

THE IMPACT OF ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT ON KNOWLEDGE SHARING

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Abstract:

The main purpose of this study is to determine the relationship between employees' knowledge sharings and commitment of the organization. For this purpose, a research has been done on a total of 537 employees who work in two private textile companies. Knowledge sharing in this study is defined as an activity which is mutual exchange knowledges such as information, talent or expertise within people, friends, family members, in a community or an organization. In accordance with this framework as the dimensions of knowledge sharing are treated as organizational and individual reasons that prevent knowledge sharing, individual and organizational results of knowledge sharing and finally individual and managerial perspectives in knowledge sharing. Organization commitment is treated as " individual's identification with organization, participation in activities of organization and display of willingness, desire and power of effort in these subjects. In this research dimensions of organizational commitment, emotional commitment, continuance commitment and normative commitment are investigated. As a result of the research it has been revealed that organizational commitment and especially emotional commitment have positive effect on the exchange of information. As a result of this, organizations use their current resources more efficiently, they provide being stable and loyal of employees by generating of intraorganizational knowledge sharing culture. Besides, it is provided that increasing and protection of organization's intellectual capital of employees by converting the knowledge of employees into organizational knowledge.

Key Words : Knowledge, Knowledge Sharing, Organizational Commitment

Introduction

Business organizations have to adapt current politics and create and apply new strategies in order to survive in today's intense competitive conditions. We may observe that, humans are the basis of this. Organizations are preparing for the future by improving and preserving their human resources. Setting out of the thought "Humans are the most crucial source in organizations to create value and difference", organizations must support their workers sufficiently and acknowledge their value.

Modern organizations struggle to have workforce with sufficient knowledge and ability and survive in this struggle by creating efficient learning opportunities with efficient management (Doğan and Demiral 2008). Thus, keeping the qualified worker is crucial since the works done in the organizations became more dependent on knowledge and less dependent on physical capabilities. Hence, if a worker quits, not only his/her physical capabilities are lost but also his/her knowledge and abilities. Replacing this person takes much more time and costs more since, new personnel should go through training process. Tekinay (2003) expresses that especially in knowledge dependent businesses and in some branches of manufacturing, it is important to not to lose staff. Organizations get hurt a lot when a staff is lost. If the cost of resigning and educating new skilled workers analysis contributed by Tekinay on Capital is evaluated on all the sectors; losing a blue collar personnel and signing a new one is more than %20-25 of the annual salary package. As for the white collars, this value increases to %100 or %150. In the management the cost is increased to %300.

As can be inferred, in order to gain and hold the stability and competition of advantages the business organizations have to keep their employees. Unless the knowledge possessed by the employees and their experiences are transformed into organizational knowledge probable withdrawals

are likely to engender great losses. In order to do this, organizational commitment is to be incurred among the employees so that the knowledge possessed by them can be shared.

Organizational Commitment and Formats

Organizational commitment is conceptualized in various forms and tried to be measured. Researchers suggest that organizational commitment forms in two ways in the organizations. The first is the attitudinal commitment and the other is the behaviour commitment. The attitudinal commitment emerges from the relationships between the employee and the organization centres on what the employees think about their organization. According to Grusky (1966), attitudinal commitment represents the individual's identification with a specific organization and the organization's goals, his/her willingness to continue to work in the organization to facilitate reaching these goals and the employees' emotional commitment to a social system. Allen and Meyer's (1990) work revealed the differences in the attitudinal commitment definitions, developed a measure for each and showed that each and every one of these measures has different relationships with the previous works. Meyer and Allen (1991) treat organizational commitment in three groups; affective-emotional continuance and normative commitment. This mode of classification is still valid today and is still considered to be fundamental in the commitment studies.

