

Assessing the Relationship between Participation in Decision Making, Job Satisfaction and Multiple Commitments

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ABSTRACT

This study assesses the impact of participation in decision making on job satisfaction, organisational commitment and group commitment. It also seeks to fill the void about the extent of participation in decision making and commitment in Indian public sector undertakings (PSUs). Data were collected from 397 employees working in these different organisations. Structural equation modelling was used to examine the hypothesised relationships. The findings of the present study indicated that participation in decision making had significant relationship with job satisfaction. Job satisfaction was positively related to organisational commitment and group commitment. Participation in decision making has significant impact on organisational commitment but not on group commitment. Group commitment did not have significant impact on organisational commitment. Results suggest that participation in decision making is a key element as it enhances satisfaction of employees with the organisation. The implications of these findings for the people holding key managerial responsibilities in public sector undertakings have been discussed.

Keywords: Participation, Decision Making, Organisational Commitment, Group Commitment, Job Satisfaction, Employees, Public Sector Undertakings

INTRODUCTION

The world of business has undergone rapid development in information technology over a few decades. Globalisation is believed to be the reason for such continuous development. Globalisation also has an impact on

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business environment. Human resource is considered the most important asset for any organisation. In order to be highly competitive, an organisation needs to have a human resource pool or talent pool generating high performance that cannot be substituted by its rivals (Barney, 1991). Since a lot of emphasis is given on performance and result-oriented services, participative management is considered very essential for satisfaction of employees (Kim, 2002).

Management of organisations depends on the extent of participation that is used in an ethical perspective (Sashkin, 1984). Participation allows individuals to share influence among themselves who are not hierarchially equal (Wagner, 1994). Participative management practices help to maintain a balance on the involvement of managers as well as the subordinates in the daily tasks and activities related to the job (Wagner, 1994). In addition, participation allows employees to understand the firm's business and problems. It leaves them in a better position to feel involved in the policies and decisions of the firm. It is believed that participation makes an influence on work practices, recognition and rewards. Participation in decision making is believed to be related to job satisfaction of the employees (Cotton, Vollrath, Froggatt, Lengnick-Hall & Jennings 1988). The highest levels of satisfaction in the work environment are likely to occur when there is high level of involvement by planning processes, generating alternatives, formulating policies and evaluating results.

Commitment of an individual determines the extent of an individual's identification and involvement in the organisation (Mowday, Porter & Steers, 1982). By increasing participation of the employees, their level of affective organisational commitment increases by a very high amount (Witt, Andrews & Kacmar, 2000). This type of commitment has an impact on the attachment of the individual with the organisation. It regards the individual as identifying with the organisation, hence committed to retaining membership to pursue his or her goals (Kumar & Giri, 2012). Affective organisational commitment is one such variable which was researched abundantly by the research scholars, considering the fact that it is associated with positive organisational outcomes. It has received a great deal of attention in business and organisational studies (Giri & Kumar, 2013).

An employee in his workplace would interact with several entities in order to effectively discharge one's assigned duties. Employees who are reluctant to develop commitment to the organisation might instead become committed to the team or group in which they work (Meyer & Allen, 1997). Group commitment is a form of commitment that measures

the level of bonding of an individual with his or co-workers (Randall & Cote, 1991). Group commitment is a very new concept in the domain of commitment research. It is well understood fact that communication taking place in positive spirit would ease out the differences in understanding and would lead to a sense of belongingness. In turn, sense of belongingness is expected to develop commitment. The behavioral consequences of these commitments might have implications for employee's relations with the organisation.

To address the paucity of research on the interface between participation levels and behaviour related outcomes, a cross-level model of the influence of participation in decision making on individual-level outcomes is delineated and empirically tested.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Participation in Decision Making

Participation in decision making is defined as sharing the decision making process in order to achieve organisational objectives (Knoop, 1995). Individuals feel a sense of belongingness to the organisation when they are allowed to make suggestions and participate in decision making process. Participation increases motivation of individuals that helps in building job satisfaction and organisational commitment (Witt et al., 2000). This is due to the fact that employees who make decisions that have their consent in them are more likely to value outcomes (Black & Gregersen, 1997). This in turn, reinforces satisfaction. Participative management is found to have substantial positive influence on satisfaction in work environment (Kim, 2002; Louis & Smith, 1991; Johnson, 1990). Participation in decision making offers employees different levels of influence in making policies ranging from consultative committees to developing good relations with managers. When employees participate in decision making, it helps to build their commitment towards the organisation (Kumar & Giri, 2013).

