

Job-Related Factors and their Influence on Organizational Commitment of Part-Time Academic Staff in Institutions of Higher Education in Nairobi and Mombasa Cities in Kenya

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Abstract

This study was set out to establish whether selected job-related factors affect organizational commitment of part-time academic staff in higher education institutions (HEIs) in Kenya. The quantitative study design by use of survey was used for the study. The sampling frame was developed through capture-recapture method. The sampling technique used was multi-stage consisting of several stages of stratified and simple random sampling and time-location sampling. Data was collected using questionnaires from 227 part-time academic staff from selected HEIs in Nairobi and Mombasa cities in Kenya. The results show that role clarity is a negative predictor of normative commitment. All the job-related factors (supervisor support, co-worker support and access to resources) are predictors of affective commitment. The study recommends that education managers in HEIs should make deliberate attempts to develop and implement explicit policies relating to the management of part-time academic staff. This study strongly recommends that part-time academics staff should be provided with resources to enable them effectively carry out their duties.

Keywords: organizational commitment, part-time academic staff, job-related factors, higher education institutions

1.0 Introduction

The period since 1970s has experienced an enormous change in the teaching workforce in higher education worldwide (Berry, 2002). This has been caused by the increase in international competition and trends in globalization. As a result, higher education institutions have been forced to adopt managerialization as means to cope. These reforms have created new ways in which work is organized and the way people are managed (Joiner & Bakalis, 2006).

The use of part-time academic staff in HEIs has raised serious concerns about their commitment and performance. One very general and old assumption about part-timers in relation to their commitment has been that part-timers are less committed (Pfeiffer, 1994). This assumption led to increased interest among researchers to find out about commitment of part-timers at work. Most such studies on commitment of teachers (even part-timers in general) have been extensively conducted by researchers in the western countries (e.g. Eagan et al., 2009; Dooreward et al., 2009; Umbach, 2008; Tabuso, 2007; Gaylor, 2006; Borchers, 2002).

1.1 Statement of the Problem

The expansion of university education in Kenya (Kipkebut, 2010) for example, coupled with reduced direct government funding for HEIs (CHE, 2006) has left the local public universities with little choices but to resort to use of part-time academics. The research problem identified, which has created a need to this study, is that most studies on commitment of academics have been conducted by researchers in the context of western and developed economies (e.g. Eagan et al., 2009; Dooreward et al., 2009; Umbach, 2008; Tabuso, 2007; Gaylor, 2006; Borchers, 2002). A small number of studies on commitment of part-time faculty have been carried out in Eastern and the developing country contexts (Bakalis & Joiner, 2006). There is a dearth of information on organizational arising from the African context commitment not only touching on academics but also on commitment of employees in general. The aim of this study is to assess the applicability of the conceptualization of job-related factors and whether they influence the organizational commitment of part-time faculty in HEIs in Kenya.

1.2 Objective of Study

The objective of this research is to establish whether selected job-related factors are determinants of organizational commitment of part-time academics in selected HEIs in Kenya.

1.3 Hypothesis

In the light of the above objective, and in view of previous studies in this subject matter, the following research hypotheses were formulated:

H₁₀: The presence of job-related factors as supervisor support co-worker support, resources availability, role clarity and opportunities for post-graduate study at the university all have an effect on affective commitment of part-time academic staff.

H_{1A}: The presence of job-related factors as supervisor support co-worker support, resources availability, role clarity and opportunities for post-graduate study at the university not all have an effect on affective commitment of part-time academic staff.

