

## Organisation Commitment Among Public Sector Employees – Myth or Reality

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### ABSTRACT

*The aim of the present study was to explore organizational commitment in the Indian public sector unit on all the three dimensions-affective, continuance and normative of the TCM Employees Commitment Survey by Meyer and Allen (2004). (TCM Employees Survey Academic Users Guide 2004). The participants were those having more than three years of experience in the organisation. Both descriptive and inferential methods of statistics were used. The findings suggest that there was significant difference between the affective commitment with both continuance and normative commitment whereas the normative and continuance components had no significant difference between them.*

**Keywords:** *commitment, meyer & Allen, organisation, TCM employee commitment survey*

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### INTRODUCTION

Organizational commitment is identification with an organization along with its goals, while wanting to maintain membership and association in the organization. The strength of the individual's identification with an organization is organizational commitment [1].

Organizational commitment is most often defined as:

- (1) A strong desire to remain a part of the organization.
- (2) A drive and willingness to keep raising the bar on behalf of the organization.
- (3) A definite belief in value system of the organisation and its goals.

Meyer and Allen (2004) define Organisation commitment, as reflecting employees' loyalty towards their organisation. It is an ongoing process wherein the participants show the concern they have towards the organisation and for its ongoing success and well-being [2].

Porter, Steers, Mowday & Boulian (1974) describe organizational commitment as "an attachment to the organisation, characterized by an intention to remain in it; an identification with the values and goals of the organisation; and a willingness to exert extra effort on its behalf."

Miller (2003) further states that organizational commitment is "a state of motivation in which an employee identifies with the goals of the organisation. He wishes to remain an integral part of such organisation". Therefore, organizational commitment is the degree of association of an employee to its organizations values and goals.

Researchers and psychologists Meyer & Herscovitch (2001) define the Organizational commitment as a state of mind. It connects the employee psychologically to an organization. This reduces attrition and employee turnover as

per Allen & Meyer, 1990. Each individual has a different thought process and thus finds a convincing and relevant form of action that is of relevance to him.

For new employees, organizational commitment has some connection to performance. But it is probably seen as being less essential as compared to the past as now perhaps it is more of an occupational commitment and loyalty to profession rather than towards an organisation or employer.

To understand its complex nature, it can be broken down into its basic components. There is distinction between the foci of commitment- the particular entity, such as the group of individual to which a person is committed and the bases of commitment – the underlying reasons why the commitment occurs.

Foci of commitment – people can be committed to various establishments and systems in their organizations. For example, they may have different degrees of commitment towards their superiors, co-workers, subordinates, superiors, customers or top management- basically, any individual or group target.

Bases of commitment – to understand commitment, the bases must be seen i.e. the motives that people have for being committed.

Three distinct bases of organizational commitment have been identified:

- (1) Affective – emotional attachment to organization
- (2) Continuance – economic value of staying
- (3) Normative – moral or ethical obligations

Organizational commitment as a concept has increased in popularity in the literature

on organizational and industrial psychology. Early studies on it viewed the concept as just a single dimension, based on an embracing identification, attitudinal perspective, involvement and loyalty as defined by Porter, Steers, Mowday & Boulian, 1974 [3].

### ALLEN AND MEYER'S MODEL

The Three-Component Model (TCM) of organizational commitment (Meyer & Allen, 1991) has gained considerable popularity since its establishment in the field. Meyer and Allen (1991) came to a conclusion that an employee's commitment was a reflection of a need, desire and obligation to sustain membership in an organization. Consequently, commitment exhibits itself in three relatively discrete forms.

Meyer and Allen (1984) initially perceived organizational commitment as two-dimensional- affective and continuance. Meyer and Allen (1984) defined the first dimension, i.e. affective commitment as “positive feelings of identification with, attachment to and involvement in the work organisation”, and they defined the second dimension, continuance commitment as “the extent which employees feel committed to their organisation by virtue of the costs that they feel are associated with leaving”. After further research, in 1990, Allen and Meyer added the third dimension of normative commitment. Allen and Meyer define normative commitment as “the employee's feelings of obligation to remain with the organisation”. Normatively committed employees discern that they ought to stay with the organization for various reasons like need for reciprocity, feeling of indebtedness or organizational socialization.