Emotional Commitment: the most popular approach to the organizational commitment is the emotional commitment. It can simply be defined as strong sense of belonging to the organization and/or identification with the organization. "Cohesion Commitment" which is defined by Kanter (1968) as individuals' emotional investments is phrased by Buchanan as the emotional involvement or affiliation with the business organization's goals and targets. This, according to him is in a way a type of commitment for the sake of organization. On the other hand, it is defined by Porter and his colleagues as strong ties between the organization and the individual. Mowday and his colleagues ground emotional commitment on four factors namely, individual characteristics, work(ing) characteristics, work experience, anatomical/structural characteristics. The data obtained from the results of the studies on emotional commitment show that emotional commitment stems from work experiences (Allen and Meyer, 1990). Emotional commitment in its most general form can be described as sentimentally the individuals' willingness to stay at the business organization by their own will.

Continuance Commitment: According to Becker (1960) is a type of commitment which forms as a result of the cost that must be paid by the individual who discontinues his/her activities. The basic feature of this commitment which is defined by Kanter (1968) as the cognitive-continuance commitment is that it is correlated with gain in continuance and cost in discontinuance or withdrawal. The reason for the employees desired to stay in the organization is the sense of deprivation from the present/prospective salary gains, status, freedom and promotional opportunities. Becker grounds continuance commitment on two main factors: individual investments in the organization and the individuals perceived lack of alternatives. Employees cannot easily give up the investments they have made through their talents/knowledge, the time and energy they have spent and transfer to another organization. For this reason, they have the tendency to continue in their organizations. The other reason is that the individual has too little job alternatives and this reinforces continuance commitment. In general, continuance commitment is set to be the type of commitment which is engendered by the cost that must be paid by the employee in case of withdrawal from the organization.

Normative Commitment: The basis of this type of commitment is the benefits accomplished by the employees from the organization and his feeling of indebtedness, gratitude and respect to the organization in return for the reciprocal good relations that he/she developed with the organization (Seçkin 2011: 352). For Allen and Meyer (1990), the reason for employees continuing to work for the organization is his/her feeling of responsibility for the organization. According to Wiener (1982), the motivating factor behind reaching organizational goals and targets employees feeling of normativity and for the employee this feeling is moral and right. This is, under the influence of familial, cultural life, individual experiences and his/her identification with the organization the belief developed that it is right and morally appropriate for the employee to stay in the organization. The length of employees' stay in the organization affects the expected loyalty (i.e. the longer he/she work for the organization higher the expected loyalty).

Researchers consider commitment attitudinal (internal tendency, eagerness to maintain relationships) as well as behavioral (individual efforts reinforcing relationships). Behavioral commitment is considered as a commitment to comprise reciprocal interaction, effort and relational utility. Employees in the organizations demonstrate their tendencies and intentions to their colleagues via their behavior (Sharma, et al., 2001). In other words, behavioral commitment can also read as employees' claiming responsibility for the organization, taking part in solving the problems within the organization by sharing their knowledge and skills with the organization as well as with other employees, and the contributions made to the organization for minimizing costs and maximizing the profits. What underlies behavioral commitment is the creation of mutual objectives and values resulting from the integration of the organization and individual (Demirel, 2008).

Knowledge and Knowledge Sharing

From past to present, society have gone through different eras. These are: Agriculture Society, Industry Society and Knowledge Society. The valid thing in agricultural society is to own land and physical labor. In industrial society, machines take the place of land and skilled workers take the place of physical labor. In the Knowledge Society which started to become influential from mid 20th century knowledge replaced the machines and "brain power" replaced skilled labour (Nazlı, 2004).

The fact that knowledge has become one of the greatest elements of competition has led the business organizations to utilize the knowledge possessed by their employees in the most effective and efficient manner. Besides, business organizations are striving to minimize the losses engendered by employees quitting job. These efforts may prove fruitful if commitment can be elicited among employees, (individual) knowledge can be transformed into organizational knowledge and if knowledge sharing can be secured among the employees. In the knowledge sharing, socialization and learning processes creation of new ideas among the employees and presenting new business ideas are fundamental to a living organization (Salim, et al., 2011). Accordingly, knowledge sharing is a process whereby information, skill or expertise is reciprocally exchanged among people, friends, members of family, community or organization (Wang, 2010).

