Employee Commitment: Nature, Antecedents and Outcomes

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Abstract

The authors explore the meaning, contributory factors; and results of employee engagement. We employ predominantly academic and popular literature to assess the three parts of the subject. Combining the review with discussion, we find that employees are committed not only to their organisations but also to their jobs and work groups; antecedents are of two main categories – organisational antecedents and personal characteristics antecedents, the former being predominantly intrinsic; outcomes include creation of corporate image, control of voluntary employee turnover, and social benefits. We conclude that many studies identify and describe motivation, job satisfaction, and increased performance as employee commitment outcomes, which we tend to disagree. We have clarified these, which we consider as the major contribution of this study.

Keywords: Employee commitment, commitment antecedents, motivation, performance, job satisfaction, commitment outcomes

1. Introduction

Effective management of people at work is an integral part of the management process. To understand the critical importance of people in the organisation is to recognise that the human element and the organisation are synonymous (Tella et al., 2007). To further understand this relationship is to understand the employee commitment concept. Not surprising therefore, that since the 1970s employee commitment has become very popular topic of investigation, indication that the topic has important implications for employees, organisations, and the larger society.

Due to the perceived importance of the concept there have been many studies, both theoretical and empirical, with diverse views and results on what employee commitment involves. A few of such studies include Rocha, Cardoso & Tordera (2008) who looked at employee commitment and knowledge management; Mishra (2005) on the role of employee commitment in organisational effectiveness; Owoyemi et al. (2011) on employee commitment to organisation; Alimohammadi & Neyshabor (2013) on work motivation and organisational commitment; Lambert & Hogan (2009) on job satisfaction and organisational commitment in shaping turnover intent. However, just a few of these studies have approached employee commitment in systematic and comprehensive way (Mishra, 2005), therefore producing scanty information on the subject since most of such studies combine employee commitment with other subjects on people management. Regardless, such investigations do not underestimate the importance of employee commitment as part of management process in business organisations.

Our study therefore focuses on employee commitment and attempts to explore its three major components – what it is; what contributes to it; and what it produces. We believe that understanding these could help employers appreciate the need for employee commitment initiatives, improvements, or corrective actions to take for organisational survival. The rest of the paper is organised under four major sections. Section 2 looks at the purpose of the study and how the study is conducted. Section 3, the main part of the

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paper, is our literature review and description of the three major parts of employee commitment. This is followed by section 4 that presents our key findings. The final section is our conclusion which is combined with suggestion of potential area for further research.

2. Purpose and Methods of Study

This paper attempts to assess what is employee commitment; what contributes to employee's commitment to an organisation; and what the employee, on being committed (or non-committed), brings to the organisation. We employ predominantly academic and popular literature on the topic. Our aim is to focus solely on employee commitment, considering the three major parts – nature, causes and outcomes. The study therefore has three objectives, which together satisfy our study aim. These objectives include (1) to assess the nature of employee commitment; (2) to identify the contributory factors of employee engagement; and (3) to explore outcomes of employee commitment. Our approach departs from all the identified literature – theoretical or empirical – that rather combine employee commitment with other soft human resource areas such as performance, motivation, job satisfaction, voluntary employee turnover, etc. We review literature on each of the three main elements. Review of each element is combined with its discussion to derive emerging themes. Discussion of our results however leads us into some of the findings of authors/researchers whose works have been our major source of data, and evaluate them and offer our views.

3. Our Review and Discussion

Commitment has been defined as the degree of pledging or binding of the individual to a set of behaviours that motivates one to act, and once identification with the group or unit begins, the individual is likely to become concerned with the broader interests of the unit including its reputation, survival, and continued success. It is therefore a force that binds an individual to a course of action of relevance to one or more targets (Tayyab, 2006). In discussing employee commitment, Price (2007) asks the question, "committed to what?" and writes that individuals themselves may identify their work at a variety of levels: their job, profession, department, boss or organisation. In this section we review and discuss the nature, antecedents and outcomes of employee commitment.

