

A Study on Factors Affecting Effort Commitment of Employees: The Case Study of Public Institutions in Ethiopia

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ABSTRACT

This study is quantitative in its approach and an explanatory in its design. It examines the total effect of reward practice, supportive behavior, work environment and job satisfaction on employee's effort commitment using data from 297 employees holding a position of professional science (ps) from head quarters of public ministerial offices in Ethiopia. The correlation analysis results have shown that the working environment ($r=.513$) has strong relationship with employee's effort commitment. The organization's reward practice ($r=.333$) and job satisfaction ($r=.430$) have moderate relationship with employee's effort commitment. However, the prevailing supportive behavior ($r=.192$) had weak relationship with employee's effort commitment. The explanatory power as shown by adjusted R square indicates that 39.4% of the variation in employee's effort commitment is explained by factors that are considered as influencing factors for the present study. Therefore, organizational leaders should pay attention to influencing factors considered in this study to alter their employee's effort commitment.

Keywords: *Effort Commitment, Public Institutions, Ethiopia*

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Organizational commitment as defined by Armstrong (2009) is an employee's identification with, and adoption of, an organization's values, norms and traditions. The concept of commitment in the workplace is one of the most researched concepts in the fields of human resource management. As stated by Meyer and Allen (1997) people could be attached to organizations, unions or occupations which they referred it

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as attitudinal commitment or to some courses of action like continuing membership, goals or policies known as behavioral commitment. Paille' et al., (2011) stated that employee commitment refers to a psychological state in which the employee shares the values of the organization and adheres to its objectives. Khaliq et al., (2016) described that organizational commitment has three basic components; (a) identification, a strong faith and reception of goals as well as values of an organization (b) effort, an eagerness to put effort for the goals of organization (c) loyalty, an intention to remain part of the organization. Although there have been several definitions and measures of organizational commitment, Meyer and Allen's (1991) three component model of organizational commitment namely, affective, continuous and normative has been the dominant framework for organizational commitment research.

Once the nature of commitment is known, it is logical to identify the factors that contribute for employee commitment. Allen and Meyer, (1993); Aven et al., (1993); Mathieu and Zajac, (1990) shown three main antecedent groups could be distinguished as a contributing factors of employee commitment. These are 1) organizational variables such as such as the nature of a job, job design, human resource policies, communication and participation policies, or manager behaviors; (2) personal variables, such as age, gender, tenure, job expectations, job values, kinship responsibilities, affectivity and motivation toward work; and (3) environmental variables like job opportunities. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to identify the factors influencing effort commitment of public sector employees in Ethiopia. It is believed that gaining awareness about the factors that affect employee's commitment factors will help on increasing the commitment of employees.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Organizational Commitment has been conceptualized and measured in different ways. Many of the studies in organizational commitment conducted in African context used Meyer and Allen's (1991) framework to show factors that influence affective, normative and continuous commitment mostly in combined form; For example Ferreira (2012); Islam, et al (2012); Pillay (2014). However, throughout the years, some changes in the scales were proposed and tested. Ko, Price & Mueller (1997) examined the Meyer and Allen scales and argued that there are conceptual problems with the scales and that those problems may be responsible for

the psychometric difficulties found in the scales. Vandenberg and Sep (1994) suggested that employees have difficulty in understanding the meaning of the items typically included in measurements of commitment in different stages in their organizational career. Thus the previous researches show commitment in totality. In other respect the factors that contribute for effort commitment might not have the same impact for affective commitment. Therefore, the present study targeted to show the factors that contribute for employee effort commitment.

Though the Government of Ethiopia in its Growth and Transformation plan II (2015/16-2019/20) document stated that in order to meet it envisaged goal there is a dire need for a committed robust workforce, the key informants considered for preliminary study shown their concern on the declining trend of employee commitment. Though there are many studies conducted in the area of employee commitment, most of them were carried out in the context of western and Asian countries and none in the Ethiopian context to the best knowledge of the Researcher. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to fill the research gap as well as targeted to identify factors influencing employee commitment to create awareness for the decision makers. In line with this premises, the study targeted to answer the following basic questions.

- What are the factors that influence employee's effort commitment in public sectors in Ethiopia?
- What is the extent of the factors relate to employee's effort commitment?
- To what extent the factors have an effect on employee commitment?

LITERATURE REVIEW

In the next section, literatures that show the effect of reward practices, supportive behavior, organizational environment and job satisfaction on employee's effort commitment were reviewed and also relevant hypotheses were drawn.