Creation of a favorable work environment and securing high levels of trust among employees and employer-employee relationships are crucial factors in knowledge sharing (Kurtoğlu, 2007). In order to avoid losing the qualified employees or to minimize prospective loss of leaving employees today's business organizations must transform the individual knowledge possessed by the employees into organizational knowledge. However, how can this be accomplished? Rendering organizational commitment among employees is one of the most important ways. Demirel (2008) in his/her study explained organizational commitment by demonstrating its potential consequences according to which organizational commitment is "The individual's contribution to the organization. It comprises of contributions such as enhancing organizational performance, resolving absenteeism and reduction of worker turnover rate. As the level of commitment to the organization rises so does the level of effort for the organization". As can be inferred organizational commitment is key to ensuring continuance and knowledge sharing. Knowledge sharing is defined as a process whereby an individual exchanges the knowledge he/she possesses with other individuals for them to understand, appropriate and utilize that knowledge. It is said that, the most important element of knowledge sharing of organizations is the individuals and individual knowledge. In their study dated 1995 Nonaka & Takeuchi, referring to importance of business organizations' employees in the process of knowledge production, emphasize that the organizations cannot produce knowledge without the individuals and that unless an knowledge sharing is medium is created within the organization organizational effectiveness and efficiency will be quite limited (Karaaslan, et al., 2009). Employees will contribute to the sharing knowledge within the organization relative to their level of organizational commitment and this will contribute to the development of both the organization and the employees.

Methodology of Research

Purpose of Research

The purpose of the research is to determine the effect of organizational commitment on knowledge sharing in the textile sector by determining the relationship between organizational commitment and knowledge sharing.

Data Collection Method

Survey method is used in data collection. The survey consists of three parts. Part 1 consists of Personal Knowledge Form in which knowledge regarding the gender, level of education, age, length of work in the sector, length of work in the work place, job, salary and management mentality of the business organization are asked to the subjects. Part 2 consists of Knowledge sharing Measure. The said measure is adapted from the studies of Holste (2003) and Wang (2010). Part 3 consists of Organizational Commitment Measure. This measure is taken from the studies of Meyer and Allen (1991), Tayyab (2006) and Cohen (2007).

Extent of Research and Sampling Process

The employees of the two plants operating in the textile sector in Aksaray, Turkey make up the main mass of the study. To gain advantage in terms of cost and time in sampling from said main mass and easy sampling method is utilized.

In Table 1, the profile of the organizations within the scope of the research is given. Knowledge regarding the textile employees is taken from “Work force market Aksaray province result report” prepared by Türkiye İş Kurumu in 1911 (2012 report is not published yet).

Table 1. Employee Data of Organizations

Organizaitons	Female	Male	Total
A Textile	166	184	330
B Textile	148	59	207
Total	314	243	537

278 employees working in two different firms of the textile sector in Aksaray took part in the research. The age range of the employees is 18-30 (86.3%). 54.3% of the subjects consisted of men and 45.7% of women. As to the level of education of the employees 46% (128 graduates) of them were noted to be graduated from primary school and 43.5% were high school graduates.

Hypothesis of Research

The hypotheses developed depending on the purpose of the research are:

- H₁:** There is a significant relationship between the level of organizational commitment and knowledge sharing at the individual level.
- H₂:** There is a significant relationship between the level of organizational commitment and knowledge sharing at the organizational level.
- H₃:** The level of organizational commitment affects knowledge sharing in a positive manner.

Research Findings

Socio-Demographic Properties and Management Type Related Findings:

%54,3 of the 278 workers who participated in the survey are male and %45,7 of them are female. %86,3 of the workers are aged between 18-30. %55,4 of the workers have been in this sector for 1-3 years. %61,9 of them have been working less than 1 year in their organizations. %89,5 of the participant are elementary school or high school graduates. %97,8 of the workers are in manufacturing departments and have work in coordinated. As for the salaries, salaries of the %92 of the workers are between 500-1000 TL (€210 - €420). %49,3 of the workers indicated that their management has an authoritative structure and %28,4 of them are customer oriented.

