



Effects of Work Related Attitudes on Organisational Commitment – A Study with Special reference to Clerical Employees at the Ministry of Health, Sri Lanka

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Abstract

Employees' behaviour and response to challenges or rewards are highly depended on their work-related attitudes. Similarly, work related attitudes are strong predictors of job performance. Therefore this study intends to analyse the effects of work related attitudes on the organisational commitment of clerical workers, at the Ministry of Health in Sri Lanka. A descriptive cross-sectional study was carried out using quantitative methodology and a validated structured questionnaire distributed among 144 clerical employees. The researchers have collected the data during the period between March-2017 and May-2017. In this work, both Organisational commitment and work related Attitudes of employees were measured using a questionnaire with eleven indicators for each. Factor analysis was carried out, and the weighted effect of each indicator on interested two variables was assessed. Simple linear regression analysis was carried out to test the hypothesis considering work-related attitudes as an independent variable and organisational commitment as the dependent variable. Findings proved that a job attitude has a significant positive impact on organizational commitment.

Key words: *Organizational commitment, work related attitudes, Clerical employees.*

Introduction

According to the manual on management of Teaching, Provincial, Base & Special hospitals (1995), health workers can be divided in to four main categories as clinical services, administrative services, supportive services and utility services. Most of the administrative work of all of these workers is being done by the clerical staff in the respective institutions. 'Office' is considered as the "heart" of any organisation and clerical workers has a huge responsibility in properly maintaining the office at any health institute. Therefore, it is very important to have a team of well committed clerical staff, since their performance has an impact on all other employees as well as on the overall performance of the health institution.

It is not uncommon to find that in many offices, there are complaints being made against the misconduct or mismanagement of most of the clerical staff and in the health sector too, such complaints are common. Further, it is interesting to note that the staffs in other units, who are involved in clinical and supportive services, do have the opportunity of directly interacting with the public, whereas the clerical staffs rarely gets such exposure. The advantage due to this lack of exposure in dealing with public is that, this segment of employees tends to be less vulnerable to criticism by the media. From an administrative point of view, it is important to have a clear understanding of the problems associated with the clerical staff in order to identify remedial measures which will assist in enhancing their job commitment levels as desired by the management.

Human resources are considered as the key element for the sustainability of any organisation or establishment. Presently Human Resource Management (HRM) is recognised as an area of specialisation which requires special expertise to deal with the core areas such as relations, resourcing, training and development and rewards. Under the current context of HRM, when studying organisation



behaviour and management, the connection between employees' commitment and job performance highlights a significant correlation. It has been observed that when managers seek to create a climate in which people are motivated, it tends to encourage simple compliance or bring about commitment to the organisation (Ritson& Marsden, 2001). Many studies have shown a positive correlation between job performance and employee's organisational commitment (Tolentino, 2013, Kashefi et al., 2013, Susanty&Miradipta, 2013 and Kunle et al., 2016) and this aspect has become a common topic of study among many researchers.

It has become apparent nowadays that organisations need to use different management and leadership strategies to motivate and increase the level of commitment of their staff. Highly committed employees are known to deliver a higher level of performance and due to this the organisation can achieve much more annually. Hence, this study aims at assessing the level of organisational commitment of clerical workers at the Ministry of Health in Sri Lanka and to look into the influence one of the key factor; employees'work related attitudes on their organisational commitment.

Literature Review

According to Mowday et al. (1982), organisational commitment is the "employee's strong belief in the organisation's goals, values and willingness to exert considerable effort in his or her work with a strong desire to continue as a member of it". It was defined by Mullins (1999), as an "employee's level of identification and involvement in the organisation. Allen & Meyer, 1990 have defined organisational commitment as "a psychological state that characterises an employee's relationship with an organisation and has implications for the decision to continue membership of the organisation". Large number of studies (Mowday et al., 1974; Irefin & Mechanic, 2014; Tolentino, 2013) have suggested that organisational commitment has an impact on employee's job performance. Another set of studies have been carried out to find out the determinants of job commitment. Those studies have revealed several determinants such as job satisfaction,work related attitudes of employees and some demographic factors (Jena, 2015; Rizwan et al., 2014; Kunle et al., 2016).