➢ What is Employee Commitment?

Employee (or organisational) commitment is defined as the psychological and emotional attachment of the individuals to their jobs, careers, work groups or teams and peers (Cohen, 2003). Who is a committed employee? Tayyab (2006) asks this question and describes committed employee as one who stays with the organisation, attends work regularly, puts in full day, protects organisational assets, shares organisational goals and so on. Terming it as workplace commitment, Fornes et al. (2008) describe commitment to include organisational commitment and individual commitment. They define organisational commitment as the psychological and emotional attachment to their organisation, and the measure of strength of the employee's identification with the goals and values of the organisation. Wright & Kehoe (2008) define organisational commitment as the strength of an individual's identification with, and involvement in a particular organisation. Employees committed to the organisation exert extra efforts; protect company assets; and share company goals and values. The authors contend that these values and behaviours are both organisational and supervisory. Emphasizing the importance of supervisory commitment, Fornes et al (2008) intimate that it portrays the strength of identification with the supervisor and the internalisation of the supervisor's values. Identification occurs when the subordinate admires certain attributes of the supervisor, such as behaviours and accomplishments to involve both organisational and supervisory commitment. Clark et al. (2009) are of the view that supervisors or managers who are committed and employ an empowering leadership style can create a transformational climate that conveys their commitment which leads to their employees being more likely to share the organisation's values; who understand their role in the organisation; who are more satisfied with their jobs; and who perform at a higher level.

Research has it that employee commitment is a strong belief in the goals (Mowday et al., 1997) and values of the organisation, to offer voluntary contribution and sustain this attachment. This perspective, which is shared by Wright and Kahoe (2008), is believing in what the organisation stands for. Such employees may see the organisation as second home. In another development, Allen & Meyer (1990), whose work is supported by Camelleri (2006), see commitment as how employees feel to be committed – because they want to; because they need to; and because they ought to. There are the implications of their effective commitment; continuance commitment; and normative commitment categorisation.

Fornes et al. (2008) identify three types of organisational commitment. These include team commitment which is the strength of the employee's identification with the values of other individuals and peers within the organisation; job commitment which is the degree to which a person identifies psychologically with his/her work; and career commitment, which involves identification with one's profession or occupation. By their team, job and career commitment categorisation they imply that commitment is more of personal development including social relationship and how one achieves this through work behaviours within the organisation. Mishra's (2005) two-tier categorisation of attitudinal and behavioural commitments reveals that employee has bond with the organisation through his/her actions, and through these actions sustain his/her involvement in the organisation. All these findings and descriptions reveal that commitment is not only towards achieving organisational objectives but also for employee's survival as an organisational member; as well as for social reasons – the need to belong to and work with others. These varied views therefore support the varied descriptions of the concept – employee commitment; individual commitment; organisational commitment.

The studies of Mowday et al. (1997) and Wright and Kehoe (2008) also consider organisational commitment as of three components: a strong belief in and acceptance of organisational goals and values (identification); a willingness to exert considerable effort on behalf of the organisation (involvement); and a strong desire to maintain membership in the organisation (loyalty). Allen & Meyer (1990) on their part view organisational commitment as the feeling of obligation to stay with the organisation: feelings resulting from the internalisation of normative pressures exerted on an individual prior to entry or following entry. Allen & Meyer (1990) and Camelleri (2006) also explain commitment with the identification of three distinct components including affective commitment, continuance commitment, and normative commitment. Affective commitment is the employee's emotional attachment to, identification with, and involvement in the organisation. This is emotional bond between an employee and the organisation. They explain continuance commitment as the individual's need to continue working for the organisation based on the perceived costs associated with leaving the organisation either by personal sacrifice or limited opportunities elsewhere, which Brooks & Wallace (2006) describe simply as the intent to stay. The third, normative commitment, is influenced by society's norms about the extent to which people ought to be committed to the organisation i.e. the feeling of obligation to remain with the organisation.