Reliability-Validity Analysis of Organizational Commitment and Knowledge Sharing Scales

In the research, Cronbach’s Alpha Coefficient is used in scales analysis as predicative factor in the validity analysis. Cronbach’s Alpha coefficient of the organizational commitment scale is 975; Cronbach Alpha coefficient of the knowledge sharing scale is 925. Validity analysis of the scales are given in Table 2 and Table 3.

Table 2: Validity Analysis of Organizational Commitment Scale

Organizational Commitment: Variables	Factor and Factor Values		
	1	2	3
I think people frequently change jobs	,601		
A person should always be loyal to the organization he/she works in	,678		
As a worker, transferring from one firm to another is completely ethical to me	,639		
One of the main reasons for me to continue to work in this company is loyalty and moreover moral obligations	,812		
I can leave my job if I get a better job offer	,773		
Spending most of his/her career in one institution is good for a worker	,843		
I don't it will be logical to commit myself emotionally to one organization	,776		
As for my opinion, being loyal to the organization is important	,860		
I'd be happy to spend the rest of my professional life in this organization		,783	
I like to talk to my friends about the organization		,825	
I consider the problems of the organizations as my own problems		,825	
I can't easily commit to another organization as I've done to this organization		,805	
In this organization, I feel like I'm family		,747	
I feel an emotional bond with this organization		,772	
This organization is very important to me		,705	
I feel loyal to this organization		,747	
If I leave my job, a big proportion of my life would be affected negatively			,606
Leaving this organization now would cost me economically in the future			,479
I continue working here to prevent myself from making individual sacrifices			,611
One of the negative consequences for me to leave this institution, another organization may not provide me the conditions that I have here			,318
Even if I wanted to leave this organization, it is very hard for me right now			,608
The reason I want to stay in this organization is both because I want to and because it's a necessity			,415
I think I have not enough opportunities to consider leaving this organization			,626
I'm concerned about leaving this organization without guaranteeing a new job			,341
Organizational Commitment format related variance (%)	31,379	29,843	15,03
Total variance (%)	76,26		
S-S-P	,949		
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity: Approx. Chi-Square ;df	7649,206; 276; p<0,001		

Not: Factor 1: Normative Commitment, Factor 2: Emotional Commitment, Factor 3: Continuance Commitment

In Table 2, factor analysis related to organizational commitment scale is presented. According to results of the analysis, organizational commitment is described in 3 factors in a percentage of 76.26. Sampling sufficiency coefficient is set to 0,949.

Table 3: Validity Analysis of Organizational Commitment Scale

Organizational Commitment: Variables	Factor and Factor Values	
	1	2
I share knowledge with my co-workers in order to solve a problem	,633	
I'm willing to share formal documents with the rest of the staff in the future	,747	
I'm always willing to share manuals, methods and work analysis models	,766	
I'd like to share work related knowledge I've gained from newspapers, magazines, etc...	,798	
I'm willing to share technical knowledge with the rest of the staff in the future	,837	
I always use other workers desires in order to create my own technique and methods.	,809	
I'll try to share my expertise coming from my education more effectively with my co-workers	,858	
Knowledge sharing increases my prestige in the organization	,840	
Knowledge sharing makes me recognizable	,838	
Knowledge sharing brings me respect	,846	
Knowledge sharing brings me praises	,843	
Knowledge sharing helps other workers in solving organizational problems	,824	
Knowledge sharing brings new job opportunities to the organization	,789	
Knowledge sharing increases prolificacy		,884
Knowledge sharing helps reaching organizational performance goals		,894
Knowledge sharing strengthens relationships between workers		,927
Knowledge sharing makes me present myself better to the new employees.		,901
Knowledge sharing widens the cooperated activity area		,898
Knowledge sharing helps me to cooperate better with the management in the future		,882
Knowledge sharing creates a strong cooperation between workers who has same sense of purpose.		,871
Knowledge sharing factor related variance (%)	42,293	28,269
Total Variance (%)	70,562	
S-S-P	,924	
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity: Approx. Chi-Square; df	5330,796; 190; p<0,001	