2.0 Multi-Dimensional Approach to Organizational Commitment

Interest in the study of the multidimensionality of organisational commitment has been as a result of two factors. Firstly, previous studies on organisational commitment have been criticised for failing to investigate commitment as a construct that is distinct from other psychological concepts (O'Reilly & Chatman, 1986). This is despite studies showing that one's commitment to an organisation can result from value congruence, financial investments, effective reward and control systems or a simple lack of opportunities (Becker, 1960; Wiener, 1982). Secondly, although attitudinal or behavioural approaches explained different concepts of commitment (i.e. psychological attachment, loyalty and costs attached to leaving the organisation), Mowday *et al.* (1982) found that the two approaches were not mutually exclusive but interrelated. The first study that explored the multidimensionality of organisational commitment was carried out by Meyer and Allen (1984) who adopted Becker's (1960) "side-bet" theory by introducing the concept of continuance commitment alongside the concept of affective commitment. Reichers (1985), in a review of 32 commitment studies, did not find a consistent definition of commitment. However, from these studies, Reichers (1985, p.468) classified commitment into three categories: the affective, continuance and normative commitment. Allen and Meyer (1990) developed measurement scales (OCQ) for organizational commitment which consisted of 24 items measuring the three components of commitment. Since the development of the multidimensional commitment by Allen and Meyer (1990), various studies in American and other Western contexts have been carried out using the three-dimensional organisational commitment measures (Iverson & Buttigieg, 1999; Vandenberghe, Stinglhamber, Bentein & Delhaise, 2001; Meyer *et al.*, 2002).

2.1 Job- Related Characteristics and Organizational Commitment

Job-related characteristics have been found to influence organizational commitment. Job-related characteristics refer to practices used by the employer to assist the employee understand the job or work roles (Beukhoif et al., 1998). These practices broadly increase the clarity of the job by providing structure, formality and feedback to employees (Steers 1997; McClurg, 1999). These aspects are not only important predictors of commitment, but they also predict motivation states of employees. This study will consider four significantly important job characteristics: supervisor support; co-worker support; role clarity; and access to resources (Shore & Wayne, 1993).

2.2 A Model of Organizational Commitment: Hypotheses Development

Employers are interested understanding how to develop and maintain the commitment of employees (Meyer & Allen, 1997; Jackson 2006). This is so because organisational commitment is a variable that bind the employee to the organization, and this relationship has been found to have positive effects on performance (Naude *et al.*, 2003). Research has identified three dimensions of organisational commitment: affective, normative and continuance commitment (Meyer & Allen, 1997).

Affective commitment reflects the employee's emotional involvement in the firm's values and goals and the employee's identification with "his/her" firm (Allen & Meyer, 1990; Dick & Metcalfe, 2001; Bansal *et al.*, 2004; Meyer & Smith, 2000). Normative commitment – explains the sense of duty and responsibility towards the firm arising from agreements or norms shared by the parties (Allen & Meyer, 1990; Bansal *et al.*, 2004; Gruen *et al.*, 2000; Meyer & Smith, 2000; Rylander *et al.*, 1997). Continuance commitment reflects the intention to continue working for the same firm. Following Allen and Meyer (1990), employees who have a strong affective commitment stay in the firm because they "want to", the ones who have a strong normative commitment stay because they feel they "ought to" and the ones who have a strong continuance commitment stay because they "need to" (Martin, 2007).

A review of past literature on organisational commitment has identified several determinants of OC (Chungtai & Zafar, 2006; Joiner & Bakalis, 2006; Smeenk *et al.*, 2009, Martin, 2007, Caykolyu & Egri, 2009): personal characteristics; job-related characteristics; organisational characteristics; economic factors; trust; and job satisfaction.

2.3 Determinants of Affective Commitment

Research has produced results on several determinants of affective commitment (Joiner & Bakalis, 2006; Nijhof *et al.*, 1998; Jacobsen, 2000). Job-related factors have been shown to be the most popular determinants of affective commitment among part-time staff. Studies indicate that part-timers may be more or less excluded from the key decision processes of the organization. This can be partly attributed to fact that they are not always present when the decisions are being made; and partly because the employer would consider them as outsiders who do not necessarily have to the authority to be invited to participate in the processes (Jacobsen, 2000).