The concept of organizational commitment thus, is described as a tri-dimensional concept, identified by the affective,

continuance and normative dimensions, as per Meyer and Allen (1991)

### **AFFECTIVE COMMITMENT**

When looking at positive work-related behaviors (e.g., attendance, organizational citizenship behavior), affective commitment has been seen as most strongly associated to it out of all the dimensions of Three-Component Model (TCM) of organizational commitment.

Employees affectively committed to an organisation, continue working because they want to. Such members see their personal employment relationship as congruent to the values and goals of the organisation. Affective commitment may be related to pro-organizational individual behavior, organizational spontaneity beyond the endorsed role without any want or consideration of reward. Affective commitment is a work-related attitude which includes having positive and favorable feelings towards the organisation. Meyer and Allen's model indicates that affective commitment is guided by factors such as, goal clarity, job challenge, receptiveness by management, role clarity and goal difficulty, personal importance, peer cohesion, equity, dependability, feedback and participation.

### **CONTINUANCE COMMITMENT**

This commitment is said to arise when an employee stays with an organization basically out of need, which could be due to lack of alternatives or the costs associated with leaving, such as seniority, lost income or retirement benefits. It is very calculative as the individual weighs the costs and risks associated with quitting the organisation. The primary antecedents of this type of commitment are the inability to transfer one's education and skills to a different organisation or the lack of alternatives. Thus, once an employee experiences these, the perceived need to

stay with the organization may increase. This commitment can be viewed as an instrumental attachment to the organisation as here the individual's association is formed on his assessment of economic benefits. Employees develop commitment on the basis of the positive extrinsic rewards acquired through the effort-bargain in absence of any identification with the organization's values and goals. A high level of continuance commitment leads to heightened levels of role conflict, role ambiguity, along with low withdrawal cognitions. This scenario, a lose-lose for both the employee and organization leads to the employee remaining in an uncomfortable position due to need or lack of alternatives. Due to this, the employee may also corrupt the work group.

### **NORMATIVE COMMITMENT**

This is seen when an employee maintains membership in an organization due to the sense of obligation. The individual's internalized normative beliefs make them obliged to sustain employment in the organisation. According to Meyer and Allen (1991) "employees with normative commitment feel that they ought to remain with the organisation". The employees thus, remain in the organisation because it is the proper thing to do or because they should do so.

Employee's commitment here is formed on moral grounds. The normative committed employees consider it to be morally right to continue in the organisation, notwithstanding the status enhancement or satisfaction he receives over time. Such commitment may evolve when an organization offers employees benefits and rewards in advance, such as payment of college tuition, or if the organization goes to great length to hire or train the employee. Another precursor to normative commitment is organizational tenure.

Normative commitment may best denote the extent to which the members align themselves with organizational goals. The association of this form of commitment with organizational citizenship behaviors and withdrawal cognitions highlights its importance with low level of the latter being at the heart of the normative commitment [4].

To conclude, the organisation needs to provide more recognition and attention to the aspects that foster and promote the morale of its employees to be affectively committed and retain employees who are continuance committed. Employees staying in the organisation under obligation are normatively committed. Development of affective commitment necessitates internalization and identification. In general, affective organizational commitment is concerned with the scope to which an individual associates with the organisation and thus, it is the best form of commitment.

OC Survey (Allen and Meyer's TCM Employee Commitment Survey, 2004) TCM Employee Commitment Survey measures three forms of employee commitment in an organization: desire based (Affective), obligation based (Normative) and cost based (Continuance). Three well validated scales (ACS, NCS and CCS) are included in the survey. Each scale can be used to discern the commitment profile of the members in an organisation and can be scored individually.

Employees with a strong affective commitment stay because they want to, those with strong normative commitment stay because they feel ought to, and those with strong continuance commitment stay because they have to do so.

