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Does Engagement of Employees affect to Organizational Commitment? Evidence from Non-Academics in Sri Lankan State Universities

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Abstract

Area of the Study

This study is aimed to discuss the impact of employee engagement on the organizational commitment of the Sri Lankan non-academics in the state universities.

Problem of the Study

As an interesting research area, there are different finds of the impact of employee engagement on the organizational commitment. However, it is difficult to find the empirical findings of these two phenomenons among the non-academics in the state universities. Therefore the problem of the study is: Does employee engagement of non-academics in the state universities affect their organizational commitment?

Method of the study

317 non-academics in the Sri Lankan state universities were selected randomly as the sample of the study and structured questionnaire was used to measure the employee engagement and organizational commitment of the sample respondents. Bivariate and multivariate analyses were basically used statistical analysis of the study.

Findings of the Study

The major finding of the study is that there is a positive and significant relationship and impact of employee engagement and organizational commitment of the non-academics in the state universities. However, there is weak and no relationship was found between the employee engagement (both job engagement and organizational engagement) with the continuance commitment.

Conclusion of the Study

The administrations of the state universities have to consider the employee engagement as an important human behavior and they have to pay their attention to enrich the employee engagement.

Keywords: Employee Engagement, Organizational Commitment, Non-academics, State Universities

Introduction

It is a need of committed workers for the business organization in order to meet the global economic competition (Agu 2015). Therefore, many scholars in psychological research have been given their interest for the organizational commitment (Mathieu & Zajac 1990; Meyer 1997; Gutierrez, Candelo & Carver 2012; Huang, You & Tsai 2012). Organizational commitment can be defined as an employee's level of identification and involvement in the

organization (Mullins 1999). Meyer and Allen (1997) defined occupational commitment as a psychological state that characterizes employee's relationship with the organization with its implications for the decision to continue membership in the organization. Member-based and organizational-based model was used to define the occupational commitment by Angle and Perry (1983). Occupational commitment is a multidimensional as well as multifaceted concept (Ferrer 2005). Therefore, there are many meanings and influences for the concept (Ferrer 2005). Then, Porter and others (Beukes & Botha 1974) explained three types of organizational commitment, which are affective commitment, continence commitment and normative commitment.

Affective commitment is the strength of a person's identification with and participation in the organization (Beukes & Botha 1974). Continuance commitment is based on the degree to which the person perceives the costs of leaving the organization as greater than staying or simply that the person remains committed because it is their only opinion (Beukes & Botha 1974). Normative commitment is attaching internalized values to the organization or feeling of obligation towards the organization (Steer 1977).

As Kahn (1990) work engagement is the harnessing of organizational members' selves to their work roles. Employee engagement is a practical concept than the theoretical and empirical research (Saks 2006). Different definitions were given by different scholars for employee engagement (Luthans & Peterson 2002; May, Gilson & Harder 2004). Employee engagement is a broad concept and it explains the symbiotic relationship between employees and organization (Shmailan 2016). Schaufeli, et al (2002) defined employee engagement as the positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterized by vigour, dedication and absorption (Beukes & Botha 2013). As Sake and Rothmann (2006), it is a state of mind and is not focused on a specific object, event, individual or behavior (Beukes & Botha 2013).

According to Sake (2006), employee engagement can be measured through job engagement and organizational engagement. Job engagement is the individual being psychologically present in one's role at work (Saks 2006). As Sake (2006), organizational engagement is the sense of personal attachment to the company itself, independent of the individual's professional role within the organization.

There are different outcomes of engaged workers within the organization. Engaged worker encourages involvement in business decision making (Hoffmeister 2006), feel a strong emotional bound (Agu 2015) engages emotional and rational factors relating to works (Freeney & Tiernon 2006), results in higher retention levels, productivity levels and lower absenteeism (Agu 2015), characterizes low levels of burnout (González-Roma 2006), encourage high levels of commitment, performance and innovation (Khalid, et al 2015), low levels of neuroticism and high levels of extraversion (Langelaan et al. 2006), grants more work outcomes (Andrew & Sufian 2012) and enjoys good mental and physical health (Schaufeli in 2008 cited in Agu 2015). Therefore, this study is aimed to discuss the engaged workers and their impact of organizational commitment.

