

# ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION – A CAUSE OF CONCERN.

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**Abstract**—Teachers play an important role in educating the future members of the society through their work in educational institutions. The factors influencing their levels of commitment towards their organization must necessarily be the focus of research in higher education. The paper aims at studying the institutional factors influencing organizational commitment of teachers in self-financing colleges affiliated to Bharathiar university, Coimbatore. A sample of 100 teachers was chosen and questionnaire was used to collect data. Inter correlation matrix and Path analysis were used to analyze the data. Professional Autonomy, Feedback, Participation in Decision making, Perceived Organizational support and Collegiality were the institutional factors chosen and it was found that all of them had a strong relationship and influence on the Organizational commitment of teachers. Professional Autonomy , Participation in decision making and Collegiality had a direct effect on Organizational Commitment of teachers in self-financing colleges . Educational institutions should take concern on this issue and try to enhance the organizational commitment of teachers to avoid turnovers, absenteeism and improve Organization Citizenship behavior.

**Keywords** :Organizational commitment (OC) , Professional Autonomy, Perceived organizational support, Organization Citizenship behavior.

## I.INTRODUCTION:

Over the past three decades, impressive research efforts have been devoted to understand the antecedents of organizational commitment. Teaching is the noblest profession and hence, their well being and their commitment towards their organization is gaining significance recently, especially in higher educations. India's higher education system is the third largest in the world, next to the United States and China. Indian higher education system has expanded at a fast pace by adding nearly 20,000 colleges and more than 8 million students in a decade from 2000-01 to 2010-11. As of 2011, India has 42 central universities, 275 state universities, 130 deemed universities, 90 private universities, 5 institutions established and functioning under the State Act, and 33 Institutes of National Importance.

While there is clear and categorical recognition of the vital role that the teachers in colleges have to play in preparing future pillars of the nation, in terms of professional competencies and commitments on

their part, surprisingly, in the total enterprise of teachers, the most neglected group is the teachers themselves.

### *Organizational commitment:*

Organizational commitment refers to “The relative strength of an individual’s identification with and involvement in a particular Organization. “(MowdayEtal 1979, P. 226.)Organisational Commitment (OC) represent the attachments that individuals form to their employing organisation . To measure OC, Porter et al.(1974) developed an instrument, the Organisational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ), which was later refined by Mowday, Steers and Porter (1979). Organization commitment refers to the employee’s emotional attachment to, identification with, and involvement in the organization. It is generally considered as three dimensional construct comprising of affective commitment, continuance commitment and normative commitment (Boehman, 2006; Canipe, 2006; Turner and Chelladurai, 2005; Greenberg, 2005; Allen and Meyer, 1996; Karrasch, 2003). It is believed that affectively committed employees continue working with great devotion on voluntary basis, continuance \ commitment ensures that employees retain their organizational membership, however those who are normally committed usually feel obligation on their part to stay in the organization. While defining organizational commitment, Porter et al., (1974) defined it as “strong belief in and acceptance of the organizational goals and values, willingness to exert considerable effort on behalf of the organization, and a definite desire to maintain organizational membership”.

OC has been identified as important in its effect on individual’ s performance and behaviour. OC is also an important issue from both the conceptual and organisational perspectives since it may be used to predict employees’ absenteeism, performance, turnover and other behaviours including dysfunctional behaviour (Camilleri, 2002).

Jans (1989) has defined it as the extent that an employee accepts, internalizes, and perceives one’s role based on organizational values and goals. Employees becomes committed to their organization when (a) they own and have conviction regarding the mission and values of the their organizations (b) they are mutually ready to exert their dedicated efforts in the achievement their organizational goals, and (c) they have intense desire to continue serving in their organizations (Robbins & Coulter, 2003; Jans, 1989; Hunt & Morgan, 1994; Mowday, Steers, & Porter, 1982). According to Buchanan (1974); commitment is “a partisan or affective attachment to the aims and

values of an organization, to one's role in relation with these aims and values and to an organization for its own sake".

In this context, university teacher organizational commitment can be viewed as:

- (1) His or her firm belief in and acceptance of the university goals and values;
- (2) Readiness to exert dedicated efforts on behalf of university; and
- (3) Strong desire to sustain his or her university membership.

