commitment.Emotional commitment is described as employee's attachment for, identity and participation in organization and organizational goals (Javadi and Yavarian, 2011). According to Clugston et al. (2000), emotional commitment relates to the 'wish' of the employee. The employee's values and goals are congruent to the organization and there is a strong identification and attachment to the organization. In continuance commitment the employee is with the organization because disassociating with the organization would result in unbearable cost or loss of investments. (Javadive Yavarian, 2012). This is same as Becker's (1960) theory. He proposed that organizational commitment emerges as a structural phenomenon that happens as a consequence of individual organizational transactions and adjustments in side-bets over time. Normative commitment represents the employee's wish to stay within the organization because of the notion of duty, fidelity or moral obligation. (Meyer and Allen, 1991). This type of commitment may result from job ethics that make an employee feel obliged to stay within the organization. Normative commitment is seen to be different from the other two commitments as employees may not be keen in relating to the values, missions and goals of the organization but to their own sense of loyalty and service that affects individual decision to stay within the organization (Clugston, 2000).

Outcomes of Organizational Commitment

More recently, commitment has been associated with various forms of work and non-work behavior (e.g.,Hackett, Bycio, & Hausdorf, 1994; Meyer, Paunonen, Gellatly, Goffin, & Jackson, 1989; Randall, Fedor, & Longenecker, 1990). Meta-analytic studies reveal that employees committed to an organization are less likely to leave (Mathieu & Zajac, 1990; Tett & Meyer, 1993) would attend regularly (Meyer, Stanley, Herscovitch, & Topolnytsky, 2002), perform effectively (Cooper-Hakim & Viswesvaran, 2005; Riketta, 2002), and be good organizational citizens (Meyer et al., 2002; Riketta, 2002). Existing research submit that OC is negatively associated to actual turnover (Price and Mueller, 1981; Mowday et al., 1982; Allen and Meyer, 1990; Eby et al., 1999) and the intent to leave (Ferris and Aranya, 1983). Scholars found that high degree of organizational commitment are related with low levels of absenteeism (Cohen, 1993; Mowday et al., 1979). Mathieu & Zajac (1990) in their meta-analysis profess that organizational commitment correlated positively with attendance and negatively with coming late and turnover. Randall (1990) in a meta-analytic study of the relationship between organizational commitment and work outcomes , found an affirmative relationship with factors like "job performance, job effort, attendance, coming to work on time, and remaining with an organization (or its converse turnover)"Iverson (1996) says that in successfully completing organizational change initiatives high commitment is a sine quo non .Committed employees are in most cases focussed towards achievement and innovation and are keenly interested in improving performance (Morrow, 1993).Meyer and Allen (1997) advocate that employees having firm commitment would supposedly engage in OCB than those with weak commitment. The meta-analysis done by Organ and Ryan (1995) reported that organizational commitment would be significantly associated with altruism and compliance dimensions of OCB. A meta-analysis of Riketta (2002) put forward the view that organizational commitment was very meaningfully related to extra-role behaviours.

Demography &Organizational Commitment

Scholars have asserted that personal features like gender, age, and organizational tenure would influence organizational commitment (Meyer & Allen, 1997).Age and tenure are two prime antecedents of OC as they are vital indicators of side-bets (Becker, 1960), which are investments

cherished by the individual which would be gone if the individual leaves the organization.

LaVan & Banner's (1985)research on managerial and professional employees found that there was no significant relationship between employee commitment and gender. Recent studies (Meyer et al., 2002; Riketta, 2005; Thorsteinson, 2003) also point out that males and females do not have significantly different commitment levels.

Many studies have indicated lower commitment for females. Karrasch (2003), Schwartz (1989), Yammarino & Dubinsky (1988) suggested that females are less committed than males. Dixon et al., (2005)& Graddick and Farr (1983) also reported low levels of commitment in females. A meta-analysis on teacher's commitment by Aldyin (2011) studied fifteen master and doctorate theses done between 2005 &2009 and concluded that effect of gender on organizational commitment is higher in male teachers than females, especially in identification and internalization with the organization. On the other hand Joolideh and Yeshodhara (2008), Mishra (2011) and Zilli and Zahoor (2012) found that female teachers had higher organizational commitment than their male counterparts. Steers and Porter (1979) acknowledges a meaningful relationship between organizational commitment and gender and found that females are higher in commitment levels as they try to justify their role in the organization. Gender model in understanding organizational commitment and females propose that women see their role in family as their primary responsibility and social fulfilment, this leads to distinction between female and male's orientation towards their organization (Loscocco, 1990). Ngo (1998) assert that the working space in organizations offer unequal conditions to women and this results in negative commitment towards the organization. Therefore it is assumed that:

Hypothesis 1: Male teachers have higher commitment than female teachers.