As quoted in Tolentino(2013),Utapao, (2003) introduced two dimensions to measure the commitment and they are (a) acceptance of organisational goals and values (b) mentality of not leaving the organisation. Quevedo(2006) measured it using three domains(As quoted in Tolentino, 2013) which are known as (a) knowledge on organisational goals (b) desire to get involved in organisational duties and (c) being loyal to the organisation. Allen and Meyers (1990) developed a model referred to as the "three component model" to measure and describe organisational commitment. According to them, organisational commitment can be divided into three main components as (a) affective commitment (b) normative commitment and (c) continuance commitment.Affective commitment describes the extent of the workers' willingness to stay in the organisation depending on the individual's positive work related attitudes towards the employer. Numbers of factors like organisational policies, working environment and relationship with other employees are co-related with regard to affective commitment. According to Allen and Meyer(1997), employees with high level of effective commitment have the desire to stay in the organisation willingly and perform well.

Normative commitment is the obligation based which describes as to how much an employee feels that he has to stay with the organisation. Normatively committed employees feel that they ought to work for the organisation since their employer has spent a lot of time and expended significant resources on behalf of them to provide an acceptable working environment. They are of the view, that the organisation will face many difficulties if they do leave and therefore, they are reluctant to tender their resignation (Lee & Chen, 2013), whereas, continuance commitment is mainly concerned with the employees' earnings. Majority of the employees are reluctant to leave their organisations as they



perceive that they can earn more financial benefits by staying in the same organisation, rather than changing jobs (Hettiararchchi & Jayarathna, 2014).

Attitudes essentially explain how a person perceives something and how he reacts in relation to that perception. According to this view, various people have defined the word or term “attitudes” in different ways. Fishbein and Ajzen(1974) had defined the term as “a positive or negative feeling or mental state of readiness, learned and organised through experience that exerts specific influence on a person’s response to people, objects and situations”. Saari and Judge (2004) had distinctly identified it as “evaluative statements either favourable or unfavourable concerning objects, people or events”. There are thousands of attitudes which have been identified by various persons and number of research has been done to see the effect of work related attitudes on organisational commitment. Employee's willingness to work hard and make an effort to do the job more than the expected level (job involvement), their positive and effective psychological work related state of mind (employee engagement) and employee's spiritual values are some of the attitudinal aspects which have been widely studied to see their association with organisational commitment.

A study done in Turkey, among three hundred (300) multinational company employees to assess the association between organisational commitment and their willingness to work hard or the job involvement (Ekmekçi, 2011). A significant positive correlation was found between these two variables indicating that level of organisational commitment will increase when they have high willingness to work hard (i.e. positive attitude). Another study done in Texas, U.S.A. (Ortiz et al., 2011), among one hundred and sixteen (116) university undergraduates showed a rather weak and statistically not significant relationship between employees' positive and effective psychological work related state of mind or employee engagement and continuance commitment. Nevertheless, a noteworthy positive relationship was seen between employee engagement and normative commitment. In a another study which was done in U.S.A(Dehaghi et al. 2012), the impact of employees' spiritual values on their organisational commitment was assessed and revealed a significant positive relationship. Further it indicates that when employees experienced spirituality at work, they feel more close and loyal towards the organisation.

About three hundred and thirty six (336) Jordanian banking employees got involved in a similar study and their level of engagement and relationship, with regard to affective, normative and continuance commitments were assessed separately (Albdour & Altarawneh, 2014). A strong positive connection was identified between employee engagement and normative commitment while a moderate and positive correlation was identified with affective commitment and the weakest relationship was found with continuance commitment. Another study done with the participation of four hundred and seventy seven (477) employees from various sectors of India also revealed a significant positive relationship between organisational commitment and some of their work related attitudes (Singh & Gupta, 2015).