Part-timers have a much higher chance of being allocated to less enriched jobs. The much enriched, more challenging and interesting jobs are would ordinarily be assigned to full-timers leaving the rest for part-timers who would be engaged by the employer. As a result of their temporary contracts in organizations, part-timers get little support from their co-workers and supervisors. Indeed in situations where the work stations are decentralized and the employment decision making is centralized, part-timers are not accorded sufficient socialization through orientation. This in effect results in role ambiguity. The supervisors and co-workers in an out work station may get a feeling of threat and intimidation and threat to their authority as they were not involved in selecting part-timers who were later deployed in their work stations. In this regard, part-timers would really experience incidences of lack of appreciation and support from co-workers, supervisors. The aspect of role ambiguity and lack of support to access resources necessary for carrying out the work eventually result in a negative effect on affective commitment.

Hence, from the foregoing discussion, it has been can hypothesized as follows:

H1₀: The presence of job-related factors as supervisor support co-worker support, resources availability, role clarity and opportunities for post-graduate study at the university all have an effect on affective commitment of part-time academic staff.

H1_A: The presence of job-related factors as supervisor support co-worker support, resources availability, role clarity and opportunities for post-graduate study at the university not all have an effect on affective commitment of part-time academic staff.

3.0 Methods

In this study, a quantitative research design was used. The specific quantitative method used in this research was the survey method. The population in this study consisted of part-time academics and chairpersons or coordinators or directors of business schools or business-oriented faculties or departments engaging part-time academics in the selected universities in Mombasa and Nairobi cities in Kenya. The sampling frame was developed through capture-recapture or contact-recontact methods.

3.1 Sampling Techniques and Sample Size

Multiphase sampling technique was employed to select the subjects of study. First, stratified sampling was used to select the HEIs for the study. This resulted in a sample of the HEIs from those operating in the study area. The total population of part-time academic staff in the selected HEIs was 864 where a sample of 267 was targeted. A total of 267 questionnaires were delivered to the respondents in the sample. 243 questionnaires were returned but 16 were not in usable form leaving a total of 227 in usable form. This represents a response rate of 85% for the part-time academic staff in the sample. Out of the 19 academic heads of departments who were selected, 12 accepted and were interviewed representing 63%. This response rate has been considered to be adequate in survey research (Baruch, 1999; Roth and BeVier, 1998).

The data collection instruments in this study included a questionnaire and an interview guide. The Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (EOQ) was used to measure the variables in this study. This OCQ has been largely used to measure organizational commitment over the last four decades (Benkhoff, 2000).

Data was collected through administration of questionnaires and interviews. Spearman rho correlation was used to establish the relationship between variables in this study. Multiple regression was done in this study to establish the independent variables that predict the dependent variables. The test statistic used for testing the hypothesis in this study was the F-test.

3.2 Measurement of the Variables

Job-related characteristics in this study applied quite a number of separate measures. Supervisory support was measured using an instrument based on Gartner and Nollen's (1989) and Taylor and Bower's (1972) measures on a Likert scale. Access to resources was measured using an instrument adapted from Spreitzer (1996) while role clarity was measured using a scale by Rizzo et al. (1970).

3.3 Sample Description

The gender of respondents was one of the factors assumed to predict organizational commitment of part-time academic staff. The findings indicated that there was a larger percentage of male part-time lecturers (70.5 %) compared to the female ones (29.5%). The findings on marital status, assuming that married people have more responsibilities, shows that 83 % of the respondents were married. A small percentage (17%) was unmarried. The findings show that with regard to sibling status, 83% of the respondents reported that they have children. This may be indicative of the fact that economic conditions and the responsibility to take care of siblings pushed them into part-time teaching.

The total number of semesters taught was one of the factors assumed to predict organizational commitment of part-time academic staff. The aspect of longevity of service in part-time teaching gave mixed results. On one hand, there were many entrants (32%). This can be attributed to the massive expansion in university education in Kenya in 2007-2012 periods. On the other hand, there were almost equally a similar number (29%) who had a service in excess of 10 semesters. The focus of highest academic qualifications shows that most of the staff is holders of masters' degree (82%). This trend is worrying compared to the 5% who possess doctoral degree and above. This means that most of those involved in part-time teaching barely possess the required qualifications as per Kenya's Commission for University Education academic staff quality standards that require a minimum of Ph D.

