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Antecedents of Organizational Commitment and Retention: The Mediating Role of Organizational Commitment Over Employees of Ceramic Sanitary Ware Factories in India

S. Umamaheswari¹

¹Research Scholar, school of management studies, Sathyabama University, Chennai, India. Email: umaaishwarya99@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Extant literature predicts that organization commitment is an important determinant of employee's retention and its most related antecedents are work environment, work life balance and career development. This study examines the impact of above antecedents over organization commitment and also verifies the influence of organization commitment on retention and its mediating role. Key findings from the data collected from employees of five ceramic sanitary ware factories located at different places in India reveal that organization commitment is enhanced by all the proposed factors and it influences retention. In addition to this it plays a major role in partially mediating the relationship of work environment and work life balance on retention and fully mediates the association between career development and retention. Implications to organization and suggestions for future research are discussed.

Keywords: Work Environment; Work Life Balance; Career development; Organization Commitment; Employee Retention.

1. INTRODUCTION

The migration of skilled workforce (Docquier and Rapoport, 2009) and high turnover rate of 26% (Hay group 2013) creates turbulence in production and affects Indian manufacturing sector alarmingly placing India in the eye of turnover storm (Mohinish Sinha, 2013) and slow down the success of 'make in India' scheme as well as Indian vision to become a developed nation in 2020. The best possible solution to prevent employee's attrition is to create suitable internal conditions which motivates employees to stick to their organization instead of hoping for lack of opportunities outside. (Biswas, 2013). Several studies supports that organization commitment (OC) is significantly related to retention (Newman et. al., 2011; Zopiatis et.

al., 2014; Kang et. al., 2015), mediates the relationship between most of the antecedents of organization commitment and retention (Juhdi, 2013; Umamaheswari and Jayasree Krishnan, 2016; Nawaz and Pangil, 2016) and leads to better performance of employees (Arthur 1994; Neiningen et. al., 2010). Hence it would be argued that organization commitment plays a vital role and if employee's organization commitment level is highly significant, probability of their continuation will be high. Further Indian employees may exhibit lesser commitment towards their organization due to the prevalence of fluctuations in the working condition and their desire towards greener pastures. Hence it is essential to give more emphasis to the factors that induces commitment (Mohinish Sinha, 2013) and researches focus their attention to find out all possible ways to motivate employee's attachment towards their working place.

The researcher Rousseau, (1998) suggested two specific ways to increase employee's commitment they are (a) increasing the perception of organizational membership (b) demonstrating the employees that they are valued by organization. Literally hundreds of studies were conducted identifying the factors positively related to OC. The current human resource practices found that work environment (WE), Work life balance (WLB) and Career development (CD) are the factors most relevant to increase commitment towards organization since these factors demonstrate either organizational care and support for employees or a sense of belonging and a positive feeling of identification. This research provides supports to the fast growing, ceramic sanitary ware factories of turnover prone Indian environment, by examining the impact of WE WLB and CD, over employee's OC as well as to predict the effect of OC on retention. Further it is one of the pioneer studies in ceramic sector, to examine the mediating role of organization commitment in the relationship between antecedents of employee's commitment and retention.

1.1. Research Motivation

Ceramic is a diverse industry and contains several category of products including sanitary ware. The Indian ceramic industry is positioned at 8th in the world and it has a 2.5% share in the global output. 5.50 lakh people are employed in this industry and it provides direct employment to 50000. The ceramic sanitary ware market estimated to be valued around 4.27 billion USD in 2014 is projected to reach 46 billion USD in 2019 (Ceramic industry in India; Ceramic Sanitary Ware Market by Product, 2015). Also developing nation's growing population, rising standard of living and 'Swatch Bharth' scheme of government of India has increased the requirements of sanitary ware products, thereby enhancing the need of work force. In addition, the expected investment of \$ 1trillion for the development of infrastructure in the forthcoming years would create a large demand for labour – totally 14% of employment in the organized sector which likely to increase turnover in these activities (Mohinish Sinha, 2013). Moreover the plight of skilled category of work force in search of greener pastures (Docquier and Rapoport, 2009) also makes the situation worse and there is an immediate need to ascertain the factors which would prevent the turnover to the maximum extent in the ceramic sanitary ware industry.