Employees who are committed to their organizations may easily accept and adhere to the organizational objectives and goals (Valentine et al., 2002). Individuals may become committed to an organization for many reasons: a person may stay with an organization because the organization's values, mission, and goals align with his/her own; another person may stay with the same organization because leaving may impact his/her prestige, benefits, or social networks; yet another may be committed to the organization due to a sense of obligation. Each of these three commitments – affective, continuance, and normative – are independent types of commitment experienced at different levels by all individuals of an organization (Meyer & Allen, 1997).

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW:

Commitment has received a great deal of attention in business and organizational studies for important reasons (Kacmar, Carlson, & Brymer, 1999; Keller, 1997). The outcomes of commitment are fairly clear. Committed people are more likely to remain with the organization, work toward organizational goals, and invest more effort in their job (Mayer & Schoorman, 1992; Yousef, 2000). Commitment is significantly and negatively associated with turnover and, to a lesser extent, other withdrawal behaviors such as decreased performance and increased absenteeism (Ostroff, 1997). Relatively little research, however, has addressed commitment among teachers (e.g., Billingsley & Cross, 1992; Grady, 1989). Moreover, although recently there have been attempts to trace the diverse construct of commitment (Firestone & Rosenblum, 1988), most research on teachers' commitment examined it as a generic construct (e.g., Niehoff, 1997; Reames & Spencer, 1998).

The teacher commitment literature can be distilled for generalizations and assumptions about the ways that teachers define, describe and characterise commitment. The current accepted conceptualizations of teacher commitment can be directly linked back to the research done in the 1970's into organizational commitment by Kanter (1974) and Mowday, Steers and Porter (1979). Teachers are thought to have commitments to the social context in which they work, or to what Kanter (1974) describes as the 'social system'. However, the overarching assumption is that teacher commitment is not one dimensional, but has many layers and dimensions (Day, 2000, 2004; Nias 1981, 1996; Tyree, 1996).

### OC AND PERCEIVED ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORT:

Supportive leader behaviors and a generally facilitative organizational climate may be subsumed under a variable entitled "Perceived Organizational Support." Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchison, and Sowa (1986) demonstrated that individuals tend to "form global beliefs concerning the extent to which the organization values their contributions and cares about their well-being" (p.

504). Employees are frequently sensitive to relevant environmental and organizational constraints that might limit the ability to provide them with desired rewards (Eisenberger, Cummings, Armeli, & Lynch, 1997). Employees who experience a strong level of POS theoretically feel the need to reciprocate favorable organizational treatment with attitudes and behaviors that in turn benefit the organization (Eisenberger et al., 1986). In support of this social exchange perspective, research has revealed that POS is positively related to job attendance and measures of job performance (Eisenberger et al., 1986; Eisenberger, Fasolo, & Davis-LaMastro, 1990), the tendency to help coworkers (Shore & Wayne, 1993), the tendency to offer constructive suggestions for organizational improvement, and affective organizational commitment (Eisenberger et al., 1990).

### OC AND PARTICIPATION IN DECISION MAKING:

For a person who is organizationally committed, work is a vital part of life. This means that both the work itself and the co-workers are very meaningful to the employee, in addition to the importance s/he attaches to the organization as a whole. Active participation in decision-making increases involvement and OC, which result in a higher level of acceptance and satisfaction. Evers (1990) suggested that teachers' successful participation in decision-making could be explained by the feeling of ownership that comes from initiating ideas rather than responding to others' proposals. Gaziel and Weiss (1990) claimed that teachers' participation, based on establishing a strong voice in decisions and policies, was a characteristic of "professional orientation", and fostered better working relations among staff members. With regard to self-efficacy, studies have shown that teachers with a greater sense of efficacy are more enthusiastic about teaching (Guskey, 1984), report a higher level of commitment to teaching (Coladarci, 1992; Evans & Tribble, 1986), and are more likely to remain in organization (Glickman & Tamashiro, 1982).

### OC AND FEEDBACK:

An applied managerial perspective might suggest that a supervisor use as much performance feedback as possible, and indeed, the degree to which feedback enhances performance has been amply documented (Annett, 1969; Nadler, 1979). It is desirable to study organizational commitment as a moderator of the feedback and performance relationship among professionals because commitment attitudes are likely to affect perceptions and reactions to different types of role related feedback. Teachers feel more responsible for their actions which in turn influences their commitment (Salancik, 1977). For such persons, task feedback is likely to be perceived as important due to expectations derived from professional training that performance standards should be defined and monitored by the individual professional. Relatedly, positive supervisory feedback would likely be welcome by the organizationally committed as an indication of an absence of conflict between professional norms and organizational practices.