Research has unvaryingly shown that employees who want to stay are likely to

function and execute at a level that is higher than those who do not want to stay. Employees who remain out of obligation also tend to out-perform those who feel no such obligation but the effect of performance is not as strong as that observed for desire. Employees who need to stay essentially to avoid losing something valuable have little incentive to perform activities that are more than what is required to maintain their position. Thus, not all commitments are alike.

There are six statements for each scale. After reading each item, employees indicate the strength of their agreement by selecting a number from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). There are certain reverse keyed items. They are incorporated to encourage participants to give a thought to each statement carefully rather than just mechanically adapting a pattern of disagreeing or agreeing with the statements. For yielding an overall score for the three components, the responses of all items within a scale are averaged.

### PSYCHOMETRIC PROPERTY

Samples of two different organizations from South Korea formed the basis of exploration of three component model of organizational commitment. Reliabilities of Normative Commitment Scale (NCS) and Affective Commitment Scale (ACS) were studied and found acceptable. However, it was observed that the score of reliability of the Continuance Commitment Scale (CCS) was low. While ACS and the NCS lacked discriminant validity, however, the 3 scales component model had acceptable convergent validity. The construct validities of the CCS and NCS were found questionable. But, the construct validity of the ACS was supported.

### LITERATURE REVIEW

A study by Meyer, P., Stanley, D., Herscovitch, L., & Topolnytsky, L.

(2002) conducted meta-analysis to assess (a) relations among affective, normative and continuance commitment to the organisation and (b) the relations between the three forms of commitment and variable identified as their antecedents, correlated and consequences in Meyer and Allen's Three Component Model (1991). They found that the three forms of commitment are related yet distinguishable from one another as well as from job satisfaction, job involvement and occupational commitment. Affective and continuance commitment generally correlated as expected with their hypothesized antecedent variables; no unique antecedents of normative commitment were identified. Affective component had the strongest and most favorable correlations with organisation relevant (performance, attendance) and employee relevant (stress and work family conflict) outcomes. Normative commitment was also associated with desirable outcomes but not as strongly. Continuance commitment was unrelated or related negatively to these outcomes.

## METHODOLOGY

### Objective

The aim of the practical was to explore organizational commitment in Indian public sector units using TCM Employees Commitment Survey (Meyer, J. & Allen, N., 2004, TCM Employees Survey Academic Users Guide)

### Participants

The participants in the present study were 60 working males and females with a minimum work experience of 3 years in public sector organisation. They were selected through nonprobability sampling technique. Nonprobability sampling is one of the sampling methods in which there is no way of assessing the probability of the element or group of elements of the population being included in the sample.

Accidental sampling as a technique under nonprobability sampling was used. Accidental sampling also known as incidental sampling refers to a sampling procedure in which the investigator selects the persons according to his convenience (Singh, 2006).

### Design

Ex Post-Facto research was used for this practicum. It is one in which the investigators attempt to trace an effect which has already occurred to its probable causes. Thus, this term means that the researcher has conducted the study after the events have occurred (Simon & Goes, 2013). In this type of research, the manifestation of the independent variables occurs first and then its effect becomes obvious to the investigator. Since the independent variables have already occurred, the investigator has no direct control over such variables.

### Measure

Three forms of employee commitments to an organisation is measured by TCM Employee Commitment Survey i.e. Affective, Normative and Continuance commitment which are desire based, obligation based and cost based respectively. Three well validated scales (ACS, NCS and CCS) are included in the survey. Each scale can be used to discern the commitment profile of the members in an organisation and can be scored individually.

There are a total of 18 items, six statements for each scale. After reading each item, employees indicate the strength of their agreement by selecting a number from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). There are certain reverse keyed items. They are incorporated to encourage participants to give a thought to each statement carefully rather than just mechanically adapting a pattern of

disagreeing or agreeing with the statements. For yielding an overall score for the three components, the responses of all items within a scale are averaged.

Three component model of organizational commitment was explored with samples from South Korea of 2 different organizations. Reliabilities of the Affective Commitment Scale (ACS) and the Normative Commitment Scale (NCS) were acceptable, whereas the reliability of the Continuance Commitment Scale (CCS) was low. The 3 scales had acceptable convergent validity but the ACS and the NCS lacked discriminant validity. The construct validity of the ACS was supported whereas the construct validities of the CCS and NCS were questionable.