Methodology

In order to achieve the main objective of the study, the segment of clerical workers who are working at the head office of the Ministry of Health, was selected as the study population. Clerical workers who involved in administrative work and work experience of more than one year as a clerical employee were considered as the inclusion criteria. Hence, grade 1 clerical officers, and administrative officers and Clerical staff in the accounting and financial section were excluded due to the possibility of factors such as their job satisfaction, work related attitudes and organizational commitment being different from other clerical staff and in order to minimise department wise differences that could arise due to



the above mentioned variables. This reduces the focus population to 144 employees, and it was considered as the sample of the study.

A self-administered, validated questionnaire was used to collect data, and it contained three parts. Part – A aims at socio-demographic factors of employees. Part – B consists of eleven (11) questions to assess the work related attitudes of employees towards their job. Part –C consisted of eleven (11) questions to assess the level of organisational commitment of employees. Allen and Mayer's organisational commitment scale was used as a guide when planning this part of the questionnaire and it was developed to assess all three components of organisational commitment. This section comprised of six (6) questions to assess the affective commitment, three (3) questions to assess the normative commitment and two (2) questions to assess the continuance commitment.

The validity of the content in the questionnaire was obtained from an expert panel in the field of clerical work. The expert panel consisted of one Medical Administrator, two Administrative Officers, and two Chief Clerks. All the included questions were assessed for its relevance, accuracy of wording and acceptability to the relevant context. Pre-testing of the questionnaire was carried out at the office of the Provincial Director of the health services, Western province, and eight clerical employees were selected for this exercise, and few modifications were made after the pre-testing, to make it clearer and understandable. Data were entered into the Statistical Package for Social Services (SPSS) 21 version. Both descriptive statistics and inferential analysis were carried out for the analysis of data.

Objectives of the study

1. To assess the present level of organisational commitment of the clerical workers.
2. To assess the level of work related attitudes of the clerical workers.
3. To study the effect of work related attitudes on the organisational commitment of the clerical workers.

Limitations of the study

1. The study is purely based on the opinion and perceptions of employees.
2. Number of respondents is restricted to 144 clerical employees.
3. The findings may vary according to the perceptions of the respondents.
4. The results are not generalised.

Findings and Discussion

Cronbach's alpha values have been analysed for the internal consistency or reliability of the dependent and independent variables. Accordingly, the overall reliability has been achieved by the questionnaire to carry out the inference analysis since the calculated value of Cronbach's Alpha is greater than 0.70. Preliminary analysis of demographic data revealed that about 74% represent female while the majority of the clerical staff are in the age group between 31 – 40 years. Further, it was observed that about 90% of the clerical staff employees are possessed undergraduate and post graduate qualifications, while 64% of the total staff has more than four years of working experience in their positions.

Measuring of Organisational commitment

As the initial step, it was decided to investigate the responses for each indicator of organisational commitment, by separately calculating the mean of the respective indicator.