2. LITERATURE

2.1. Work Environment

The term work environment refers to atmosphere prevailing in the work place of the employees. The importance of creating a motivating environment is felt by most of the manufacturing organizations to help

employees fully expose their capabilities (Shalley et. al., 2000). Work environment which allows interactive communication between and among employees (Reed, 2014). Innovative and supportive organization sub culture (Iok et. al., 2005) free from verbal abuses from co workers (Budin et. al., 2013) leads to employee's perception that organization signals their willing to have cordial relationship with employees and this increases their attachment towards organization. Hence the proposed hypothesis is

H1: Work environment will be positively related to OC

2.2. Work Life Balance

Employees satisfaction with the provision of work life benefits is positively associated with OC (Caillier, 2013), further perception of a family supportive environment is related to work to family enrichment and is also related to employee's commitment (Wayne et. al., 2013). Previous studies revealed that provision of work life benefits including flexible policies are positively related to employee's commitment (Dockel 2003; Kim 2014; Umamaheswari and Jayasree Krishnan, 2016). Provision of employee friendly work schedules and policies by the organization makes them to feel that the organization supports them and it ultimately increases the trust towards organization. Hence the hypothesis is proposed

H2: Work life balance will be positively related to organization commitment.

2.3. Career Development

When opportunities for skill development are readily available in organization, employees will perceive that the organization is committed to their personal development; such positive perception improves their commitment towards their organization. Opportunities for employees to develop their skills and career in the organization predicts high organization commitment (Sturges et. al., 2002) Even in the case of over qualified job candidates, career development opportunities enhances organization commitment besides reduction of turn over intentions (Sikora et. al., 2016). Numerous researches supported the availability of opportunities to grow in the career are important for developing organization commitment of employees. (Dockel 2003; Van Dyk and Coetzee, 2012; Nouri and Parker 2013; Moon and Choi, 2016). From the above literature it is ascertained that CD is an important variable related to organization commitment. Therefore the proposed hypothesis is

H3: Career development will be positively related to organization commitment.

2.4. Organization Commitment and Retention

More attention is being given to OC of employees due to its capacity in the production of desirable outcome (Haldar and Pareek 2009). Employees decision to stay in the company is influenced by their organizational commitment (Igbaia et. al., 1994). As per Arthur, (1994) when organization seek to foster a philosophy of commitment employee's likelihood of seeking other jobs lowered and organization commitment had negative impact of turnover intention (Rubel and Kee, 2015). Numerous studies confirmed that commitment to organization is positively related to retention (Newman et. al., 2011; Zopiatis et. al., 2014; Kang et. al., 2015). The above literature reveals that the most important factor for employee retention is organization commitment and the following hypothesis is proposed.

H4: OC will be positively related to retention.

2.5. Mediating Role by Organization Commitment

Several studies were conducted to explore simultaneous effects on retention of employees by various factors and OC. Several studies have found that OC mediates the relationship between antecedents of OC with employee retention. (Juhdi, 2013 Umamaheswari and Jayasree Krishnan,2016, Nawaz and Pangil,2016) Given that proposed factors are related to OC and OC related to retention, it is possible that OC mediates the relationship between proposed factors and retention. Hence the last hypothesis is as follows.

H₅: The relationship between proposed factors and retention will be mediated by organization commitment.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Sample and Procedures

The participants of the survey were employees of ceramic sanitary ware factories in India. Given the difficulty to obtain permission to distribute questionnaire from authorities, the researcher managed to distribute to five ceramic sanitary ware factories, located in different places, each of them having more than 150 employees after giving assurance of anonymity. Employees of production, marketing, finance and HR were utilised for this survey. Each factory was provided 120-130 questionnaire forms with a brief note indicating the purpose of the research. The distribution and collection of forms were conducted by the researcher with the help of few HR department staffs. Totally 550 questionnaire were distributed to employees and 416 usable questionnaire were received back representing a response rate of 75%, the selection of the respondents was based on the simple random sampling. Around 81% of the respondents were of 25-45 age group and 73% of them possess post graduate and professional qualification while 57% of the respondents falls under 5-15 years of experience. Regarding designation, middle level managers were dominating in the industry and majority of them belong to production department.

Work environment was measured utilizing 5 items adopted from (Chew, 2004). The example items are “overall this organization is a harmonious place to work” and “workers and management get along in this organization”. The reliability coefficient (α) for the items is 0.717 which is above the acceptance level of 0.700 (Nunnally and Bernstein,1994) and provides support to the items.