Problem of the Study

There are different research findings of the relationship between employee engagement and organizational commitment in the available literature. However, in the Sri Lankan context, there are few research findings that can be found of employee engagement with different variables. There is no any research finding of the relationship and impact between/ of employee engagement and/on organizational commitment. Therefore, this study is aimed to discuss; Does employee engagement has relationship and impact on organizational commitment of the non-academics in the Sri Lankan state universities.

Research Model

Available literature pointed out that different positive consequences were given by the job engagement (Gavin & Mason in 2004 cited in Singh & Karki 2015; Fisher in 2010 cited in Singh & Karki 2015). Beukes and Batha (2013) found there was a positive correlation between organizational commitment and work engagement of permanent and non-permanent nurses at private hospital. Trofimov, et al. (2016) concluded that more organizational commitment will be presented when employee engages to their works (Alam 2017). The positive relationship between organizational commitment and employee engagement has been recorded by Dajani (2015) and Khalid et al. (2015) and found positive relationship between occupational commitment and employee engagement by Khalid et al. (2015). Positive significant relation between employee engagement and occupational commitment was recorded by Agyemany and Ofei (2013) using public sector organizations in Ghana. Wachira (2013) found strong positive relationship between employee engagement and organizational commitment.

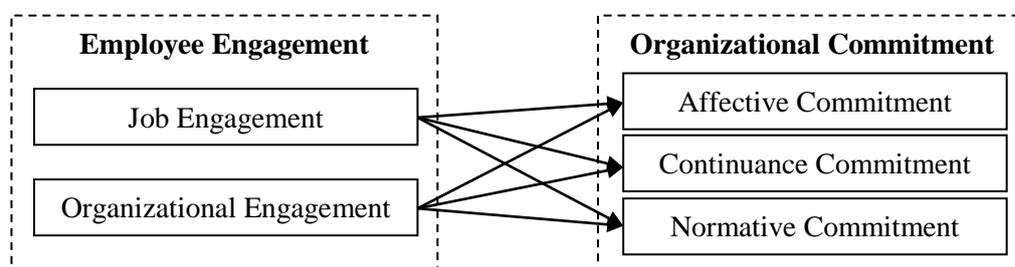
Aldbour and Alterawneh (2014) found high level of relationship between job engagement with affective and normative commitment. They also found positive association between employee engagements with normative commitment (Aldbour and Alterawneh 2014). Brown and Leigh (1996), Maslach, Schaufelli and Leiter (2001), Richardsen, Burke and Martinussen (2006), Llorens et al. (2006), Hakanen et al. (2006) and Saks (2006) pointed out that there is a positive relationship between employee engagement and affective commitment. Alam (2017) found significant positive correlation between job engagement and affective and normative commitment among junior executives in Bangladesh. In this study, researcher found negative, but not significant relationship between job engagement and continuance commitment (Alam 2017). As overall there was less significant negative relationship between job engagement and occupational commitment was found by the researcher (Alam 2017). Loltha and Johnson (2015) found significant positive relationship between employee engagement and affective commitment, continuance commitment and normative commitment. Albdour and Altarawneh (2014) found from the study in banking sector, job engagement is positively correlated with affective commitment and normative commitment. However negative correlation was found by them between job engagement and continuance commitment. As Haksanen et al (2006), Llorens et al. (2006) and Saks (2006) reported that

important determinant of affective commitment is a work engagement (Loltha & Johnson 2015).

Loltha and Johnson (2015) pointed out from their study that there was a positive relationship between organizational engagement and affective commitment and normative commitment. However, less significant negative relationship was found between organizational engagement and continuance commitment. Further, Loltha and Johnson (2015) found that 29.3% of variance in affective commitment is explained by job commitment and organizational commitment together. The research found that 3.1% of the variance in continuance commitment is explained by job engagement and organizational engagement of the studied sample and 58% of variance in normative commitment can be explained by the together of job engagement and organizational engagement.

The research model of the study is given based on the above research findings depicts in Figure 01.

Figure 01: Research Model



Considering above research findings in the different contexts, the following hypotheses were developed in this study.

Relationship between Job Engagement (JE) and Organizational Commitment (OC)

- H₁: There is a positive relationship between JE and AC among the non-academics in the Sri Lanka state universities.
- H₂: There is a negative relationship between JE and CC among the non-academics in the Sri Lanka state universities.
- H₃: There is a positive relationship between JE and NC among the non-academics in the Sri Lanka state universities.
- H₄: There is a positive relationship between JE and OC among the non-academics in the Sri Lanka state universities.