Outcomes of the studies of Allen & Meyer (1990) support Gbadamosi's (2003) findings that employees display two categories of effects or attitudes. The first is those who love their job but hate the organisation for which they work. We speculate that such people have low commitment levels and therefore harbour exit intentions and eventually leave at the slightest chance to continue with their careers elsewhere. This was the major outcome of the work of Oppong (2013) that employees of a Ghanaian mining company, especially managers, became disinterested and resigned to pursue their careers in other mining companies in and outside Ghana. The second category involves those who hate their job but love their employing organisation, thereby displaying a strong loyalty towards the organisation. It is our belief that employees in this category demonstrate commitment to their organisations as they would want to be associated with their organisations instead of their jobs that do not appeal to them. In this light, we see commitment as going further than simple compliance. It is an emotional attachment to the organisation. To Mishra (2005), employee commitment is of two broad categories – attitudinal commitment and behavioural commitment. Attitudinal commitment involves a bond that reflects an individual's identification with the employer, a psychological state that reflects employee's relationship with the organisation. Behavioural commitment, on the other hand, is

follow-on to attitudinal commitment in that it reflects in the willingness to involve in extra behaviour for organisational benefits.

Employee commitment is also put into two different categories by Quijano et al. (2000), including instrumental (calculative) commitment and personal (affective) commitment. Instrumental commitment has to do with individual's dependence on organisational rewards, and this category has two sub-divisions, which is viewed as bonds. These include exchange commitment that is relationship based on extrinsic rewards; and needs commitment that is the employee's need to keep his/her job. The second category, personal commitment, includes the employee's internalisation of organisational values and objective. Like the first category, this also has two sub-categories, which are considered as levels of intensity, and include affective commitment and value related commitment. The categorisations of Quijano (2000), Mishra (2005) and the others reviewed inform us, as we also believe that they hinge on the two main components of commitment – to the organisation and its work, work groups and values; and to the individual's social and survival benefits.

➢ Antecedents of Employee Commitment

Antecedents of commitment are elements and actions that cause commitment to occur. Such elements and actions create employee perceptions that lead to positive consequences for the organisation and the individual (Fornes et al., 2008), and it is these perceptions that create emotional attachment to the organisation. Investigating workplace commitment, Fornes et al. (2008) conclude that the identified antecedents promote organisational commitment and individual commitment by fostering working conditions that stimulate positive outcomes benefiting both the organisation and individuals. Many researchers have identified various antecedents of employee commitments. Tayyab (2006) categorised antecedents into intrinsic and extrinsic work motivation. Intrinsic values comprise feelings of enjoyment and satisfaction derived from work well done; interest in organisational activities; desire to seek higher job and better standards of living; recognition for work effort and performance. Extrinsic work motivation, on the other hand, is derived from attainment of tangible rewards and monetary benefits. Works of others such as Carbery & Garavan (2007), Sachau (2007) and Fornes et al. (2008) reveal various distinct antecedents of employee commitment which includes Tayyab's (2006) intrinsic and extrinsic categorisation. These antecedents which are outlined below include autonomy; clarity of purpose; congruency; empowerment; equity and fairness; feedback; and interesting work. These antecedents result from the organisational environment and are therefore, for the purpose of this article, termed as organisational antecedents.

o Autonomy

Autonomy is the degree of freedom, independence, and discretion an employee is allowed in scheduling work, determining procedures, and involving in the job. Carbery & Garavan (2007) see job involvement as the most important element of autonomy. Job involvement is the degree to which an employee identifies with his job, actively gets involved, and sees his job performance as important to his self-worth. There is the belief that increased autonomy strengthens organisational commitment, as organisations that design work environments that allow for independence and discretion in scheduling work and determining procedures improve employee commitment.

o Clarity of purpose

This antecedent provides a clear identification of the employee's intentions, goals, ideas, and plans of the organisation and therefore allowing him to be informed and to ask questions, provide sense of direction and share information. Lack of clarity of purpose results in organisational ineffectiveness and inefficiency (Kaufman, 2000) as organisations that develop systems and procedures that provide clear sense of direction and adequate explanation of new policies and procedures are more likely to have high levels of commitment (Fornes et al., 2008) from employees.

