

The Impact of Emotional Intelligence on Organizational Commitment

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Abstract

This paper theoretically examined the impact of emotional intelligence on organizational commitment. The paper notes that possession of emotional intelligence drives managerial and employee's commitment and influences how organization's members exert individual effort toward organizational wellbeing and accomplishment of organizational goals. The paper posits that possession of emotional intelligence enhances employee's development of deep rooted affection towards the organization, and hence extensively contributes to high organizations capability and resourcefulness. The paper concluded that emotional intelligence promotes employees job satisfaction and organizational committed, and is highly essential to help employees cope with physiological and psychological stress they always go through, as well as to achieve enhanced job performance. The paper also pointed out that emotional intelligence is vital in contributing to firm effectiveness by improving morale of employees. The paper recommends that managements should develop their employee's emotional intelligence skills in order to increase their job satisfaction which promotes organizational commitment. Moreover, emotional self-awareness of the employees should be developed through timely training and other relevant methods so that the employees could effectively control and manage their own feelings and behaviours at all times thereby promoting healthier organizational climates that stimulates commitment of members and increased organizational productivity.

Keywords: *emotional intelligence, organizational commitment, efficiency, performance, productivity.*

INTRODUCTION

High level of fierce competition in today's business arena demand improved efficiency on the part of management to be able to achieve set goals and objectives of their respective business organizations. The achievement of these managerial efficiency and organizational productivity however requires high level employee's commitment to the organization to help drive the goals, vision and objectives of their organizations. One factor that has however driven managerial and employee's commitment and how they exert individual effort toward

organizational wellbeing is the level of emotional intelligence possessed by the individual workers in the organization. Employee's needs for high level emotional intelligence are thus vital as it affect their commitments which contribute greatly to their performances in organizations.

Cooper (1997) note that a well-managed emotion help an employee to perform a loyalty and be commitment to themselves, their groups and their organizations. Today, the understanding of the employee's emotion and commitment in the workplace has gained serious recognition as they act as a precursor in determining an individual's response as well as attitude towards the workplace (Kassim, Bambale and Jakada, 2016). An employee who is not committed can hardly contribute effectively to the organizational objectives. In fact, an uncommitted employee is a threat to the corporate goals of his employing organization. Emotional intelligence is highly needed for employees to be satisfied in their jobs, and consequently become more committed to their organizations (Awang, Hanin and Mohammed, 2010). For employees to perform effectively and be more committed to their organizations, issues relating to the level of their emotional intelligence cannot be brush under the carpet. According to Chermis (2000) a positive relationship exists between emotional intelligence and job performance, and commitment is one factor that drives enhanced performance. Meyer and Salovey (1993) maintain that emotional intelligence is highly important issue in solving variety of individual and social problem. Thus, individuals require a high level of emotional intelligence to excel and succeed in the job. Studies have found that emotional intelligence positively correlate with organizational commitment (Abraham, 2004). Chermis (2001) also asserts that emotional intelligence is vital in contributing to firm effectiveness by enhancing employees' commitment and improving morale of employees.

Emotional intelligence refers to the "ability to monitor one's own and others' feeling, to discriminate among them, and to use this information to guide one's thinking and action" (Salovey and Mayer, 1990). On this ground, Payne (1985) has earlier contended that emotional intelligence is equal to, if not more valuable than, IQ as a vital indicator of an individual's professional and life success. The study of Guleryuz et al (2008) which sought to examine the influence of job satisfaction in relationship to emotional intelligence and organizational commitment of nurses found a positive relationship between emotional intelligence and organizational commitment. Gardner (2003) expressed same opinion when he stated that people who score high in emotional intelligence are always more committed to their companies. Guleryuz *et al.*, contend that a positive relationship between emotional intelligence and organizational commitment is possible when job satisfaction is introduced.

In the study of the relationship of emotional intelligence to organizational commitment of college teachers in Pakistan, Shafiq and Rana (2016) found that a significant relationship exists between college teachers' emotional intelligence and their organizational commitment. Adeyemu (2007) found that emotional intelligence significantly influence organizational commitment. Cobb (2004) contend that a significant relationship exist between emotional intelligence and job satisfaction among teachers. It is thus believed that the high level of emotional intelligence possessed by an individual and his satisfaction on his or her job will lead to high level of organizational commitment. Rashid, Bajwa and Batool (2016) has pointed out that by dealing with one's own and other peoples emotion effectively at workplace, an individual acquire the feeling of satisfaction toward his job, and this lead to commitment and well being.