### OC AND PROFESSIONAL AUTONOMY:

The extent to which the profession provides substantial freedom, independence and discretion to carry out the tasks is Professional Autonomy (Gegas and Schwalbe 1983; Hackman and Oldham 1980; Rosenholtz and Simpson, 1990). Those high in organizational commitment desire autonomy and resent organizational intervention (Sorenson & Sorenson, 1974). The autonomous flexibility to pursue these core tasks is valued part of any professional work. Mathew and

Zajac found a positive correlation between Autonomy and organizational commitment. (Hackman and Lawler; 1971;)

#### OC AND COLLEGIALITY

Professionalism is characterized by high degree of collegiality which enables them to cope up with uncertainties encountered in their work (Blau & Scott 1962;). Stronger collegial ties and support from professional coworkers enhance the organizational commitment of workers; Friedson 1984; Jean E Wallace 1985; Nelson & Trubek 1992; Derber 1983). The ease at which an employee feels at his workplace with his colleagues enhances his commitment towards the organization as he spends much of his time in the workplace.

#### III. RATIONALE OF THE PROBLEM:

There is a dearth of committed teachers in higher education which is an important area to be addressed. Rate of attrition of Quality teachers is increasing and hence the institution as well as the student community suffers a lot. Lower commitment creates the dilemmas that both affect badly the effectiveness of college and cause teachers to be less successful in their organizational performance or to leave the organization. The less committed teachers may both create difficulties and cause the deviations in respect of the educational aims of the institution, for example in the classroom, the teachers may struggle to direct the students to behave in accordance with different aims separated from the aims of the institution. Those types of negative attitudes may be recognized and prevented at the proper time, if there is a real understanding of their commitment towards their organization.

Teachers today, leave their institutions as well as professions often due to some reasons. Teachers' commitment in higher education are influenced by various institutional factors like Autonomy, Decision making, collegiality, feedback, job satisfaction, Stress etc. Serious negative consequences like turnover, turn over intentions, absenteeism can be prevented if the teachers are committed to their institutions. Positive consequences like Organizational Citizenship behavior, job performance and creativity in teaching can also be enhanced in committed teachers. Based on the review of literature, six institutional variables are identified to have an impact on the professional commitment of teachers in higher education. They are Professional Autonomy, Feedback, Participation in Decision making, Perceived Organizational support and Collegiality.

#### IV. OBJECTIVES:

1. To study the institutional factors affecting the organizational commitment of teachers.
2. To analyze the relationship between the factors and the organizational commitment of teachers.
3. To suggest some measures to the institutions to enhance the commitment of the teachers.

#### HYPOTHESIS:

Ho: There is no significant relationship between Professional Autonomy and organizational Commitment of teachers in higher education.

Ho: There is no significant relationship between Feedback and organizational Commitment of teachers in higher education.

Ho: There is no significant relationship between Participation in Decision making and organizational Commitment of teachers in higher education.

Ho: There is no significant relationship between Perceived Organizational support and organizational Commitment of teachers in higher education.

Ho: There is no significant relationship between Collegiality and organizational Commitment of teachers in higher education.

#### V. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

The study was conducted in Arts and science colleges affiliated to Bharathiar University, Coimbatore. In this study, 100 teachers working in Self-financing colleges affiliated to Bharathiar University were chosen as samples. Selected colleges were chosen in Coimbatore district for the study and data collection was done with the help of a questionnaire. Simple random sampling was used to collect the data.

#### SAMPLE SIZE:

It refers to the number of items to be selected from the universe to constitute as a sample. The sample size of the study was 100 and it was a descriptive study.

#### TOOLS USED:

Organizational commitment scale of Meyer and Allen (1990) was used to collect data on OC. Questions on Collegiality were framed on the basis of the instrument adapted from Professional teacher behavior: OCI by Hoy et al (2001). Questions on Feedback were adapted from Job Characteristics Inventory by Sims et al (1976). Questions on Participation in decision making and Professional autonomy were taken from (Rosenholtz 1989), and (Eisenberger et al 1986)'s scale was used to collect data on Perceived Organizational Support.