Job Satisfaction

The concept of job satisfaction is widely studied in literature. Job satisfaction has been defined as a feeling about a job that is determined by the difference between the amount of valued outcome that an individual receives and the outcome he feels he should receive (Porter, Lawler & Hackman, 1975). Job satisfaction is also defined as a pleasurable

emotional state resulting from appraisal of one's job or values gained from the job (Locke, 1976). It is an important attribute that is desired by organisations through their employees. This is due to the fact that job satisfaction is an explicit and potential determinant of absenteeism, turnover, in-role job performance and behaviours within the organisation. In addition, the primary antecedents of job attitudes are within the ability of the management to influence.

Multiple Commitments

More than one form of commitment may be exhibited by the employees in the workplace simultaneously. For example, an employee wanting to develop commitment may end up building attachment towards the organisation or towards the members of his or her work group (Meyer & Allen, 1997). If an employee is less committed to one aspect of the workplace (e.g. the organisation), then there is a possibility that he may be committed to another aspect of the workplace (e.g. the work group). Hence, it is necessary to study more than one form of commitment to gain better understanding about the process and magnitude of commitment (Cohen, 2003, 1993a).

Organisational Commitment

Attributes like attachment, identification and loyalty are considered positive feelings that should be exhibited towards one's organisation. Commitment is viewed as an attitude that reflects such feelings (Morrow, 1993). Affective organisational commitment is regarded as identifying with the organisation and hence being committed to retaining membership to pursue his or her goals. It is defined as positive feelings of identification, attachment and involvement with the work organisation (Meyer & Allen, 1997). An individual who is affectively committed to his or her organisation might be more likely to be attached to his or her organisation, to join and be active in relevant matters.

Group Commitment

An individual's identification and sense of cohesiveness with other members of the organisation is known as group commitment (Randall & Cote, 1991). It is one of the less researched concepts in multiple commitment research (Morrow, 1993). Most of the research on group commitment related it to organisational commitment conceptually or empirically.

Randall and Cote (1991) suggested that the importance of work group commitment is its enhancement of social involvement, and this reinforces the social ties the individual develops with the organisation. Another reason for analysing group commitment as a separate construct together with affective organisational commitment is the need to demonstrate the distinction between the two commitments and to shed light that group commitment is an equally independent concept in addition to other forms of commitment. It is also termed as team commitment (Cohen, 2003).

Theoretical Background

Participation in Decision Making and Job Satisfaction

When employees are allowed to take part in the decision making process, it creates a sense of belongingness towards the organisation. To reciprocate such privileged actions, employees would exhibit identification and loyalty with their organisation. Research indicates that employee participation across organisations is increasing (Harley, Ramsey & Scholarios, 2000). Therefore, it is important to understand when and how workplace participation contributes to gains for both employees and employers. Information flow and decision making are enriched and communications are more open and transparent (Anderson & McDaniel, 1999).

A study conducted in a large manufacturing organisation had concluded that employees having a high desire to participate in decision making are likely to exhibit high levels of job satisfaction (Ornoy, 2010). In addition, similar fact was observed in a large manufacturing firm and a large public utility firm (Schuler, 1983). Thus employees, who view their organisations behaving in their interest experienced greater job satisfaction (Parnell, 2003) and returned the favour by exhibiting more affective commitment (Scott-Ladd, Travaglione & Marshall, 2006). Thus, the review of literature led to develop the following hypothesis:

H₁: Participation in decision making will be positively related to job satisfaction.

Job Satisfaction and Group Commitment

Team spirit is known to enhance job satisfaction levels of employees in a developing country (Halepota & Shah, 2011). Certain tasks in organisations involve working in teams. In such cases, team spirit should develop among individuals. Randall and Cote (1991) studied that group

commitment evolves from social ties of individuals in an organisation. When the reference team members provide guidance and support to an individual, his social ties would improve. It implies his level of job satisfaction increases. Further, it generally determines satisfaction with group achievements (Maynard, Mathieu, Marsh & Ruddy, 2007; Van Knippenberg & Schie, 2000; Bishop & Scott, 2000). Hence, group commitment of the employee would also increase. Thus, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H₂: Job satisfaction will be positively related to group commitment.