**Procedure**

Public sector units were approached to gather data for study. The Meyer and Allen scale of Organizational Commitment was to be filled by the participants. A rapport was formed with the participants. They were first de-briefed about the test and assured that confidentiality would be maintained. The data of 60 participants, both males and females with a work experience of minimum 3 years,

irrespective of the age was taken. The data were subjected to statistical analysis wherein the mean and SD were found. ANOVA was calculated on this data as the difference between the three components of the scale along with Tukey’s HSD test which had to be computed.

**RESULT**

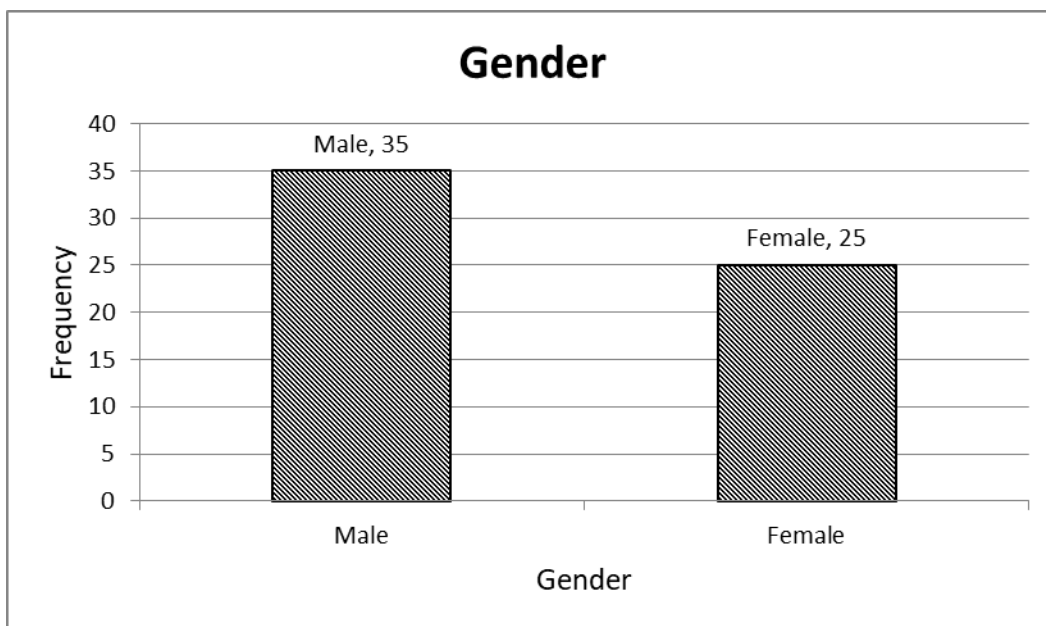
After the data was scored, it was statistically analyzed. For the data (N=60), mean and standard deviations were calculated, after which ANOVA was calculated which was further subjected to Tukey’s HSD test, a post hoc test for additional exploration of the dimensions among means to obtain information on which means were significantly different from each other. The results are discussed below (Figures 1–3, Tables 1, 2).