The importance of emotional intelligence to high level performance and success of individual workers can never be over stated. An employee without high developed emotional intelligence may not be able to appreciate his/her works even when everything has been provided to make his/her job more interesting and satisfying. Kassim *et al.*, (2016) note that emotional intelligence is required in all organization, as it can help employees and other

individuals to cope with the physiological and psychological stress they always go through, so as to be able to motivate them generate job satisfaction, as well as achieve higher job performance. The high emphasis placed on emotional intelligence and organizational commitment, and the reported associated benefits to individual employees and organizations therefore demand that a study be carried out to critically investigate the impact of emotional intelligence on organizational commitment.

To achieve this therefore, this study utilizes a theoretical approach to examine the impact of emotional intelligence on organizational commitment. The concepts of emotional intelligence and organizational commitment were discussed, as well as the benefits of emotional intelligence on organizational commitment. Recommendations were also highlighted.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Concept of Organizational Commitment

The concept of organizational commitment and its outcomes in organizations or workplaces have received great attention from scholars, managers and employees alike. Many scholars have defined it using different terminologies however, the various definitions seems to agree upon some basic principles. According to Don-Baridam (2017) and Raza, Saleem and Qamar (2014), organizational commitment is the “emotional bond or attachment between employees and their organization.” It is also seen as a relative strength of an individual’s identification with and involvement in an organization, and characterized by: a strong belief in and acceptance of the organization’s goal and value, a strong desire to maintain one’s membership of an organization, and a willingness to put in serious effort toward and on behalf of an organization (Stazyk, Pandey and Wright, 2011). Organizational commitment therefore, represents an employee’s desire to remain with the organization, and more of how employees feel toward the organization (Kaplan, Ogut, Kaplan and Aksay, 2012).

According to Chen (2006, P.274) organizational commitment is an effective response of an employee to the whole organization. Cohen (2014) sees organizational commitment as “a bond an employee has with his or her employing organization, and the degree with which he can identify with the organization’s value.” Organizational commitment refers to the psychological bond that connects an employee with the organization. It focuses on employee’s attachment to the employing organization, and represents “mental states that ties an employee to an organization and makes him or her see the organization as a place to be” (Allen and Meyer, 1990; Adeyemo, 2007). Buchanan (1974) posits that organizational commitment predicts work variables such as turnover, employment execution and organizational citizenship conducts.

Organizational commitment constitutes two dominant categories which are an employee’s loyalty towards the organization and an employee’s intention to stay with the organization (Baridam and Nwibere, 2009). Greenberg and Baron (1996) thus define organizational commitment as “the extent to which individuals associate and identify themselves with the organization in which they are working for, and their level of unwillingness to leave the organization”. These levels of willingness to associate and identify with their organization, and the unwillingness to leave the organization can results from the nature of relationship with colleagues, superiors, subordinates, customers or top management. Meyer and Allen (1991) proposed three dimensions of commitment namely: affective commitment, continuance commitment and normative commitment. An understanding of the various dimensions of organizational commitment by managers or supervisors is vital in knowing the factors that will make an employee to remain with the organization, and how the managers will strategize to make its best talents to stay with the organization.

Dimensions of Organizational Commitment

Meyer and Allen (1991, 1997) identified three major dimensions of organizational commitment which has been well-researched and is widely accepted by the academic community. According to Meyer and Allen (1991), these three approaches are affective commitment, continuance commitment and normative commitment. These three dimensions of organizational commitment states that an individual who stay working in their organization because they really wanted to have affective commitment. Those who feel that they should be working have normative commitment, and those that stay working because they need to work have continuance commitment (Meyer and Allen, 1991).

