Impact of Job Involvement on Organizational Commitment: A Case Study of Lebanese Public Sector

Wael Zaraket

Abstract

While the topic of organizational commitment has been discussed thoroughly in various literature reviews, there are no references for such a study in Lebanon. After studying the existing literature review within the area of job involvement and organizational commitment, the researcher conducted a quantitative study where the data was distributed and collected from two hundred and thirty employees working in the Lebanese public sector using a self-administered questionnaire to explore the effects of job involvement on the level of organizational commitment. Five initial hypotheses were proposed to be tested through the research paper and three of these hypotheses were verified. The results show a significant relation between age and job involvement, whereas gender, salary, and educational level bear no relation to job involvement. Furthermore, job involvement bears a positive relation to the organizational commitment. The implications of the findings for practice were highlighted.

Keywords: Lebanon, public sector, job involvement, organizational commitment.

Introduction

In today's business environment, firms know that employees are their inimitable assets, and that the employees should be considered as an endowment from the labor market to the firm. Theorists and practitioners of this subject have inferred that organizations are structured by three main paradigms: (1) Organizations are social systems in which activities are ruled by social work laws and psychological laws; (2) organizations are formed based on people's common interests, through which management and employees work in collaboration to achieve organizational objectives and individuals' goals; and (3) organizations endeavor to recruit and maintain good employees through ethical and stable job environments (Davis & Newstrom, 1996). Hence, an organization's success depends on having a constant and skillful workforce who can be self-motivated and bring quality and human commitment as an added value to the organization (O'Malley, 2000). To achieve this indispensable objective, organizations, therefore, continually strive to implement an effective human resource management strategy.

An organization's prosperity depends on having a solid and secure talented work force, which can add value to the organization's operations and structure. Therefore, to realize these priorities, organizations have renovated the role of human resource management strategy. The function of resource management in business operations ebbed and flowed over the 1960s and 1970s, and the role of human resource management staff was often viewed as the "health and happiness crews" who plan picnics, schedule vacations, enroll workers for health care coverage, and plan retirement parties (Decenzo & Robbins, 2010). Human resource strategy today aims at augmenting the methods by which firms can be more effective in attracting, training, developing, and retaining employees who fit well into the business environment. Thus, such employees can achieve productivity, labor proficiency, and job satisfaction, as well as personal commitment. Here falls the role of job involvement that can have an effect on the organizational commitment.

Practitioners in human resource management within the organization are vigilant to issues that have been linked with organizational commitment. The methods by which these dynamics alter the development of organizational commitment are not well understood. Multiple studies about the relation of the employees' job involvement and the employees' organization commitment were studied all over the world of business practice. However, the concept is rarely discussed among Lebanese public sector. Hence, empirical evidence is still needed to illustrate the relation between job involvement and organizational commitment.

Purpose And Scope

This study aimed at investigating the level of employees' job involvement and employees' organization commitment in the Lebanese government ministries. Also, it aimed at concluding on the relation between those two variables and the way they affect each other.

Varied practitioners and professional groups have studied comprehensively organizational commitment and job involvement. Both elements are essential for the successful attainment of organizational and professional goals in Lebanese public sector. This sector is a sector which has remained unexplored by researchers. The study of employee commitment and job involvement should be an important component of the Lebanese public sector, given that the Lebanese ministries handle large number of employees.

No previous studies have been performed based on the commitment of the employees of the Lebanese public sector, best to the author's knowledge. The primary role of this paper is to link employee job involvement to organization commitment. Here, this paper tackles the need for commitment in the Lebanese public sector that will improve its ministries work and role in the country.

Lebanon

Lebanon is small country with an Arab culture base, and it is located in the Middle East. Lebanon has many characteristics in terms of its environment, history, and diverse population. Diversity is one of the key elements that characterize Lebanon among its neighboring countries. However, it is the only Arabic country that has a Christian President as stated by its constitution. Lebanon has been known for being the "Crossroads of civilizations" due to its diverse historical inhabitants. Moreover, it is also known for the "Ground of Islamic-Christian dialogue" as a result of the religious diversity, where it consists of two main religions (Islam and Christianity) with almost seventeen sects (Harris, 2012).