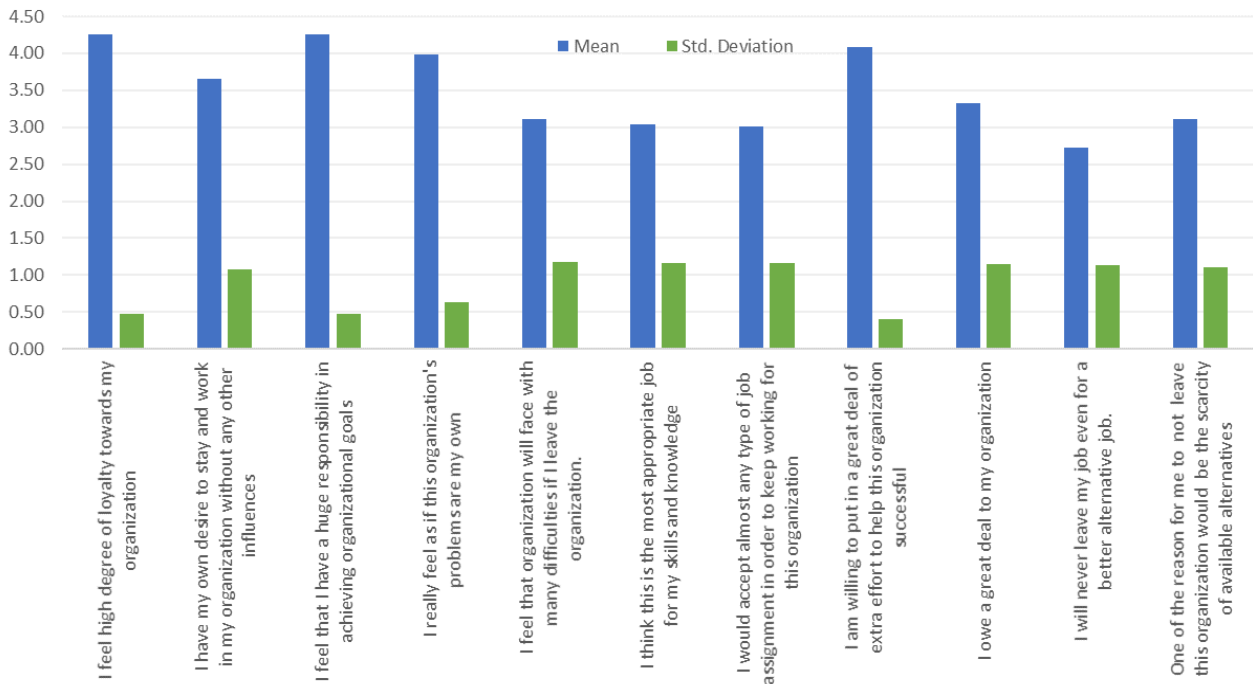


Figure 1: Mean and Standard Deviation of indicators of organisational commitment

Above graphical presentation (figure 1) indicates the organisational commitment of clerical employees, analysed based on eleven (11) different indicators. As per the Likert scale, a score of 3 represent neutral stance while above 3 indicates displaying more commitment and less than 3 indicates, showing a less specific level of commitment, based on the particular indicator.

As the mean value was greater than three (3), Seven (7) aspects or indicators out of the eleven (11) indicators show that the clerical employees are committed to their organisation. However, on the indicator related to the intention of leaving his/her current job even for a better alternative job, the response of the majority reflected that they are willing to consider such opportunities since the mean value was less than 3. At the same time, the mean value of 4.25 recorded for two indicators showed that the clerical employees at present have a high degree of loyalty towards their organisation as well as, a huge responsibility in achieving the respective goals. Also, it is observed that there is a common understanding and equal level of willingness to put in a great deal of extra effort to help the organisation to be successful, as the standard deviation recorded for same is the lowest out of all. Remarkably, a higher standard deviation indicated for the employees' who are of the view that if they leave, the organisation would face many difficulties and they also feel that the current job they hold is the most appropriate for their skills and knowledge. Results showed that majority were having higher level of commitment since their factor scores were higher than the neutral value. Further it revealed that 66.67% of clerical employees belonged to the category of "committed" while 28.47% could be categorised under "highly committed". These findings were quite similar with certain other studies done in Malaysia (Ismail & Razak, 2014) and Manila (Tolentino, 2013).

Further analysis was carried out in order to get an in-depth understanding on the impact of the demographic factors of the employees on their level of commitment. Hence, the level of commitment was analysed based on the age of the employees and it revealed that in aligning with the general thinking of youngsters being active, hyper, daring etc. the highest level of commitment was displayed by less than 30 year olds, followed by the age category of 41 to 50 years and above and thereafter by 31-40 year olds. However, the ANOVA test proved otherwise, as statistically significant differences



were not visible between these mean values and fascinatingly these findings were compatible with another local study done by Liyanage & Galhena in 2014. On the other hand, number of other studies has shown a positive relationship between the age of employees and their commitment towards the employer being positive (Jena, 2015; Sandoval & Garcia, 2015; Hrebiniak & Alutto, 2014).