REWARD PRACTICES AND EMPLOYEE COMMITMENT

Organizational rewards refer to all the benefits, financial and non-financial, that an employee obtains through his/her employment relationship with an organization (Armstrong 2009). There are different views on the

relationships between rewards and employee effort commitment. As stated by Malhotra (2007); Garrow (2004) the provision of rewards by an organization has been shown to be a major factor that strengthens the psychological contract between the employee and employer which may shape the employee behavior of commitment. There are contrasting views in the literature as to the relative strength of the relationships between the different types of rewards and organizational commitment. Some authors argue that the relationship between extrinsic rewards and organizational commitment is stronger than that between intrinsic or social rewards and organizational commitment as organizations have direct control over their provision. (Newman and Abdullah, 2010). Hence the first hypothesis postulated stated as:

H1: Increased reward provision leads to increased employee's effort commitment.

Supportive Behavior and Employee Commitment

Supportive behavior includes coworker support, supervisor support, and organizational support given for employees. When employees feel they are supported by coworkers, supervisors, and/or organization, they are likely to develop a sense of commitment (Woo and Chelladurai 2012). The relationship between perceived support at work and employee commitment is explained by social exchange theory which emphasizes on a principle of a quid pro quo or this for that (Thibaut and Kelley, 1967; Setton, Bennett, & Liden, 1996). According to Shah et. al (2012), employees with clear objectives and who are provided with the necessary tools and resources to carry out their jobs can develop a positive attitude towards the job and organization. Thus, it is more likely that a person will provide support to the others who support the person. In other words, if employees feel their supervisor and colleagues are providing support for them, they would work for the supervisor's and colleague's benefit. Therefore, the second hypothesis proposed is:

H2: Increased organizational support behavior results in increased employee's effort commitment.

Work Environment and Employee Commitment

As stated by Kohun (1992), the work environment is the sum of the interrelationship that exists within employees and the environment in which the employee work. Work environment means security, autonomy

and empowerment that an employee assumes while performing job. Mehboob and Bhutto (2012) stated that the perception of a work environment includes the physical, psychological and social aspects that mark up the working condition. According to Madigan, Norton and Testa (1999) committed employees would work diligently, conscientiously, provide value, promote the organization’s services or products and seek continuous improvement. In exchange, they expect a work environment that fosters growth and empowerment, allows for a better balance of personal and work life. Better work environment can foster good relations and commitment. Therefore, the third proposed hypothesis is:

H3: Higher favorable work environment leads to higher employee’s effort commitment.

Job Satisfaction and Employee Commitment

Job satisfaction refers to the extent to which employees have clear work objectives, whether or not they have access to the necessary tools and resources to do their jobs effectively and are afforded the opportunity to fully utilize their talents and skills in their jobs. Aydogdu and Asikgil (2011) concluded that job satisfaction to have a positive correlation with three scopes of organizational commitment. Lumley et.al (2011) conducted a study in the South African context after employing stepwise regression and correlation analysis and concluded that there is a positive relationship between job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Therefore, the fourth hypothesis postulated is:

H4: The higher employees satisfied with their jobs the higher they will show effort commitment.

Conceptual Frame Work

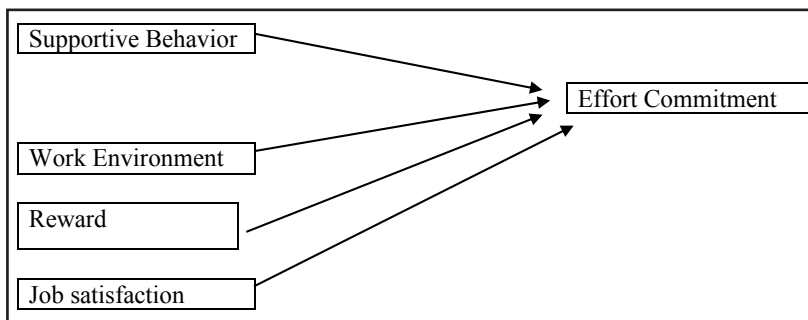


Fig. 1: Conceptual Frame Work Developed by the Author

The study assumed that human resource management efforts such as supportive behavior, conducive work environment, and reward and job satisfaction can be used as a predictor of employee retention. The above model depicted that influencing factors were considered as independent variables and the employee's effort commitment were considered as dependent variable.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Description of the Study Area

Ethiopia, with total area of 1,103,609 square meters located at the horn of Africa, its plateau covers 2/3 of the country. According to CSA, the total population in next census survey of 2017 is projected to be 94,351,001 of which 47,364,009 will be males and 46,986,992 will be females. Ethiopia is Federal government and had nine regional administration and two city regions. There are 17,200 employees holding positions classified as professional at the federal offices (NPSHRS 2008/16).

