THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN AFFECTIVE COMMITMENT AND SUBJECTIVE CAREER SUCCESS: EVIDENCE FROM PRIVATE SECTOR ACADEMICS OF PAKISTAN

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the relationship between affective commitment and subjective career success among academics in the private sector of the country as the emotional attachment of employees to the organization, whereby, employees identify with the organization is of utmost importance. For carrying out the research, academics have been chosen from Pakistan's private sector universities. Thus, out of 4994 academics, 351 were chosen. Moreover, stratified sampling has been used to select academics from each stratum. The researcher has employed statistical tools to analyze the data. According to the structural modeling done, a significant relationship has been found between the two variables. The academics thus evaluate the costs and the benefits attached to their job, and individually satisfy the needs and desires resulting in positive feelings towards the working environment.

Keywords: Subjective Career Success, Affective Commitment, Private Education Sector

INTRODUCTION

Meyer and Allen (1991) describe in a meta-analysis on affective commitment, continuous commitment and normative commitment that affective commitment (AC) has weightage over the other two commitments, as it results in more favorable outcomes for both the employees and the employer. These favorable outcomes include lower absenteeism, better organizational citizenship behavior, high job performance, low turnover, reduced stress and work life balance (Meyer & Allen, 1991). The benefits of affective commitment have therefore, led the researcher to restrict the measurement of organizational commitment to affective commitment. The researcher, meanwhile, through exhaustive search did not find any research on the relationship between affective commitment and subjective career success with regard to the private higher education sector of Pakistan. There has been research on the relationship between affective commitment and employability of a public sector university of Pakistan by Yousaf and Sanders (2012) but it is from the perspective of public sector and not private sector.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Higher Education Institutes (HEI) are the backbone of any country (Niazi & Mace, 2006), and the most important factor in the social and economic development of a state. New ideas are generated and individuals attain competency through education thus accelerating the pace of technological transformation. Without a satisfied faculty, however, the education sector cannot flourish. Likewise, subjective career success among academics helps in the development of affective commitment and a desire to show performance for oneself and the organization Khalid, Irshad, and Mahmood (2011). This performance is not based solely on job satisfaction but also requires a strong sense of career satisfaction with education as a profession. Thus, as a result of satisfaction with the career, quality teaching ensues, and this facilitates students learning.

Subjective Career Success

According to Greenhaus, Parasuraman, and Wormley (1990), subjective career success, refers to individuals' feelings of satisfaction and accomplishment in their careers. It is important for the researcher to differentiate between life satisfaction, career satisfaction and job satisfaction. Life satisfaction is the cognitive component of subjective well-being (Martikainen, 2008). This viewpoint is quite similar to that of Bradley and Corwyn (2004) who argue that life satisfaction is the extent to which basic needs and life goals are met. If life goals are accomplished, satisfaction with life will also increase. Thus, life satisfaction is directly related to better physical and mental health. However, subjective career success is just one component of life satisfaction. Other components of life satisfaction include satisfaction with one's job, community, health, recreation, social life, marriage and religion (Lounsbury, Park, Sundstrom, Williamson, & Pemberton, 2004).

As with the modern career landscape, marked by an ever changing global business environment impacting the world of work, subjective dimensions have been introduced such as lateral job movements within the organizations, and less job security (Cascio, 2005). As a result of these lateral job movements, the nature of contract between the employer and the employee has changed from being relational psychological to transactional psychological. The relational psychological contract was, and still is, located within a single organization, in which there are hierarchical movements, stresses on salary increments, and is trust-driven. The transactional psychological contract, on the other hand, is the new career contract. It transfers the responsibility for training and development to the employees and at the same time creates career options (De Vos, Stobbeleir & Meganck, 2009; & Rigotti, 2009).

Affective Commitment

Affective commitment has been defined in different literature reviews as the individuals feeling closer to the organization not only emotionally but also involved with the organization, and its vision and mission statements (Meyer, Becker & Vandenberghe, 2004). Employees having affective commitment show enthusiasm for the organization, and "feel" satisfied working for it (Allen, 2011; Colakoglu, Culha & Atay, 2010; Yousaf &

Sanders, 2012). Positive work experiences in the form of career satisfaction, and procedural fairness are actually a result of affective commitment. It is a "psychological state" that is characterized by an employee having a relationship or an emotional attachment with the organization. The psychological state here refers to the employees having internal perceptions about their working environment. The psychological state is also referred to as the psychological climate (Parker, Baltes, Young, Huff, Altmann, & Lacost, 2003). Various factors contribute to this psychological climate; these include autonomy, leadership, procedural fairness, employee development, and praise for work well-done.