On a gender basis the males dominated the commitment levels with a slightly higher value of 15.67 than females with a value of 15.16. Even, the ANOVA test results did not show any significant difference between the two genders and same was also proven by the findings of the local study done by Liyanage & Galhena, 2014. But some studies showed higher organisational commitment among males (Jena, 2015), while some showed a higher value among females (Hrebiniak & Alutto, 2014).

The commitment displayed by married employees was slightly higher with a value of 15.37 when compared with the unmarried (15.12). ANOVA test too did not statically show a significant difference and it was same with the findings in the above mentioned local research done by Liyanage & Galhena, 2014. However, most other studies showed a higher level of organisational commitment among married staff (Mottaz, 1988, Parks et al., 1998, Jena, 2015).

Measuring work related attitudes of employees

The work related attitudes of the clerical employees were measured using eleven (11) indicators. The good or positive attitudes towards the work/job were ranked with high values and lesser or lower value represented the lower or negative attitudes.

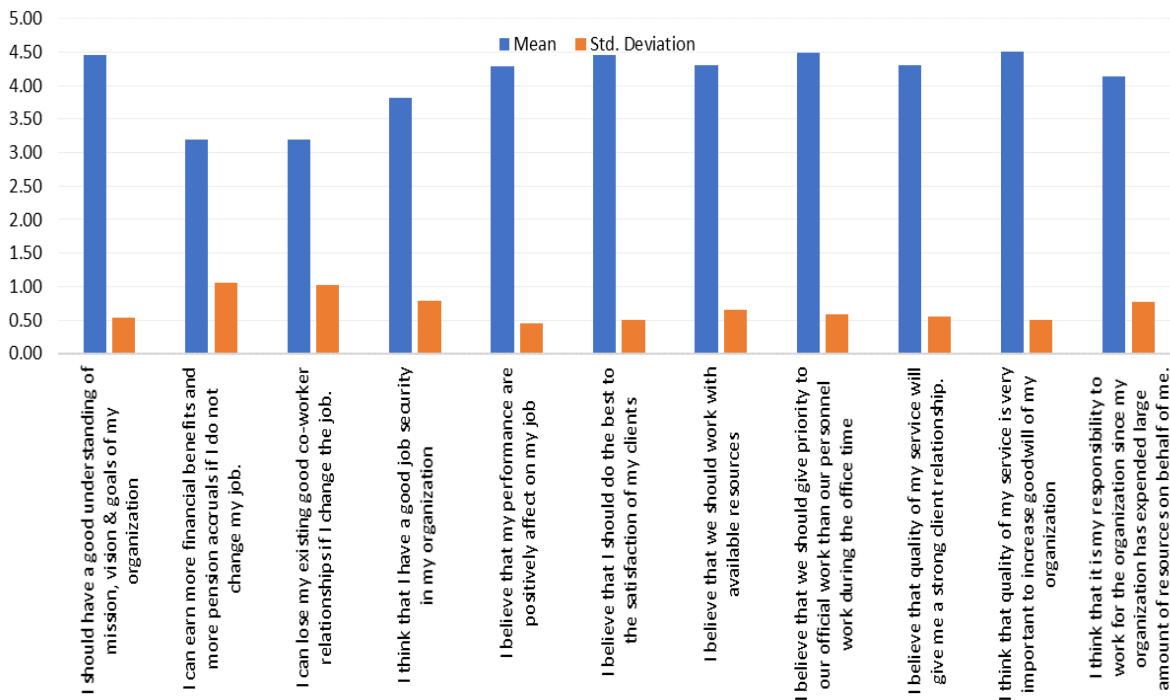


Figure 2: Mean and Standard Deviation of indicators of attitude

As per figure 2, all the indicators were well above the neutral mean value of 3 and the highest mean value represented the thinking of employees in offering quality service to their customers (or public) in order to enhance the goodwill of their organisation. Thereafter, the highest ranking was towards the employees giving priority to their official work during office time and less attention to their personal matters. Least ranked attitude was that they believed that they could lose their existing, positive or good co-worker relationship in the event they changed their jobs.