Affective Commitment: This refers to the employee's emotional attachment to, identification with, and involvement in the organization (Allen and Meyer, 1990, P.2). It is the extent to which employees are attached emotionally and are involved with their organizations (Addae, Parboteeah and Velinor, 2008). Affective commitment refers to the positive thoughts and feeling of an employee towards the work for which is formed as a result of combination of personal traits, perceptions and work experience (Mowday, Porter and Streers, 1982). Affective commitment occurs when an employee feels himself as a part of an organization, and feels proud to be a part of the organization. Thus, desires to increase his efforts and contribution toward the organization. According to Greenberg and Baron (1996), affective commitment is the commitment which results from an employee willingness to work for his or her current organization.

Mowday *et al* (1979) posit that affective commitment may be primarily impacted by positive work experience and employee's perceived organizational support. On their own view, Mathieu and Zajac (1990), note that a strong belief in and acceptance of an organization's goals and values, the willingness to put in considerable effort toward an organization, and the strong desire to maintain membership in an organization are what characterize affective commitment. In affective commitment, an employee strongly identifies with the goals of an organization and desires to remain a part of the organization. The antecedents of affective commitment include perceived job characteristics, organizational dependability and perceived participatory management (Baridam and Nwibere, 2009).

Continuance Commitment: According to Allen and Meyer (1990) and Schappe and Dovan (1997), continuance commitment may be affected by perceptions of external consideration such as pension plan and retirement benefits. Continuance commitment is the reason an employee feels that the burden of leaving an organization is heavy and too high. According to Allen and Meyer (1990), continuance commitment occurs when an employee considers the cost of leaving (which he stand to lose if he leaves), and therefore decides to stay. Thus continuance commitment could be seen as the perceived cost associated with leaving an organization. Baridam and Nwibere (2009) describe this perceived cost associated with leaving an organization as the loss of sunken cost, and also note that continuance commitment may compromise "personal sacrifice" associated with leaving, and "limited opportunities" for other employment.

Mathieu and Zajac (1990) opine that continuance commitment may be primarily affected by an individual perception of external considerations or "side bets" provided by organizations such as pension plan and retirement benefits. An individual therefore tend remains with an organization because of a perceived loss of sunken costs. In other words, the individual believes that he or she has invested a great deal of effort/time and therefore has to remain with the organization as leaving may make him loss some benefits he would have gain if he/she chooses to remain with the organization (Baridam and Nwibere, 2009). According to Meyer and Allen (1997), the potential antecedents of continuance commitment are age,

tenure, career satisfaction and intent to leave. Baridam and Nwibere (2009) note that whatsoever employees perceive as sunk cost, resulting from leaving the organization, are the antecedents of continuance commitment.

Normative Commitment: This refers to an employee's feeling of obligation to remain with the organization (based on the employee having internalized the values and goals of the organization). This is the commitment of an employee to an organization resulting from social pressure (Greenberg and Baron 1996). Normative commitment is an obligation to remain with an organization based on the sense of reciprocal obligation between organizations and their employees. Thus it is a commitment based on an individual feeling of obligation towards an organization. According to Inanc and Ozdilek (2015), normative commitment take place when an employee's feels that he or she owes his organization, based on what they have done for him/her, as a result, felt a sense of obligation and responsibility towards the organization. Schappe and Doran (1997) and Allen and Meyer (1996) are of the opinion that normative commitment may arise as a result of social pressure and sense of obligation to an organization. Factors that may influence an individual feeling of obligation towards and organization include individual's familiar and cultural socialization.

Drivers of Employee Commitment

Several factors account for employee's commitment in workplaces. These factors include:

Fairness: Fairness implies the eradication of one's feeling, prejudices and desires to attain an appropriate balance between conflicting interests. The problem with fairness is that it is subjective. Again, perception is reality. To produce a perception of fairness, employers should pay competitive wages, create and administer policies that are unbiased; offer competitive benefits, offer timely, accurate and useful performance appraisals encourage the most qualified employees and employees by providing opportunities for growth. Affording employees the prospect to voice their concerns, play a vital role in ensuring interactional justice. Various research studies (Shapiro, Buttner and Barry, 1994) demonstrated that an unfavourable outcome, such as not receiving a promotion because of a measures, is better received by a receiver when he or she is treated in an interpersonally fair manner such as being given an explanation for a decision. In such instances, although the employee might feel that the decision is not distributive fair, he or she will remain committed to the organization because he or she was treated with respect and fairly.

