

## Studying the mediating role of subculture in relationship of job satisfaction and organizational commitment in Islamic Azad University- shiraz branch

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**Abstract.** The main purpose of this research was to investigate the mediating role of organizational subculture between job satisfaction, organizational commitment in Islamic Azad university – shiraz branch. The sample was 200 educational sectors persons (faculty members) and service staffs which were selected by stratified randomized sampling. Structural equation analysis was conducted to obtain the best fit model and to determine the direction of the causal effect between job satisfaction and commitment, and the role of subculture as a mediating variable. Results showed the casual relationship between organizational commitment and job satisfaction and highlighted the important role of subculture as a mediator.

**Keyword:** subculture, job satisfaction, organizational commitment

### 1. Introduction

Organizational commitment has been a favorite variable for researchers for studying in different organizations because of its important role and its impacts on the behaviors of staffs. Higher educational organization plays an important role in every countries, so the commitment of their faculty members is very important. Among the possible antecedents of commitment, organizational culture has received relatively low levels of empirical investigation. For example, in a comprehensive meta-analysis and review of the antecedents and correlates of commitment, organizational culture was not mentioned (Mathieu, & Zajac, 1990). Such an omission is surprising given the emphasis placed on culture in recent organizational writings (e.g. Ashkanasy, Wilderom, & Peterson, 2000; Cartwright, 1999; Parker, 2000) It has been widely argued that organizational culture exerts a considerable influence on organizational behavior, particularly in areas such as performance and commitment (van Vianen, 2000). Culture affects universities performance and effectiveness (Ramseden, 2005).

It is presumed that organizational culture influences employees' sense of engagement, identification and belonging. Such sentiments might reasonably be expected to impact on commitment of faculty members. Also it is showed that organizational culture has an important impact on job satisfaction of faculty members of universities (Ibid). Subcultures form on the basis of people's varied identification with different subgroups based upon factors such as occupational or professional identifications, work location/proximity, functional locus, or demographic factors such as age, ethnicity or gender (Bloor, & Dawson, 1994). Subcultures impact the attitudes and behavior of their members and this may be independent of the main culture effects (Martin, 1992). Although the influence of organizational subculture on commitment is virtually absent in the research

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literature, there is an increasing body of work which suggests that there are multiple foci for member commitment, including work groups, supervisors and occupational groups (Baruch, & Winkelmann-Gleed, 2002; Gallagher, & McLean Parks, 2001).

The purpose of this paper is to develop a structural model to clarify the relationship of job satisfaction and organizational commitment by emphasizing the mediating role of subcultures.

### **1.1. Commitment**

Organizational commitment is defined in terms of member's identification and level of engagement with a particular organization. It reflects peoples' attitudes to staffs the organizations goals and values, a desire to stay with the organization, and a willingness to expend effort on its behalf. The latter has behavioral implications, but the conceptualization focuses more on how people think about their relationship to the employing organization and the formation of attitudes based on that. Although Meyer and Allen (1997) have sought to broaden the perspective on organizational commitment through the componential model, it has been shown that the three components are distinct and have different antecedents (Dunham Grube, & Castanedal, 1994).

Meyer and Allen (1997) still acknowledge, too, that commitment should be conceptualized as a psychological state concerned with how people feel about their organizational engagements. It has also been demonstrated that it is the affective characteristics which impact greatest on outcome variables such as absenteeism and turnover (Dunham et al., 1994; Somers 1995).

Employee commitment is argued to be critical to contemporary organizational success (Pfeffer 1998). Affective commitment, in particular, has been associated with positive organizational outcomes such as improved retention, attendance, and citizen behaviors, self reports of performance, and objective measures of supervisor ratings of employees' performance as well as indicators of improved operational costs and sales (Meyer & Allen, 1997).

Research on organizational antecedents has focused mostly upon factors that serve to signal to employees that the organization is supportive, fair in its dealings and that they are valued (Meyer & Allen, 1997). This set of factors is often labeled as 'employee-focused' (Bridges & Harrison, 2003). Little attention has been paid to factors associated with the structure and culture of organizations, such as organizational sub-units or subcultures. It has also been shown that employees exhibit commitment to different organizational coalitions, such as departments, collective labor bodies, management and supervisors. We suggest that organizational subcultures are likely to offer another point of identification, involvement and loyalty among their members and thus to exhibit a relationship with affective commitment. Such relationships have not been explored in extant research.

### **1.2. Organizational Culture and Subculture**

A key objective of this study then is to investigate the relationship between organizational culture and subculture and their relations with commitment. Organizational culture has been a phenomenon of intense interest among practitioners and researchers since the early 1980s. It is also, however, a contested construct that has been variously conceptualized, defined and empirically pursued (Ashkanasy et al. 2000; Martin & Frost 1999). There is broad agreement, however, that organizational culture provides the 'social glue' that gives organizations coherence, identity, and direction.