Lebanon is an Arab country in terms of language, culture, and background. Specific features make Lebanon unique. These features are, however, related by religion and language. Lebanese people's main language is Arabic, but most of the Lebanese people speak French or English, which is a second language for most of them.

Lebanon is located at a connecting point between the three old continents: Asia, Europe, and Africa. Due to its location, Lebanon has been known to be a country of passage for ancient civilizations among these continents based on the history of Pope John Paul (1991). The country has been a place of refuge for the minorities persecuted in the rest of the Middle East, especially the Maronites, the Shiites, and the Druze, who have established successively in the mountain and in the plain (Harris, 2012).

However, Lebanese employees foster a job environment that encourages job freedom and new challenges that can lead to organizational development. This intrinsic cultural behavior embedded in the Lebanese people has turned Lebanon into one of the most tourist-friendly countries in the region, where people operate their own businesses as entrepreneurs.

Lebanon is an image of paradoxes, reflecting individualistic cultural behavior and democratic standards and, at the same time, it is located in a region that is well known for its collectivist culture and its dictatorship and monarchy regimes (Salibi, 1977).

According to the latest report on "The Labor Market in Lebanon – October 2011, published by the Central Administration for Statistics (CAS), the public sector in Lebanon employs about 16 percent of the workforce. Ministries employ between 7,000 and 8,000 administrative employees out of 25,000 contracted and waged workers.

Organizational Commitment And Job Involvement

Many definitions exist in the literature for organizational commitment. For the purposes of this study, the definition of organizational commitment is derived from Mowday et al. (1982). Organization commitment is characterized as far as there is a relative power of a worker's Inclusion and involvement in, and recognizable proof with, a particular organization. Mathieu & Zajac (1990) express that this definition mirrors different measurements since it incorporates the idea of distinguishing proof, and fuses the yearning to stay with the organization and work towards the organizational objectives.

Basically, there are three elements of mentalities and practices on loan striking nature based on the characterization of organizational commitment. They are: (1) acknowledgment of and a faith in the qualities and objectives of the organization; (2) craving to keep up organization enrollment; and (3) a readiness to contribute to the organization. This meaning of organizational commitment signifies a dynamic relationship trade between the worker and the association. Also, it includes states of mind and practices as indications of the real idea of organization commitment. Furthermore, watched practices of the committed representative will be consistent with the definition constituents.

O'Reilly & Chatman (1986) characterize organizational commitment as a mental connection to the organization anticipated by three autonomous builds which include those of consistence, Distinguishing proof, and disguise. Consistence is regarded as an involvement for the extraneous prizes. Recognizable proof is an involvement with the organization as a result of the longing for alliance, and is an essential system in creating procedure of mental connection (Bowlby, 1982). Disguise is involvement in view of the Individual's acknowledgment of the organization's values. The first definitional component of the

Mowday, Porter & Steers (1982) organizational commitment model, acknowledgment, and confidence in the qualities and objectives of an organization is based on psychological attachment (O'Reilly & Chatman, 1986). Mowday et al. (1979) stated that organizational commitment is a worldwide phenomenon which uncovers the full feeling reactions of the worker in regards to the entire organization. The advancement of commitment to the organization starts at the time of recruitment. This proceeds over a time frame and involvement interaction of the state of mind and practices. Porter & Steers (1973) reported that the level of commitment, detailed by workers on the first day of recruitment, anticipated turnover up to a while at work. Alternatively, Hunt & Morgan (1994) advocated the different commitment perspective of authoritative duty. They report authoritative responsibility to be characterized as different duties to different gatherings which the organization contains. This includes duty to the work group, the supervisor, and to the top administration. Their research supports a reconceptualization of the worldwide organizational commitment which is shown as a "key interceding build" with consistence, disguise, and ID as the bases of commitment. Therefore, voting demographic particular duties are components that prompt, and result in, the idea of worldwide organizational commitment. As a result of the consequences and outcomes of organizational commitment, diminished intentional turnover might be the most unsurprising of the behavioral results (Mowday, Porter & Steers, 1982; Mathieu & Zajac, 1990; Lee & Mitchell, 1991; Lee, Ashford, Walsh & Mowday, 1992). A meta-analysis was conducted by Mathieu & Zajac (1990), which reveals high relationships between organization and behavioral goals. Furthermore, Mathieu & Zajac opine that organizational commitment may speak of a "rundown list" of the worker's business related experiences, and that organization commitment may have a significant impact on the behavioral expectations specifically.