o Congruency

Congruency is the quality of agreement existing between the employee's values and interests, and those of the organisation. This gives positive perception and such employees are more likely to want to remain members of the organisation (Camelleri, 2006). Czandaer (2001) points out that employees become more

emotionally committed to the organisation when congruency exists between a person's interests, preferences, abilities and values, and organisational factors in the work environment. It is therefore highlighted that aligning employee's values, abilities, skills, and interests with organisational values and culture will have a positive impact on organisational and individual commitments, resulting in improved organisational and performance outcomes.

o **Empowerment**

Empowerment, according to Fornes et al. (2008), gives authority to the employee to make decisions about their work and this creates commitment if it is stronger among employees who are allowed to participate in decision-making and empowered to carry out their work. Empowering people to make decisions and have some control over their work increases the chance that they will perform as desired and bring additional ideas, initiative and energy to their work. It is observed that organisations that allow employees to participate in decision-making and allow employees latitude and flexibility to make decisions will increase organisational and individual commitment. Autonomy differs from empowerment in that autonomy is built into the job description while empowerment is authority given to the employee.

o **Equity and fairness**

Equity and fairness seek to sustain a balance between employees and their organisation. Apart from sustaining a balance between organisation and its employees, effective and sustainable commitment between employees and their supervisors strengthens employees' perceptions of fair, trusting, and equitable environments, which lead to the building of an organisation that provides for equal and fair treatment of all employees resulting in improved organisational commitment.

o **Feedback**

Feedback has been defined as the degree to which employees receive information that reveals how well they are performing on the job. Researchers are of the view that feedback can promote continuous improvement and constant communication with employees. It is advised that organisations that build systems that promote continuous feedback for improved and constant communication will increase both organisational and individual commitment (Sachau, 2007) to improve performance which will translate into the overall achievement of organisational objectives.

o **Interesting work**

Interesting work engages individual's attention and makes work challenging and rewarding, and allows the utilisation of a variety of skills and knowledge. Interesting work is determined by the following job characteristics, all of which improve commitment to the organisation.

- Job challenge;
- Skill variety (different activities and talents the job requires);
- Task identity (doing a job from beginning to end with visible results);
- Task significance (the job's impact on the lives of others); and
- Degree of autonomy (freedom, independence, and discretion in scheduling work and determining procedures).

Maxwell & Steele (2003) and Camelleri (2006) term this antecedent as job characteristics. The most important of these characteristics is job challenge which, the higher it is, the greater the level of commitment resulting from job satisfaction, motivation and job performance. We believe that organisations that ensure that work is interesting and allow for job variety, independence or discretion in sequence, methods, procedures and quality control will improve employees' desire to be committed to their organisation. This supports Maxwell and Steele's (2003) finding that commitment is higher when employees have a broad job scope. The argument is that a wider range of duties and responsibilities means employees experience more challenges, hence become more committed. This suggests that the individual swaps their commitment for a

satisfying work experience, complementing the argument in theory that experience of role conflict will inevitably lead to a reduction in commitment.

➢ **Personal Characteristics Antecedents**

The antecedents identified and discussed earlier are mostly factors relating to the organisation. Personal characteristics (acquired outside work) positively or negatively impact on the employee's attachment and/or loyalty to the organisation (Chughtai & Zafar, 2006). These include age, marital status, tenure, level of education, trust in management, and job involvement. These factors are taken one after the other and explained.

o **Age**

Research has shown that age is positively related to organisational commitment (Mathieu & Zajac, 1990) meaning that the older the employee, the more likely he/she is to be committed and stay. One possible explanation for this relationship is that there are fewer employment options available to older employees (Mowday et al., 1997), and older employees realise that leaving may cost them more than staying. Thus, in that research, a positive relationship between age and commitment was predicted.