RESEARCH DESIGN

The design of the study is an explanatory type in its nature. The study employed quantitative data to explore the effect of influencing factors on employee's effort commitment. As explained by Kothari (2004) in quantitative research, the researcher tends to remain objectively separated from the subject matter.

Population and Sampling Procedure

The ideal populations considered for this study were employees working in public enterprises in Ethiopia. Samples were selected from cluster of professional employees' category on proportionate quota sampling technique based on their availability at the head quarters of the public ministerial offices located at Addis Ababa. A total of 11 ministerial offices were considered as a sampling study. They are employing 6,947 employees at their head quarters. 13% of them are holding a position classified as professional (NPSHRS 2008/16). The sampling technique was cluster sampling as the technique is used to sample from professional category employees which were considered as a cluster. As stated by

Sekaran (2003) a sample size larger than 30 and less than 500 is usually appropriate for most researchers and valid to be analyzed using general statistical tools. Accordingly, 350 number of questionnaire targeted professional employees at head quarter of the ministries were distributed. Two hundred ninety-seven (85%) respondents were properly filled in and returned the questionnaires.

Instruments and Methods of Data Collection

Questionnaires were constructed in line with relevant literature in the area of the study. The reliability of the questionnaires was tested using alpha Cronbach test. A result of ($=.85$) was obtained and found at accepted level for this type of studies. The collected data were processed using SPSS version 20. Descriptive statistics such as percentages, mean and standard deviation were used to show the present status of effort commitment influencing factors. To show the level of relationships in between influencing factors and employee's effort commitment, Pearson's correlation coefficients were used. To show the effect of influencing factors on employment commitment multivariate linear regression was performed. The study considered the following model equation in order to show the explanatory power of the influencing factors on employee's effort commitment.

Model Specifications

$Y = \alpha + \beta_1x_1 + \beta_2x_2 + \beta_3x_3 + \beta_4x_4 + \varepsilon$ where as:
Y = employee's effort commitment (dependent variable)
 α = smoothing constant
 β = coefficient of independent variables
 $x_1 \dots x_4$ = independent variables
 ε = standard error

Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

The respondents were drawn from the Head Office of Public Ministries in Ethiopia. All were employees holding professional positions in public ministerial offices. Accordingly, 297 employees properly felt the questionnaires and returned. The demographic characteristics of the respondents are shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Demographic Information of the Respondents

Items	Frequency	Percentage (%)	
Gender	Male	207	69.7
	Female	90	30.3
	Total	297	100.0
Age	20-30	159	53.5
	31-40	92	31.0
	41-50	23	7.7
	51-60	22	7.4
	Over 60	1	3
	Total	297	100.0%
Service years	1-5	158	53.2
	6-10	54	18.2
	11-15	32	10.8
	16-20	10	3.4
	Over 21	8	2.7
	Total		
Educational qualification	Diploma	45	15.2
	First degree	214	72.1
	Masters	30	10.1
	Others	8	2.7
	Total	297	100.0

Source: Questionnaire

As shown in Table 1, the majority of the sampled employees are male (69.7%) which is a common fact as observed in many organizations in Ethiopia. Age wise the majority of the respondents fall in the age category of 20-30 implying that most of them are youngsters. In terms of the years they served the organization, the majority of them served their respective organization for 1 to 5 years implying that the dominant groups are lesser experienced employees. The level of their educational qualification shows that the majority (72.1%) of them are qualified with first degree.

In an attempt to show factors influencing employee commitment, previous studies have identified several factors that have an influence on commitment initiatives. These factors related to organization, personal and environmental (Allen and Meyer, 1993; Aven et al., 1993; Mathieu and Zajac, 1990). This study examined the effects of reward practices, supportive behavior, work environment and job satisfaction on employees'

effort commitment. The respondents were requested to rate each of items as related to the influencing factors using v-rating scale points, ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. The following statistics were used in interpreting the results of the study: 1.00 – 1.80 strongly disagree/very dissatisfied 1.81 – 2.60 disagree/dissatisfied 2.61 – 3.40 moderate agreement/moderately satisfied 3.41 – 4.20 agree/satisfied 4.21 – 5.00 strongly agree/very satisfied. Table 2 shows the descriptive statistics report of factors influencing employee’s effort commitment.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics Report of Employee’s Effort Commitment Influencing Factors