Studies demonstrate that organizational tenure is positively associated to organizational identification and commitment (Kushman, 1992; Mathieu & Zajac, 1990; De Gieter et al., 2011). Similarly, Meyer, Herscovitch & Topolnytsky (2002) observed a significant and positive relationbetween organizational commitment and organizational tenure. According to Newstrom (2007) commitment is stronger among employees with longer tenure in the organization. Meyer and Allen (1997) explained that with lengthier tenure in the organization, an individual is likely to develop an emotional connect with the organization which would restrain the employee in leaving the job. It is a positive commitment with the organization known as affective commitment. Meyer and Allen (1997) also indicate that those who are not committed will quit the organization and those who remain are very likely to have high commitment. The longer an employee works with an organization, their sense of responsibility for consequences related to them also enhances. Hence it is hypothesized:

Hypothesis 2: Organizational Commitment levels are significantly different between various groups based on length of service

Age has been studied as an antecedent to organizational commitment. Mathieu & Zajac (1990) reported that age has a significant relation with organizational commitment. Sommer, Bae & Luthans (1996) support this in their study among Korean employee's and observed that employee commitment increases with age. In two separate studies Kumar and Giri (2009) and Abdulla & Shaw (1999) in their research suggested that older employees are more likely to have higher level of commitment than younger ones. This is explained on the lines that older employees have realistic expectations and adapt to the working environment in comparison to younger employees (Newstrom, 2007). Ruokolainen (2011) also assert that older employees are more committed and advance that they being at middle or higher stages in the organization, have wider responsibilities and consult and guide others. With increasing age,other employment chances gets diluted, this may also enhance their commitment for their current organization. Based on the above the following hypothesis is proposed:

Hypothesis 3: Organizational Commitment levels are significantly different between various groups based on age.

This study also tries to further comprehend the complexities involved in understanding organizational commitment in relation to demographic traits. With this agenda, the interaction effect of gender with age and organizational tenure in impacting commitment is also studied. The two hypotheses are as follows:

Hypothesis 4: Interaction between gender and organizational tenure effecting organizational commitment is significant.

Hypothesis 5: Interaction between gender and age effecting organizational commitment is significant.

Figure 1: Model
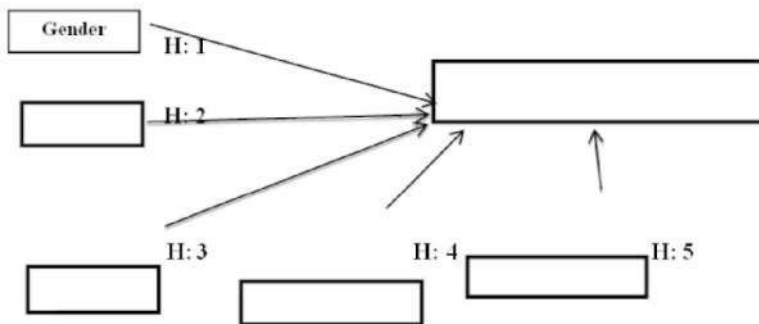
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Participants

Respondents in this study were teachers of private schools in Lucknow, India. All the schools were senior secondary schools. The sample included 150 teachers. 68 % percent of the respondents were female while 32 % were males.

Procedure

The survey was distributed to the respondents personally. They were informed that individual responses would be kept confidential and anonymous. Out of the 172 questionnaires administered 154 were returned at the rate of 89 percent. Out of these 150 were found to be complete in all aspects.

Instrument: Organizational Commitment.

Scale developed by Meyer, Allen and Smith (1993) was used to measure organizational commitment. The three dimensions of organizational commitment namely: affective commitment, normative commitment and continuance commitment were assessed. A six-item scale measures affective commitment (e.g. this organization has a great deal of personal meaning for me). The normative commitment scale includes six items (e.g. this organization deserves my loyalty). The measure of continuance commitment contains six items (e.g. It would be very hard for me to leave my organization right now, even if I wanted to). Each item was linked to a five-point Likert response scale ranging from "Strongly disagree" (1) to "Strong lyagree" (5).

The reliability coefficients (Alpha) organizational commitment (.73) was found to be acceptable based on Nunnaly (1978) and Robinson et al. (1991). One statement from organizational commitment scale was deleted to arrive at this reliability coefficient (Alpha) statistics.