Relationship between Organizational Engagement (OE) and Organizational Commitment (OC)

- H₅: There is a positive relationship between OE and AC among the non-academics in the Sri Lanka state universities.

- H₆: There is a negative relationship between OE and CC among the non-academics in the Sri Lanka state universities.
- H₇: There is a positive relationship between OE and NC among the non-academics in the Sri Lanka state universities.
- H₈: There is a positive relationship between OE and OC among the non-academics in the Sri Lanka state universities.

Relationship between Employee Engagement (EE) and Organizational Commitment (OC)

- H₉: There is a positive relationship between EE and AC among the non-academics in the Sri Lanka state universities.
- H₁₀: There is a negative relationship between EE and CC among the non-academics in the Sri Lanka state universities.
- H₁₁: There is a positive relationship between EE and NC among the non-academics in the Sri Lanka state universities.
- H₁₂: There is a positive relationship between EE and OC among the non-academics in the Sri Lanka state universities.

Impact of Job Engagement (JE) on Organizational Commitment (OC)

- H₁₃: There is a positive impact of JE and AC among the non-academics in the Sri Lanka state universities.
- H₁₄: There is a negative impact of JE and CC among the non-academics in the Sri Lanka state universities.
- H₁₅: There is a positive impact of JE and NC among the non-academics in the Sri Lanka state universities.
- H₁₆: There is a positive impact of JE and OC among the non-academics in the Sri Lanka state universities.

Impact of Organizational Engagement (OE) on Organizational Commitment (OC)

- H₁₇: There is a positive impact of OE and AC among the non-academics in the Sri Lanka state universities.
- H₁₈: There is a negative impact of OE and CC among the non-academics in the Sri Lanka state universities.
- H₁₉: There is a positive impact of OE and NC among the non-academics in the Sri Lanka state universities.
- H₂₀: There is a positive impact of OE and OC among the non-academics in the Sri Lanka state universities.

Impact of Employee Engagement (EE) on Organizational Commitment (OC)

- H₂₁: There is a positive impact of EE and AC among the non-academics in the Sri Lanka state universities.
- H₂₂: There is a negative impact of EE and CC among the non-academics in the Sri Lanka state universities.

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- H₂₃: There is a positive impact of EE and NC among the non-academics in the Sri Lanka state universities.
- H₂₄: There is a positive impact of EE and OC among the non-academics in the Sri Lanka state universities.

Method

Randomly selected 317 non-academics in the state universities in Sri Lanka was the sample of the study and the questionnaire was the main data gathering instrument of the study. The questionnaire consisted of employee engagement and organizational commitment. The instruments of employee engagement were job engagement and organizational engagement and three components, affective commitment, continuance commitment and normative commitment were the instruments of measuring organizational commitment. Job engagement and organizational engagement were measured using the questionnaire developed by Saks (2006) and organizational commitment was measured using the questionnaire developed by Allen and Meyer (1990). The univariate, bivariate as well as multivariate analyses were used to analysis the primary data gathered from the sample.

Results

The internal reliability of questionnaires which is used for data collection of the variables is measured by Cronbach's Alpha coefficients. The standard Alpha value for job engagement, organizational engagement, affective commitment, continuance commitment and normative commitment were 0.745, 0.796, 0.891, 0.831, 0.804 respectively and results from applying reliability analysis showed that tools were reliable.

Table 01 presents the Pearson's correlation between the independent variable and dependent variables of the research model. The correlations between employee engagement and organizational commitment of the non-academics in the state universities recorded as 0.857 (Sig 0.000), which is significantly positive relationship. The relationship between employee engagement and the affective and normative commitments of the sample are 0.912 (Sig 0.000) and 0.926 (Sig 0.000) respectively. However, there is negative but less significant relationship between employee engagement and continuance commitment.

Table 02 presents the simple regression analysis for the research model.