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis
Supportive behavior	290	4.1310	.70916	-1.034	1.138
Work environment	286	3.5804	1.02119	-.365	-.874
Reward practice	282	2.4953	.96159	.292	-.530
Job satisfaction	294	3.4116	.87062	-.453	-.021
Effort Commitment	266	3.2970	.64559	.192	-.143

Source: Questionnaire

Respondents were asked to rate 30 items of the questionnaire divided into sections pertaining to employee’s effort commitment influencing factors targeted to assess their perception. The items were sub divided in terms of questions related to reward practices, supportive behavior, work environment and job satisfaction. The levels of employee’s commitment were assessed based on seven v-scaled questions. The results of standard deviation, skewness and kurtosis revealed the normality of the distribution of responses as all are within the normal range.

As shown in Table 2, the mean average of respondents’ perception as related to the supportive behavior relationship pertaining within the organization is 4.1310 with standard deviation of .70916. The result of this item shows that the respondents felt they are given proper support from their supervisors as well as their colleagues. The kurtosis and skewness report revealed the distribution of the results falls within normal curve. Respondents were asked to rate four questions as related to their working environments and the mean response were found to be 3.5804 with standard deviation of 1.02119 as shown in the second item of Table 2. The questions were targeted to assess the magnitude of the provision of facilities and equipments by their respective organizations as well as the extent of the conduciveness of policies and guidelines. The mean average of the items shows that the respondents’ expression of satisfaction on the prevailing working environment.

The third item in Table 2 shows the perception of employees towards reward practices of their respective organizations. This section targeted to assess the degree of employees’ satisfaction on their salary, benefits and provision other

incentives. The respondents were asked to rate 3 items related to reward from the questionnaire. The mean average of the items as shown in Table 2 was found to be 2.4953 with standard deviation of .96159 implying the respondents' dissatisfaction on the reward practices of their respective organizations.

The fourth item in Table 2 shows the level of employees' satisfaction on their present job. The mean of the items related to job satisfaction was 3.4116 with a standard deviation of .87062 implying employees' satisfaction on their present jobs. Respondents' level of employee's effort commitment was assessed by letting them rate seven questions related to employee's effort commitment. The mean average rating was 3.2970 with a standard deviation of .64559 implying moderate level of respondents' employment effort commitment.

Relationships between Influencing Factors and Employee Commitment

In order to show the level of relationship among working environment, job satisfaction, reward and job satisfaction with employee's effort commitment a Pearson correlation coefficients were used. The result was analyzed based on correlation analysis formula shown as follows: -1 to -0.5 or 1.0 to 0.5 strong, -0.5 to -0.3 or 0.3 to 0.5 moderate, -0.3 to -0.1 or 0.1 to 0.3 weak and -0.1 to 0.1 none or very weak.

Table 3: Relationship Among Factors Influencing Employee's Effort Commitment

Variables		Supportive behavior	Work Environment	Reward	Job Satisfaction	Effort Commitment
Supportive behavior	Pearson Correlation	1	.373**	.007	.223**	.192**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.908	.000	.002
	N	290	279	276	287	259
Work environment	Pearson Correlation	.373**	1	.237**	.236**	.513**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000	.000
	N	279	286	271	284	256
Reward	Pearson Correlation	.007	.237**	1	.513**	.333**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.908	.000		.000	.000
	N	276	271	282	279	253

Variables		Sup- portive behavior	Work Environ- ment	Re- ward	Job Satis- faction	Effort Com- mit- ment
Job Sat- isfac- tion	Pearson Cor- relation	.223**	.236**	.513**	1	.430**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000		.000
	N	287	284	279	294	264
Effort com- mit- ment	Pearson Cor- relation	.192**	.513**	.333**	.430**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.002	.000	.000	.000	
	N	259	256	253	264	266

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

Source: Questionnaire

Test of Model Fit

Before considering the model, test of model fit was made based on key assumptions of multiple regressions proposed by many standard research methodology text book authors like Kothari 2004. Accordingly, the first test was made on multi-collinearity. This assumption is tested using Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values. As VIF values for all items are below 2 the independent variables are not highly correlated with each other, implying that no multi-collinearity problem among the independent variables. The normal distribution of the independent variables was tested using histogram. The Test of multivariate normality as shown in histogram clearly shows the residuals are normally distributed. Hence the data met the assumption of multivariate normality of the independent variables.