**Data Analysis (N=60)**

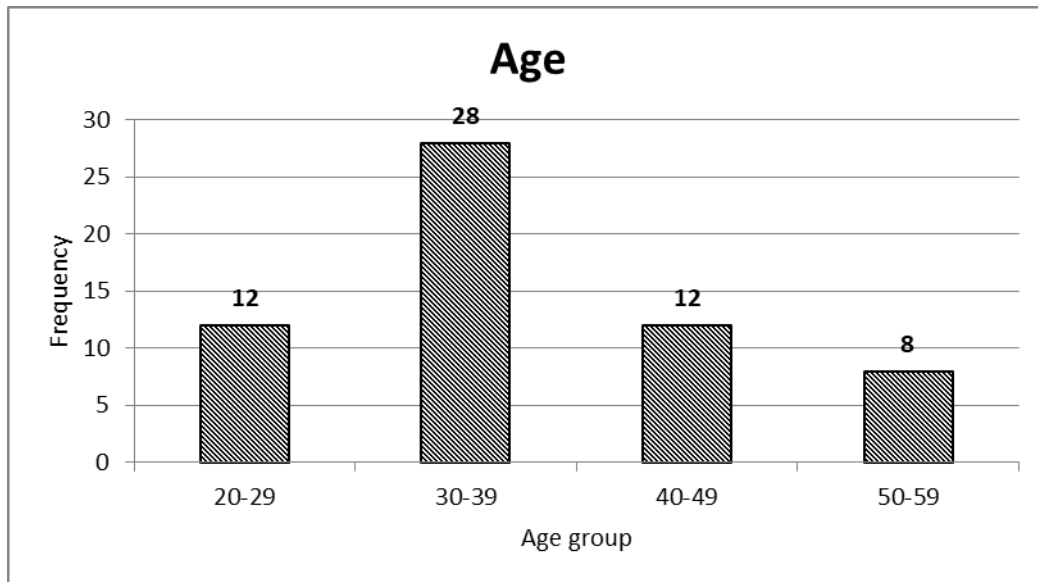
*Table 1. Mean and standard deviation (SD) of total sample against all three dimensions (N=60).*

	AC	CC	NC
Mean	3.58	3.06	3.29
Standard deviation	0.61	0.70	0.52

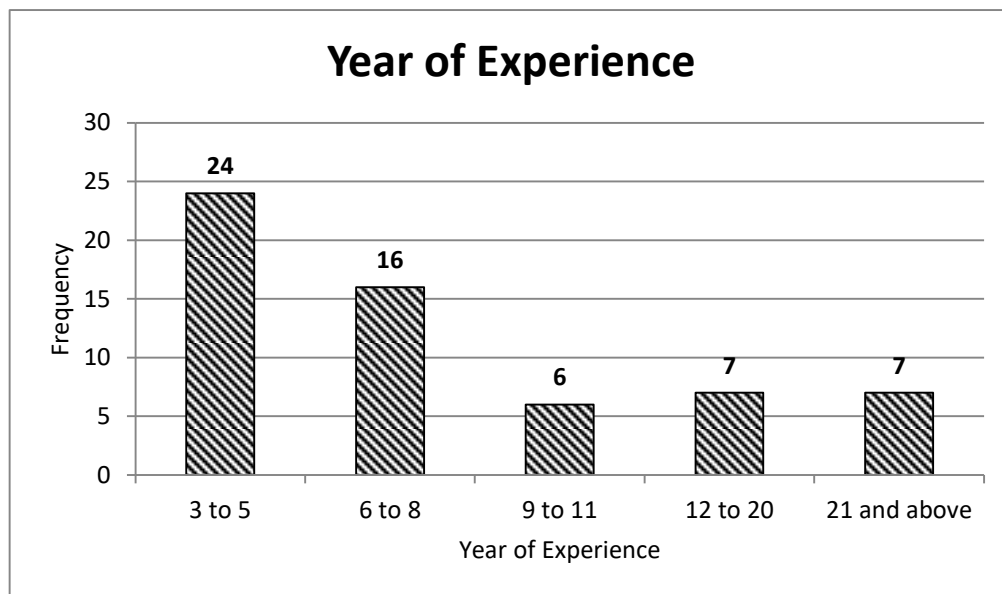
**Demographic Analysis**



**Fig. 1.** Demographic analysis: gender percentage for data (N=60).



*Fig. 2. Demographic analysis: age distribution of employees for data (N=60).*



*Fig. 3. Demographic analysis: experience in organisation for data (N=60).*

**ANOVA and Post Hoc**

*Table 2. ANOVA for data (N=60).*

Source	SS	df	MS	F
Treatment <0.0001 (Between groups)	8.2	2	4.1	10.57
Error	68.61	177		