o **Marital Status**

Marital status has emerged as a consistent predictor of organisational commitment. Findings indicate that married people were more committed to their organisation than unmarried people (Chughtai & Zafar, 2006) as married people have more family responsibilities and need more stability and security in their jobs; and therefore, are likely to be more committed to their current organisation than their unmarried counterparts. In the light of the outcome and explanation, it was found that married employees will be emotionally attached to their organisations than unmarried people.

o **Education**

Level of education has been found to have relationship with organisational commitment. The explanation for this finding is that people with low levels of education generally have more difficulty changing jobs and therefore show a greater commitment to their organisations. Oppong (2013) has reported findings consistent with this rationale. The study shows that lower level of commitment and therefore voluntary turnover was higher with managers and professionals (with higher education) than the lower level employees in a Ghanaian gold mining company.

o **Tenure**

This refers to the period or number of years one has been an employee in an organisation. Research indicates that the length of period a person has been in employment (with a given organisation) is positively related to organisational commitment (Allen & Meyer, 1990). Tenure here is more of personal satisfaction than organisational reason. According to Allen & Meyer (1990), as an individual's length of service with a particular organisation increases, he or she may develop an emotional attachment with the organisation that makes it difficult to switch jobs. It is suggested that the results of a positive relationship between tenure and organisational commitment might be simply explained from the point of view that uncommitted employees leave an organisation, and only those with a high commitment remain.

o **Job Involvement**

Job involvement concerns an individual's ego involvement with the job - that is, the degree to which his/her self-esteem is affected by his work performance. Research reveals a significant positive relationship between organisational commitment and job involvement. One explanation for this could be that for employees with a high level of job involvement, the job is important to their self-image. These high-involvement employees identify themselves with the organisation, care about the organisation's values and objectives, be more concerned about their jobs and are thus less likely to quit their jobs. Thus, a significant positive relationship between job involvement and commitment is expected from employee's loyalty towards their organisations.

o **Trust in Management**

Trust refers to a person's degree of confidence in the words and actions of another. Trust in organisational authorities has been shown to influence a variety of subordinates' work attitudes and behaviours. Where there is trust, employees become so attached to the organisation because of the self-assurance that they can depend on the organisation. Organisational dependability has been described as the extent to which employees feel the organisation could be counted on to look after employee interests. Clearly, the higher the experience of employee's dependability, the more positive the impact on commitment (Maxwell and Steele, 2003). When trust levels are high, employees are supportive of, and committed to the authorities and the organisations that the authorities represent.

Our review has revealed that antecedents are categorised into organisational and personal characteristics. We term the organisational factors as traditional antecedent because these are the common and almost every author/researcher writes about. However, these antecedents are observed to be mainly intrinsic despite the perceived influence of extrinsic factors such as pay and other rewards on employee's attachment to his/her organisation. For instance, it is identified by Tayyab (2006) that work motivation derived from direct rewards such as pay and promotion have direct influence on employee commitment. Complementing these are employee importance and social involvement. We believe that if employees receive rewards, e.g. promotion after overcoming some obstacles, then commitment is likely to be higher than if the rewards are automatically received. Pay – in the absolute amount and relative to others' pay – is also important in rewards. This means that not reward per se but equitable reward is antecedent of commitment. The view that high levels and equitable pay encourage higher levels of commitment highlights Oppong's (2013) research finding that pay was a major reason for loss of employees' commitment to their organisation, leading to their exit decisions. In Oppong's (2013) research employees' exit decisions were not just influenced by inadequate pay but also because other companies within industry pay higher for similar jobs and roles. This supports our view that individual's experiences of their co-workers' rewards can have an effect on their own commitment.

