

# **Factors affecting Organizational Commitment of Retail Sales Personnel**

## **Abstract**

Organizational commitment of the sales force is imperative to delivering service quality. The objective of this study is to analyze the relationship between organizational commitment and job satisfaction, job status and gender among retail sales personnel.

Method: The research analyzed the variable relationship through the use of quantitative method in a non-random convenience sample of 200 males and females salespeople; employed full-time and part-time with retail stores selling mobile phones, athletic and dress shoes, garments, jewelry, furniture, and electronics. A self-administered questionnaire was given to all participants. Statistical analyses using a correlation matrix was performed to confirm or reject hypotheses.

Results: Evidence shows that there is a significant relationship between organizational commitment and job satisfaction among retail sales personnel. According to the calculated value ( $r = 0.85$ ,  $P > 0.5$ ) there was a significant and positive correlation between organizational commitment and job satisfaction.

There is also a significant relationship between organizational commitment and current job status among retail sales personnel. The calculated value ( $r = 0.82$ ,  $P > 0.5$ ) indicates that there was a significant and positive correlation between organizational commitment and current job status among retail sales personnel.

Research confirmed a significant relationship between commitment to an organization and gender among retail sales personnel. According to the calculated value ( $r = 0.88$ ,  $P > 0.5$ ) there

was a significant and positive relationship between organizational commitment and gender among retail sales personnel.

Conclusions: It is imperative for sales managers to understand the factors related to organizational commitment among the retail sales force. Also, building employee commitments in the retailing organization is an important goal that every organization must address. Managers should be trained to detect levels of organizational commitment and how to increase job satisfaction among their part-time and full-time sales personnel.

**Keywords: Organizational commitment, Job satisfaction, Job status, Gender**

## **Introduction**

In retailing firms today, service has become an aspect of utmost importance to clients. Organizational commitment to the sales force is imperative to delivering service quality. Building employee commitment to the organization in retailing is a paramount goal that every organization must address. Salespersons organizational commitment and their antecedents have received considerable attention because of the importance sales managers' place on retaining sales personnel (Johnston, Parasuraman, Futrell & Black, 1990; Mathieu et al., 2000). Research has illustrated that commitment has a positive effect on productivity, turnover and service quality. With the intention of creating a committed workforce, organizations are trying to promote a corporate culture of commitment toward the organization's value system and achieve the defined performance outcome (Welch & Welch, 2006).

Past studies have included organizational commitment as an important component of sales force performance (Chonko, 1986; Hunt, Chonko & Wood, 1985; Boles, Madupalli, Rutherford and, Wood, 2007). Other studies found that salespeople who are committed to an organization tend to perform better and stay longer as an employee with the organization, than those less committed (Hom, Katerberg, & Hulin, 1979; Mowday, Steers & Porter, 1979).

Another article refers to satisfaction in selling, as developing all the characteristics that satisfies the job and the job environment, which the salesperson finds rewarding and fulfilling (Brown & Peterson, 1993). Therefore, the first factor affecting organizational commitment is the level of job satisfaction. The second factor deals with the job status and the third is related to the emergence of women as a major component of the labor force.

Granted that women play a greater role in retailing, research on gender related topics have become an important aid in understanding this phenomenon. Women have had fewer opportunities in other organizations and must overcome more barriers to get where they are more likely to be committed to their organizations (Lincoln & Kalleberg, 1996, p. 154).

Retail sales managers need to understand the importance of having a committed sales force in order to ensure the success of their company's goals. The identification of key factors related to commitment will aid managers in designing appropriate methods to strengthen organizational commitment within the sales force.

## **Relevant Literature**

### **Organizational Commitment**

The substantial literature contains a number of approaches of the study, definition, and measurement of commitment. Some of which includes, the divergent views that commitment is a psychological state (Meyer, Allen, & Gellatly, 1990), a situation involving individual choice (Weick, 1995), and a phenomenon not clearly understood, due to flawed theoretical and methodological approaches (Singh & Vinnicombe, 2000a).