This study had an item exploring whether the respondents have a full-time job over and above the part-time teaching job they have. On whether the respondents had full-time jobs, 58% were on the affirmative. However, this number could go up given that some did not want to prejudice their jobs by stating that they have another job. This study had an item exploring the work sector from which the respondents with full time jobs were working. While 40% confirmed that they have no full-time job, the bulk of the rest were in the education and training sectors. This means that the same full-time staff in HEIs participates a lot in part-time teaching; and this is supported by those who work in the secondary education sector and the tertiary training sector.

4.0 Findings

The findings of this study are as discussed below.

4.1 Results of Correlation Analysis

The results of the correlations between the variables are shown in Table 4.1. The results show supervisor support is positively related, and is statistically significant all the other three variables: co-worker support, $r_s .458, p$ (two-tailed) < 0.01 ; access to resources, $r_s .383, p$ (two-tailed) < 0.01 ; and role clarity, $r_s .337, p$ (two-tailed) < 0.01 . co-worker support was also found to be positively and significantly related to access to resources, $r_s .504, p$ (two-tailed) < 0.01 ; and role clarity, $r_s .204, p$ (two-tailed) < 0.01 . Lastly access to resources was statistically significant with role clarity, $r_s .279, p$ (two-tailed) < 0.01 .

4.2 Results of Regression Analysis of Job-Related Characteristics Predicting Organizational Commitment of Part-Time Academic Staff in HEIS in Kenya

To establish this prediction, stepwise regression was carried out with selected job-related factors being independent variables and affective, continuance and normative commitment being dependent variables in turns.

Stepwise regression analysis looking for job-related factors predicting affective commitment produced the results summarized in Table 4.2. The results of step 2 show that the selected and statistically significant job-related characteristics (co-worker support, access to resources, supervisor support) accounts for 33.6% ($R^2=.336$) of the factors that predict affective commitment.

The results from the model parameters shows that the 3 selected predictors had relatively large contributions to the model shown by the t-values: co-worker support $t=2.929, p < .01$, access to resources $t= 2.457, p < .0$, supervisor support, $t= 2.93, p < .01$). In summary therefore, the three job-related factors are the significant predictors of affective commitment in this model with affective commitment being the dependent variable.

4.3 The Influence of Job-Related Characteristics on Continuance Commitment of Part-Time Academic Staff in Kenya

Stepwise regression analysis looking for job-related factors predicting continuance commitment produced the results summarized in Table 4.3. The results of step 4 show that the selected and statistically significant job-related characteristic (co-worker support) accounts for 3 % ($R^2=.030$) of the job-related factors that predict continuance commitment from the model.

The results from the model parameters show that the one selected predictor had relatively sizeable contribution to the model shown by the t-values: $t=2.64, p < .01$). In summary therefore, the one variable is predicting affective commitment in this model with affective commitment being the dependent variable.

4.4 The Influence of Job-Related Characteristics on Normative Commitment of Part-Time Academic Staff in Kenya

Stepwise regression analysis looking for job-related factors predicting normative commitment produced the results summarized in Table 4.4. The results of step 3 show that the selected and statistically significant personal characteristics (role clarity and access to resources) accounts for 10.5% ($R^2=.105$) of the entered factors that predict normative commitment in this model. The results from the model parameters show that the 2 selected predictors had relatively large contributions to the model shown by the t-values: access to resources, $t= 4.78$, role clarity, $t= -3.12$). In summary therefore, the two variables are the predictors of normative commitment in this model with affective commitment being the dependent variable.

4.5 Hypotheses

H2₀: The presence of job-related factors as supervisor support (X_6), co-worker support (X_7), resources availability (X_8), role clarity (X_9), and organizational factor, opportunities for post-graduate study (X_{12}) at the university all positively affect affective commitment of part-time academic staff (all $\alpha_i \neq 0$, for $i = 6,7,8,9,12$).

H2_A: The presence of job-related factors as supervisor support (X_6), co-worker support (X_7), resources availability (X_8), role clarity (X_9), and opportunities for post-graduate study (X_{12}) at the university not all relates to affective commitment of part-time academic staff (some of $\alpha_i = 0$, for $i = 6,7,8,9,12$).

