JOB SATISFACTION AND ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT: THE CASE OF SHKODRA MUNICIPALITY

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Abstract

The purpose of this investigation was to determine the levels of employees of public sector satisfaction with job dimensions and perceived organizational commitment in public sector in Shkoder, Albania. In addition, the study aimed at exploring to what extent these employees are committed to their job and satisfied with different dimensions to their job. A survey-based descriptive research design was used. The study was carried on public administrative sector, in Shkoder municipality. About 160 survey questionnaires were distributed in August, 2012 by employing diverse modes of communication such as email, in person and post. Multiple follow ups yielded 56 statistically usable questionnaires. Descriptive and inferential statistical techniques were used to give answer to the research questions. The findings of the study indicated that the satisfaction with work-itself, quality of supervision and pay satisfaction had significant positive influence on organizational commitment of municipality employees. They had high degree of organizational commitment and satisfaction with work-itself, supervision, salary, coworkers and opportunities for promotion. The focus of the study was employees working at public sector in Shkoder only. Job Descriptive Index (JDI) and Organizational Commitment questionnaire were used to measure job satisfaction and organizational commitment. The relevant literature shows that public sector employees' commitment and job satisfaction is under-researched area particularly in the public sector institutions in Albania. So, the current investigation has contributed to improve the understanding on significant issue. Besides the study findings are discussed in perspective of practical implications in public administration sector.

Keywords: Organizational commitment, Job satisfaction, Public administration sector employees, Shkoder

Introduction

The study of behaviors within organizational setting has highlighted critical variables that are supportive or detrimental to the performance of workforce. This notion holds true while focusing on quality of human resources that is major factor which contribute significantly to the organizational success (Pohlman & Gardiner, 2000). Organizational commitment and Job satisfaction are widely studied factors in management literature (Bodla & Danish, 2009; Bodla & Naeem, 2009a; Bodla & Naeem, 2009b; Parker et al, 2005; Allen & Meyer, 1990) which are the precursors of employee's performance.

This study was another effort which aimed at investigating the relationship of organizational commitment and job satisfaction among employees in public sector and their levels: in Municipality of Shkoder. Municipality employees generally feel a sense of calling and responsibility to their work. The impact of the profession on work/non-work interactions, along with increased pressures of citizens' affairs work, may be negatively influencing commitment to the profession. In an era of rapid change, knowledge capital must be retained in order for the organization to remain productive and responsive to the needs of its stakeholders (Bloch, 2001). The literature suggests that individuals become committed to organizations for a variety of reasons, including an affective attachment to the values of the organization, a realization of the costs involved with leaving the organization, and a sense of obligation to the organization (Meyer & Allen, 1997). Understanding of how public sector employees become satisfied and committed to their work, and to what degree various factors contribute to their level of commitment, is really important to boosting up their performance.

Organizational commitment has also been measured in public sector. However, to the best knowledge of the researchers a few studies have addressed the role of different job dimensions on organizational commitment of the employees particularly in the context of public sector in Albania. Thus, the current study aimed at determining to what extent these employees are committed to their work and satisfied with different dimensions of their job. In this connection, important contribution has been made to advance the body of knowledge is on organizational commitment and job satisfaction of municipality employees in the developing country.

Literature Review

Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction is understood to be affective response to the job viewed either in its entirety (global satisfaction) or with regard to particular aspects (facet satisfaction) i.e. pay, supervision etc. (Tett, Meyer, & John, 1993) As mentioned above, one of the most important factors that determine

the employee satisfaction with respect to particular aspects (facets) is the satisfaction with pay as found by Wallace and Schwab (1974) who reported that pay satisfaction was positively related to pay level. Job satisfaction has been correlated with enhanced job performance, positive work values, high levels of employee motivation, and lower rates of absenteeism, turnover and burnout (Begley & Czajka, 1993; Tharenou, 1993). An individual's principal choice of employment can help shape their view of themselves, broaden their daily life, and help to give meaning to their existence. So, if there is poor satisfaction with work, the individual questions him/herself in more aspects than just work factors (Hackman & Oldham, 1976). Furthermore, apart from the obvious importance of job satisfaction, it has been demonstrated that satisfied employees have better health and live longer, and satisfaction on the job carries over to the employee's life outside the job. For management a satisfied workforce translates into higher productivity due to fewer interruptions caused by absenteeism or good employees quitting, as well as into lower medical costs. There are benefits for society as a whole: satisfaction on the job carries over to employees' off the job hours, so the goal of high job satisfaction for employees can be explained in terms of both financial and social responsibility (Robbins, 1998).