Commencing with Becker (1960) and the side-bet theory, also known as the behavioral perspective (Meyer & Allen, 1991) hypothesizes that commitment is calculative. According to this view, individuals remain in an organization to avoid losing accrued benefits such as pensions and seniority if they decide to leave their work, their work environment are key but not prime

considerations. Expanding on this perspective, Allen and Meyer (1990) differentiated continuance commitment from normative commitment. They identified three types of commitments, namely, affective commitment: identification of an employee with a particular organization (Chen & Francesco, 2003), continuance commitment: the willingness to remain in an organization because of the investment that an employee has with 'nontransferable' investments, such as rank and retirement money" (Obeng & Ugboro, 2003, p. 87), and normative commitment: it is a "generalized value of loyalty and duty, a moral obligation to the organization" (Gül, 2003, p. 45).

By understanding commitment, practitioners will be more proficient in anticipating the impact of a particular policy or practice on the organization (Meyer & Allen, 1997; Bergmann et al., 2000). Organizational commitment has been defined as involving an employee's loyalty to the organization, willingness to exert effort on behalf of the organization, degree of goal and value congruency with the organization and desire to maintain membership (Cohen, 2007).

### **Job Satisfaction and Organizational Commitment**

In retailing firms, the sales force's job satisfaction is equally important as customer satisfaction. The positive relationship between job satisfaction and organizational commitment is widely recognized in sales and marketing literature (Johnston et al., 1990; Brown and Peterson, 1993; Singh et al., 1996; Bhuian and Menguc, 2002). Satisfaction in selling refers to all the characteristics on the job and its environment which the salesperson finds satisfying, rewarding, and fulfilling (Brown & Peterson, 1993). Kwaku (1998) describes satisfaction as the salesperson's affective state pertaining to the job of selling the most recent or newly marketed product introduced by the firm. Job satisfaction is an important work-related attitude in sales force research, for several (Boles et al., 2003). Sales research indicates that various facets of job satisfaction may exhibit different relationships with other constructs when compared to a

measure of global job satisfaction (Boles et al., 2003). Thus, job satisfaction can influence a variety of important attitudes, intentions and behaviors in a sales force.

Understanding and identifying a salesperson's satisfaction with various facets of job satisfaction can help organizations devise a better behavioral forecast. They currently have in relation to outcomes, either directly or indirectly to job satisfaction, factors such as organizational commitment, intention to quit, and actual turnover (Boles, Madupalli, Rutherford & Wood, 2007).

On the subject of the above discussion, the following research hypothesis is derived:

H<sub>1</sub>: There is significant relationship between organizational commitment and job satisfaction among retail sales personnel.

### **Job Status and Organizational Commitment**

Inconsistent findings have emerged from comparisons between the commitment levels of part-time and full-time employees. Many newly created jobs are part-time (Rosendaal, 2003). All industries have shown their concern about part-time employees, especially those in the service and retail sectors (Hipple, 1998).

Studies have found the part-time workers to be more committed (Martin & Peterson, 1987; Sinclair et al., 1999), less committed (Lee & Johnson, 1991; Martin & Hafer, 1995; Morrow et al., 1994) and equally committed to their jobs in comparison to full-time workers (Krausz, 2000; McGinnis & Morrow, 1990; Still, 1983; Ng et al. (2006), Maynard et al. (2006) and Thorsteinson (2003). Nardone (1995) found that part-time and full-time workers differ on a variety of demographic characteristics. Any differences found between part-time and full-time employees may be due to the dissimilarities of characteristics among persons who hold part-time or full-time jobs.

Recent research (Al Omar, Lolli, Chen-McCain, Dickerson, 2011) indicates that part-time employees were found to be less committed to their job than full-time. Part-time employees may have other important obligations or activities, which explain why they choose to be part-time (Stamper & Van Dyne, 2003). Reality is that they chose such work status because they need this additional job for some reason, whilst they simultaneously fulfill their main obligations or activities outside of the company. Hence, having a part-time job may be considered an extra; thus, their organizational commitment is lower (Thorsteinson, 2003).

Resulting from these arguments, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H<sub>2</sub>: There is a significant relationship between organizational commitment and current job status among retail sales personnel.

## **Gender and Organizational Commitment**

Owing to an increase in the number of women entering the sales force, gender differences and similarities are of interest in the sales and marketing settings (Babin and Boles, 1998; Moncrieff et al., 2000). Different studies suggest that gender should be one of the critical variables significantly correlating with organizational commitment (Hofstede, 2001; Mathieu and Zajac, 1990). Sales research into organizational commitment has reported some gender differences in non-marketing settings (Hartmann, 2000) due to job attributes, family ties, career variables (Marsden et al., 1993) and job attribute preferences (e.g., Mason, 1995). These studies indicate that men and women have different levels of organizational commitment for varied reasons.