Participation in Decision Making and Organisational Commitment

Apart from job satisfaction, opportunity to participate in decision making is related to organisational commitment as well, and this might be because of motivational mechanism. Participation in decision making is defined as the degree to which an employee is able to influence decisions concerning his or her job (Teas, Wacker & Hughes, 1979). Research in general supports a link between participation in decision making and commitment (Louis & Smith, 1991; Johnson, 1990). Employees who participate in decisions which involve them reported relatively higher levels of organisational commitment (Giri & Kumar, 2013; Long, 1978). This process of influence by participation might strengthen identification of employees with the job and values of the organisation. This led to the formulation of the following hypothesis:

H₃: Participation in decision making will be positively related to organisational commitment.

Group Commitment and Organisational Commitment

Employees of a work group share similar interests. When employees work in teams, they develop ties among themselves. The perception of having similar interests is strongly related to feelings of group commitment or, in other words, attachment with the group (Ellemers, Kortekaas & Ouwerkerk, 1999). Evaluating the impact of group commitment on attachment with their organisational behavioral outcome is very important for long term performance and longevity of the group (Ellemers et al., 1999). Group commitment is believed to have an impact on organisational commitment (Cohen, 2003; Cohen, 1993a). Thus, the following hypothesis has been proposed:

H₄: Group commitment will be positively related to organisational commitment.

Job Satisfaction and Organisational Commitment

Job satisfaction is of interest to employers and continues to be studied since it is considered to be a desirable outcome of employment. It creates arenas that build in attachment and loyalty of individuals with their organisations (Williams & Anderson, 1991). Employees who are satisfied with their job are more likely to be committed to their organisations. These are those individuals who would believe in the goals and values of the organisation and exhibit higher levels of performance and productivity (Steinhaus & Perry, 1996). Research has identified job satisfaction as a significant determinant of affective organisational commitment (Appelbaum, Louis, Makarenko & Saluja, 2013; Knoop, 1995). Hence, the review of literature helped devise the following hypothesis:

H₅: Job satisfaction will be positively related to organisational commitment.

Participation in Decision Making and Group Commitment

Research supports a link between participation in decision making and commitment (Louis & Smith, 1991). This is due to the presence of motivational mechanism. Employees in a group would have different levels of influences on taking decisions for the group. Few senior employees enjoy a higher level of decision making as compared to the other members. Participation in decision making by employees is known to have an impact on the group commitment (Kukenberger, Mathieu & Ruddy, 2012; Cohen, 1993b). Evaluating the impact of extent of decision making on one's work group on attachment with the organisation is very important for the organisation's long term performance. Owing to this, the following hypothesis was prompted:

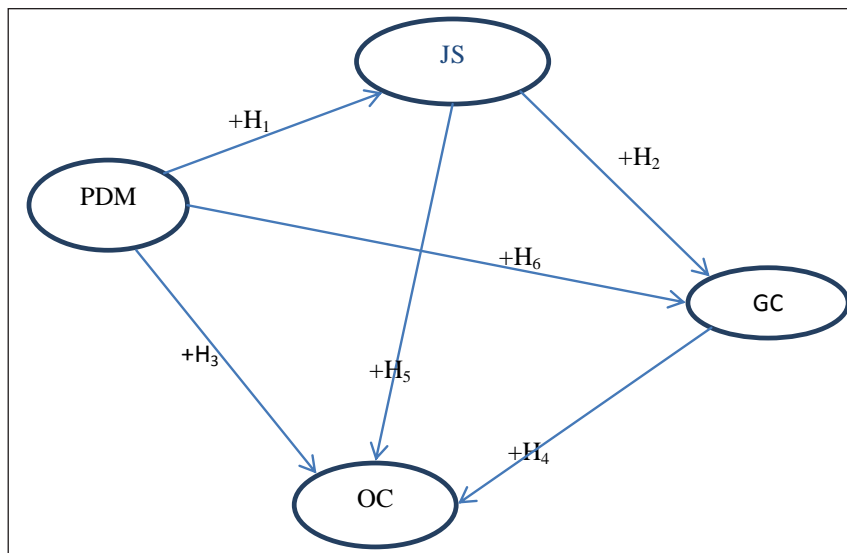
H₆: Participation in Decision Making will be Positively Related to Group Commitment.