Correlation matrix was used to find the relationship between the institutional factors and the relationship of those factors with OC. Path analysis was done to find the direct and indirect effect of the institutional variables on OC.

#### VI. ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION:

Institutional variables and Organizational commitment:

**TABLE No 1**  
**INTER - CORRELATION MATRIX**

\*\*-.Significant at 1 % level

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS:

It is seen from the above table that the inter-correlation among all the explanatory variables X1, X2, X3, X4 and X5 is highly significant and positive. Further it is also seen that all these explanatory variables are highly, significantly and positively

	Prof autonomy	Feedback	Decision	Org support	Collegiality	Org commitment
Prof Autonomy-X1	1.00					
Feedback-X2	0.23	1.00				
Decision making-X3	0.24	0.47	1.00			
Org support-X4	0.53	0.19	0.48	1.00		
Collegiality-X5	0.56	0.29	0.47	0.82	1.00	
Org commit-Y	0.57**	0.20**	0.37**	0.46**	0.60**	1.00

correlated with the dependent variable Y ( Organizational Commitment).

PATH COEFFICIENT ANALYSIS

The direct effect of each of the explanatory variables on the dependent variable and the indirect effect of each explanatory variable on the dependent variable through other explanatory variables are furnished in the Table No 2.

TABLE 2  
DIRECT & INDIRECT EFFECT OF EXPLANATORY VARIABLES ON Y-ORGANISATIONAL COMMITMENT

	Prof autonomy	Feedback	Decision	Org support	Collegiality	Org commitment
Profes. autonomy-X1	<b>0.38</b>	-0.02	<b>0.05</b>	-0.13	<b>0.30</b>	0.57
Feedback-X2	0.09	-0.09	0.09	-0.05	0.16	0.20
Decision-X3	<b>0.09</b>	-0.04	<b>0.19</b>	-0.12	<b>0.25</b>	0.37
Org support-X4	0.20	-0.02	0.09	-0.25	0.43	0.46
Collegiality-X5	<b>0.21</b>	-0.03	<b>0.09</b>	-0.20	<b>0.53</b>	0.60

It is seen from the above table that among the five explanatory variables, three explanatory variables namely X1-prof autonomy, X3-decision making and X5-collegiality have higher positive direct effect on the dependent variable Y-Organizational commitment. The variable X1 also has higher positive indirect effect on Y through X3 and X5. Similarly the variable X3 also has positive indirect effect on the dependent variable through X1 and X5. The variable X5 also had positive indirect effect on Y through X1 and X. Hence the three explanatory variables X1-prof autonomy, X3-decision making and X5-collegiality are substantially important contributing variables to Y-Organizational commitment.

1. Professional Autonomy has a strong positive relationship with Organizational Commitment. It has a high positive direct effect on OC.

2. Participation in decision making has a strong positive relationship with Organizational Commitment. It has a high positive direct effect on OC.

3. Collegiality has strong positive relationship with Organizational Commitment. It has a high positive direct effect on OC.

4. Feedback has strong positive relationship with Organizational Commitment. It has an indirect effect on the dependent variable OC.

5. Participation in decision making has strong positive relationship with Organizational Commitment. It has an indirect effect on the dependent variable OC.

6. Perceived Organizational support has strong positive relationship with Organizational Commitment. It has an indirect effect on the dependent variable OC.

The institutional factors in self-financing colleges have a strong impact and relationship with the organizational commitment of teachers in higher education. Professional autonomy and collegiality influences organizational commitment directly. Hence higher education institutions should realize the importance of organizational commitment of teachers and concentrate in improving the working conditions of teachers that will enhance their commitment. The outcomes of organizational commitment like turnover and absenteeism can be minimized if the institutional factors are healthy so that quality teachers can be retained in educational institutions.

CONCLUSION:

From the study, it clear that the institutional factors namely Professional Autonomy, Feedback, Participation in Decision making, Perceived Organizational support and Collegiality have a positive relationship on the organizational commitment. Teachers in higher education will be committed to their organization if these institutional variables are good. The present study focused on the institutional factors. Researches can be carried out to study the other variables that affect organizational commitment and the scope of research can be extended to other universities and colleges in the state.

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