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Impact of Academic Rank on Organizational Commitment

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Abstract

Academic staffs are the backbone of any university. Thus, building Organizational Commitment (OC) among them is a necessity for any university to be effective. The current study investigates the impact of academic rank (i.e., professor, associate professor and assistant professor) on OC (i.e., affective commitment, continuance commitment and normative commitment) for academics staff at Tafila Technical University (TTU). Questionnaires of (100) were sent both via email and on hand out to sample from academic staff at TTU, (65) questionnaires were analyzed to achieve the research objective. The results of the study show that the relationship between academic rank and OC is partially accepted. The professors pointed to high level of continuance commitment to maintain their achievements and benefits, while, assistance professors focused on normative commitment and stay at the university to meet their legal obligations towards the university.

Keywords: Organizational commitment, affective commitment, continuance commitment, normative commitment, Jordanian universities

Introduction

Higher education in Jordan plays a main role in the comprehensive development of the country. It has witnessed a significant expansion of higher education institutions. For example, the number of public universities as a result has reached ten, beside about seventeen private Universities, in addition to about fifty one community colleges (Ministry of Higher Education, 2012).

TTU is the 10th public university in Jordan which was launched in 2005. It is located in Tafila Governorate, 187 KMs south Amman. TTU lies in one of the less developed aeries in Jordan. This, however, means that TTU contributes significantly to the development of such area. Government pushes the public universities to exploit all of their available resources as a means of achieving goals, one resource recently recognized as providing a source of competitive advantage is the human resources (Al-rfou & Trawneh, 2009). Thus, universities put much emphasis on the development of their human resources and

always try to support their OC by offering them all the possible benefits and privileges. In this regard, Humphreys & Hoque (2007) argued that committed academics are the key of the successful of universities TTU has (190) academics: professor (6) associate (47) assistant (60) and master holders (77). The academics staff turnover about (21%) for the period from 2005 to 2012 with (150) left the university during that period. This, however, makes the topic of OC for academics of TTU questionable.

Against this background, this study primarily focuses on the investigation of the impact of academic rank (i.e., professor, associate professor and assistant professor) on OC (i.e., affective commitment, continuance commitment and normative commitment) of the academics staff at TTU.

Theoretical development and hypotheses formulation

OC is a vital topic in organizational behavior. It has been researched in the public, private, and

non-profit sectors. OC defined by Porter et al. (1974) as a strong belief in the acceptance of the organization's goals, a willingness to exert considerable effort on behalf of the organization, and a definite desire to maintain organizational membership.

Meyer and Allen (1991) suggested three types of OC: affective commitment, continuance commitment and normative commitment. A stream of previous research in the field were investigated the different issues of OC in Universities. These, for example, include OC and performance (e.g. Malik *et al.*, 2010; Chughtai & Zafar 2006; Adekola 2012; Daneshfard and Ekvaniyan 2012), effectiveness (e.g. Laschinger 2001; Miller 1978), and style of leadership (e.g. Hashim & Mahmood 2012; Shirbagi 2007). Noordin & Jusof 2008 found that the academic staffs of a local public university in Malaysia has higher level of career identity, low level of career resilient, and slightly high level of career planning. Hashim and Mahmood (2012) mentioned that there is a significant relationship between transformational leadership style and commitment to service quality among academic staff at the Malaysian universities.

Demiray and Curabay (2008) studied OC levels of students who have been studying at Anadolu University Economics, Business Administration and Open Education faculties in the scope of affective, continuance and normative commitment using Meyer and Allen's (1991) model.

Malik *et al.* (2010) determined the impact of teachers' satisfaction with job dimensions on perceived OC in public sector universities of Pakistan and explored to what extent these teachers are committed to their universities and satisfied with different dimensions to their job. The findings of the study indicated that the satisfaction with work-itself, quality of supervision and pay satisfaction had significant positive influence on OC of faculty members. They had high degree of OC and satisfaction with work-itself, supervision, salary, co-workers and opportunities for promotion.

Chughtai and Zafar (2006) investigated the personal characteristics, facets of job

satisfaction and two dimensions of organizational justice as a group were significantly related to OC of teachers. Individually, distributive justice and trust in management were found to be the strongest correlates of commitment. Moreover, commitment was found to be negatively related to turnover intentions and positively related to a self-report measure of job performance.