METHOD

The sample consisted of respondents belonging to managerial cadre from public sector undertakings located in various parts of India. Convenient

sampling technique was adopted to identify organisations. Out of the 550 survey questionnaires distributed, 430 (i.e. 78.19 percent) questionnaires were received back. After rejecting the incomplete questionnaires, 397 (i.e. 72.19 percent) questionnaires were retained for the study. Out of 397 subjects, 389 (i.e. 98 percent) were males and 8 (i.e. 2 percent) were females. 17.1 percent of the participants were in the age group of 51-60 years. 29.5 percent, 33.2 percent and 20.2 percent were in the age group of 41-50 years, 31-40 years and 21-30 years respectively. The average years of work experience across all levels of management was 15.09 years. 46.6 percent participants were reported to be in entry-level management. 39.3 percent were reported to be in middle level management. 14.1 percent were reported to be in senior level management. 81.6 percent were reported to be married and 18.4 percent were reported to be single. In the overall sample, 39.6 percent subjects had B.E./B.Tech as highest qualification. 56.4 percent had M.E./M.Tech/MBA as highest qualification. 4 percent had Ph.D. as highest qualification. The maximum tenure was reported to be 33 years.

Figure 1: Hypothesised Model



Notes: PDM = Participation in decision making; JS = Job Satisfaction; OC = Organisational commitment; GC = Group commitment.

Measures

Participation in Decision Making

A scale developed by Van Veldhoven and Meijman (1994) measuring participation in decision making consisting of 8 items was used (e.g. ‘Can you discuss work problems with your superior?’). All items were measured using a five-point likert scale ranging from “always” to “never”.

Job Satisfaction

To assess job satisfaction, a scale developed by Warr, Cook & Wall’s (1979) was used which has a total of 15 items. It has two dimensions: intrinsic job satisfaction consisting of 7 items (e.g. satisfaction with freedom to choose your own method of working) and extrinsic job satisfaction consisting of 8 items (e.g. satisfaction with fellow workers). All items were measured on a five-point likert scale ranging from “I am extremely satisfied” to “I am extremely dissatisfied”.

Organisational Commitment

Affective organisational commitment was drawn from the three factor model proposed by Meyer and Allen (1997). It was measured based on Meyer and Allen’s (1991) organisational commitment scale. It consisted of 8 items (e.g. ‘I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career with this organisation’). All items were measured on a five-point likert scale ranging from “strongly agree” to “strongly disagree”.

Group Commitment

Group commitment was assessed using Ellemers, de Gilder and Heuvel’s (1998) scale. It consisted of 7 items (e.g. ‘I am prepared to do additional work when this benefits my work team’). All items were measured on a five-point likert scale ranging from “strongly agree” to “strongly disagree”.

Statistical Tools and Techniques used for Data Analysis

To analyse the data, the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 21.0 and AMOS version 20.0 were used. The statistical analyses such as obtaining descriptive statistics, developing the correlation matrix, and calculating Cronbach’s Alpha values of the various measures used in the study have been analysed using SPSS. The hypothesised model

emerging from the review of literature was subjected to analysis and fit tests. A variety of Goodness-of-Fit indices as provided by AMOS 20.0 (Kline, 2005; Bentler, 1990) were utilised for this purpose. AMOS tool was used to perform some advance statistical techniques such as creating structural equation models. The hypothesised model was tested and the conclusions regarding the model fit and acceptance are reported.

RESULTS

The data was subjected to statistical analysis in order to test the above hypotheses. First, mean, standard deviation (SD), reliability and inter-correlation were computed. Table I shows the mean, SD and reliability coefficients for all the measures.

Table I: Descriptive Statistics and Reliability Coefficients for all Variables

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation (SD)	Reliability (Cronbach's Alpha)
PDM	4.01	.51	.78
JS	4.01	.43	.85
OC	3.79	.51	.77
GC	4.31	.40	.84

Note: PDM = Participation in Decision Making; JS = Job Satisfaction; GL = Group Learning; GC = Group Commitment.

As the values for Cronbach's Alpha are well above the recommended threshold of .70, hence the reliability of the measurements is considered valid (Nunnally, 1978). Table II shows the results of bivariate correlation between the latent variables.

