

Organizational Commitment and Work Performance in Regular and Contract Faculties of Royal University of Bhutan

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ABSTRACT

Having permanent as well as contract or temporary employee became a new trend in organization's HR strategies in developing countries as well. The present research is designed to understand organizational commitment in employees of two types of employment status (regular /permanent and contract employment). The study will also find how resulting commitment out of the nature of employment status will influence on their work performance. Using random sampling procedures, data were collected from 90 faculties, which include both contract and permanent, of colleges of Royal University of Bhutan (RUB). A structured questionnaire was used to measure all the variables of interests. T-test and regression analysis were carried out to analyze the obtained data. Results revealed significant difference in the commitment between regular and contract employees. Regular employees were found to be significantly less committed than contract faculties. It is also found that because of difference in commitment, there is differential effect on their job performance. Findings has implication for the RUB and colleges that they need to explore further and take necessary steps to address the issues of commitment of their regular faculties because it will have negative influence not only on their performance but also organizational performance.

Introduction

Employee's mindsets - their fundamental attitude, is crucial in achieving and maintaining high performance (Thomas, Harburg & Dutra, 2007; Snyder & Burke, 2012). One of the attitudes that could lead to high performance is employee's commitment towards the organization. Because of the centrality in understanding and predicting work place behaviour, organizational commitment has emerged as a promising area of research in recent time (Adebayo, 2006; Nehmeh, 2009).

Organizational commitment is of great academic and managerial interests given the relationship between commitment and desirable organizational outcomes such as creativity and innovativeness (Katz and Kahn, 1978), increased job performance (Jaramillo et al. 2005; Chughtai & Zafar, 2006), loyalty (Cooper-Hakim & Viswesvaran, 2005, Chughtai & Zafar, 2006), job satisfaction (Passarelli, 2011). Committed employees helps create organization's competitive advantage and are motivated to give their best to the organization. Further, in rapidly changing and uncertain business environment,

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organizations are reluctant “a job for life” which has made the notion of organizational commitment even more pertinent (Nehmeh, 2009) from organization perspective.

With the changes in business scenario, work arrangement between employee and employer also got changed. A good number of organizations have started using contract or contingent employees in their labour force in addition to regular staffs to keep cost down, maintain flexibility and to stay competitive in market place. Consequently, this resulted into a stream of research activities concerning individual and organizational-level consequences associated with the new trend of employment. There has been concern that differences in work arrangement between regular and contingent employees may create differences in their work attitude and behaviour (Broschak, Davis-Blake, & Block, 2008, De Cuyper et al., 2008). Thus organizational commitment (work attitude) and their job performance (behaviour) can also get affected in contract viz-a-viz regular employees.

Why the Present Study?

Organizational commitment has always been the issue of investigation because of its centrality in organizational outcomes and plethora of researches are available in the literature. But very few researches are undertaken on contract (contingent) employees and its implication on work life, given the fact that temporary/ contract work arrangement is increasingly becoming an integral part of the labour market. Knowledge of contingent employees on implications for the work organization is sparse and the effects of the use of contingent employment on work settings are not very well documented (Bergström, 2001). Considerable amount of research has examined the organizational commitment and its influence

of work performance of permanent employees, little empirical work has investigated the commitment of temporary workers (Van Breugel, VanOlfen & Olie, 2005; Connelly, Gallagher & Gilley, 2007). Organizational commitment is relatively ignored area within educational settings (Chughtai & Zafar, 2006). Also the present study is in the Bhutanese context where no such study has been undertaken. Most of such studies were undertaken in other countries whose findings can't be applied in Bhutanese context. Bhutan is concerned to improve its education systems especially tertiary education systems in order to build its human capital to steer growth of the nation and faculty's commitment can also work as a catalyst in this regard. Good numbers of faculties of Royal University of Bhutan are on contract basis. Getting commitment from both regular and contract faculties is essential for the good for the students as well as for the nation. In this regard, it becomes important to understand commitment of faculties. Against this background, the present study will investigate organizational commitment on contract and regular faculties of Royal University of Bhutan. The study will also understand the effects of organizational commitment resulting from the nature of employment on faculty's job/ work performance.

Concepts and Literature Review

Contract Employee

In literature, different words are used for contract employees such as temporary workers, agency temps, labour hire workers, or temporary help-service workers, contingent workers (Veitch & Cooper-Thomas, 2009) etc. Contract employee is an individual engaged by an organization on certain terms and conditions of a written employment contract. An important feature of this

work arrangement is that their service duration is limited unlike regular or permanent employment. Contract employees can also be workers hired by agency and send to the client organization for work. But in the present research contract employees refers to employees hired directly by the organization.