DATA ANALYSIS

Table 1 : *Group Statistics*

	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT	Female	48	3.2696	.41111	.05934
	Male	102	3.4031	.45613	.04516

Table 2 : *Independent Samples Test*

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
OC	Equal variances assumed	1.070	.303	-1.724	148	.087	-.13351	.07742	-.28650	.01949
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.790	101.392	.076	-.13351	.07457	-.28143	.01441

To test the first hypothesis that male teachers are more committed than female teachers, an independent t test (see Table 2) was conducted. The assumption of homogeneity of variances was tested and satisfied with Levene's F test F (148) = 1.07, p = .30. The independent t test did not show a statistically significant effect, t (148) = -1.724, p = .087. Though in table 1 we can see there is difference in mean scores, with males having higher mean, but that difference in not significant. Therefore, it is reported that there is no significant difference in employee engagement based on gender. The hypothesis is not accepted.

Table 3: *Organizational Commitment Grouping by Age*

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	.448	3	.149	.749	.525
Within Groups	29.091	146	.199		
Total	29.538	149			

A one-way between subjects ANOVA was conducted to compare the effect of age on employee commitment for four different age groups. There was a no significant difference between the groups with regard to commitment scores, F (3,146) = .749, p = 0.525. Therefore the hypothesis is rejected.

Table 4 : *Organizational Commitment Grouping by Years of service*

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	1.145	4	.286	1.462	.217
Within Groups	28.394	145	.196		
Total	29.538	149			

To test the third hypothesis, again a one-way between subjects ANOVA was performed to compare the effect of years of service organizational commitment for five different groups. It is reported that there is no significant difference between the five groups with regard to commitment scores, $F(4,145) = 1.462$, $p = 0.217$. The third hypothesis is rejected.
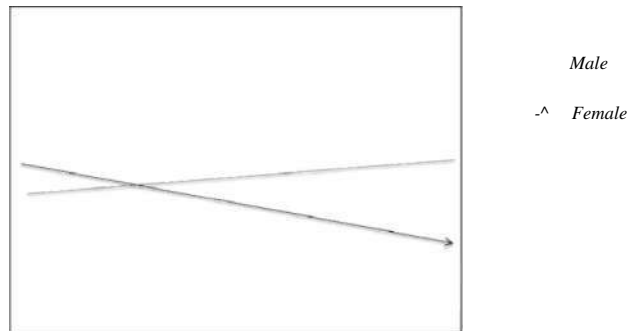
Table 5 : *Tests of Between-Subjects Effects*

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	3.226[a]	7	.461	2.487	.019
Intercept	1086.988	1	1086.988	5866.108	.000
gender	1.124	1	1.124	6.068	.015
age	.197	3	.066	.354	.786
gender * age	2.372	3	.791	4.268	.006
Error	26.313	142	.185		
Total	1723.374	150			
Corrected Total	29.538	149			

a. R Squared = .109 (Adjusted R Squared = .065)

A two-way ANOVA (see table 5) was conducted that examined the effect of gender and age (four groups) on organizational commitment. This study reports a significant interaction between the effects of gender and age on employee commitment levels, $F(3, 142) = 4.26$, $p = .006$. A graphical presentation of interaction is shown for the two ways ANOVA in figure 2. (Regression fit line). It clearly shows the difference in commitment of males and females with respect to age. So, the hypothesis is accepted.

Figure 2: *Regression Fit Line*

Male

-^ Female

Table 6 : *Tests of Between-Subjects Effects*

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	3.789[a]	8	.474	2.594	.011
Intercept	868.483	1	868.483	4755.751	.000
gender	1.481	1	1.481	8.110	.005
years	1.481	4	.370	2.027	.094
gender * years	2.183	3	.728	3.984	.009
Error	25.749	141	.183		
Total	1723.374	150			
Corrected Total	29.538	149			

a. R Squared = .128 (Adjusted R Squared = .079)

In testing the 5th hypothesis regarding interaction effect of gender and organization tenure, a two-way ANOVA (see table 6) wascarried out to explore the impact of gender and organizational tenure (five groups) on organizational commitment. The results show that the interaction between gender and organization tenure is significant in effecting employee commitment levels, $F(3, 141) = 3.98$, $p = .009$. A graphical representation of the interaction effect is shown for the two ways ANOVA in figure 3. (Regression fit line), which unambiguously shows distinction in employee commitment levels of males and females when we factor in organization tenure. Hence, the 5th hypothesis is accepted.