There are a limited number of studies, which whilst not examining cultures and subcultures directly, have noted the presence of multiple foci for employee commitment, not just the organization itself (Becker et al. 1996). For example Swales (2004) revealed both public and private sector accountants showing commitment to up to four foci including the supervisor and the work group. Vandenburghe, Bentein & Stinglhamber (2004) also examined differential commitment to supervisors, work groups and the organization over a series of studies, including a study of nurses, with mixed results. Another study in the health sector also theorized different foci of commitment including the organization, the work group and the occupational grouping (Baruch & Winkelmann-Gleed 2002). These studies suggest the potential value of examining subcultures as a focus for commitment.

Theoretically, conceiving of organizations as containing a single, homogenous culture and of organizational cultures globally and monolithically, has, as noted, increasingly been challenged and the notion of subcultures has been proposed (e.g. Martin 1992). It is argued that, particularly in large, complex organizations, members are likely to have identifications with groups at a sub-organizational level, focused around a range of possible factors as noted earlier. Public sector health organizations are typically large, complex and pluralistic (Dawson 1999) and there is evidence of the existence of organizational subcultures in such organizations (Degeling, Kennedy, Hill, Carnegie, & Holt, 2001).

Conceptually, a subculture is a subset of a culture and thus is defined in a similar manner as consisting of the shared assumptions, values and practices of an identifiable group of people within an organization but *at a sub-organizational level* (Brown 1995). Subcultures may form around organizational groups on the basis of a range of possible factors that constitute an organizational differentiation such as occupation, profession (Bloor & Dawson 1994), structural or functional location.

There are many subcultures in universities. In this paper we studied staffs and faculty members subcultures.

### **1.3. Job Satisfaction**

A number of researchers suggest that job satisfaction has a special significance for an understanding of the effects of various antecedent constructs on commitment. Previous studies investigating causal models of organizational commitment and turnover have suggested that the effects of various antecedents on commitment are mediated through job satisfaction. In line with the majority of the above studies, our proposed model contains the assumption that job satisfaction is a causal antecedent of commitment. However, given the uncertainty of whether satisfaction is a total or partial mediator of the effects of other antecedents on commitment, we examine job satisfaction as a potential mediator of the effects of organizational subcultures as well as examining the direct effects of subcultures on commitment. This view is consistent with previous research.

In this research we propose that subcultures would be a mediator for the relationship between job satisfaction and organizational commitment.

## **2. Research method**

Structural equation modeling was used to conduct this research.

### **2.1. Research instruments:**

In this research we used Paul spector questionnaire of job satisfaction(1991), Meyer and Allen scale for organizational commitment(1995) , and Wallach's (1983) Organizational Culture Index describes organizational culture in terms of three distinct dimensions: (1) Bureaucratic, (2) Innovative, and (3) Supportive.

## **3. Results**

Exploratory factor analysis and reliability analysis were initially used to assess the psychometric properties of the above measures. An inspection of Cronbach's alpha values reveals that they range from 0.746 to 0.961, indicating satisfactory reliability of the measures.

Following standard psychometric scale assessment procedures we then conducted confirmatory factor. Given the large number of constructs and measurement items employed in this study, we followed the recommended practice of basing our confirmatory factor analyses on groupings of related sets of measures: (1) measures of faculty members culture dimensions, (2) measures of staff subculture dimensions, and (3) measures of job satisfaction and commitment. The adequacy of the measurement models is evaluated on the criteria of overall fit with the data, convergent validity, and discriminate validity.

Although the chi-square statistics were statistically significant, this is not unusual with large sample sizes .The Tucker-Lewis index (TLI), and comparative-fit index all exceeded the recommended cut-off value of 0.90. The values of the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) were either close to or below the value of 0.08 recommended and the normed chi-square values ( $\times 2/df$ ) were all less than 3. Taken

together, the results suggest that the hypothesized measurement models fit reasonably well with the data. A chi-square difference test was used to test compare the original measurement models with alternative models in which pairs of constructs were combined. In all cases it was found that the changes in chi-square were highly significant ( $p < 0.01$ ), thus providing evidence for the discriminate validity of the measures. In figure 1 the Structural model has shown. Model fitting indexes were as follows.

Chi-square = 24.105,  $df = 19$ ,  $p\text{-value} = 0.226$ ; TLI = 0.901; CFI = 0.974; RMSEA = 0.043)

It could be concluded from these results that this model would be fitted good for datum. all paths in model were significant and these results lend further support to our revised mediated model in which job satisfaction serves as a partial mediator between antecedent constructs and organizational commitment. Of course it confirms that subcultures played an important role in mediating the effect of job satisfaction on organizational commitment.