Work life balance was measured utilizing 5 items adopted from (Atkinson, 2011) and Olafsdottir (2008). This factor’s reliability coefficient ($\alpha = 0,766$) exhibits good level of support to the items adopted. Example items are “I am satisfied with the way company policies are put in to practice” and “This organization supports and values the integration of employee’s work and family lives”.

Career development was measured using 7 items adopted from Dockel, (2003) and chew,(2004). The reliability coefficient (α) of the items is 0.783 which is above the acceptance level of 0.700 and provides support to the items. Example items are “There are enough career opportunities for me in this organization” and “An employee’s career development is important to this organization”

Organization commitment items were adopted from (Mowday et. al., 1979) that consist of 9 items. The reliability coefficient for the items ($\alpha = 0.837$) gives good level of support to the items. The examples items are “for me this is the best of all possible organizations for which to work” and “I find that my values and the organization’s values are very similar”.

Finally employee retention was measured using 10 items adopted from Njoroge, (2007) and Wang, (2012). The reliability coefficient for the items is 0.902 gives good level of support to the items. The examples items are “ I like the way my firm does the business and what it stands for” and “Enjoying my job”. Respondents are requested to fill the questionnaire on the likert –scale which ranges from 1-5, 1 = strongly disagree and 5 = strongly agree. The collected data have been analysed using Statistical package for the social sciences (SPSS). All the items were subjected to an assessment of content validity as per the procedure described by Hinkin,(1998). An item by item based correlation matrix was calculated for the data and the principle component analysis was made. According to general rule factor loadings more than .40 on a factor of the variables are considered reasonable in defining that factor and the factor loadings of all the items were above 0.40 with no major cross loadings. The concern of this study is common method, to assess whether single factor represents majority of variance, Harmen’s one factor test was performed (Podsakoff et. al., 2003). We used EFA (exploratory factor analysis) to verify whether single factor represents the majority of variance. The five variables (WE, WLB, CD, OC and employee retention) consisting of 36 items rated by the participants were subjected to unroated factor solution and found that the majority of the variance is not represented by a single factor. Common method variance cannot be ruled out by conducting Harmen’s one factor test but the results suggest that common method variance is not a major concern and do not affect the interpretation of the results (Ertürk, 2014).

4. RESULTS

Table 1 represents mean, Standard deviation, Cronbach’s alpha and correlation matrix of the proposed factors. The alpha co-efficient varies from 0.717 to 0.902 concurs with minimum acceptable value of 0.700 (Nunnally and Bernstein, 1994) there exists correlation among all the variables and ranges from 0.574 to 0.771. Further all the proposed factors are significantly related to OC and retention.

Table 1
Mean, Standard deviation and Cronbach’s alpha & correlation of proposed factors

<i>Proposed Factors</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Cronbach’s alpha</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>
1. Work environment	21.73	0.717	1.984	1				
2. Work life balance	21.45	0.766	2.097	0.599**	1			
3. Career development	30.16	0.783	2.674	0.771**	0.755**	1		
4. Organization commitment	38.67	0.837	3.609	0.703**	0.700**	0.747**	1	
5. Employee retention	41.80	0.902	4.482	0.574**	0.602**	0.618**	0.643**	1

***p* < 0.01 SD - standard deviation

Table 2
Multilinear regression analysis of organization commitment on proposed factors [n = 416]

<i>Proposed Factors</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>Standardized Beta</i>	<i>R</i>	<i>Adjusted R²</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>F</i>
Work environment	0.000**	0.301	.799	.635	6.458	242.046**
Work life balance	0.000**	0.302			6.689	
Career development	0.000**	0.288			5.064	

***p* < 0.01

To determine the relationship between proposed factors and OC, all the factors regressed simultaneously and the results are tabulated in Table 2. As shown in Table 2, the multiple correlation coefficient ($R = 0.799$). Indicates strong and positive relationship between dependent and three independent variables. Moreover the significant amount of variance in OC ($R^2 = 0.635$, $p = 0.000$) by the proposed factors reveals that all the three factors are significant predictors of OC and provides support to the hypothesis H_1 , H_2 and H_3 . The strongest predictor is WLB ($\beta = 0.302$) and the weakest is CD ($\beta = 0.288$).