Trust: In order to nurture commitment, employers must create an environment of trust if employers want to develop and maintain trust, they should do what they say they will do, be consistent, maintain confidences, be a role model of behaviour, encourage employee involvement, allow people to make decision that, affect their work, allow people to make mistake without fear or ridicule, learn from mistakes and not crucify scapegoat explain reasons for major decision and act on employee suggests.

It is interesting to note that research by Mathieu and Zajac (1990) concluded that the link between commitment and performance was largely non-existent and commitment to supervisors was more strongly linked to performance than commitment to organizations. One implication of these results is that human resource professionals concerned with employee performance should focus their efforts on commitment to supervisors rather than commitment to organizations. Supervisors play a crucial role in the perceptions employees form about the organization supportiveness and the extent to which it can be trusted to look after their interests. Baridam and Nwibere (2008) concur with the important role supervisors and managers play in building employee commitment. According to them, high-quality managers are one of the principal factors retaining high-quality employees. Hence, the need for

organizations to ensure that they select, train, evaluate and reward managers for trustworthy behavior, as effective managers inspires loyalty, trust and admiration.

Personal Characteristics: this includes demographic variables such as gender, age, tenure, and education (Mathieu and Zajac; Randall 1990). In regards to gender, Mathieu and Zajac (1990) found that women tend to be more committed to organizations than men, primarily due to the fact that they are offered fewer opportunities for employment. Likewise, research finds age and tenure to positively correlate with organizational commitment (Mowday et al. 1982; Mathieu and Zajac 1990; Allen and Meyer 19995, Harrison and Hubbard 1998). As employees get older, their employment opportunities commonly decrease, thereby motivating them to invest more personal effort into the organization, with the aim of being considered valuable to the firm and thus retain their position (Mowday et al. 1982; Meyer and Allen 1984; Gregersen and Black 1992; Harrison and Hubbard 1998). Conversely, education is found to have a negative relationship with organizational commitment, as employees with higher education have more opportunities for alternative employment and mobility (Mowday et al; 1982; Mathieu and Zajac 1990).

Situational Factors: Situational factors are commonly divided into factors related to job characteristics include such phenomena as job satisfaction, which the literature argues is a result of organizational commitment, as opposed to being a determinate of it (Baterman and Strasser 1984; Mathieu and Zajac 1990; Randall 1993). Work experiences include all of the experiences that occur during an employee's tenure with an organization (Mowday et al. 1982; Harrison and Hubbard 1998). The most influential of these experiences on organizational commitment are those related to an employee's opportunities for leadership, in terms of participative planning coordinating, disciplining, organizational problem solving, and decision making (Glisson and Durick, 1988; Mathieu and Zajac, 1990; Randall 1993). Finally, managerial effectiveness has been cited in various studies as being a significant positive correlate of organization commitment (Mott 1972; Angle and Perry 1981; Mowday et al 1982; Harrison and Hubbard 1998; Adler and Corson 2003).

Concept of Emotional Intelligence

According to Goleman (1998), emotional intelligence is defined as, "a person's self-awareness, self-confidence, self-control, commitment and integrity, and a person's ability to communicate, influence, initiate change and accept change". Mayer and Salovey (1995) defined emotional intelligence as, "the ability to perceive emotion, integrate emotion to facilitate thought, understand emotions and to regulate emotions to promote personal growth". A theoretical level definition of emotional intelligence offered by Kafetsios and Zampetakis (2008) reflects the level of degree to which an individual attempts to, processes, and acts upon information of an emotional nature intra-personally and inter-personally. In the view of Reus and Liu (2004), emotional intelligence is "a person's ability to perceive emotions and understand their underlying causes and effects. It also involve an individual ability to monitor his own and other people's feeling and emotions, in order to discriminate among them and to utilize the information as a guide to one's thinking and actions" (Kelly and Barsade, 2001; Rubin *et al*; 2005).