Strategies for managing relationships are based on the notion that women and men react differently to situations (Babin et al., 2001). Gender researchers suggested that women's emotions can be tied more closely to their approach-avoidance behavior (Babin et al., 2001) and

men are less expressive and react less emotionally to different situations in comparison to women (Gross & John, 1998).

Recent research (Franzway, 2000; Singh & Vinnicombe, 2000a) confirms that there is a link between gender, emotions, and organizational commitment. Singh and Vinnicombe's (2000a) research suggested that in an organizational context, women tend to experience different emotions to men in relation to organizational commitment.

Latter research (over 20 studies; e.g., Meyer, Stanley, Herscovitch, & Topolnytsky, 2002; Thorsteinson, 2003; Riketta, 2005) found that there were no gender differences in organizational commitment. Further studies found that even when there was a mean difference in organizational commitment between men and women, there was no gender effect when predicting organizational commitment (i.e. via multiple regression) when controlled variables such as age, job level, educational, job and organizational tenure were included in the analyses (Vander Velde, Bossink, & Jansen, 2003). This suggests that certain characteristics that may be correlated with gender (e.g., job level, as women are more likely to have lower-level jobs) are likely to explain the difference in organizational commitment more so than gender itself.

Hence, the following research hypothesis is proposed:

H3: There is a statistically significant relationship between gender and organizational commitment among retail sales personnel.

## **Objective**

The purpose of this study is to analyze the relationship between organizational commitment; and job satisfaction, job status, gender, and intervening variables.

## **Methodology**

The research design involves a survey methodology and the employment of the modified organizational commitment scale for the analysis of organizational commitment among retail

sales personnel in Humacao, Puerto Rico. The variables studied were commitment to the organization, as it relates to gender, job status and job satisfaction levels.

The retail stores selected for this study were from the Humacao municipality in Puerto Rico. The stores were selected because of the high level of employability of sales people working in retailing. A non-random convenience sampling process was used in selecting retail sales personnel, specifically from stores in the Humacao Municipality of Puerto Rico. The population of interest had a total potential quantity of approximately 2,000 salespeople with the size of the actual sample being 200. The sample included males and females; employed full-time and part-time with retail stores selling mobile phones, athletic and dress shoes, garments, jewelry, furniture, and electronics.

To analyze the relationship between organizational commitment, job satisfaction, job status and gender among retail sales personnel, a self-administered questionnaire was given to all participants. The questionnaire measured levels of organizational commitment, job status, job satisfaction and the effects of gender for part-time and full-time retail sales personnel. The questionnaire consisted of three sections that relate to the variables used in this study: commitment to an organization, level of job satisfaction and general demographic information. The respondents were asked to rate their level of organizational commitment on a Likert scale, ranging from “strongly disagree” (1) to “strongly agree” (7). High scores on this scale reflect a high degree of commitment to an organization.

A translation of the original questionnaire was completed and the document was evaluated by three Spanish professors from the Humacao Department of Education of Puerto Rico. They examined the translation for accuracy in content, vocabulary, and linguistic appropriateness for study participants. The final Spanish version of a modified organizational commitment scale was administered as a pilot –test to a selected group of 80 subjects from retail



stores in the Humacao Municipality. Cronbach's Coefficient Alpha was used to determine the reliability of the modified organizational commitment scale and job satisfaction scale. The coefficient alpha index of reliability obtained for both scales was 0.90.

SPSS software was used in order to carry out the statistical analysis. Cronbach's Coefficient Alpha was used to determine the reliability of the modified organizational commitment scale. A correlation matrix was performed to determine the possible intercorrelation between sub-scales in the modified organizational commitment scale.

## Discussion of Results

The mean score for the modified organizational commitment scale was 90.31 and for commitment were 73.51. The distribution of the sample by area was 53% males and 47% females. Ages ranged from 18 to 61 years; 57% were between the ages of 18-25 years. A total of 52% was full-time and 48% part time. The modified organizational commitment scales showed that 62% of the respondents were noncommissioned retail store sales personnel and 38% were commissioned retail store sales personnel (Table 6).