Table 3
Regression Analysis of OC on Employee Retention [$n = 416$]

<i>Proposed Factor</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>Standardized Beta</i>	<i>R</i>	<i>Adjusted R²</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>F</i>
Organization Commitment	0.000**	0.643	0.643	0.411	17.062	291.126**

** $p < 0.01$

The regression analysis in Table 3 shows that OC had significant variance ($R^2 = 0.411$, $p = .000$) in retention and positively related with it, hence provides support to the hypothesis H_4 .

Table 4
Summary of hierarchical multiple regression analysis of employee retention on proposed factors [$n = 416$]

<i>Model No</i>	<i>Proposed Factors</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>Standardized Beta</i>	<i>R</i>	<i>Adjusted R²</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>F</i>
A	Work Environment	0.000**	0.228	.668	.442	3.957	110.463**
	Work life balance	0.000**	0.307			5.481	
	Career development	0.003**	0.211			3.000	
B	Work Environment	0.020**	0.136	.692	.474	2.326	94.576**
	Work life balance	0.000**	0.215			3.755	
	Career development	0.080	0.123			1.754	
	Organization commitment	0.000**	0.304			5.143	

** $p < 0.01$

To determine the mediating effect of OC on the relationship between proposed factors and employee retention, hierarchical regression analysis was performed and displayed in Table 4. According to (Baron and Kenny, 1986), to establish mediation, the following conditions must hold: (1) The independent variables (proposed factors) must be related to the mediator (OC), (2) The mediator (OC) must be related to dependent variable (employee retention), (3) Both independent variables (proposed factors) and mediator (OC) must be correlated with dependent variable (employee retention). If the significant relationship between independent variables (proposed variables) and dependent variable is reduced to non-significant after introducing mediator (OC), then it is considered full mediation. However if the effect size of the independent variable is reduced after inclusion of mediator then it is considered to be partial mediation. From Table 4, it is found that significant relationship derived for the two factors WE, WLB (model A) is not changed to non-significant but the effect size is reduced ($WE = p = 0.000$, $\beta = 0.136$ and $WLB = p = 0.000$, $\beta = 0.215$) after inclusion of mediator variable OC (model B) indicates that OC has partial mediation effects, while significant relationship of CD is changed to non-significant reveals full mediation.

Additionally (Sobel, 1982) tests were carried out to examine the mediating effect of OC on the relationship between the three factors WE WLB and CD with employee retention. The results support the mediation. (WE, $Z = 8.124, p < 0.01$ WLB $Z = 7.857, p < 0.01$, CD $Z = 8.911, p < 0.01$). To reinforce the evidence of mediating effect of OC, Aroian test (Aroian, 1947) is also conducted and this also supports the mediation (WE, $Z = 8.115, p < 0.01$ WLB $Z = 7.849, p < 0.01$ CD $Z = 8.899, p < 0.01$). Hence all the statistical tests supported mediating role of OC between the three factors and retention Further significant effect of OC on employee retention is inferred ($\beta = 0.304, p = 0.000$) and provides support to the hypothesis H₅.

5. DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study is to check the impact of WE and WLB and CD over OC among employees of ceramic sanitary ware factories in India as well as to verify the effects of OC on retention. Further it also investigates whether organization commitment mediates the effects of above factors on retention.

The result of the study indicates that proposed factors explained 79.9% of variance in OC. This signifies that all the proposed factors are influential in enhancing OC, and need to be given top priority. This variance 79.9% also indicates that OC is very essential, as commitment leads to better performance of employees (Neininger, 2010; Arthur, 1994)

The findings that indicates WLB as the strongest predictor ($\beta = 0.302$) of OC coincide with the earlier findings (Dockel 2003; Kim 2014; Umamaheswari and Jayasree Krishnan, 2016) Employees feel organization's supportive WLB culture and friendly policies like flexible work timings are much needful for their successful handing of their life and to reduce work family conflicts. Workers who enjoy such facilities feel gratified and it will be reflected in terms of OC. This highlights importance organizational support towards WLB to achieve OC.

The next predominant factor positively related to OC is WE ($\beta = 0.301$) and this coincides with previous findings of (Vanaki and Vagharseyyedin, 2009; Reed, 2014). Employees are spending more time next to their residence. More hygienic, properly ventilated work space designs facilitate them to unfold their full potential. Availability of discretion independence, participation in decision making, information sharing, reasonable work tasks, and sufficient work space could be perceived by employee's that organization supports them. More over these are indicators to employees to know how far they are valued by the organization as an individual which is likely to increase the attachment towards organization. This highlights the importance of organizational support for work environment to achieve OC.