According to Poskey (2011), emotional intelligence is "a self-perceived ability to identify, assess, and control of one's emotion, that of others and of groups. It also represents the competencies demonstrating the ability an individual has to recognize his or her behaviour, moods and impulse and to manage them best based on situation at hand". According to Goleman (1998), an individual's emotional intelligence is equal to, or more than IQ, and is a vital indicator of success in one's personal life and profession. Accordingly, effective use of the emotion is basic to the function of successful leadership (Goleman, Boyatziz and Mikee,

2002). In the words of Mayer and Salovey (1997), emotional intelligence represents “the ability of an individual to perceive things accurately, appraise and express emotion, to access and/or generate emotional knowledge and to regulate emotion to promote emotional and intellectual growth”. It is therefore important that employees know how to control their emotions in different working conditions, as well as how to act and relate to and with others. According to Goleman (1995), emotional intelligence competencies such as social skills, self-management, social awareness and social management can be learned, and has become important construct in the change process. Based on this, Huy (1999) defined emotional intelligence as “the ability to monitor one’s own and other’s feeling and emotion, to discriminate among them and to use this information to guide one’s thinking and actions”. This definition of emotional intelligence by Huy (1999) successfully addressed the four dimensional emotional intelligence construct (Cote and Miners, 2006) made up of self-awareness and social management, as proposed by Goleman (1998).

Dimensions of Emotional Intelligence

Different dimensions of emotional intelligence have been identified by several scholars. Goleman (1998) identifies four emotional intelligence dimensions, namely, self-awareness and self-management, social awareness, and relationship management. The self-awareness and self-management make up the personal competence side, while social awareness and relationship management constitute the social competence side of emotional intelligence. These dimensions of emotional intelligence proposed by Goleman (1998) has been widely recognized and accepted. Although, there are other emotional intelligence typologies proposed by other scholars like Reus and Liu (2004) who proposed two main components namely: emotional recognition which deals with a person’s ability to perceive emotions and understand their potential causes and effects, and emotional regulation which is an individual ability to manage his own and others’ emotional expressions. However, these two classifications of emotional intelligence seem to narrowly defined versions of emotional intelligence constructs. On his own, O’Neil (1996) identified five components of emotional intelligence as; self-awareness (knowing your emotions), motivation (motivating you), managing emotions (self-regulation), empathy (recognizing and understanding other people’s emotions), and social skills (managing relationship, i.e., managing the emotions of others).

Goleman’s Dimensions of Emotional Intelligence

Goleman (1998) identified four dimensions of emotional intelligence which include: self-awareness, self-management, social-awareness and relationship management. These four noted dimensions represent the best accepted dimensions of emotional intelligence today.

Self-awareness: This represent the ability to read ones emotions and recognize their impact while at the same time, using get feelings to guide one’s decision (Goleman, 1998). It also refers to “being aware of one’s emotions, understanding their causes and reflecting on the patterns of behaviour which one display as a consequence of the emotion” (Goleman, 1995).

Self-management: This refers to ability to control one’s emotions and impulses and adapting to changing circumstances (Goleman, 1988). It also refers to the ability and individual has to regulate distressing effects such as anger and anxiety, and the ability to inhibit emotional impulsivity (Goleman, 1995). A person with self-management ability appears more calm and confident even in the midst of stressful condition. The person also tends to be in control of his emotions, and does not allow his emotion and impulses to dictate his decisions and actions.

Social awareness: This includes an individual ability to sense, understand, and react to other’s emotions while comprehending social networks (Goleman, 1998). It also constitute of the ability to recognize and understand other people’s emotions. Garner (2009) has stated that social awareness deals with an individual ability to read non-verbal cues for negative

emotions, particularly anger and fear, and the ability to judge the trustworthiness of others. Thus, it is the ability to understand how others feel, and not to experience them.

Relationship management: This is an individual ability to inspire, develop and influence others while managing conflict (Goleman, 1998). It is “the specific skills of influencing and persuading others, managing and improving the performance of others, utilizing and managing the diverse strengths of a team and negotiation as well conflict handling skills” (Garner, 2009).