**Tukey's HSD test**

AC vs. CC  $p < .01$

AC vs. NC  $p < .05$

NC vs. CC not significant

**DISCUSSION**

The aim of the practical was to explore organizational commitment in Indian public sector units using TCM Employees Commitment Survey (Meyer, J. & Allen, N., 2004). The participants in the present study were 60 working males and females with a minimum work experience of 3 years in public sector organisation. They were selected through nonprobability

sampling technique. Accidental sampling as a technique was used under nonprobability sampling. Accidental sampling also known as incidental sampling refers to a sampling procedure in which the investigator selects the persons according to his convenience (Singh, 2006). The design used was the ex-post facto research. The TCM Employees Commitment Survey (Meyer, J. & Allen, N., 2004) has 3 dimensions namely the affective component, normative component and the continuance component with 6 statements each. After the data was obtained, it was scored and statistically analyzed. For the data (N=60), mean and standard deviations were calculated, after which ANOVA was calculated which was further subjected to Tukey's HSD test, a post hoc test for additional exploration of the dimensions among means to obtain information on which means were significantly different from each other. The group data of N=60 had a total of 35 males and 25 females. The age of the employees varied from 20 to 59 years. There were 12 employees in the bracket of 20-39 years, 28 in 30-39 years, 12 in 40-49 years and 8 employees in the bracket of 50-59 years. It can be clearly seen that the majority of employees belong to the age group of 30-39 years. The employees were also grouped according to the years of experience they have in the organisation. 3-5 years was the number of years spent in the organisation by a maximum of 24 employees while 6 employees spent 9-11 years in the organization.

As can be seen from Table 1, the mean and standard deviation (SD) of total sample of N=60 for AC is 3.58, CC is 3.06 and 3.29 is NC and the standard deviations were 0.61, 0.70, 0.52 for AC, CC and NC respectively.

One way analysis of variance was conducted to explore the contribution of 3 dimensions i.e. the affective, continuance and normative on Organizational

Commitment. For N=60, a statistically significant difference was obtained at  $p < 0.0001$  level for the three dimensions on scores of organisation commitment (Table 2).

To further see which groups are significantly different from one another, a post hoc; Tukey's HSD test was carried out. It was seen that AC and CC are significantly different from each other at  $p < 0.01$  level while AC and NC differed at  $p < 0.05$  level. It was further noticed that CC and NC were not significant.

From the two analyses at N=60, it can be seen that the dimension of affective commitment is significantly different from both continuance commitment and normative commitment.

This result is supported by a study by Meyer and Allen in 2011. In a study of organizational commitment, the results suggested that the affective and continuance components of organizational commitment are empirically distinguishable constructs. The affective and normative components although distinguishable, appear to be somewhat related.

A study examines the factor structure of the affective and continuance commitment scales as well as the causal links between affective and continuance commitment. Data was obtained from 2 employee samples on a single occasion and from a sample of new employees on 3 occasions during the first year of employment. Results revealed that the AC and CC measure different constructs (Meyer, Allen, & Gellatly, 1990). The results of the present study are concordant with prior literature work that affective and continuance commitment is significantly different from one another and difference between affective and normative commitment however is comparatively weak.

## LIMITATIONS

The present study explored the organizational commitment in Indian public sector units using the Meyer and Allen model. The study though, has certain limitations. The sample of the study was small and can be broadened and done on a broader scale to get results for more data and better representation population. This study is representative only of the public sector units thus cannot be generalized among all employees and working class. This study also did not represent both males and females equally with a higher proportion of males. Also, the study used nonprobability sampling technique. The scores might be biased due to social desirability.

## CONCLUSION

The aim of the present study was to explore organisational commitment in Indian public sector unit on all the three dimensions- affective, continuance and normative of the TCM Employees Commitment Survey (Meyer, J. & Allen, N., 2004). The participants were those having more than three years of experience in the organisation. They were selected through nonprobability sampling technique. Accidental sampling as a technique was used under nonprobability sampling. The design used was the ex-post facto research. After the data was obtained, it was scored and statistically

analyzed for N=60. The mean and standard deviations were calculated, after which ANOVA was calculated which was further subjected to Tukey's HSD test, a post hoc test. Statistically significant difference was obtained. The post hoc test further showed that there was significant difference between the affective commitment with both continuance and normative commitment whereas the normative and continuance components had no significant difference between them.

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