**Table 1. Demographic Profile of the respondents**

Demographic Criteria	Percent
Age	
18-25	57%
26-44	37%
45-54	4%
55 and over	2%
Gender	
Female	53
Male	47
Job status:	
Full-time	52

Part-time	48
Paid Commission	
Commissioned	38
Noncommissioned	62

**Table 2. Pearson Correlation For Modified Organizational Commitment Scale and Gender, Job Satisfaction, and Job Status**

Variable	Mean Score	SD	DOCS	COMM.	GENDER	JOBSAT	JOBSTAT
DOCS	90.31	17.67	1.00				
Commitment	73.51	8.57	.75	1.00			
Gender	98.1	9.97	.83	.88	1.00		
Job Sat.	87.23	9.33	.81	.85	.79	1.00	
Job stat.	89.21	9.44	.80	.82	.74	.80	1.00

Evidence in table (2) shows that Hypothesis 1 (H<sub>1</sub>) was confirmed, there is a significant relationship between organizational commitment and job satisfaction among retail sales personnel. According to the calculated value ( $r = 0.85$ ,  $P > 0.5$ ) there was a significant and positive correlation between organizational commitment and job satisfaction.

Hypothesis Two (H<sub>2</sub>) was confirmed, there is a significant relationship between organizational commitment and current job status among retail sales personnel. The calculated value ( $r = 0.82$ ,  $P > 0.5$ ) indicates that there was a significant and positive correlation between organizational commitment and current job status among retail sales personnel.

The evidence in table (2) indicates that Hypothesis Three (H<sub>3</sub>) was confirmed and that a significant relationship between commitment to an organization and gender among retail sales personnel exists. According to the calculated value ( $r = 0.88$ ,  $P > 0.5$ ) there was a significant and positive relationship between organizational commitment and gender among retail sales personnel. The study suggests that gender is one of the critical variables significantly correlating with organizational commitment (Hofstede, 2001; Mathieu and Zajac, 1990).

## Conclusions

The principal aims of this study were to analyze the relationship between organizational commitment, and job satisfaction, job status, gender, and intervening variables. The results indicate that there is a positive and significant relationship between job satisfaction and organizational commitments. These results connote that satisfied sales personnel would seem more likely to talk positively about the organization, help others, and go beyond the normal expectations of their job (Robbins, 2005). These findings highlight the critical roles of job satisfaction in organizational commitments. The practical implication of the results is that managers need to actively improve their firm's job satisfaction among retail sales personnel in order to achieve higher levels of organizational commitments. Furthermore, supporting such findings is research which suggests that appropriate investments in job satisfaction can enhance organizational commitments.

Results also suggested that there is a positive and significant relationship between job status and organizational commitments. Moreover, results indicate that it is likely to conclude that part-time sales personnel are found to differ from full-time employees in terms of organizational commitments.

A significant relationship between organizational commitments and gender among retail sales personnel was also found. The study confirms what different studies suggest; that gender is one of the critical variables significantly correlating with organizational commitment (Hofstede, 2001; Mathieu and Zajac, 1990).

It is imperative for sales managers to understand the factors related to organizational commitment among the retail sales force. Also, building employee commitments in the retailing organization is an important goal that every organization must address. A sales force committed to their organization will make the difference between an organization that struggles and a

powerful and effective one. If all the antecedents of their organization are related to personal characteristics, the candidate selection techniques for a position must be improved. In furtherance, if all the antecedents are related to the organization then major efforts should be directed toward developing certain positive employee traits. Some of these traits include greater responsibility, satisfaction, motivation, and commitment to service quality.

The findings of this study suggest that retail managers should understand the importance of the relationship between organizational commitment and the variables of job satisfaction, job status, and gender among retail sales personnel. Members of the sales force should be interviewed to determine their organizational commitment, job satisfaction, and service quality and empowerment perceptions.

The implication of this study is that managers should understand that they should be trained to detect levels of organizational commitment and how to increase job satisfaction among diversified work force. Organizational decision-makers may examine factors to redesign tasks, structures and organizational culture in an effort to provide greater opportunities to enhance the commitment of their employees. While management cannot change workers' personal characteristics or those factors external to the job or organization, it does have control over a wide choice of change strategies that may affect organizational commitment.

Sellers have different types of motivation. Consequently, it is suggested to update new studies on the relationship between organizational commitment of the sales force and its relationship with the motivation. Another study that should be taken into account is the organizational commitment and the quality of service.

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