Table II: Correlations among Latent variables

Latent variable	PDM	JS	GC	OC
PDM	1			
JS	.49	1		
GC	.38	.58	1	
OC	.39	.44	.38	1

Note: All correlations are significant at $p < .001$ level; PDM = Participation in decision making; JS = Job Satisfaction; OC = Organisational commitment; GC = Group commitment.

Table III: Goodness of Fit Results for Overall Measurement Model

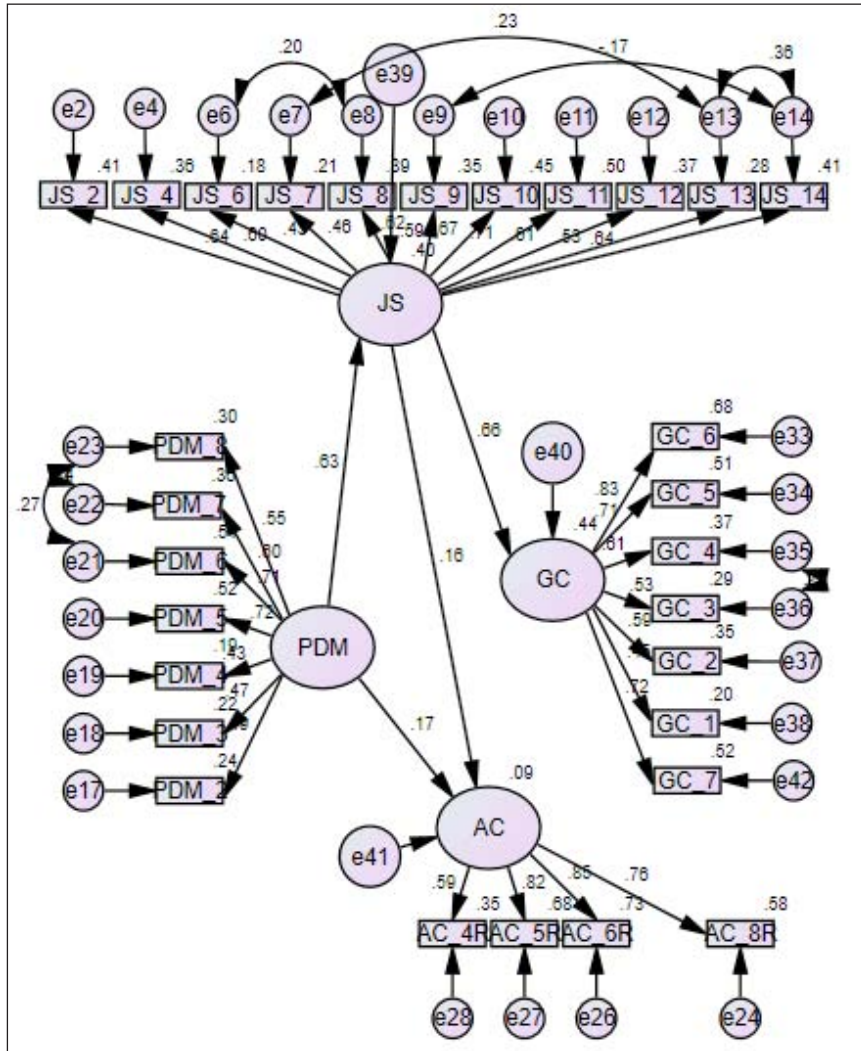
Model	χ^2	χ^2/df	GFI	TLI	CFI	RMSEA	Items Deleted	Reason
CFA1	1375.44	2.12	.85	.85	.86	.05	JS3	LFL, HSR
CFA2	1319.44	2.15	.85	.85	.86	.05	JS5	LFL, HSR
CFA3	1253.99	2.17	.85	.85	.86	.05	JS1	LFL, HSR
CFA4	1195.22	2.20	.87	.85	.87	.05	JS15	LFL, HSR
CFA5	1136.12	2.22	.86	.85	.87	.05	AC7	LFL, HSR
CFA6	1036.10	2.15	.86	.87	.88	.05	AC2	LFL, HSR
CFA7	975.72	2.16	.87	.87	.88	.05	AC1	LFL, HSR
CFA7	873.36	2.06	.87	.89	.89	.05	AC3	LFL, HSR
CFA8	758.21	1.92	.88	.90	.91	.05	PDM1	LFL, HSR
CFA9	681.16	1.87	.89	.91	.92	.05	-	-

Note: LFL = Low Factor Loading; HSR = High Standardised Residual; PDM = Participation in decision making; JS = Job Satisfaction; OC = Organisational commitment; GC = Group commitment.