#### **4. Conclusion**

This research represents one of only a few empirical studies of the relationships between organizational commitment and its antecedent constructs using a structural equation modeling approach. We examined the influences of organizational subculture, and job satisfaction on organizational commitment. One of the main findings in this study was that subculture had a greater influence on commitment than organizational culture. Among the three Staff subculture dimensions, innovative staff subculture was found to have the largest direct effect on commitment (standardized estimate of total effect size  $\beta = 0.32$ ) while bureaucratic staff subculture had a significant negative direct effect on commitment ( $\beta = -0.19$ ). Supportive staff subculture had a positive indirect effect on commitment via job satisfaction ( $\beta = 0.23$ ). In contrast, of the three faculty members culture dimensions, none had any direct effect on commitment, and only innovative faculty members culture had an indirect effect on commitment ( $\beta$  for innovative faculty members = 0.33,  $\beta$  for supportive faculty members = 0.087, and  $\beta$  for bureaucratic faculty members = -0.081). This is an important finding offering a substantial contribution to theory development with respect to organizational commitment. Previous research has suggested that organizational culture and subculture could have differential effects on individuals in the work place (Brown 1995; Krausz et al. 1995; Martin 1992; Trice & Beyer 1993). However, few empirical studies have so far been conducted to test these ideas. Our results reinforce the view that staffs tend to identify more closely with their service subculture than the culture of the educational sector as a whole This could have significant implications in managing human resources in organizations, as it suggests that greater attention and resources should be given to the cultivation of subcultures as well as the general organizational culture. Another important finding of this study was that innovative staff subculture had the strongest positive effect on commitment ( $\beta = 0.32$ ), while a bureaucratic staff subculture had a negative effect on commitment ( $\beta = -0.19$ ). This finding is consistent with previous research, which suggested that a bureaucratic environment often resulted in a lower level of employee commitment (Brewer 1994) and performance (Krausz et al. 1995; Lok et al,2007). In common with much of the previous research literature on commitment, the proposed model contains the assumption that job satisfaction is one of its causal antecedents. However, as noted, this has not been universally accepted. The proposed model was therefore compared with alternative models in which the direction of causation between satisfaction and commitment was varied. The result of this research was aligned with results of Lok et al (2007)

Certain limitations of this study provide opportunities for further research. First, the results of this study may not be transferable outside the national context. Various cultural dimensions in different nations may affect organizational commitment differently (Vandenberghe 1999). For example, the negative effect of a bureaucratic culture on commitment may not be present in high power distance countries.

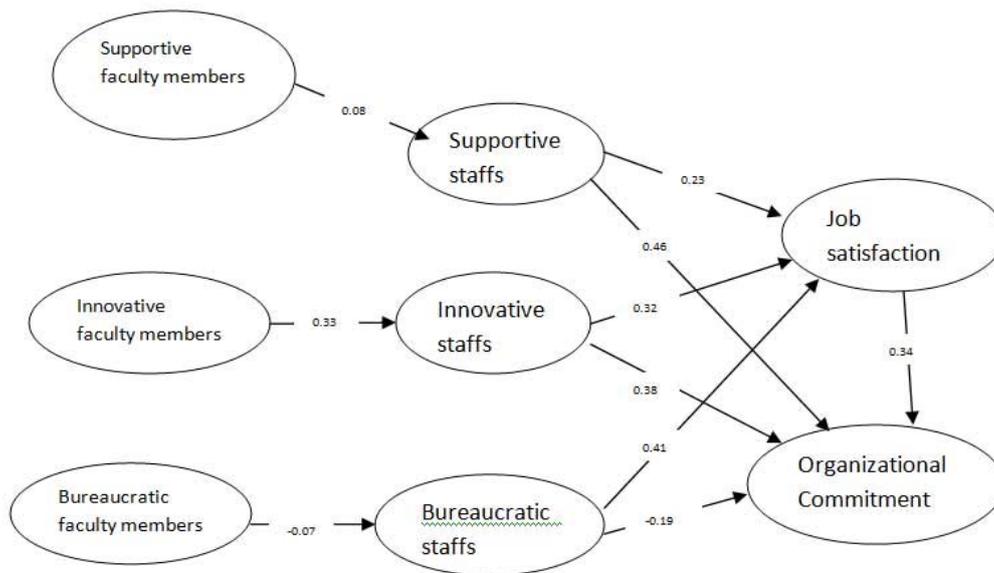


Fig-1: structural model

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