Job satisfaction has been defined in a number of ways. Vroom (1964) defined job satisfaction as the positive orientation of an individual towards the role which he/she is presently occupying, while Hackman and Oldham (1975) define it as "the degree to which the employee is satisfied and happy with his job" (cited in Kamfer, 1989, p.15). Job satisfaction can also be defined as "a pleasurable or positive emotional state, resulting from the perception of one's job as fulfilling or allowing the fulfillment of one's important job values, providing these values are compatible with one's physical and psychological needs" (McPhee & Townsend, 1992, p.117).

According to Cherrington (1994), research on job satisfaction has identified two aspects to understanding the concept of job satisfaction, namely, facet satisfaction and overall satisfaction. These two concepts are explained as follows: Facet Satisfaction: Facet satisfaction refers to the tendency for an employee to be more or less satisfied with various facets or aspects of the job (Johns, 1988).Overall Satisfaction: Overall satisfaction focuses on the general internal state of satisfaction or dissatisfaction within the individual.

Organizational Commitment

Organizational commitment has become one of the most fashionable variables studied in the last three or four decades. Like every other psychological construct it is quite hard to have a universally accepted definition. However, it has been defined and measured in several different fashions. The various definitions and measures have the common point that

organizational commitment is considered to be a bound or a linkage of the individual to the organization (Mathieu & Zajac, 1990). Organizational commitment may be defined as relative strength of an individual's identification with and involvement in a specific organization. It can be characterized by three factors: 1) a strong belief in and acceptance of organization's goals and values; 2) a willingness to exert considerable effort on the behalf of the organization; and 3) a strong desire to maintain membership in the organization. (Porter, et al., 1974). Much of the interest about organizational commitment is the belief that highly organizationally committed employers are theorized to engage in more citizenship activities, display higher job performance etc (Jaros, 1997) and other similar desirable behaviors.

Steers (1977) conducted a study to look into the antecedents and the outcomes of organizational commitment. He found that the antecedents (as he proposed) were important and significantly related of organizational commitment, for both samples. These antecedents were divided into three groups, which were as follows: personal characteristics, job characteristics and work experience. As for the outcomes of the organizational commitment, it was found that commitment was strongly and positively related to the intent to remain in the organization for both samples. Hence, it can be derived that commitment is strongly and negatively related to turnover intention. Moreover, commitment was found to be inversely related to employee turnover, in the hospital sample. One of the greatest contributions to the literature about organizational commitment is the work of Meyer and Allen (1990), who extended the definition of the construct and studied it further.

Organizational commitment can take different forms: the first form they talk about is the *nature* of commitment that defines the relationship between an employee and some other entity (i.e.: organization) and it can vary. The second form involves efforts to distinguish among *entities* to which an employee becomes committed (Meyer & Allen, 1997, p 8). Meyer and Allen (1990) proposed a three–component model of organizational commitment. They suggested the organizational commitment is the sum of *affective* component, which refers to the employees' emotional attachment to, identification with, and involvement in, the organization; the *continuance* component, which refers to the commitment based on the costs that an employee associates with leaving the organization; and *normative* component, which refers to employees' feelings of obligation to remain with the organization. Put it in other words: *affective* commitment occurs when employee *wants to* stay; *continuance* commitment occurs when the employee *needs to* stay; and the *normative* commitment occurs when the employee feels s/he *ought to* stay in the organization.

Job satisfaction and organizational commitment

Past research has found a positive correlation between job satisfaction and organizational commitment (Mathieu & Zajac, 1990). Williams and Hazer (1986) found a direct link between job satisfaction and organizational commitment, whereby job satisfaction is an antecedent of organizational commitment. This thought process assumes that an employee's orientation toward a specific job precedes his or her orientation toward the entire organization.

Job satisfaction and organizational commitment have been shown to be positively related to performance (Benkhoff, 1997; Klein & Ritti, 1984), and negatively related to turnover (Clugston, 2000; Mathieu & Zajac, 1990) and turnover intent (Lum, Kervin, Clark, Reid & Sirola, 1998). The vast majority of research indicates a positive relationship between satisfaction and commitment (Aranya, Kushnir & Valency, 1986; Boshoff & Mels, 1995; Harrison & Hubbard, 1998; Johnston et al., 1990; Knoop, 1995; Kreitner & Kinicki, 1992; Morrison, 1997; Norris & Niebuhr, 1984; Ting, 1997) and their relationship has an influence on performance and turnover intent (Benkhoff, 1997; Clugston, 2000; Klein & Ritti, 1984; Lum, et al., 1998; Mathieu & Zajac, 1990).