Adekola (2012) investigated the impact of OC on employees' job satisfaction at Nigerian universities. The results revealed that employees in public universities have greater degree of OC in comparison to private universities. Also, job satisfaction increases or decreases based on increase or decrease in OC. Obtained results were in the line of the hypotheses. In terms of OC, a significant difference was noticed between public and private universities. Against expectation, employees of public universities exhibited higher degree of OC as compared to those of private universities. Most importantly, OC is being proven as the catalyst for enhancing job satisfaction level of employees. Daneshfard and Ekvaniyan (2012) explored the job satisfaction and OC in employees, managers and members of the delegation in Islamic Azad University of Kogiluyeh and Boyer Ahmad province. The results show that faculty's job satisfaction is more than employees, employee's job satisfaction is as same as managers, and OC of all three groups is same. Choong *et al.* (2011) intrinsic motivation and OC of academicians in Malaysian Private Universities. A comparative study between Iranian and Indian institutions conducted by Shirbagi (2007) investigated the relationship between faculty members' OC and leadership frames of chairpersons. The primary objective of the study was to understand how these contribute in making faculty members committed to a university.

However, the above mentioned studies revealed mixed results. The importance of the current study comes from that it, to the best of my knowledge, is the first study to investigate the relationship between academic rank and OC in Jordanian universities.

Accordingly, the following hypotheses were developed:

H_{1a}: There is a significant relationship between professor rank and affective commitment.
H_{1b}: There is a significant relationship between professor rank and continuance commitment.
H_{1c}: There is a significant relationship between professor rank and normative commitment.
H_{2a}: There is a significant relationship between associate professor rank and affective commitment.
H_{2b}: There is a significant relationship between associate professor rank and continuance commitment.
H_{2c}: There is a significant relationship between associate professor rank and normative commitment.

H_{3a}: There is a significant relationship between assistant professor rank and affective commitment.
H_{3b}: There is a significant relationship between assistant professor rank and continuance commitment.
H_{3c}: There is a significant relationship between assistant professor rank and normative commitment.

The proposed research model is depicted in Figure (1) below:

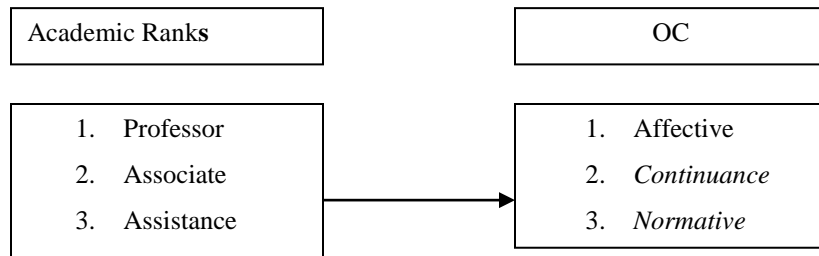


Figure (1): study model

Methodology

Sample selection and data collection

This study was designed to investigate the relationship between independent variable academic rank (i.e., professor, associate professor and assistant professor) on dependent variable OC (i.e. affective commitment, continuance commitment and normative commitment) for academics staff at TTU. The study population consists of academics staff at TTU. 110 questionnaires were distributed. 65 questionnaires were collected yielding a response rate of 59%. The questionnaire was developed based on Meyer and Allen's (1991) model which includes three types of commitment, namely; affective, continuance and normative. SPSS version 17 was used to measure the study variables

Measurement of variables

Based on the Meyer and Allen's (1991) model of commitment OC will be measured using the following three types:

Affective commitment: which measures an academic's emotional attachment to, identification with, and involvement in the university?

Continuance commitment: refers to commitment based on the costs and risk the employees associate with leaving the university.

Normative commitment: reflects pressures on academics to remain with a university resulting from obligations.

Data Analysis

The data collected were processed through the study instrument using the SPSS program, where Simple Correlation Coefficient

(Pearson’s correlation) was used, in order to examine the relation between the study variables and characteristics of the study population.