Not: Factor 1: Individual Knowledge Sharing, Factor 2: Organizational Knowledge Sharing

In Table 3, results of knowledge sharing related factor analysis are presented. Knowledge sharing is described in 2 factors in a percentage like 70.562. Sampling Sufficiency Proportion is 0.924. In this context, we may say that, knowledge sharing scale has internal accuracy.

Table 4: Descriptive Statistics Related to Organizational Commitment and Knowledge Sharing

Descriptive Statistics			
	Average	Standard Deviation	Numeral
Individual Knowledge Sharing	3,6646	,97951	278
Organizational Knowledge Sharing	2,9491	1,24403	278
Knowledge Sharing in General	3,3069	,84626	278
Emotional Commitment	2,9159	1,06600	278
Continuance Commitment	2,9213	1,03778	278
Normative Commitment	2,8858	1,11854	278
Organizational Commitment in General	2,9077	,99607	278

Not: 1: Strongly Disagree, 2: Disagree, 3: Neutral, 4: Agree, 5: Strongly Agree

In Table 4, when statistics are examined, it is seen that participants have a positive attitude towards individual knowledge sharing in organizations. Attitude of the workers toward organizational knowledge sharing is almost positive. Hereunder, it is possible to say that workers have a positive attitude towards knowledge sharing in general. As the averages of the organizational commitment levels of the workers are examined it appears to have an above the average value.

The Relationship between Organizational Commitment and Knowledge Sharing

Correlation analysis is conducted in order to obtain the effects of organizational commitment over knowledge sharing on Table 5.

Table 5. The Relationship between Organizational Commitment and Knowledge Sharing

FACTORS	Knowledge Sharing Related Factors			
	Sperman's rho	Individual Knowledge sharing	Organizational Knowledge sharing	Knowledge sharing in General
Emotional Commitment (EC)	r	,184	,339	,356
	p	,002	,001	,001
Continuance Commitment (CC)	r	,127	,283	,281
	p	,035	,001	,001
Normative Commitment (NC)	r	,129	,254	,261
	p	,032	,001	,001
Organizational Commitment (OC)	r	,158	,314	,322
	p	,008	,001	,001
p < 0.05				

In Table 5, correlation analysis of the relationship between organizational commitment and knowledge sharing is presented. According to this, there is a positive but weak relationship between emotional commitment, organizational knowledge sharing and knowledge sharing in general. Also there is a positive but weak relationship between continuance commitment, normative commitment, organizational knowledge sharing and knowledge sharing in general too. Additionally, it is also discernable that there is a positive but weak relationship between emotional commitment, normative commitment, continuance commitment and knowledge sharing. In general, there is a positive but weak relationship between organizational commitment and knowledge sharing.

According to the results obtained from the table, **1. H₁ hypothesis** ($p < 0,05$; EC: $r = 0,184$ CC: $r = 0,127$; NC: $r = 0,129$; OC: $r = 0,158$) which supports there is a relationship between organizational commitment and knowledge sharing is confirmed. When the second hypothesis which supports that organizational commitment levels bring the organizational knowledge sharing system is examined, it's obvious that organizational knowledge sharing is gets more powerful than individual knowledge sharing. **2. H₁ hypothesis** ($p < 0,05$; EC: $r = 0,339$; CC : $r = 0,283$; NC: $r = 0,254$; OC: $r = 0,314$) is confirmed. Result of the hypothesis supports the research done by Han and his friends in 2010.

Accordingly, in the research, it is implied that workers will be more willing to share knowledge if they are involved in organizational decisions.

Effects of Organizational Commitment over Knowledge Sharing

Regression analysis is conducted in order to obtain the effects of organizational commitment over knowledge sharing on Table 6 and Table 7.