➢ **Consequences of Employee Commitment**

Consequences (also known as outcomes) of employee commitment are effects that result from employee's attachment to an organisation. Employee commitment is important because high levels of commitment lead to several favourable organisational outcomes. For instance, it has been researched that commitment is positively related to job satisfaction and motivation (Mathieu and Zajac, 1990), and to organisational citizenship behaviours. On the other hand, commitment is negatively related to voluntary employee turnover (Oppong, 2013) and absenteeism, and counterproductive behaviour. Moreover, none or low commitment results in low levels of morale and negative image of the organisation to outsiders thereby inhibiting the organisation's ability to recruit high-quality employees, indication that commitment leads to creation of good corporate image.

We believe that these outcomes have important implications for both organisation theory and management practice. We tend to support the fact that employee commitment leads to good corporate image. We explain that when employees are committed to an organisation (caused by other factors) outsiders see the organisation as an employer of choice – good corporate image – that works well for the organisation's sales and attraction of quality staff.

It is difficult for authors/researcher to disassociate work motivation (or employee motivation) from employee commitment. For instance, Alimohammadi & Neyshabor (2013) are of the opinion that committed employees engage in organisational behaviour that results in higher performance and higher work motivation. Therefore, they believe employees' productivity is highly related to their motivational levels and result from employee commitment. Defined motivation as the management process of influencing behaviour based on the knowledge of what make people tick, Tella et al. (2007) believe that motivated people need to be stimulated to action and to achieve a desired task. To make employees satisfied to do their jobs there is the

need for strong and effective motivation at various levels. This was the outcome of their study on work motivation and commitment of library personnel in academic and research libraries in the Oyo State of Nigeria.

Much as we agree to Tella et al. (2007) explanation that motivation leads to increased performance, it is our view that motivation is not an outcome of commitment. Commitment is an attachment to the whole organisation, its culture, strategies, work, stakeholders etc. while motivation is a drive towards improving work output. Committed employees do not bring about motivation because commitment withstands transitory aspects of employee's individual work behaviours which motivation is one of them. Commitment cannot, as a result, lead to motivation. For example, when workers of a mining company in Ghana embark on a strike for increased salary they stop working but they do not leave the company. When the increased salary is offered they return to work but management's action of increasing the pay does not have anything to do with employees committing to the company. Motivation is towards performance while commitment is towards the entire organisation.

We further argue that once someone becomes committed, the one has already passed the stage of motivation and does not need to be further motivated. Mullin's (2010) submission clarifies why motivation theories and factors are not too strong determinants of employee commitment as they are closely associated with employer's commitment towards employees for improved performance rather than employee's commitment to the organisation. This is because many of these motivational factors are extrinsic which are rather normal employee expectations which, at best, lead to retention but not necessarily commitment. We however praise Alimohammadi & Neyshabor (2013) for their advice on motivation and performance that because of motivation's role in influencing workplace performance and behaviour, it is a key factor for every organisation to understand and to structure work environment to encourage productive behaviour.

With regard to the intervention of commitment in determining facets of organisational outcomes, Brooks and Wallace (2006) found quite high correlations between levels of employee commitment and organisational performance – supporting the view that the recipients of services provided by an organisation (including the organisation itself and, consequently, the organisation's management and shareholders) will all benefit if employees within the organisation are committed to it. They classified outcomes as withdrawals (that lead to negative outcomes) and participation (set of positive consequences). Much as we agree that motivation leads to improved performance, we differ in the argument that commitment leads to higher performance. This is because to get peak performance, people need to be stimulated to sustain behaviour and performance. One way of stimulating people is to employ effective motivation, but commitment is attachment to the organisation and sustaining it. Committed employee sees organisation performance as "self" but not as a result of "self". Put differently, absence or lack of motivation may negatively affect just part of employee's contractual responsibility (i.e. performance) within the organisation but lack of commitment may lead to lose of the employee as a whole, leaving the organisation. Our position is supported by the view of Tella et al. (2007) that it is wise not to expect too much from commitment as a means of making direct and immediate impact on performance; it is not the same as motivation. We view commitment as a broader concept that involves emotional attachment of the individual to the organisation's reputation, survival and continued success, and to the individual's job, career, work groups and teams, and peers (Cohen, 2003). Commitment is not job-related per se but organisation-related which performance is just one of the many components. We therefore speculate that employee is efficient and has achieved the desired performance level by the time he/she becomes committed.