Based on the recommendation of Hair et al. (2006), items associated with a standardised residual greater than $|4|$ were dropped. Attention was also given to those items with standardised residuals between $|2.5|$ and $|4|$ by checking modification indices and loading estimates to detect any other problems associated with the pair items. The fit indices for the overall measurement model are displayed in table III. Since the items JS1, JS3, JS5, JS15, AC1, AC2, AC3, AC7 and PDM1 have very low factor loadings and high standardised residuals, these items were removed for further analysis. Hence, all items with factor loadings greater than .50 were considered for further analysis.

The model was prepared in a recursive manner to avoid problems associated with statistical identification (Hair, Black, Babin, Anderson & Tatham, 2006). The results of the model with completely standardised path coefficients for the model are demonstrated in figure 2. This model showed a perfect fit with the data ($\chi^2 = 683.37$, $\chi^2/df = 1.87$, GFI = .90, TLI = .92, CFI = .92, RMSEA = .05) which is considered to be an overall acceptable fit. A χ^2/df value of less than or equal to 3 is considered a reasonable good indicator of the model fit (Hair et al., 2006; Bentler, 1990). The values for GFI, TLI and CFI greater than .90 are considered good model fit indices (Bentler, 1990). A good fit is also indicated by RMSEA value of less than .05 (Hair et al., 2006).

Figure 2: Structural Equation Model and Standardised Estimated Parameters



Notes: Only significant path coefficients are displayed; PDM = Participation in decision making; JS = Job Satisfaction; OC = Organisational commitment; GC = Group commitment.

Hypotheses Testing

Table IV gives the results of hypotheses that are tested. The results of the analysis suggest that participation in decision making had a significant

and positive relationship with job satisfaction ($\beta=.63, p<.001$). Hence, hypothesis 1 was accepted. Job satisfaction has significant relationship with organisational commitment ($\beta=.16, p<.05$). Hence, hypothesis 2 was accepted. It is evident from the results that participation in decision making had significant relationship with organisational commitment ($\beta=.17, p<.05$). Hence, hypothesis 3 was accepted. The results of the analysis revealed that group commitment had no significant relationship with organisational commitment ($\beta=.10, p>.05$) though there was a significant bivariate correlation between organisational commitment and group commitment (.38). Hence, hypothesis 4 was refuted. Job satisfaction had a significant and positive relationship with group commitment ($\beta=.66, p<.001$). Hence, hypothesis 5 was accepted. Also, participation in decision making had no significant relationship with group commitment ($\beta=.05, p>.05$) though there was a significant bivariate correlation between participation in decision making and group commitment (.38). Hence, hypothesis 6 was refuted.

Table IV: Results of Hypotheses

Sl. No. of Hypothesis	Hypothesis	Results
H ₁	PDM -> JS	Accepted
H ₂	JS -> GC	Accepted
H ₃	PDM -> OC	Accepted
H ₄	GC -> OC	Refuted
H ₅	JS -> OC	Accepted
H ₆	PDM -> GC	Refuted

DISCUSSION

The positive relationship between participation in decision making and the other constructs in this study lends credence to previous findings that employees value the opportunity to participate in decisions affecting them. Participation, positively and significantly influencing job satisfaction in large manufacturing firms is evident from the present study. This finding is consistent with previous research (Schuler, 1983). This might be because of the fact that employees have an increasing desire to take part actively in the internal matters of the organisation. The results suggest that Indian public organisations interested in enhancing employee job satisfaction, should consider how effectively the employees participate in decision

making which has been supported in previous research (Ornoy, 2010).

Another finding of note is that job satisfaction exerted a strong influence on group commitment. This finding is supported by past research on group commitment (Van Knippenberg & Schie, 2000). Thus, the positive association between job satisfaction and group commitment implies that identification and attachment with the group can be improved by providing supportive work groups and providing recognition within the reference groups for good work. Social ties are believed to achieve strong satisfaction level while working in groups. Thus when the members of the work group of an individual provide support and guidance in work, the satisfaction obtained by good work will help in observing significant amount of group commitment.