Job satisfaction is one of the attitudinal constructs that has been shown to be related to organizational commitment (Steers, 1977), but its treatment as an independent construct should be emphasized. A number of factors distinguish job satisfaction from organizational commitment. Mowday et al., (1979, p.226) argue that organizational commitment is "more global, reflecting a general affective response to the organization as a whole" while job satisfaction "reflects one's response either to one's job or to certain aspects of one's job" (p.226). Thus organizational commitment focuses on attachment to the employing organization as a whole, including the organization's goals and values, while job satisfaction focuses on the specific task environment where an employee performs his or her duties (Mowday et al., 1979). Organizational commitment is less influenced by daily events than job satisfaction; it develops more slowly but consistently over time, and therefore is seen to be a more complex and enduring construct (Mowday et al., 1979). Furthermore, job satisfaction and organizational commitment do not necessarily occur simultaneously: it is possible that an employee may exhibit high levels of job satisfaction without having a sense of attachment to, or obligation to remain in, the organization. Similarly, a highly committed employee may dislike the job he/she is doing (exhibiting low levels of job satisfaction) (McPhee & Townsend, 1992).

While generally research supports a positive association between commitment and satisfaction the causal ordering between these two variables remains both controversial and contradictory (Martin & Bennett, 1996).

Kalleberg and Mastekaasa (2001) found that previous research on the relationship between job satisfaction and organizational commitment has not shown any consistent and easily reconcilable findings. Accordingly, Lincoln & Kalleberg (1990), Porter et al. (1974), and Tett and Meyer (1993) maintain that a satisfaction-to-commitment model assumes that satisfaction is a cause of commitment. A second commitment-to-satisfaction model holds that commitment contributes to an overall positive attitude toward the job (Tett & Meyer, 1993; Vandenberg & Lance, 1992).

Research methodology

The following research questions were addressed:

- What is the level of job satisfaction among employees in the municipality' employees?
- What is the level of organizational commitment among municipality' employees?
- What is the relationship between job satisfaction and organizational commitment?

One hundred and sixty questionnaires were sent to the Municipality of Shkoder, with 56 completed questionnaires being returned. The final sample comprised male and female employees. Years of employment at the Municipality of Shkoder ranged from one year to over ten years. Seventy nine percent of the employees had a tertiary education. Two questionnaires were identified as the primary data collection tools and were used to collect quantitative data. In addition, a biographical questionnaire was administered to obtain information on participants' gender, educational level, length of employment at the Municipality of Shkoder, level of employment.

The most commonly used measure of job satisfaction is the Job Descriptive Index (JDI) (Smith et al., 1969). The scale provides a faceted approach to the measurement of satisfaction in terms of specific identifiable characteristics related to the job (Luthans, 1998). It measures five aspects of an employee's satisfaction in respect of: satisfaction with work itself, satisfaction with pay, satisfaction with opportunities for promotion, satisfaction with supervision, and satisfaction with coworkers (Smith et al., 1969). The JDI consists of 72 items: 9 items each for the facets of promotions and pay; and 18 items each for work, supervision and co-workers (Smucker & Kent, 2004). The Organizational Commitment Questionnaire was developed on the basis of Mowday et al.'s (1982, p. 27) definition of organizational commitment. It consists of 15 items that tap an employee's belief in and acceptance of the organization's goals and values, their willingness to be part of the organization, and a strong desire to maintain membership in the organization. The questionnaires were accompanied by a covering letter and a consent form explaining the nature and purpose of the research and assuring respondents of absolute confidentiality. The rationale

behind providing clear instructions and assuring confidentiality of information is based on the fact that this significantly reduces the likelihood of obtaining biased responses (Sekaran, 2003). Administrative staff members, who had been enlightened about the purpose of the study, were assigned to distribute and collect the questionnaires. The process of distribution and collection of the questionnaires was conducted over two weeks. A total of 160 questionnaires were distributed to all employees, with 56 fully completed questionnaires being returned, thereby constituting a 35% return rate. For the purposes of testing the research hypotheses, a number of statistical techniques were employed. These included both descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. The data were analyzed with the use of the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences.

Results

The level of total job satisfaction as well as for the facets of job satisfaction was assessed by the Job Satisfaction Index (JDI) amongst the sample of 56 employees. The mean for total job satisfaction (JIG) was 33.39 with a standard deviation of 12.673. Given that a mean above 27 and below 40 is considered to indicate moderate satisfaction, one may conclude that, as a group, this sample was moderately satisfied. The means for the facets of job satisfaction also indicate a moderate level of satisfaction with work, supervision and coworkers. The employees in the sample were, however, moderately dissatisfied with promotion and highly dissatisfied with pay.