Brooks and Wallace (2006) in their study of turnover, absenteeism and lateness suggest that these outcomes are drastically reduced by an employee's attachment to an organisation (withdrawal behaviours). Other studies reveal that dissatisfaction may "push" the employees to look for alternative employment (Mitchell et al., 2001), whereas the perception of attractive alternative job opportunities may "pull" them to consider alternative employment (Tang et al., 2000). These "push" and "pull" factors could be linked to the two schools of thought about labour turnover identified by Marchington & Wilkinson (2008). These are the labour market/economic and psychological schools of thought. The former focuses on factors external to the organisation such as level of employment; wage differentials; and availability of alternative jobs in local,

national and global economies. The latter focuses on individuals and their decisions to quite, relating labour turnover to factors such as job satisfaction and worker commitment. These reveal the relationship between job satisfaction and voluntary labour turnover which, together, result from commitment. We strongly agree to employee turnover as an outcome of lack of employee commitment. Since voluntary turnover is a result of employee initiating the termination of their employee-organisation relationship, employee will not take this initiative if strongly attached to the organisation. Udechukwu and Mujtaba (2007) argue that this presents voluntary turnover as an activity that involves just the employee and the employer and ignores other reasons such as social reasons that may influence employees to stay or leave. They therefore see employee turnover to involve three broad entities i.e. employees; employers and social affiliates. It is explained that social affiliation in the workplace involves relatedness or social attachment to other people such as family members or activities such as attending to daily needs of aging parents outside the workplace. This argument makes our position even stronger as affiliation is a strong bond (especially in collectivism societies) and sacrificing these ties shows how determined employees are to disassociate themselves from the organisation. However, we disagree that job satisfaction is an outcome of employee commitment because employees who are satisfied with their jobs rather want to be attached to the organisation and sustain that attachment, but one does not need to be committed to be satisfied with his/her jobs. Job satisfaction therefore is a component of commitment, meaning that one is automatically satisfied by the time he/she becomes committed.

Fornes et al. (2008) believe that individuals/employees with strong organisational commitment are emotionally attached to the organisation and have a greater desire to contribute meaningfully to the organisation, including extra role performance. They intimate that the willingness to go above and beyond the call of duty (extra role performance) includes things such as volunteering for special work assignments, help to co-workers; being considerate to customers and co-workers; making suggestions when problems arise; and working additional hours. The view of Fornes et al. (2008) that commitment leads to both performance and motivation creates confusion. Here, they see performance and motivation as at similar levels, both of which result from employee commitment. As we have pointed out earlier, motivation rather leads to increased performance while we add that job satisfaction results from factors closely related to the job. Factors that contribute to job satisfaction could include how the job is designed that the person feels comfortable in performing e.g. job description relating directly to person specification; level of autonomy offered the job holder; meaningfulness of the job i.e. how the job impacts on others including the organisation. This means that job satisfaction (which is result of other factors) could lead to improved performance. However, this does not suggest that job satisfaction and motivation are at the same level, though they both lead to improved performance. We explain that someone may have to be motivated to be satisfied but not necessarily that someone will have to be satisfied to be motivated, although being motivated to be satisfied is a weak link (as shown by the dotted line in Figure 1). Any or all the three could however lead to employee commitment but not the other way round, as have been the results of many studies. Both needs hierarchy theory and two-factor theory of Abraham Maslow and Frederick Hertzberg respectively contend that intrinsic factors are the actual motivators but Hertzberg points out that extrinsic or economic factors are to be satisfied before intrinsic factors can work as motivators. These motivational theories are pointer to the fact that job satisfaction enhances employee commitment. This is confirmed by Mullins (2010) who makes strong link between job satisfaction and motivation but he is quick to reiterate that satisfaction is not the same as motivation and describes job satisfaction as more of an attitude, an internal state that could be associated with a personal feeling of attachment to the organisation. This clarifies our position that motivation theories and factors are not strong determinants of employee commitment as they are closely associated with employer's commitment towards employees for improved performance rather than towards employee's commitment.
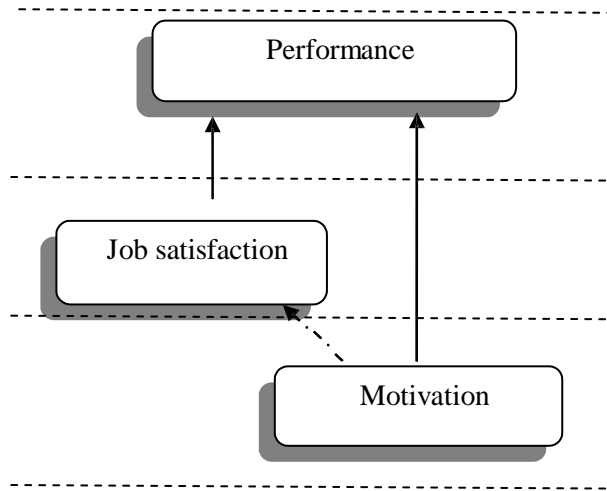
Figure 1: Relationships among motivation, job satisfaction and performance