The variables in this hypothesis were supervisor support (X_6), co-worker support (X_7), resources availability (X_8), role clarity (X_9) relate pt question Q11, Q12, Q13, and Q14 respectively; while the variable, opportunities for post-graduate study (X_{12}) relates to question Q17.

Initially, each variable was independently correlated with Y_1 to assess plausibility of relationship. Subsequently, a multiple regression equation was fitted and hypothesis tested against α_6 , α_7 , α_8 , α_9 , and α_{12} that correspond to supervisor support, co-worker support, resources availability, role clarity and opportunities for post-graduate study respectively. Some of the $\alpha_i = 0$ and the null hypothesis H_0 was rejected at 5% confidence interval and concluded that the presence of job-related factors as supervisor support (X_6), co-worker support (X_7), resources availability (X_8), role clarity (X_9), and opportunities for post-graduate study (X_{12}) at the university not all relates to affective commitment of part-time academic staff.

5.0 Discussions

Results from this study show that job-related factors play a particularly important role in the affective commitment of part-time academics. This is consistent with the findings of previous research (Bakalis and Joiner, 2006; Najhof, Jong and Beukhof, 1998). Strong co-worker support and supervisor support both contribute to affective commitment, highlighting the value of these relationships to part-time university academic staff. The supervisor is the lecturer in-charge of the subject for which the part-time university academic staff member has been employed to teach. A supervisor who offers support, shares concerns and provides useful job-related information is likely to have a positive influence on part-time university academic staff member's organisational commitment. This is consistent with a study in Pakistan by Zafar and Chungtai (2006) who found that supervision was positively correlated with organizational commitment. Likewise, the results from one of the previous study (Bakalis and Joiner, 2006) suggest that academic co-workers provide mutual support for one another in terms of providing information and assistance which in turn increases their sense of connection and commitment with the university.

Not unrelated to the above theme, our study (Bakalis and Joiner, 2006) found that increased information about the job (role clarity) was associated with heightened affective commitment. The nature of the part-time university academic staff members' job is such that they are often employed at short notice in response to an unexpected increase in demand for a particular subject, may not have worked at the university previously or might not have taught in the particular subject previously. Documentation, such as job descriptions, is usually very sparse for part-time university academic staff. Thus, any increase in direction and explanation with respect to job responsibilities, rights and requirements is likely to increase the part-time university academic staff members' commitment to the organisation. Role/job information may be communicated formally by improving the documentation given to new staff.

Alternatively or additionally, such information can be communicated informally by among other mechanisms, via co-workers and supervisors. Access to resources, such as photocopying, computing facilities, printing, stationary and office space can do doubt impact on the ability of part-time university academic staff members to undertake their work. Access to resources, however, also subtly communicates to the academic their value to the organisation. Lack of resources, or punitive attitudes towards the distribution of such resources, can signal a lack of organisation caring and commitment to the part-time academic staff, exacerbating the academics own organisational affective commitment.

The second research hypothesis (H_{2A}) was also accepted indicating that not all the of job-related factors used in the study (supervisor support, co-worker support, resources availability role clarity and opportunities for post-graduate study) predict affective commitment of part-time academic staff. The results show that supervisor support is a positive predictor of affective commitment; co-worker support is a positive predictor of affective and continuance commitment.

5.1 Conclusions

The following conclusions can be made arising from the findings of this study. First, since part-time academic staff seem to be an evolving and quickly rising trend in higher education, it might as well be important to start appreciating their role in the economic and social development of a country. Secondly, the Three Component Model (TCM) of organizational commitment is applicable in Kenya, a developing country context, as it is applicable in the Western context. Third, job-related factors (supervisor support, co-worker support, access to resources and role clarity are very important factors determining organizational commitment of part-time academic staff. The more these factors are present at the workplace, the more the likelihood of greater organizational commitment from part-time academic staff.

5.2 Recommendations

By identifying factors that help to foster organizational commitment among university part-time academics staff, the findings of this study provide guidelines to education managers to come up with policies which would enable them to attract and retain top level faculty at their respective universities. These findings should inform such policy formulation and implementation.