Since affective commitment leads to involvement, and sense of belonging, various researchers have held that affective commitment is the most important out of the three components of organizational commitment (Vandenberghe & Bentein, 2009). Unlike the other two commitments, continuous commitment and normative commitment (which are a result of economic loss prevention and moral obligations towards the organization), affective commitment is intrinsic in nature (Becker & Kernan, 2003). Considering this viewpoint, Meyer and Allen (1991) described in a meta-analysis that affective commitment results in more favorable outcomes for both the employees and the employer. These favorable outcomes include lower absenteeism, better organizational citizenship behavior, high job performance, low turnover, reduced stress and work-life balance. The benefits of affective commitment have, therefore, led the researcher to restrict the

measurement of organizational commitment to affective commitment.

HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

From the employees' perspective, affective commitment can lead to the built-up of self-esteem and psychological well-being. High affective commitment results in higher performance, lower costs of absenteeism, lower counter-productive behaviors, organizational citizenship behavior, lower turnout, and talent retention (Allen, 2011; Benson, 2006; Briscoe & Finkelstein, 2009; Chughtai & Zafar, 2006; Colakoglu et al., 2010; Field & Buitendach, 2011; Ghazzawi, 2008; Grant, Dutton, & Rosso, 2008; Lumley, Coetzee, Tladinyane, & Ferreira, 2011; Malik, Nawab, Naeem, & Danish, 2010; Warsi, Fatima & Sahibzada, 2009). However, in recent years, organizations in almost all advanced countries have been facing problems of employee retention (Filstad, 2011; Yousaf & Sanders, 2012). These problems have resulted primarily due to the appearance of phenomena such as globalization, technological advancements, competition, and less job security. The human resource departments, therefore, are aware of paradigm shifts and have thus made organizational policies to not only attract but also to retain intellectual capital (Joiner & Bakalis, 2006).

Moreover, in times of changing employee commitments, the key priorities for organizations include attracting, and retaining personnel through creating a satisfying office environment for employees. In this way, a committed workforce adds to the intellectual capital of the organization. Also, one of the ways in which the organizations can be more

competitive and retain labor force is by adding to the psychological success of the employees, and not just providing them with higher pay, power and promotion. In other words, employees having better intrinsic satisfaction are a boon for the organization.

Therefore, with the emergence of intrinsically motivated employees, the contract has changed from relational to transactional (Ackah & Heaton, 2004; Briscoe & Hall, 2006; Clarke, 2009; De Vos et al., 2011; Dries, 2011; Rasdi, Ismail, Uli, & Noah, 2009; Zikic, Novicevic, Harvey, & Breland, 2006). In relational contract, there is an indefinite commitment shown by the employees towards the organization. In return, the organization offers its staff better wages, power and promotion through upward mobility. However, in the transactional psychological contract there is a partial commitment from both sides as the focus shifts to immediate, short-term gains.

As a result of this transactional contract, there are limited consequences for both the employer and the employee. In such contracts, organizations are expected to provide for professional career development opportunities that are perceived by the employees as a means to increase the satisfaction levels within the organization. Career satisfaction is thus a positive emotional disposition that has an effective response to any job situation (Ariani, 2012). Career satisfaction is the overriding feeling of well-being at one's working environment. It is internally driven and is dependent on the working relationship. Employees that are satisfied with their careers are shown to have higher affective commitment, perform more, show organizational citizenship behavior and

support the organization's goals and objectives. So, it is hypothesized that:

H_1: There is a significant positive relationship between affective commitment and subjective career success

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Subjective career success is measured using the five items adopted from the "Career Satisfaction Questionnaire" developed by Greenhaus, Parasuraman and Wormley (1990). The researcher has thus decided to adopt the instrument by Greenhaus et al. (1990) as it has an excellent internal reliability of $\alpha=.88$, and is mostly used to measure career satisfaction. Furthermore, all the items are measured on a five point Likert scale from 1=Strongly Disagree to 5= Strongly Agree.