Blau & Boal (1987) propose that employee commitment and employment involvement are seen as supplements with respect to the expectation of the intentional turnover handle. Thus, they likewise report a noteworthy interactive connection between the two factors (Blau & Boal, 1989). Representatives who show large amounts of organizational commitment and of employment involvement might be the most drastically averse to participate in the intentional turnover handle. This is based on the fact that they are involved in and committed to both the job and the organization. O'Reilly & Chatman (1986) reported that job involvement is a result of mental commitment to an organization. Thus, job involvement is incorporated into a class of ward factors that is significant to organizational commitment. Furthermore, there are some

sorts of positive involvement which adds to the meaning of employment involvement. They include congruity, adaptability, motivation, and an acknowledgment of organizational policies exhibited through compliance in employee relationships.

Employees' job involvement and organizational commitment are illustrated extensively in the prominent management and behavioral sciences literature as focal subjects in connection between individuals and organizations (Kanungo, 1982). Furthermore, employee job involvement and organizational commitment are the elements that endorse the connection of the individual to the organization. Employees are considered to be involved and committed within an organization when they willingly continue their involvement and engagement with the organization and dedicate substantial effort to accomplish organizational goals (Zaraket & Halawi, 2017).

The organizational commitment meta-analysis which was conducted by Mathieu & Zajac (1990) also reveals that among the foci of commitment, the job involvement and organizational commitment relationship is the largest that was observed. The two variables are considered to influence some work-related behaviors independently. Job involvement is defined as a belief that is descriptive of an employee's relationship with the present job. Employees who display high levels of organizational commitment and of job involvement may be the least likely to be engaged in the voluntary turnover process, because they are involved in and committed to both the job and the organization. On the other side, O'Reilly & Chatman (1986) reported that job involvement is a consequent outcome of the psychological commitment to an organization.

Based on the aforementioned information in this study, the conceptualized hypothesis is the relation between job involvement and organizational commitment.

Research Model And Hypothesis
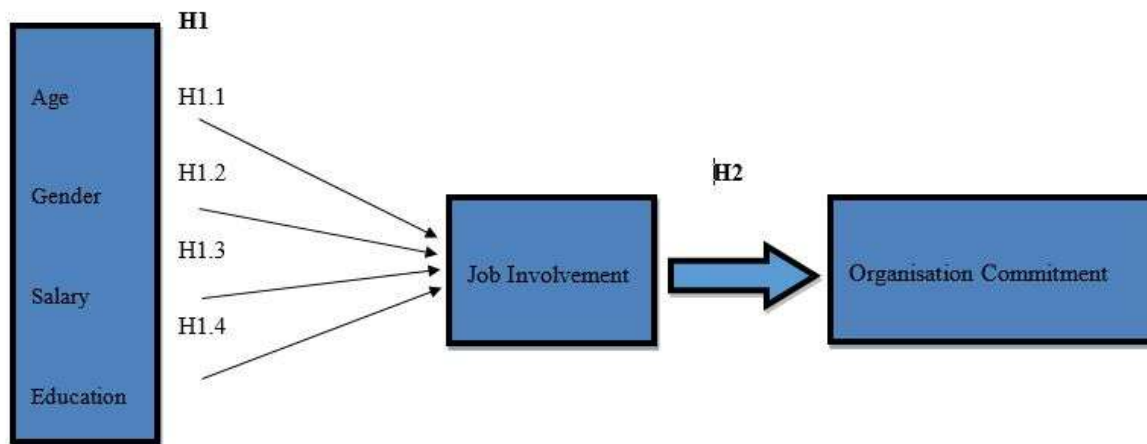
Hypotheses

Based on the reviewed literature, the set objectives, questions and variables of the study, the following hypotheses were formulated:

H1.1 - Age will have a positive impact on job involvement.