Another important finding was that employees who participate in decision making are highly committed to their job and organisation. The findings also raise concern about the extent of participation of employees in the functioning of their organisation. The more the participation, the better will be the relationship between participation in decision making and organisational commitment. The result supports the theoretical model of Louis and Smith (1991). This is because employees seek a certain level of satisfaction in the work they perform in the organisation. Participative management enhances their perception about organisational issues and improves their understanding about different technical as well managerial functions. However, participation had insignificant impact on improving group commitment of employees. This is because participation in decision making can cause many disadvantages in a team setting. There can be pressures arising from social systems to dominance by some member of the group due to unequal distribution of power. An influential member can cause other members to follow the decisions taken by him which may be disliked by other members. Hence, this could lead to indecisiveness, lack of consensus and group conflicts. In addition, this would lead to lower group commitment among the employees.

Another interesting finding was that job satisfaction had a significant impact on the magnitude of affective organisational commitment. This result is at par with past research (Appelbaum et al., 2013). Employees seek a certain level of satisfaction in the job they perform. This is possible when they have a certain level of trust in management. Hence, appreciation from managers gives satisfaction to the employees. Employees will have positive emotional feeling about their job. Their expectations are met from the job as well as the organisation. This would motivate the employees

more towards their organisation. The positive emotional feeling would give rise to commitment or attachment with the organisation. It creates positive work environment in the organisation. Such positive work environment enhances the relationship between job satisfaction and organisational commitment.

Group commitment is the cohesiveness of an individual with the members of his or her group. It is noted from this study that group commitment does not have a significant impact on organisational commitment. This could be because of the reason that affective commitment is the attachment and identification of the individual with his or her organisation whereas group commitment is the attachment of the individual with his or her work group. Thus, a part of this study could shed light that group commitment is an equally independent construct as other forms of commitment. Thus it is worthy to study that how significant amount of group commitment can be achieved alongwith organisational commitment.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE SCOPE OF RESEARCH

Despite its contributions, the present study does have certain limitations. This study specifically includes Indian public sector undertakings. Due to this, the results of the study could not be generalised on multi-national companies (MNCs). The diverse sample from different MNCs could lead to better understanding of the model. The study considers the cross-sectional data only, which constrains the ability to make causal relations. This generates a future scope of testing causality with longitudinal data. Whereas, participation is a dynamic process and in order to firmly show relationships, the use of longitudinal study is necessary. Future research could be carried with larger sample from different locations across different industries, which would improve the generality of the findings. Future research could be extended to other sectors like health care, education, services and communication, so that the results can be compared or generalised depending on the results.

CONCLUSION

The present study has been able to identify the role of employees' participation in decision making on attitudinal outcomes. Participation

in decision making was related to job satisfaction. Job satisfaction, also significantly predicted organisational commitment and group commitment. The findings of the present study are relevant to the managers and directors of the public sector undertakings in understanding how organisational commitment develops. As globalisation and economy is growing, there exists tough competition among the public sector manufacturing organisations. The recommendations of Black and Gregersen (1997) that organisations specify the extent, level and purpose of participation to minimise dissatisfaction and overcome the inherent paradoxical problems of participation are endorsed in the present study. This supports calls from previous researchers that increasing participation creates a stronger sense of ownership or identity and satisfaction with the job (Kim, 2002). Employees need information, involvement and participation as prerequisites to developing the skills that contribute to positive autonomous outcomes. Participation allows the management of the organisation to tap the skills and ideas of the employees for better efficiency in production.

The findings suggest at least three important strategies that organisations may choose to consider if they want to enhance the job satisfaction of their employees. First, public sector undertakings can leverage the positive effects of greater employee participation by developing clear strategies to support their employees' career development. Second, these organisations may also discover that increased communication with employees about job responsibilities and performance, in conjunction with a sincere effort to increase participative decision making, can lead to enhanced levels of employee job satisfaction and commitment. Employees need to understand not only how their work can contribute to the organisation's performance but also to what degree their current work performance and strategies are making that contribution. Third, these organisations should make sure that while working in a group, the junior employees do not feel less important. The managers should ensure that the junior employees are recognised equally well as their senior employees for appreciable collective or group work.

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