The figure portrays the relationships among motivation, job satisfaction, and performance. Both motivation and job satisfaction lead to increased performance though motivation could also lead to job satisfaction (weak link). We have explained that none of these is an outcome of employee commitment though they could drive commitment.

Also, employees committed to the organisation and their jobs are able to exert more quality time with their families and hobbies, therefore having a good work-life balance. Furthermore, employees with high levels of commitment experience lower stress levels even though they may work longer than those not committed. This happens because factors such as struggling to be motivated; wanting to be satisfied; and making desperate efforts to achieve increased performance have all been overcome by the time employee commitment level is achieved. This is a social outcome of employee commitment that goes beyond job, work group, and organisational commitment.

4. Our Findings

Our study produces the following three key findings in line with our three research objectives.

▪ The first objective of our research, to investigate the nature of employee commitment, has revealed diverse views by authors and researchers. These varied views make the nature of employee commitment difficult to form a unit of conclusion. It however comes out that commitment could be to the organisation or part of it or how the individual gets attached to the organisation. We term these as "hard" and "soft" commitments. "Hard" commitment includes what the individual is attached to - to the job; to the work groups including supervisors; or to the organisation itself; while "soft" commitment involves how the attachment is done – emotional, cost of being with the organisation, and feeling of obligation to be committed to the organisation.

▪ Our second objective, to assess the antecedents of employee commitment, uncovers two sets of antecedents. First, organisational antecedents, which we term as traditional factors, include autonomy, clarity of purpose, congruency, empowerment, equity and fairness, feedback and interesting work. However, these antecedents are mainly intrinsic in nature, ignoring the extrinsic factors. Second, personal characteristics antecedents, which employers do not do much to provide but will have to take them into consideration due to their unique strength in inducing or derailing employee commitment.

▪ With regard to our third objective, to assess outcomes of employee commitment, we find that the outcomes include creation of good corporate image; reduction in voluntary employee turnover; and social

benefits to employees. It emerges that motivation, job satisfaction, and increased performance are employee commitment outcomes, which we disagree and have provided explanations.

5. Conclusion and Recommendation for Further Studies

We conclude that an impressive amount of research efforts have been devoted to understanding the nature, antecedents, and outcomes of organisational commitment. However, job satisfaction; improved performance; and motivation are confused for outcomes. We have clarified these and agreed to creation of organisational image; control of voluntary turnover and absenteeism; and social benefits as results of employee commitment.

We have reviewed two sets of antecedents – the organisational and personal characteristics. Various articles reviewed are mostly theoretical and therefore lack the basis for reliability and acceptability. We therefore encourage empirical study to ascertain whether or not these factors lead to employee commitment.

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