H1.2 - Gender will have no relation with job involvement.

H1.3 - Salary will have a positive impact on job involvement.

H1.4 - Education level will have no relation with job involvement.

H 2 - Job involvement will have a positive relation with organizational commitment.

Methods And Design

The population of the study comprised of employees working in the Lebanese public sector. A probability sampling method for data collection was used to select employees from four ministries and public agencies: Ministries of Finance, Electricity of Lebanon, Ministry of Agriculture, and the Government Palace.

The questionnaires were distributed to respondents from different age groups, backgrounds, and positions; whereas, the surveys were delivered to the employees of the fourth and third level employment status. A total number of 230 were administrated to potential respondents.

An overall 150 questionnaires were filled and returned by the employees, giving a response rate of 65%.

The instrument for primary data collection was a structured questionnaire survey to collect the primary data in this study. The questionnaire was in three pages. It was designed by the researchers and it consists of three sections.

Section A: required the respondents to provide personal information such as gender, age, level of education, type of contract (fixed or contractual), level of employment (fourth of third level), and income level.

Section B: designed to test the employees level of involvement in their work.

Section C: designed to test the employees level of commitment towards their organizations.

The questions were designed to facilitate the respondents to identify the various variables which are contributing towards job involvement and employees' commitment to their organizations. The respondents were requested specifically to ignore their personal biases and use their best decision on a 5-point Likert scale. The purpose of this exercise was to make the response a true reflection of organization reality, rather than an individual opinion. All items were measured using a 5-point Likert-type scale (ranging from 1 strongly disagree to 5 strongly agree).

Data Analysis

The reliability of the collected data was measured using Cronbach Alpha coefficient; the reliability test was conducted to check for inter-item correlation job involvement and organizational commitment in the questionnaire. The test results for both variables are 0.732 and .827 respectively, which exceeded the acceptable limit (Zikmund, 2002).

The normal distribution of each variable was checked by calculating the values of kurtosis and skewness. The linear regression for the tests was conducted using 150 cases. As a result, there is the need to check the normal values to ensure that all variables have acceptable normal distribution and a linear relationship between the independent and dependent variable(s). The skewness and kurtosis values are between -1 and +1, reflecting an acceptable level.

A regression analysis was used to examine the impact of job involvement on job satisfaction and the rapport between the demographical variables and job involvement. The result indicates that there is a significant relation between job involvement with organizational commitment for the Lebanese public sector employees ($R2 = 0.673$, $p < 0.05$). This suggests that the final model can explain 67% of variability. Hence, the hypothesis is supported.

As for the demographical variables correlation with job involvement, the results indicate that only age has a positive relation with job involvement ($p < 0.00$); however, gender, education, and salary do not indicate any significant relation. The statistical results are shown respectively ($p < 0.192$, $p < 0.302$, $p < 0.287$). Hence, the delineated results are as follows:

H1.1 - Age will have a positive impact on job involvement. (*supported*)

H1.2 - Gender will have no relation with job involvement. (*supported*)

H1.3 - Salary will have a positive impact on job involvement. (*not supported*)

H1.4 - Education level will have no relation with job involvement. (*supported*)

Discussion

The study reveals that there is a relation between age and job involvement. Here, the results attest to the aforementioned literature because when an employee has a larger experience, he/she will tend to be more involved in the job. This is common especially in Lebanon where managers give more work to senior employees that have spent many years in an organization.