Table 01: Correlation Analysis

		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
JE	Pearson Correlation	1						
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000						
OE	Pearson Correlation	.701**	1					
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000						
AC	Pearson Correlation	.764**	.914**	1				
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000					
CC	Pearson Correlation	-.023	-.054	-.018	1			
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.675	.338	.750				
NC	Pearson Correlation	.795**	.910**	.994**	-.044	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.430			
EE	Pearson Correlation	.918**	.926**	.912**	-.042	.926**	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.451	.000		
OC	Pearson Correlation	.731**	.846**	.939**	.324**	.929**	.857**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 02: Simple Regression Analysis

	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	F	Sig	b
Job Engagement on Organizational Commitment	.731	.534	.533	364.477	.000	.731
Organizational Engagement on Organizational Commitment	.846	.715	.714	798.397	.000	.846
Employee Engagement on Organizational Commitment	.857	.734	.733	877.286	.000	.857

Job Engagement on Affective Commitment	.764	.584	.583	450.955	.000	.764
Organizational Engagement on Affective Commitment	.914	.836	.835	1.635E3	.000	.914
Employee Engagement on Affective Commitment	.912	.832	.831	1.589E3	.000	.912

Job Engagement on Continuance Commitment	.023	.001	-.003	.176	.675	-.023
Organizational Engagement on Continuance Commitment	.054	.003	.000	.922	.338	-.054
Employee Engagement on Continuance Commitment	.042	.002	-.001	.570	.451	-.042

Job Engagement on Normative Commitment	.795	.632	.631	545.455	.000	.795
Organizational Engagement on Normative Commitment	.910	.828	.828	1.533E3	.000	.910
Employee Engagement on Normative Commitment	.926	.858	.858	1.924E3	.000	.926

According to Table 02, 73.4% of variance of organizational commitment is explained by the employee engagement of the sample. 53.4% of variance of organizational commitment is explained by the job engagement and 71.5% of variance of organizational commitment is explained by organizational commitment. Table 03 presents the multiple regression analysis of the research model.

Table 03: Multiple Regression Analysis

	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	F	Sig
Job and Organizational Engagement on Organizational Commitment	.868	.753	.752	484.054	.000
Job and Organizational Engagement on Affective Commitment	.931	.866	.865	1.034E3	.000
Job and Organizational Engagement on Continuance Commitment	.057	.003	-.003	.522	.594
Job and Organizational Engagement on Normative Commitment	.937	.878	.877	1.135E3	.000

As Table 03, 75.3% of variance of organizational commitment of the non-academics in the state universities is explained by their job and organizational engagement together.

Findings and Discussion

The findings of the study are summarized in Table 04 with the hypotheses testing.

Table 04: Hypotheses testing and the findings of the study

	Hypothesis	Results	Conclusion
H ₁	Positive relationship between JE and AC	r is 0.764, Sig-0.000	Significant Positive Relationship
H ₂	Negative relationship between JE and CC	r is -0.023, Sig-0.675	Weakly Negative Relationship
H ₃	Positive relationship between JE and NC	r is 0.795, Sig-0.000	Significant Positive Relationship
H ₄	Positive relationship between JE and OC	r is 0.731, Sig-0.000	Significant Positive Relationship
H ₅	Positive relationship between OE and AC	r is 0.914, Sig-0.000	Significant Positive Relationship
H ₆	Negative relationship between OE and CC	r is -0.054, Sig-0.338	Weakly Negative Relationship

H ₇	Positive relationship between OE and NC	r is 0.910, Sig-0.000	Significant Positive Relationship
H ₈	Positive relationship between OE and OC	r is 0.846, Sig-0.000	Significant Positive Relationship
H ₉	Positive relationship between EE and AC	r is 0.912, Sig-0.000	Significant Positive Relationship
H ₁₀	Negative relationship between EE and CC	r is -0.042, Sig-0.451	Weakly Negative Relationship
H ₁₁	Positive relationship between EE and NC	r is 0.926, Sig-0.000	Significant Positive Relationship
H ₁₂	Positive relationship between EE and OC	r is 0.857, Sig-0.000	Significant Positive Relationship
H ₁₃	Positive impact of JE on AC	R ² – 0.584, Sig-0.000	58% of variance of AC is explained by JE.
H ₁₄	Negative impact of JE on CC	R ² – 0.001, Sig-0.338	0.1% of variance of CC is explained by JE
H ₁₅	Positive impact of JE on NC	R ² – 0.632, Sig-0.000	63% of variance of NC is explained JE.
H ₁₆	Positive impact of JE on OC	R ² – 0.534, Sig-0.000	53% of variance of OC is explained by OC
H ₁₇	Positive impact of OE on AC	R ² – 0.836, Sig-0.000	83% of variance of AC is explained by OE.
H ₁₈	Negative impact of OE on CC	R ² – 0.003, Sig-0.338	0.3% of variance of CC is explained by OE.
H ₁₉	Positive impact of OE on NC	R ² – 0.828, Sig-0.000	83% of variance of NC is explained by OE.
H ₂₀	Positive impact of OE on OC	R ² – 0.715, Sig-0.000	72% of variance of OC is explained by OE.
H ₂₁	Positive impact of EE on AC	R ² – 0.832, Sig-0.000	83% of variance of AC is explained by EE.
H ₂₂	Negative impact of EE on CC	R ² – 0.002, Sig-0.451	0.2% of variance of CC is explained by EE.
H ₂₃	Positive impact of EE on NC	R ² – 0.858, Sig-0.000	86% of variance of NC is explained by EE.
H ₂₄	Positive impact of EE on OC	R ² – 0.734, Sig-0.000	73% of variance of OC is explained by EE.