Benefits of Emotional Intelligence

An employee’s ability to be aware of his/her emotions and the ability to manage and control same is very essential in helping the employee develop affective feeling towards the organization, and hence extensively contribute to such organizations capability and resourcefulness. Employees with moderate emotional intelligence are able to manage their emotions and maintain good inter-personal relationships, are committed to their organizations, and are more willing to perform extra roles for the company’s benefit (Antony, 2013). Robinson and Rousseau (1994) note that since job insecurity reduces commitment and high turnover intentions, employees with high level of emotional intelligence can ameliorate the essence of job insecurity on their affective commitment. According to them, this is because employees must firstly, be able to know the emotions they are experiencing due to their perceptions of job insecurity. Mayer and Salovey (1997) pointed out that emotional intelligence will moderate the effect of perceptions of job insecurity of an individual affective commitment.

Adeyemo (2007) posit that possession of emotional intelligence skills can help to mitigate frustrating experience at work and help to enhance affective commitment to the organization, and thus, reduces the level of continuance commitment. Carmelli (2006) and Prati (2004) have also found a positive relationship between emotional intelligence and organizational commitment. On the general note, Adeyemo (2007) note that emotional intelligence skills and competences are highly valuable in understanding, supporting, maintaining and enhancing high level of organizational commitment. Thus, employees with high emotional intelligence can handle challenges better and also make better decisions and judgment by utilizing emotional intelligence skills such as intrapersonal skills, adaptability, stress management and general mood. In other words an employee who is equipped with high level of emotional intelligence skills is more likely to be committed his organization.

Emotional Intelligence and Organizational Commitment

Various researches have reveal results of relationship between emotional intelligence and organizational commitment. Carmeli (2003) and Vakola *et al.* (2004) found that emotional intelligence correlate with high ability to solve problems and pressures, and with strongly organizational commitment. Robinson and Rousseau (1994) contend that individuals who recognize their own feelings, emotions and excitement, as well as that of others are more willing to maintain and keep their jobs with their employing companies. According to Mayer and Salovey (1997), the ability of an employee to monitor and control his emotion results to increase in his affective commitment to the organization as it generate zeal for his work. On her own, Don-Baridam (2017) affirms that employees who possess high ability to manage their emotions are more likely to increase their normative commitment to their organizations during their employment than their counterparts with low ability to manage their emotions and that of others. Nikolaou and Tsaousis (2002) also found that individuals with highly emotional intelligence are more committed to their companies. Antony (2013) has also contended that the higher level of emotional intelligence an individual possess, the greater his commitment to his organization.

Loordanoglou (2007) in his study of the relationship among emotional intelligence, leadership, job satisfaction and commitment of primary school teachers in Greece found a positive influence of emotional intelligence on organizational commitment. Shafiq and Rana (2016) in their study of the relationship of emotional intelligence to organizational commitment of college teachers in Pakistan found that there is a significant relationship between college teachers' emotional intelligence and the three facets of organizational commitment.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The realization of organizational goals and objectives depends on the availability of competent and committed workforce. Commitment is however enhanced when employees possess high level of emotional intelligence skills and competencies. The great improvements associated with emotional intelligence can hardly be matched by any other organization improvement intervention programme. Hence, emotional intelligence has a more far reaching impact on organizational commitment in organizations and goes beyond individual competencies and skills. Emotional intelligent people possess both a higher level of optimism that make them focused on resolution rather than reasoning, and the capability to place themselves in position to accommodate and successfully handle unpleasant experiences; a quality that distinguishes them from others and endears them for leadership positions, and motivating them to be more committed to their organizations.

Obvious that emotional intelligence significantly predicts organizational commitment, emotional intelligence employees tend to be more self-confident, and at peace with their works and others, as it create opportunity for employees to understand and appreciate the feeling and emotions of others, overlook their mistakes, and effectively control subordinates, and deal with situational conflicts in a more benefitting manner, thereby creating more favorable work climate that make them and others remain committed to their organizations. With these understanding of the important role of emotional intelligence in bolstering organizational commitment, emotional intelligence must be adapted as an employee needs to make employees more emotionally positive and stable, hence, able to make better quality work because of high employee commitment.

Management therefore, should endeavour to develop the emotional intelligence skills of employees in order to increase their job satisfaction which promotes organizational commitment. Moreover, emotional self-awareness of the employees should be developed through timely training, seminars, and delivering of lectures by managers and other experienced experts so that the employees could effectively learn how to control and manage their own feelings and behaviours at all times thereby helps to promote healthier organizational climates that stimulates commitment of all members.

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