Also, this study showed that there is no relation between gender (male/female) and job involvement. This reflects the Lebanese culture idiosyncrasy that differentiates Lebanon from the other neighboring Arab countries. Mainly in Lebanon, there is no discrimination between male and female with respect to the salary, recruitment, job grade, or position. In the current business environment both the male and female are considered the bread and butter gainer. Therefore, it is denoted that there is no difference between male and female in the Lebanese public sector in relation with job involvement.

Furthermore, this study revealed that there is a no relation between salary and employee level of involvement. In Lebanon, job involvement is linked more towards career growth and

senior positions. The Lebanese public sector is a reflection of the classical bureaucratic school of Management, where employees within their job grades know exactly how long it will take in terms of time as regards to promotion and salary increase. Back to the results of this study, salary carries no relation with job involvement because the main concern of these employees is not the salary when it is linked to job involvement.

This study revealed that there is no relation between educational level and job involvement. In the Lebanese public sector, the employees' job description is related to the employment level and status. However, the results showed that there are many employees that hold university degrees and are positioned in a Fourth level status of employment where they do not have a large access to information to get involved in their jobs.

Finally, the results indicated that there is a significant relationship between job involvement and organizational commitment. This finding confirms the literature as it indicated that job involvement leads to higher level of commitment from employees toward their organizations.

Concerning the public sector environment in Lebanon, where employees who have political conformity (approval) and power get better job development, employees were losing their sense of belongingness and their commitment were decreasing. Job involvement, when practiced well by managers, will help in filling this gap and thus make employees to become committed again (Zaraket & Halawi, 2015).

Consequently, the results are also congruent with recent studies from western countries. Job involvement existence lead to higher organizational commitment, a reciprocal relationship between the two variables proved to be positively significant in the Western context and same for the Lebanese public sector employees.

Conclusion And Implications

The main purpose of this research paper was intended to measure the impact of job involvement on organizational commitment of Lebanese public sector and the rapport between the employees' demographical variables and job involvement.

The results show that there is a positive relation between age and job involvement. Furthermore, no relation exits between the demographical variables (gender, education, and salary and job involvement. Subsequently, the testing of the hypotheses by using the linear

regression presents the relation between job involvement and organization commitment; it shows that job involvement has a positive relation with organizational commitment and thus supports the hypothesis.

The character of this research study was, from the start, in providing a survey of the "Lebanese public sector" by treating it as a case study. The spirit of the paper was to describe, document and measure a situation, and not to specifically provide an operative framework to be implemented. This is because at this stage of political and economic instability, it is very difficult to formulate a formal framework for direct implementation.

"The practitioners and human resource managers can get insight from the findings of this study that organizational commitment can be increased through keeping the employees involved in their jobs. It will not only increase the organizational commitment, but will indirectly or directly affect several other outcomes associated with job involvement and commitment. It will increase the OCB (Organizational Citizenship Behavior), creativity, job satisfaction, and employee's in-role performance. Also, it will decrease job stress and the turnover intention of the employees. Human resource managers and organizational development practitioners should focus on the culture, design, and environmental factors which foster the job involvement of the employees. Since there are not many studies in Lebanon that describe the level of involvement and commitment of employees of public sector, the Lebanese government can apply the findings to regulate its human resource practices. The findings of the present research regarding the relation between job involvement and organizational commitment show that there is a positive relation between employee job involvement and employee organizational commitment. If the objective of the organization is to develop stable productive employees, then extra effort is needed to understand the factors that influence the involvement and commitment of the employees.

Future research should look into the different mediators and moderators involved in job involvement and the resultant relationship. Job involvement study is recommended with other outcomes such as creativity, burnout, turnover intention, psychological contract breach, and cynicism. Therefore, a longitudinal study is recommended to test the findings of this study in a different context."

Employees are not committed to their organization when they do not feel a good level of involvement in their jobs. Therefore, the organizational management should take care of

these facts by creating an atmosphere of involvement for its employees which will eventually lead to high commitment.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Wael Zaraket, PhD. Business Administration, Assistant Professor, Faculty of Business and Economics, American University of Science and Technology, Beirut, Lebanon.
wzarakt@aust.edu.lb, zaraketwael@gmail.com