Figure 3 : Organizational Tenure
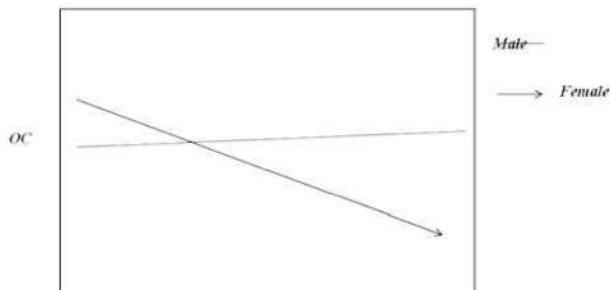
DISCUSSION

This study analyzed the relation between demographic characteristics (age, tenure and gender) and organizational commitment. The first assumption that males have higher commitment levels than females was not supported. There was no difference between the two. This is in consonance with the results reported by Meyer et al., (2002), Riketta (2005) and Thorsteinson (2003). Though females identify more with their role as a family member and males see their role in organizations as the primary one (Loscocco, 1990), in Indian social setting, the education sector especially till senior secondary schools are considered as a very good career option for females. A teaching job is considered as safe and secure and with lesser working hours a balancing role between family and work is manageable. So women are quite keen to take up teaching jobs, this would logically be one of the cause for their commitment. The nature of teaching work requires patience, affection and discipline which are traits largely found in women.

The length of service with the organization and grouping by age did not show any significant difference in commitment levels. Though employees with higher organization tenure are reported to have higher commitment (Meyer and Allen, 1997; Kushman, 1992), the role of organizational support theory and social exchange theory (SET)should also be looked into. Both these theory suggest that employee's attitudes and behaviors are dependent upon what the organization does and think about the employee. So, taking a cue from these two theories, organizational commitment can be seen as an exchange process where commitment of employees is a response to employer's actions, policies and practices towards employee and their well-being. Researchers have observed that job security (Yousef, 1998), promotion opportunities (Gaertner & Nollen, 1989), training and mentoring opportunities (Scandura, 1997), leadership support (DeCottis & Summers, 1987) and organizational justice perceptions (McFarlin & Sweeny, 1992) are all important influencers in relation to commitment of employees. It may be the case that employees organizations in this study are lacking in these areas and despite having put in many years in the organization, the employees are dissatisfied and less committed.

A very interesting outcome of the study is a significant interaction effect between gender and age(p=.006), which indicates (see figure 2) that female's commitment levels goes down considerably as there age increases and males commitment increases slightly as they age. Identical results are seen with gender and organization tenure (p=.009), but here the decrease in female commitment is much sharper. At higher levels in schools, additional responsibilities, administrative work, counselling and mentorship gets added along with classroom teaching. It may require putting in additional hours and even overstaying after school hours. In this scenario the work-life balance of female teachers could be disturbed. They have family responsibilities and educational needs of their grown up children. In Indian cultural context, even a working woman is expected to manage all the house hold chores, which would put a lot of pressure on working women. This may also hinder their ambitions in the organization. Also the reciprocal effect comes into play, as women employee are hindered in contributing fully to the organization , the organization may also withdraw some privileges , which in turn may further affect the commitment levels of women. Men on the other hand would readily take up additional responsibilities as they can fully devote themselves to their, putting up additional effort and time.

IMPLICATIONS, LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

The results offer important insights for managers in general and school principals and administrators in particular. They need to ensure that people with considerable length of service in the organization have sufficient reason to be committed. Their policies and working culture should be shaped to work as antecedents to commitment. It is well known how females find working environment and organizational policies to be detrimental to their cause. And diversity in organization is known to be a valuable competitive asset (Robinson, 2002). For effectively managing people, diversity management becomes a critical element. (Black Enterprise, 2001). Women centric policies and flexible nature of leadership should be adopted to encourage women employees.

Some of the limitations of the study could be due to the cross-sectional design of the study; concrete conclusions in terms of direction of causality as shown in the framework model cannot be drawn. Therefore any reported relation between variables should be analysed with caution. As self-reported data can have some biases, this is also a drawback of the study. Further research can be pursued to understand cultural differences, if any, in commitment levels in relation to demographic characteristics by a comparative study across nations. Also a comparison with government school can be undertaken. Other organizational factors like leadership style, culture and engagement aspects of the organization can be studied in conjunction with demographic traits to predict organization commitment.

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