The correlations coefficients and the simple regression analysis, all hypotheses of the study are accepted, and it reveals that except the continuance commitment, all other commitments (affective and normative) have a significant predictor of the employee engagement (as well as the job engagement and organizational engagement).

Conclusion and Recommendation

There are two main conclusions of the study. One is that there is a relationship between employee engagement and organizational commitment of the non-academics in the Sri Lankan state universities. The second conclusion of the study is that there is an impact of employee engagement on the organizational commitment of the non-academics in the Sri Lankan state universities. However, there is negative and very weak relationship was recorded between the employee job engagement and continuance commitment as well as organizational engagement and continuance commitment of the sample. In this study, the researchers found that there is no impact of job engagement and organizational engagement on the organizational commitment of the non-academics.

Gavin and Mason in 2004 (cited in Singh & Karki 2015), Fisher in 2010 (cited in Sing & Karki 2015), Beukes and Batha (2013), Trofimov et al (cited in Alam 2017), Dajani (2015) Khalid, et al. (2015) and Wachira (2013) concluded that there is a relationship between employee engagement and organizational commitment. This study finding is also confirmed the findings and ideas of above researchers and scholars.

The positive relationship between employee engagement and affective commitment among the non-academics was found by this study and this finding is similar to the findings of the research done by Aldbour and Alterawneh (2014), Brown and Leigh (1996), Maslach, Schaufelli and Leiter (2001), Richardsen, Burke and Martinussen (2006), and Llorens et al. (2006).

In this study, the relationship between employee engagement and job engagement was recorded as significantly positive and it can be confirmed by the studies done by Aldbour and Alterawneh (2014), alam (2017) and Lolltha and Johnson (2015).

The negative or no significance between employee engagement and continuance commitment was recorded by Know and Daniel (cited in Aldbour & Alterawneh 2014), Alam (2017), and Loltha and Johnson (2015). Negative or no significant relationship between the employee engagement and organizational commitment was found among the non-academics in the Sri Lankan state universities and it is equal to the findings of the above researchers.

The core meaning of the affective commitment highlights two important aspects of job, which are person's identification and participation. Beck and Wilson (2000) explained that identification of an individual influence his or her desire of building relationship with an organization. Randal (1990) also implied that affective commitment of an individual is influenced by the positive workplace relationship. The ownership of an organization leads to a sense of belonging to the organization and it is concludes that the sense of belongings of individual impact to affective commitment positively (Klein 1987). Albdour and Arlarawneh (2014) concluded that high levels of affective commitment can be gained through the positive attitude and attachment towards their organization of the employees. Therefore, the employee engagement of the non-academics of the Sri Lankan state universities show their high level of engagement towards the affective commitment through their identification and participation to the organization.

Continuance commitment emphasizes the perceived costs of leaving the organization for the workers comparing to the costs associated with staying in the organization. In this study, the employee engagement doesn't explain the continuance commitment of the non-academics of the universities. Kahn (1990) argued that there are three psychological conditions that can be affected to the levels of engagement, which are meaningfulness, safety and availability. The non-academics' decision on staying their job may be depended on one or more of the above factors.

Feeling of obligation towards the organization is the main point of the normative commitment. Argument of Albdour and Arlarawneh (2014) led that employee presents high normative commitment when they feel excitement and captivated as an organizational member. Robinson et al. (2004) explained that engagement is a two way relationship between organization and employee. Therefore the non-academics in the Sri Lankan state universities present the strong correlation between employee engagement and normative commitment.

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