The third test was made on homoscedasticity of the independent variables. This assumption states that the variances of error terms are similar across the values of the independent variables. A plot of standardized residuals versus predicted values can show whether points are equally distributed across all values of the independent variables. All the plots were equally distributed hence there is no homoscedasticity problem. Finally, the test of linear relationship was made by scatter plot. The scatter plots showed the existence of linear relationship between the outcome variable and the independent variables. Therefore, all the key assumption of the study met all the key assumption of the goodness of the model fit.

Effect of Influencing Factors on Employee's Effort Commitment

Based on the discussion made in test of model fit, all the key assumptions of multivariate linear regression are met. Accordingly, the model summary of the effect of influencing factors identified on employee's effort commitment are shown in Table 5 as follows:

Table 4: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.636 ^a	.404	.394	.51152	1.279

a. Predictors: (Constant), satisfaction, environment, Coworker, Remuneration

b. Dependent Variable: Commitment

Source: Questionnaire

The model summary shown in Table 5 shows that the cumulative effect of supportive behavior, working environment, reward practice, job satisfaction and employee's effort commitment. As shown in the model summary the adjusted R square result was .394. This indicates that 39.4% of the employee's effort commitment has significantly explained by supportive behavior, working environment, reward practice and employee job satisfaction. The coefficients of the independent variables are shown in Table 5.

Table 5: Coefficients of Independent Variables

Model		95.0% Confidence Interval for B		Correlations			Collinearity Statistics	
		Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Zero-order	Partial	Part	Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	1.125	1.956					
	Supportive behavior	-.175	.028	.206	-.093	-.072	.771	1.296
	Work environment	.216	.358	.515	.465	.406	.793	1.262
	Reward	-.011	.154	.361	.112	.087	.714	1.400
	Job satisfaction	.150	.326	.456	.330	.270	.680	1.470

a. Dependent Variable: Commitment

Source: Questionnaire

As shown in Table 5 the standardized coefficients Beta value of the independent variables i.e supportive behavior, working environment, reward, job satisfaction are -.175, -.216, -.011, and .150 respectively. These show their relative effects on employee commitment. Based on the findings shown in Table 5, the regression equation can be described as follows:

$$Y = \alpha + \beta_1x_1 + \beta_2x_2 + \beta_3x_3 + \beta_4x_4 + \epsilon$$

Therefore, employee commitment can be predicted based on the following equation.

$$Y = 1.125 - .175X_1 + .216X_2 - .011X_3 + .150X_4 + .51152$$

Where as:

Y = employee's effort commitment the value of α (smoothing constant) = 1.125

Coefficient or β_1 (Supportive behavior) = -.175

Coefficient or β_2 (working environment) = .216

Coefficient or β_3 (Reward) = -.011

Coefficient or β_4 (job satisfaction) = .150 ϵ (standard error) = .51152

Summary of the Result of the Hypotheses

Hypotheses	Decision	Level
H1: Increased Supportive behavior has significant relationship with employee effort commitment	Accepted	Weak
H2: Work environment has significant relationship with employee commitment	Accepted	Strong
H3: Increased reward plan has significant relationship with employee effort commitment	Accepted	Moderate
H4: Increased level of job satisfaction has significant relationship with employee commitment.	Accepted	Moderate

Concluding Remarks

The focus of the study was to show factors that affect employees' effort commitment. The study identified that factors such as supportive behavior, work environment, reward and job satisfaction had significant relationship with employee's effort commitment. Their cumulative effect as shown by regression result revealed that factors considered for present study significantly explain employee's effort commitment.

Scope for Future Research

As the samples of the study were drawn from professional category employees of public institutions in Ethiopia, the result of the study cannot be inferred for the rest of establishments in the country. Therefore, this study calls for an in depth studies on other establishments in the country so that policy makers and researchers can have a wide spectrum on factors that affect employee's effort commitment in the Ethiopian context.

Research/Managerial Implications

Most of the researches in employee commitment were conducted in western countries. As the cultural background of employees is varying from country to country, contextual analysis need to be shown for specific country. Most of the researches in the area of organizational commitment have shown factors affecting attitudinal, behavioral and effort commitment as a whole. The present study targeted to show factors affecting only effort commitment. Particularly no systematic study has been conducted in the context of Ethiopia on the subject considered for the study. Therefore, it is believed that it will create awareness for decision makers on the factors that affect employee's effort commitment so that they will alter their provision on factors identified as influencing factors to develop a committed work force.

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