Table 6. Organizational Commitment-Knowledge sharing Anova Test Results

ANOVA ^b						
Model	Sum of Squares	df	Average of Squares	F	p	
1	Regression	25,471	3	8,490	13,455	,001 ^a
	Residual	172,903	274	,631		
	Total	198,373	277			

p<0,05; a: Independent Variable:Organizational Commitment; b: Dependent Variable: Knowledge sharing in General

Table 6, model is meaningful on p<0,05 and on 13,455 F.

Table 7. Organizational Commitment-Knowledge Sharing Coefficients Table

Model 1	B	β coefficient	t- value	p	R	R ²	Rectified R ²
					,358 ^a	,128	,119
(Constant Value)	2,482		16,769	,000			
Emotional Commitment	,295	,372	3,895	,000			
Continuance Commitment	-,075	-,091	-,648	,517			
Normative Commitment	,063	,083	,718	,477			

a. Independent Variable: Normative Commitment, Emotional Commitment, Continuance Commitment

b. Dependent Variable: Knowledge sharing in general
p<0,05

In Table 7, %11.9 of knowledge sharing is described by independent variables. When looked at the β coefficient, it is observed that this affected mostly by “Emotional Commitment”. So, this means emotional commitment affects knowledge sharing. Accordingly, **3. H₁ hypothesis is partially accepted**. Similar researches also support these findings, Abili and others, (2011) tried to base knowledge sharing to various factors. One of these factors is “Human factor” in the basis of trust and commitment. Within their study, they established that there is a positive relationship between trust, commitment and knowledge sharing. Carbó ve Segovia (2011) emphasized that in order to increase knowledge sharing, individual commitment levels must be improved. Saleem and others, (2011) also defended that organizational commitment supports knowledge sharing, in addition they implied that workers with organizational commitment understanding are more willing to share implicit knowledge. Mogotsi and others (2011) weren’t able to discover a relationship between organizational commitment and knowledge sharing, however in the direction of literature and their own predictions they have implied that this is a surprise and in their research they have mentioned organizational commitment as something that may affect knowledge sharing.

Result & Discussions

Organizations recently started to understand the value of their most precious assets, people (workers). That’s why, the organizations choose to include the ways of worker and customer centered human resources applications. In the present, values of the organizations are measured not only from tangibles but also from their workers, brand value, organizational knowledge, as a sum intellectual capital too. The income that comes because of valuing workers may be low in short terms, however the gained intellectual capital would become an high profit income in mid and long terms. Thus,

organizational managers are forced to find new methods that may increase the knowledge sharing in the organization. One of these factors is organizational commitment or emotional commitment. Research is based on searching for the effects of organizational commitment in knowledge sharing.

There are many few productions in the literature that study organizational commitment. Hoof and Ridder (2004) researched the role of organizational commitment and communication over knowledge sharing. In their research, they have established the importance of organizational commitment especially emotional commitment over knowledge sharing. Besides, they presented that emotional commitment increases the knowledge sharing and willingness of the workers to share knowledge and also they presented that sharing knowledge is harder than gaining knowledge. On the other hand, in his doctoral thesis on the relationship between organizational commitment, job appreciation, organizational citizenship behavior and knowledge sharing, Mogotsi (2009) presented that there isn't a strong connection between them but less %5 interaction. By looking at the results of research hypothesizes, generally results are positive and indicate that there is a connection between knowledge sharing and organizational commitment. Emotional commitment would cause the workers to willingly contribute to the organization without any expectations from the organization. In other commitment types since the workers only think their profits, they will share only "sufficient" knowledge. However, willing workers won't hesitate to make efforts and to share their knowledge. (Hau ve Chow 2004: 3). This is because; emotional commitment interacts better with knowledge sharing. Researches are consistent with the literature. In order to set light to future studies, since this research is contributed on a textile factory which is a production plant it would be better to study on more suitable sectors. This is important to provide the consistency of results and to indicate differences between sectors

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