The mean and standard deviation for the organizational commitment were 4.5 and 1.30, respectively. The mean score is slightly above the midpoint on the 7-point Likert scale, which indicates a moderate level of organizational commitment for the employees at the Municipality of Shkodra. Moreover, standard deviation indicates an acceptable distribution of responses within samples. To determine the correlation between the variables, Pearson correlation tests were conducted. The results show that organizational commitment was significantly positively correlated with job satisfaction and the job satisfaction facets of supervision, work and co-workers ($p<0.01$). The correlation between organizational commitment and promotion was also significant ($p< 0.05$). There was no correlation between organizational commitment and pay. Cronbach's alpha was calculated for the Organizational Commitment questionnaire. The value of Cronbach's alpha was 0.7 indicating a high degree of internal consistency amongst the items. Cronbach's alpha was calculated for the Job Satisfaction Index. The value of Cronbach's alpha was 0.71 indicating a high degree of internal consistency amongst the items. The results show moderate levels of organizational commitment and moderate levels of job satisfaction. Organizational commitment was found to correlate, at the 99% level of confidence ($P<0.01$), with job satisfaction and the three job satisfaction facets of work, supervision

and co-workers. There was a correlation, at the 95% level of confidence ($P<0.05$), between organizational commitment and the job satisfaction facet of promotion, but no correlation between organizational commitment and pay.

Conclusions and recommendations

In line with numerous other studies (e.g. Angle & Perry, 1983; Knoop, 1995; Morrison, 1997; Young et al., 1998; Eby & Freeman, 1999; Testa, 2001; Buitendach & de Witte, 2005) and despite Kalleberg and Mastekaasa's (2001) assertion that previous research on the relationship between job satisfaction and organizational commitment has not shown any consistent and easily reconcilable findings, the current study found a significant positive correlation between job satisfaction and organizational commitment. These findings suggest, therefore, that the greater the job satisfaction among the employees at the Municipality of Shkoder, the more committed they will be to the organization. As the findings of the study show, employees were only moderately satisfied with their jobs. For human resources officers, the implication is that, to improve organizational commitment, they would need to improve job satisfaction. To do this, one needs to examine the findings obtained for the facets of job satisfaction. While the findings showed that the job satisfaction facets of work, supervision and coworkers were at moderate levels, employees were not satisfied with promotion and pay.

Of the last two, only the facet of promotion was positively correlated with organizational commitment, with no correlation between pay and organizational commitment. The job satisfaction facet of promotion can be understood from the perspective of Herzberg's (1966) 'motivator factors': a lack of stimulation and recognition in an employee's current position, where he/she seeks to be promoted into a more intrinsically rewarding position and is not promoted, then he/she can become dissatisfied, leading to lower levels of commitment to the organization. According to Adams' (1965) Equity Theory, it is possible that when employees judge an organization to be unfair and unsupportive in their treatment, particularly with regard to the availability and frequency of promotional opportunities, their satisfaction and commitment levels will not be at a high level. The current findings of a low level of satisfaction with promotion, and a strong positive correlation between promotion and organizational commitment, suggest that improving this facet could lead to an improvement in organizational commitment in this sample.

By working to improve the other facets of job satisfaction (i.e. work, supervision and coworkers), which indicated moderate levels of satisfaction, but which were also positively correlated with organizational commitment, human resources officers could also achieve greater organizational

commitment. One surprising finding was that, despite low levels of satisfaction with the facet of pay, there was no correlation with organizational commitment. In other words, although these employees were highly dissatisfied with their remuneration, this did not necessarily mean that they were not committed to the organization.

The central objective of this study was to explore the relationship between job satisfaction and the job satisfaction facets of work, pay, supervision, promotion and relationships with co-workers, and organizational commitment at a public sector institution, namely the Municipality of Shkoder. The results obtained in this study showed that job satisfaction had a significant positive correlation with organizational commitment.

The findings indicate that employees at the Municipality of Shkoder were moderately satisfied with the nature of the work itself, the supervision they receive and their coworkers. They were less satisfied with promotional opportunities and least satisfied with the pay they receive. There was also a positive correlation between work, supervision, coworkers and promotion, but no relationship between pay and organizational commitment. The results of the study should be interpreted with caution as a non-probability sample convenience sample was utilized in the study. Therefore, the results obtained from the research may be specific to the sample that was selected for the investigation, and cannot be generalized with confidence to other sectors of the Municipality of Shkoder or other public sector entities.

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