Organizational Commitment

Organizational commitment is a psychological state that binds an employee to an organization. Organizational commitment consists of three components – Affective, Continuance and Normative Commitment (Meyer and Allen, 1997). Affective commitment refers to the emotional attachment with the organization based on the match with the organizational values and goals to that of the employee's personal values and goals. It is the most desired form of commitment sought by organizations. Employees with high level of affective commitment possess a strong belief in and acceptance of organizational goal, objectives and values (Mowdey et.al. 1979). Normative commitment refers to the sense of obligation and responsibility to remain with the organization. Employees with high normative commitment believe that they ought to continue working for their organization because it the "right and moral" thing to do (Meyer and Allen 1991; Meyer, Stanley, Herscovitch & Topolnystsky, 2002). Continuance commitment indicates employee's attachment with the organization based on the notion of cost and benefit. These various types of commitment will have varying effects on the organization's performance and a person can display aspects of all of them.

Employment Status and Organizational Commitment

Prevailing notion and also common wisdom says that regular employees are more committed

compared to the contract employees. Jandaghi, Mokhles and Bahrami (2011) in their study found significant differences in organizational commitment between regular and temporary employees. They found that regular employees are more committed compared to contract employees. Barringer and Sturman (1998), in their study on contingent employees hired by agency found negative relationship between contingent workers and organizational commitment. Research on contingent and regular work arrangement has widely assumed that contingent employment status has more unfavorable psychological outcomes than permanent employment status (Wooden & Warren, 2004, Foote, 2004). This difference is attributed taking base of Social Comparison Theory (Festinger, 1954) which states that employees compare their received outcomes with the received outcomes of others. This result into unfavorable psychological outcomes (e.g. reduced commitment, reduced job satisfaction) which stem from contingent workers' perception about the inequality meted out by management in outcomes compared to permanent employees (De Cuyper et al., 2008). Reasons mentioned for having low commitment by contingent workers includes perception of lack of career growth opportunities, reduced pay and benefits, inappropriate feedback from management, lack of job security (Daciulyte & Aranaukaite, 2012). Other researches also revealed that contingent workers often receive lower pay and fewer benefits (Kalleberg, 2000), infrequently participate in career planning and training (Virtanen, Kivimaki, Virtanen, Elovainio, & Vahtera, 2003), and are often targets of unjust treatment (Boyce, Ryan, Imus, & Morgeson, 2007), given less value as compared with the core employees (Guest et al., 2006). Because of the differential treatment contract employees may experience a sense of deprivation which negatively influences their commitment.

But researches taking these two categories of employees also present different perspective on the assumed relationship with organizational outcomes especially the employee's psychological outcomes. Meldrum & McCarville (2010) studied commitment on contingent employees in leisure service organization and found that temporary employees are committed to their jobs. Whereas some studies found no significant difference in commitment between temporary and permanent employees (De Witte and Näswall, 2003). Drawing on these findings, we can infer that there is no conclusive relationship between the two kinds of work arrangement and psychological outcomes especially organizational commitment. Daciulyte and Aranaukaite (2012) in their study on temporary agency workers found that affective commitment predominates followed by continuance and normative commitment in temporary agency employees. But most of the research is done in temporary employees who have been hired by one agency and works in other agency. That is this type of employment relationship is of three dimensional in nature. The present research focuses on contract employees hired directly by employing organization. Further there is also a limited evidence of the assumed relationship. Thus it is conjectured that –

H1: *Organizational commitment and its three dimensions vary significantly in employees of two types of employment status (permanent and contract employees)*

Work Performance

The conceptualization of work performance / job performance been expanded in recent years to include core task performance (In-role performance), citizenship performance and counterproductive performance (Ng and Feldman,

2010). Core task performance refers to do the basic required duties of a particular job by the job holder. Citizenship performance refers to those extra behaviours engaged in by the employees (e.g. helping coworkers) over and above their core task requirement, which actively promotes the effectiveness of organization's performance (Organ, 1988). Counterproductive performance refers to behaviours engaged in by an employee that intentionally harms the wellbeing of the organization (Bennet and Robinson, 2000). Rotundo and Sackett (2002) found that each of these three categories of behaviours contributed to overall performance ratings, with core task performance being given the greatest weight, followed by counterproductive performance and citizenship performance. So the present study is concerned with the core work / task performance of employees. Job performance has been studied as an important variable in industrial and organizational psychology literature (Kahya, 2009).