The study further recommends that where possible and practicable, part-time academic staff should be recruited from among the post-graduate students in the same institution. It also recommends that new part-timers should be linked with co-workers who could be full-time members to facilitate in mentoring, coaching or counseling them.

This study strongly recommends that part-time academics should be provided with resources to enable them carry out their duties. Notable the resources they could be allowed to access are staffrooms, offices, photocopying services, printing, internet facilities and library resources. These have a notable role in enhancing organizational commitment.

5.3 Future Research

First, this study focused on the concept of organizational commitment but there exists several foci of commitment like professional, departmental, occupation, team or workgroup. Future research should consider the determinants of either of the other commitments.

Second, this study was confined to selected public and private universities Nairobi and Mombasa cities in Kenya. Future research should consider extending the focus to many more universities not necessarily operating in the cities in Kenya. Research could also focus on other African countries where the use of part-time academic staff is the norm. Alternative research could also narrow down and look at organizational commitment within a single university. This could shed more light for particularized decision making on part-time staff.

Third, this study used only empirically selected variables as predictors of organizational commitment of part-time academic staff. Future research could explore other variables as the effect of leadership styles, organization culture, the pay rates or human resource practices on organizational commitment of part-time academic staff.

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Appendices

Table 4.1: Output for Spearman Correlation on Job-Related Factors

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

Spearman's rho		Supervisor Support	Co-Worker Support	Access Resources	ToRole Clarity
Supervisor Support	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.458**	.383**	.337**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000	.000	.000
	N	227	227	227	227
Co-Worker Support	Correlation Coefficient	.458**	1.000	.504**	.204**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.	.000	.002
	N	227	227	227	227
Access Resources	Correlation Coefficient	.383**	.504**	1.000	.279**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.	.000
	N	227	227	227	227
Role Clarity	Correlation Coefficient	.337**	.204**	.279**	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.002	.000	.
	N	227	227	227	227

Table 4.2: Model Summary of Job-Related Characteristics as Predicting Affective Commitment

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted Square	RStd. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Change	Square Change	F Change	df1	df2
1	.581 ^a	.337	.325	.683	.337	28.225	4	222	.000
2	.580 ^b	.336	.327	.682	-.001	.307	1	222	.580

- a. Predictors: (Constant), Role Clarity, Co-Worker Support, Access to Resources, Supervisor Support
- b. Predictors: (Constant), Co-Worker Support, Access to Resources, Supervisor Support
- c. Dependent Variable: Affective Commitment

Table 4.3: Model Summary of job-Related Characteristics as Predicting Continuance Commitment

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted Square	RStd. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Change	Square Change	F Change	df1	df2
1	.213 ^a	.045	.028	.821	.045	2.633	4	222	.035
2	.202 ^b	.041	.028	.821	-.005	1.063	1	222	.304
3	.195 ^c	.038	.029	.820	-.003	.658	1	223	.418
4	.174 ^d	.030	.026	.822	-.008	1.803	1	224	.181

- a. Predictors: (Constant), Role Clarity, Co-Worker Support, Access to Resources, Supervisor Support
- b. Predictors: (Constant), Role Clarity, Co-Worker Support, Access to Resources
- c. Predictors: (Constant), Co-Worker Support, Access to Resources
- d. Predictors: (Constant), Co-Worker Support
- e. Dependent Variable: Continuance Commitment

Table 4.4: Model Summary of Job-Related Characteristics as Predicting Normative Commitment

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted Square	RStd. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Change	Square Change	F Change	df1	df2
1	.346 ^a	.120	.104	.622	.120	7.563	4	222	.000
2	.334 ^b	.112	.100	.623	-.008	2.043	1	222	.154
3	.324 ^c	.105	.097	.624	-.007	1.745	1	223	.188

- a. Predictors: (Constant), Role Clarity, Co-Worker Support, Access to Resources, Supervisor Support
- b. Predictors: (Constant), Role Clarity, Co-Worker Support, Access to Resources