The researcher adopts the 6 item "Revised Affective Commitment Scale" used by Meyer, Allen and Smith (1993). The original affective commitment scale developed by Allen and Meyer (1990) had 8 items. However, after confirmatory factor analyses, Meyer et al. (1993) reduced the number of items from 8 to 6. The items having the highest factor loadings were retained. The instrument developed by Meyer et al. (1993) has an excellent Cronbach alpha value of $\alpha=.82$ and uses the seven point Likert scale ranging from 1= Strongly Disagree to 7=Strongly Agree. Items 3, 4 and 5 are reverse-keyed items.

It is pertinent to mention again that the accessible population for the study is the 4,994 private university academic members. According to the Table provided by Krejcie and Morgan (1970), if the population is 4,994 then the sample size comes out to be 351. The researcher has
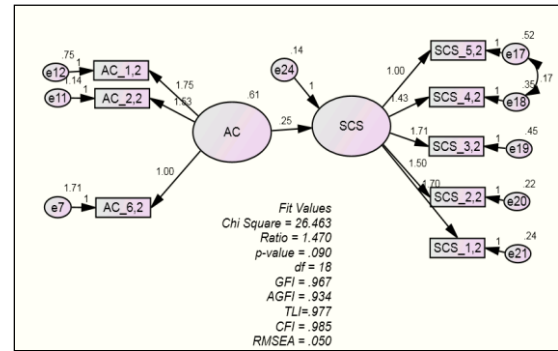
also employed proportionate stratified sampling so that all academics within the frame have an equal chance of representation and the sample is not biased towards any one rank. The various strata included in the study are thus based on job rank: professor, associate professor, assistant professor and lecturer. The stratification of academics according to rank is similar to that of other studies such as those by Chaudhry (2013), Oshagbemi (2000), Oshagbemi, (2003), Mamiseishvili (2011) and Mamiseishvili and Rosser (2011).

DATA ANALYSIS

Data analysis and hypothesis testing are done through the use of statistical tools like Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 18 and Analysis of Moment Structures (AMOS) version 18. The researcher employed SPSS to find out the missing data, non-respondent bias, outliers and normality, while, AMOS was used for conducting confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) and testing for the hypotheses.

A structural model in CFA is defined as the causal link between the latent constructs (Hair *et al.*, 2010). The Structural Model (SM) stage is the last stage in structural equation modeling after defining, developing and assessing measurement model validity. The structural model thus assigns relationships from one construct to another based on the proposed hypothetical model.

FIGURE 1

Structural Model

Fit Values
Chi Square = 26.463
Ratio = 1.470
p-value = .090
df = 18
GFI = .967
AGFI = .934
TLI=.977
CFI = .985
RMSEA = .050

The Non-Normed Fit Index (NNFI) or Tucker Lewis Index; the Comparative-Fit-Index (CFI), and the Root Mean Squared Error Approximation (RMSEA) for finding the fitness of the model were proposed by Garver and Mentzer (1999). In addition to NNFI, CFI, RMSEA and x^2/ Degrees of Freedom ratio, additional measures that are being used to check the fitness of the model include Goodness-of-Fit Index (GFI) and Adjusted Goodness-of-Fit Index (AGFI) (Sivo, Fan, Witta & Willse, 2006). In the present model, the researcher has found the following values of indices.

TABLE 1

Model Fit

Index	Ideal Fit	Observed Fit
Non-normed fit index (NNFI) or Tucker Lewis Index (TLI)	>0.90	0. 97
Root Mean Square Approximation of Error (RMSEA)	<0.08	0.50
Comparative Fit Index (CFI)	>0.90	.98
X²/ D.F. ratio	≤ 3	1.4
Goodness-of-fit Index (GFI)	>0.90	0.96

		Est.	S.E.	C.R.	P	Status
Adjusted Goodness-of-fit Index (AGFI)		>0.80	0.93			

The results of the direct relationship are shown below. The direct effect goes directly from a variable to another within the hypothesized model.