Employment Status, Organizational Commitment and Work Performance

Jaramillo et al. (2005) conducted a meta-analysis comprising of 51 empirical studies and found positive relationship between organizational commitment and job performance. Concerns have been raised by researchers about the use of temporary employment status on the various organizational outcomes such as low morale and motivation, high turnover, their work performance and productivity. Regular employees get better treatment by employers and as a result put higher efforts which results into increased performance and productivity. However, survey of literature presents mixed findings on the relationship between employment status and job performance. Some researchers (Millward & Hopkins, 1998) found negative influence on the

performance of their duties. Others found that temporary employees perform better in their job compared to regular employees. Some researchers (e.g. Engellandt & Riphahn, 2005) found higher level of employee effort in temporary workers compared to permanent employees. These differences have been found because of several reasons which includes commitment as well. Taking into account the heterogeneity within these alternative employment arrangements, some researchers realized that there is a need to understand properly the relationship between employment status and work performance in order to inform organizational and public policy makers (McLean Parks, Kidder, & Gallagher 1998; Kalleberg, Reskin, & Hudson, 2000; Kunda, Barley, & Evans, 2002). In this study we take traditional view on the issue that regular employees will be more motivated and committed and will have higher work performance. Thus it is conjectured that –

H2: *Permanent employees will report higher work performance than contract employees*

Method

Sample and Survey Procedures

The study was conducted on faculties working in colleges under Royal University of Bhutan. Data for the study was collected by administering structured questionnaire on 90 faculties of the selected colleges of Royal University of Bhutan (RUB). Out of the 10 colleges of RUB, two colleges were selected for the study which has both regular / permanent and contract faculties. Respondents were selected based on random sampling method. Responses were taken in person from both contract (40 percent) and regular (60 percent) employees. 84 percent of the respondents were male and 16 percent were

female and two - third of the sample respondents are in the age range of 26 to 35 years. Majority of the respondents (approximately 70 per cent) are having post graduate and above in qualification and the remaining are graduate only. All the necessary information regarding the study and ways to respond on questionnaire is shared with all respondents. Respondents were assured of confidentiality of their responses and were told that their responses shall be used for the research purpose only.

Measurement of variables

Organizational commitment was measured through using Organizational Commitment Questionnaire, developed by Allen and Meyer (1996). This scale measures commitment in three areas namely affective, normative and continuance commitment. There are six items each of the three areas, making 18 items scale in all. Reliability of the scale was found to be .87 for affective, .75 for continuance, and .79 for normative commitment (alphas).

Work performance (In role behaviour) was measured by scale taken from the scale of work performance developed by Williams and Anderson (1991). It is a 21 items scale which describes three types of job behaviours. These are behaviours directed at specific individuals (OCBI), behaviours directed at an organization (OCBO) and an employee's in-role behaviour (IRB). In the present paper only the in-role behaviour scale having 5 items was used. The scale has .63 as its reliability (Cronbach's alpha). In the present study, all variables are measured on 5-point likert type scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). In addition, data were also taken of respondents biographical characteristics which includes age, gender, nationality, qualification,

Results

Table 1: Mean, Standard Deviation (SD) and t- values of organizational commitment and its three dimensions in two types of employment status

Dimensions	Employment Status	Mean	SD	t - values
Affective Commitment	Permanent	16.05	2.95	10.18*
	Contract	22.91	3.66	
Continuance Commitment	Permanent	17.62	3.14	3.04*
	Contract	20.13	4.08	
Normative Commitment	Permanent	19.27	3.83	2.35**
	Contract	21.08	3.73	
Organizational Commitment	Permanent	52.96	6.93	7.34*
	Contract	64.13	8.04	

*Significant at $p < 0.01$ level (2 – tailed)

**Significant at $p < 0.05$ level (2 – tailed)

The above table clearly reveals that permanent and contract employees differ significantly in their organizational commitment ($t = 7.34$, $p < .01$). Mean score of permanent employees ($M = 52.96$) is lower compared to the contract employees ($M = 64.13$). This makes clear that permanent employees have significantly lower commitment than contract employees. Above table also indicates that permanent employees lag behind in all aspects of commitment significantly. Mean values of affective, continuance and normative commitment of permanent employees are less compared to the contract employees and t-values shows significant differences in affective, continuance and normative commitment ($t = 10.18$, $p < .01$; $t = 3.04$, $p < .05$; $t = 2.35$, $p < .01$) respectively. This finding supports the first hypothesis of the study which asserts that there will be significant differences in the organizational commitment between the permanent and contract employees.