According to results majority (60.42%) were with positive attitudes while 39.58% of them had negative attitudes. None of the employees indicated having highly negative or highly positive attitudes.

A higher mean value (16.56) of attitude was observed between the age category of 41 to 50 years and the lowest mean value of 15.57 was recorded in the age group category of above 50 years

Mean values of work related attitudes of male and females were almost same and it was observed from the results of ANOVA as well. Also there was no any significant difference between the work related attitudes among married and unmarried clerical employees.

As per the level of education, highest level of mean value for attitudes was evident from employees who had passed the O/L and lowest level of attitude was found from the graduated employees. But these values do not prove statistically significant differences.

Effect of employee's work related attitudes on organisational commitment

As per the results of the correlation analysis, a significant moderately positive relationship was evident between work related attitudes and organizational commitment. The correlation coefficient stood at 0.262 and which was significant at 99% level of significance. In order to understand the direct impact of work related attitudes on organizational commitment regression analysis was carried out and results are given in table 1 below.

Table 1: Results of the regression analysis

Model	Un standardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1 (Constant)	8.573	1.770		4.843	0.000	5.074	12.073
Attitude	0.319	0.090	0.290	3.558	0.001	0.142	0.496

This further provided evidence for a moderate positive impact of work related attitudes on organizational commitment among the clerical staff of the ministry of health in Sri Lanka. This evidence reveals that employees with positive work-related attitudes are more committed to their organization. This finding is an indication of the impact of employees' spiritual values on their commitment to the organization that they work. Hence a positive and effective psychological work related state of mind (employee engagement) and spiritual values of employees are some of the attitudinal aspects that can determine organisational commitment to a certain extent.

A study done in Turkey, among three hundred (300) multinational company employees to assess the association between organisational commitment and their willingness to work hard or the job involvement (Ekmekçi, 2011). A significant positive correlation was found between these two variables indicating that level of organisational commitment will increase when they have high willingness to work hard. In a another study which was done in U.S.A(Dehaghi et al. 2012), the impact of employees' spiritual values on their organisational commitment was assessed and revealed a significant positive relationship. Further it indicates that when employees experienced spirituality at work, they feel more close and loyal towards the organisation.



Recommendations

Even though clerical employees of the Ministry of Health were having higher levels of organisational commitment and attitudes according to the study, the senior officials or administrators should give more emphasis in further enhancing these factors, for the betterment of the organisation. Special importance to be given in improving attitudes of the existing clerical cadre, as it invariably helps to improve the overall commitment level. As “personal” attitudes have a higher tendency and capability in improving the level of organisational commitment, necessary steps should be taken to provide required support and training to the clerical employees to improve their attitudes towards work. It is recommended to conduct properly designed, effective orientation programmes for the new recruits and also to conduct specific training programmes to improve the overall attitudes of employees. During these specific training, the officials should focus in enlightening the employees in improving their outlook towards certain factors such as working with available resources, enhancing customer satisfaction and also giving priority to official work during office hours. Improvement in their thinking or positive attitudes towards the above mentioned factors could lead to the overall improvement in their approach towards work and the organisation

Conclusion

This study revealed that majority of the clerical employees at the ministry of health head office has a higher level of organisational commitment and work-related attitudes. Further, their level of organisational commitment was positively influenced by the work related attitudes. Hence this study provides rather scares findings on the impact of psychological and spiritual attachment of individuals with the work they perform on their commitment to the organization. Although this spiritual attachment can vary from an individual to individual, serious managerial implications can be drawn through this evidence.

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