The findings that indicates CD ($\beta = 0.288$) also the strong predictor of OC coincides with earlier findings of (Dockel, 2003; Nour and Parker, 2013; Moon and Choi, 2016). It is obvious that every employee wants improvement in his career and availability of opportunities for CD would be viewed by employees that organization values them and cares personal development. Consequently this will reflect in their attachment towards organization. This highlights that organizational support for CD is highly important for enhancing OC. In summary HR managers need to extent their support to the factors CD WE, WLB to improve employees commitment towards the organization.

Secondly this analysis provides evidence that OC is positively related to employee's retention and this research result coincides with earlier findings (Newman et. al., 2011; Zopiatis et. al., 2014; Kang et. al., 2015). This indicates the need to increase employee's OC for successful retention. On the other hand

the possibilities of searching employment elsewhere will be more for lesser committed employees and this research provides guidelines to the HR managers struggling in the turn over prone Indian environment.

Thirdly Multi linear regression outcomes indicated that WE, WLB CD are significantly related to employee's retention and WLB emerged as the strongest predictor coincides with previous findings (Boxall, 2003; Umamaheswari and Jayasree Krishnan, 2016). The next variable positively related to retention is WE coincides with previous findings (Guthrie, 2001; Zeytinoglu and Denton 2006). Another variable positively related to retention is CD which coincides with earlier finding (Nour and Parker, 2013; Chan et. al., 2016).

Able employees because of their talent presume themselves that they are pivotal for organization and expect more obligations for their continuation. Further the closer look of the demographic profile, most of the participants (73%) are possessing higher educational qualifications and this also increases their bargaining capacity. Results indicates that organization's employee - friendly work environment, flexible work life policies and reasonable career development opportunities do satisfy the employees, consequently influences retention, and suggests to HR managers to exercise more importance to above factors.

The author believe that this is the first study in ceramic sector to examine the role that OC may play in the relationship between antecedents of employee's OC and retention. The analysis provides evidence that OC plays a major role in partially mediating the relationship of WE and WLB on retention and fully mediates the association between career development and retention. In other way, these factors are getting indirect effects through mediator variable OC.

6. IMPLICATION TO ORGANIZATION

The findings offer some guidelines for HR managers to improve the employees adherence towards their organization. This provides the information about what to do to increase OC which is crucial for better performance and retention. This research indicates that organizational support for WE, WLB and CD which increases OC is essential. Hence managerial team should extend their support to the above factors in order to generate better understanding and relationship with their employees. As success or failure of employee's perception of human resource practices depends on the relationship between organization and employees, managers need to interact with employees at regular intervals and demonstrate them that organization cares their well-being, besides formulating needed strategy giving importance to the above factors. Involvement of all organizational members and assurance to the employees that there will not be any professional repercussion on the usage of such concessions, and clear communication provides optimal efficiency in retention.

6.1. Limitation and Future Study

Like other studies these analyses also have some limitations. One of the primary limitations of this survey methodology is that the results depend upon the assumption that respondent of the organization know about their organization. Requirement and demands of employees differ due to their culture, economy and region. This study was conducted in a particular country and also in a particular sector of manufacturing industry and hence results cannot be generalized. One more limitation is that the present study relied on

single method. Even though Harman's one-factor test (Podsakoff et. al., 2003) is useful in testing for common method variance, data from multiple sources may be gathered in future.

Future research is suggested incorporating the other variables directly linked to OC, for example, variables enhancing the perception of organizational membership like socialism tactics, and emblem of organization may be tried. Further other variables like, job security, succession planning can also be tried, and the effects of these variables over OC may be compared with this study finding. More specific results can be arrived by conducting researches in other manufacturing industries and also in different countries.

7. CONCLUSION

In Conclusion the result of this study highlights the importance of employee's organization commitment at all levels within the organization and the benefits derived by enhancing it. The analysis reveals that OC influences retention and WE, WLB and CD are the most influencing antecedents enhancing commitment of employees towards their organisation. Moreover it plays a major role in partially mediating the relationship of WE and WLB on retention and fully mediates the association between career development and retention.

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