Table – 2: Summarized result of regression analysis of work performance as the dependent variable and organizational commitment as independent variable on employees of two types of employment status

	Permanente Employees	Contract Employees
Beta (β)	.184	.439
t-value	1.312	3.242
Significance	.196	.002
R	.184	.439
R Square	.034	.193
Adjusted R Square	.014	.174
Standard Error of Estimate	2.71	2.24
F – value	1.72	10.51
Level of Significance	.196 (NS)	.002

NS = Not Significant

Beta values for permanent employees ($\beta = .184$, $p = .196$) and contract employees ($\beta = .439$, $p = .002$) shows positive but different magnitude of relationship of their organizational commitment on their work performance. R Square for permanent employees was found to be .034 which reveals that only 3 percent variation is explained in their work performance and this value is not even significant. On the contrary, organizational commitment significantly explain 19 percent variance in temporary employees in their job performance (R Square = .193, $p = .002$). The F value corroborates this relationship as well. Thus the second hypothesis of the study, which asserts that permanent employees will report higher performance compared to contract employees, is not supported.

Discussion

The research is intended to meet two objectives – (1) how organizational commitment differ with the employment status and (2) how this differences in commitment with their respective employment status, influences work performance of employees.

Regarding the first objective it is found that there are significant differences in the commitment between permanent and contract employees. Contract employees have significantly higher commitment compared to their regular counterpart. Result further revealed that permanent employees are significantly behind in all aspects of commitment. Contract faculties respect organizational goals and values, are loyal and feel sense of obligation to be with the organization more than regular faculties. Conventional belief and thinking and also findings of some researchers say that regular the employment, higher or more the commitment is. Researchers such as De Cuyper et al., (2008), view that contingent worker may experience more adverse psychological outcomes (commitment) than permanent employees. However the present finding is just opposite. Several reasons can be attributed for this difference. One reason can be the differences in the outcome expectation of contract employees and permanent employees. It may be possible that desired outcomes permanent employees expect are not coming forth and because of this they show less commitment. Job security of permanent employees may also be the reason for relatively less commitment. Perhaps thinking changes when employees found their job secured. The reason for having relatively high commitment by contract employees can be the desire to perform better and this can be achieved through commitment because commitment normally

results in high performance. Other reason that contract faculties have significantly higher commitment can be attributed to the faculty's desire to build long term relationship (job security) with the employer and this can be possible if contract faculties show commitment towards their job and organization. Survival of contract employees in organization are based on their performance. Rousseau (1990) noticed that temporary employees seeking a long-term relationship with their organizations are more committed to the organization. Foote and Folta, (2002) also echoed the similar view. To develop themselves professionally at such a level that they can get better opportunity easily anywhere, can be another factor because this may be possible if faculties work hard, are committed.

Second objective of the study was to find the influence of resulting organizational commitment on the work performance of faculties. Results obtained clearly indicate that commitment results employee's job performance. The more employees are committed towards their organization, the better the performance will be. The present finding is in line with other researchers (Rai & Sinha, 2000; Thomas & Douglaus, 2002). Research by Meyer et al., (1989) have provided evidence that employees who are highly committed to the organization are likely to exert considerable effort on behalf of the organization and therefore tend to perform at a relatively higher level. Employees who are committed to their organization are more likely to exert more effort on behalf of the organization and work towards its success and therefore are also likely to be better performers than the less committed employees. Committed employees identify with the goals and missions of the organization and strive to achieve.

Conclusion, Implication and Limitations

The growth of contract employees is catching trends in all economies. With the emergence of new trend, concerns have been raised about its effects on some of the organizational outcomes including commitment and work performance. However the result of the present study revealed that contract employees are more committed compared to their regular counterpart and also because of this, contract employees show higher job performance. Management should do some soul searching exercise to go into the details for having less commitment by their core faculties because their performance also contributes into organizational performance. The findings is important for the university and the colleges to look into the issue of commitment of regular / core faculties because they are like backbone of the organization and if they have some problem, should be taken into account for the good of the organization. Theoretically the findings of the study made some contribution in the literature of commitment and performance of regular and contract employees from Bhutanese context.

Although the present research has certain limitations such as small sample size which may affect its ability to generalize its result on the whole population. Use of self-reported survey data, which may be affected by response bias, is another limitation. The findings of this study should not be applied to contract employees who are hired by an agency and send to client organization for the work (tri-partite relationship). The present research is done on contract employees directly hired by the organization. A separate research is needed to know the issue of commitment and work performance on this kind of tripartite employment relation.

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