Table (1) shows that the mean of an affective commitment is 2.6. This means that the academics at TTU do not have a tendency to stay at the university on the basis of emotional, and they, therefore, think that moving to

another university is more attractive. While they have moderate (3.2) continuance commitment to stay in university to maintain their privileges and gains and avoid the costs of leaving university. Similarly, they have normative commitment to stay at university to meet their legal obligations toward the university .In general; it can be argued that academics at TTU have a critical rate toward OC with an average mean of 2.9. See table (1)

Table 1: Mean scores, standard deviations and coefficient of variation

OC	Mean	S D	CV
Affective	2.6	0.82	0.32
Continuance	3.2	0.78	0.24
Normative	3	0.59	0.20
Rate	2.9	0.73	0.25

Hypotheses Test

1. Testing correlation between professor rank and OC. Hypotheses: H1a, H1b and H1c. The Pearson’s correlation table (2) mentioned that There is a significant relationship ($r = 0.267, p \leq 0.05$) between academic rank of professor and effective commitment. A strong and significant relationship ($r = 0.685, p \leq 0.01$) is found between professor rank and continuance commitment. On the other hand, a positive but insignificant relationship ($r = 0.211, p > 0.05$) is found between professor rank and normative commitment. Accordingly hypotheses H1a, H1b are accepted, while hypothesis H1c rejected. Thus, result reveals that the relationship between professor rank and OC is partially accepted.

2. Testing correlation between associate professor rank and OC. Hypotheses: H2a, H2b and H2c. Table (2) shows insignificant relationship ($r = 0.219, p > 0.05$) between academic rank of associate professor and effective commitment, and also, insignificant relationship ($r = 0.121, p > 0.05$) between associate professor rank and normative

commitment, while, a significant relationship found ($r = 0.355, p \leq 0.05$) between associate professor rank and continuance commitment. Accordingly, hypotheses H2a and H2c are rejected, while, hypothesis H2b is accepted. As a result, the relationship between associate professor rank and OC is partially accepted.

3. The correlation between assistance professor rank and OC. Hypotheses: H3a, H3b and H3c. Table (2) indicate insignificant relationship ($r = 0.213, p > 0.05$) between assistance professor rank and effective commitment, although, a positive and significant relationship between assistance professor rank and continuance commitment ($r = 0.349, p \leq 0.05$), in addition, a strong and positive relationship ($r = 0.686, p \leq 0.01$) between assistance professor rank and normative commitment.

Accordingly hypotheses H3b, H3c are accepted, while, hypothesis H3a is rejected. As a result, the relationship between assistance professor rank and OC is partially accepted.

Table 2: Simple Correlation Coefficient (Pearson’s correlation)Between Variables

OC Dimensions \ Academic Ranks	Professor	Associate	Assistance
Affective commitment	0.267*	0.219	0.213
Continuance commitment	0.685**	0.355*	0.349 *
Normative commitment	0.211	0.121	0.686 * *

* $\alpha = 0.05$, ** $\alpha = 0.01$

Discussion and Results

Based on the findings of the study, OC of academics considered the key of the success of universities and the source of gaining sustainable competitive advantage. The current study investigates the relationship between academic rank, professor, associate professor and assistant professor and OC, affective commitment, continuance commitment and normative commitment for academic staff at TTU. To achieve the research objective, two types of analysis were performed. The study results, in general, show that the relationship between academic ranks and OC is partially accepted. The justification of the partially result is based on that TTU is a new University and it has founded in south of Jordan.

An interesting finding shows that the relationship between assistance professor rank and normative commitment is different from that of other commitment perspectives in that it was found very high .The justification of this result is built on the fact that most of them have a legal obligations toward the university, since they pursued their higher education using university scholarship funds

Other interesting finding shows that the professor rank is also have a high continuance commitment , the rational of this result is that they have many privileges and benefits that they want to maintain on and they want to avoid the costs of leaving university.

Since this study is considered one of the first studies in this field it must be taken as a starting point for researchers to build on. However, universities must have conditions that promote OC for academics to enhance organizational loyalty, increase productivity and achieve competitive advantage.

The current study opens many future chances for further studies. These include for example; the current study may be repeated using non-academic staff in TTU and other universities in Jordan.

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