TABLE 2

Direct Effects

		Est.	S.E.	C.R.	P	Status
SCS	←	AC	.23	.07	3.54	***	Sig

P < 0.05 *** Not Sig = Not Significant
SCS refers to Subjective Career Success), and AC refers to Affective Commitment

In the hypothesis, it was stated that there is a positive and statistically significant relationship between affective commitment and subjective career success. The relationship between the two variables has been found to be statistically significant as ß = .23, z-value = 3.54 and p < 0.05. Therefore, the hypothesis is accepted.

DISCUSSION

Hypothesis testing results in relation to affective commitment and subjective career success reveals that there is a positive and significant effect of affective commitment on subjective career success (ß = .232, z-value = 3.54, p<.05). Affective commitment has been defined as the individuals feeling closer to the organization not only emotionally but also involved with the organization (Meyer, Becker & Vandenberghe, 2004). From the employees' perspective, affective commitment can lead to the build-up of self-esteem and psychological well-being.

High affective commitment results in higher performance, lower cost of absenteeism, lower counter-productive behavior, organizational citizenship behavior, lower turnout, and talent retention (Allen, 2011; Benson, 2006; Briscoe & Finkelstein, 2009; Colakoglu et al., 2010; Field & Buitendach, 2011; Grant et al., 2008; Lumley et al., 2011). The positive and significant relationship has indicated that affective commitment helps academics to become a part of family in the organization. The academics are thus emotionally attached to the university and show enthusiasm for it, and feel satisfied while working for it.

The outcome of this hypothesis testing has empirically substantiated the arguments of Heslin (2005) that the more committed the employee is towards the organization, while being involved in and identifying with the employer, the more satisfied he or she is likely to become. In other words, employment among private sector academics is still governed by the relational contract whereby, there is an indefinite commitment shown on behalf of the employees towards the organization. In return, the organization offers its staff better wages, power and promotion. Thus, affective commitment helps academics to adapt career success norms that are in tandem with those as espoused by the organization. Thus, career satisfaction will be lower among those employees who have less commitment towards the organization. The findings are also in congruence with Ariani (2012) that career satisfaction is a positive emotional disposition that has an effective response to any job situation. In the research, career satisfaction is taken as the overriding feeling of well-being at one's work environment (De Vos et al., 2011). It

is internally driven and is dependent on the working relationship. Also, according to Allen (2011), employees that are satisfied with their careers are shown to have higher affective commitment, organizational citizenship behavior and support for the organization's goals and objectives. Therefore, it is inferred from data analysis that career development opportunities within the organization are perceived by the academics as a means to increase satisfaction levels.

The findings in relation to the present hypothesis are also in line with Boles et al. (2007) that the exchange process affects the organizational commitment of employees. The academics thus evaluate the costs and the benefits attached to their job, and individually satisfy the needs and desires resulting in positive feelings towards the working environment. Moreover, various aspects of job have an effect on the satisfaction of employees including supervision, co-worker support, tasks performed, financial rewards, and promotional activities.

The findings of the present study are also supporting Bietry et al. (2014) that when an employee becomes a part of an organization or a group, he or she will try to internalize the social norms and add meaning to work experiences. This was found in an experiment by Bietry et al. (2014) on 1,100 employees where affective commitment was related to subjective career success. Also, according to Leede et al. (2004), the higher the organizational efforts in caring for the well-being of the labor force, the higher is the emotional attachment of the employee towards the employer. An implication is that the internalizing of social norms by the academics will form a cognitive structure, or frame of reference for career satisfaction.

The significant relationship between affective commitment and subjective career success shows affective commitment helping academics in achieving subjective career success. Academics that remain committed to the organization are likely to be the ones that perform, display organizational citizenship behavior and contribute to their eventual career success. The relationship between affective commitment (AC) and subjective career success (SCS) fills in the gap, as the previous studies, Ali, Khan, Qadeer, & Shahzad (2009), Chaudhry (2012), Khan, Nawaz, Khan, Khan, Khan, & Kundi (2013), Malik et al. (2010), Rehman et al. (2013) and Shah et al. (2012) had discussed the relationship between organizational commitment and job satisfaction with respect to the academics. The finding of the present research is in line with Allen (2011), Benson (2006), Briscoe and Finkelstein (2009), Colakoglu et al. (2010), Field and Buitendach (2011), Grant et al. (2008) and Lumley et al. (2011) who describe the organization's efforts in caring for the well-being of the labor force, leading to emotional attachment towards the employer, and thus achieve career satisfaction.

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