

The Impact of Purpose and Belongingness in Organizational Commitment in Healthcare Sector

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Abstract

The healthcare sector is currently encountering serious issues ranging from burnout among staff members to high turnover and shortage of employees in the industry, hence, the need to investigate the contributing factors to ensure better understanding of what causes the level of commitment and retention among staff members in the sector. The main objective of this paper is to explore the effect of key factors which include sense of purpose, sense of belongingness, career growth and fulfillment of personal needs on the performance of employees in the healthcare sector. With theoretical underpinning provided by Organizational Commitment Theory, Social Exchange Theory and Self-Determination Theory among others, the paper makes use of the quantitative research methodology for conducting the investigation. The primary data was collected from a sample population of 68 employees from urban secondary and tertiary hospitals using a questionnaire. Some of the statistical tools employed in this research include Chi-Square Test, Pearson Correlation and Linear Regression. The results indicate that sense of belongingness plays a great role in affecting organizational commitment while personal needs play an important role in predicting career growth and organizational commitment. It was also noted that work experience does not relate significantly to employee retention.

INTRODUCTION

The healthcare sector is integral to society's welfare, but it is currently encountering growing difficulties related to workforce management. The problems include worker burnout, high staff turnover, personnel shortage, and elevated patient demands. These issues are becoming even more pronounced amid the post-pandemic period. It underscores the significance of organizational leaders prioritizing employee-related elements affecting commitment and retention.

Organizational commitment is the psychological identification of workers with their organizations, which affects their inclination to stay and positively impact the company. Historically, aspects such as pay, security, and conditions were believed to be fundamental in determining commitment. Recent studies, however, reveal that psychological elements like

sense of purpose and belongingness are much more influential, particularly in stressful work settings, such as in healthcare organizations.

This element implies the belief that one's occupation contributes to a social cause. This concept applies to healthcare professionals since they directly impact patients' well-being. Belongingness

Belongingness is the feeling of being accepted, valued, included, and emotionally connected within an organization.

LITERATURE REVIEW

There is ample literature regarding the significance of various organizational and psychological aspects that shape the behavior of employees. Among these is the notion of belongingness that has come to be seen as an important aspect in motivating workers. The sense of inclusion

increases job satisfaction and encourages organizational commitment.

Purpose, another aspect that has recently gained much significance, plays a critical role in motivating employees. Workers whose jobs have some purpose are better able to cope with stress. Purposeful work is intrinsic to health-care organizations but the pressure of organizations can diminish its impact.

The career advancement opportunities constitute an important organizational dimension that greatly influences the feelings, motivation, and attachment of workers to their organizations. The existence of defined opportunities for progress in an organization is often an indication of how much value the organization places on its workforce. The provision of chances for promotion and learning makes workers feel encouraged and motivated. In the case of the health industry, where workers have to acquire new skills to succeed, the existence of such opportunities becomes increasingly important. Workers are likely to be motivated when they identify with their organizations' goals and objectives. This is especially true of individuals who see opportunities for professional development.

Other than career development, the satisfaction of individual needs is equally as important for determining the attitude of the employees at the workplace. While personal needs go beyond the basic needs of fulfilling their duties at the workplace, they encompass work-life balance, emotional stability, recognition, security, and matching of the organizational and personal beliefs. In satisfying the employees' personal needs, employees become more stable and satisfied with their jobs hence increased productivity. It is

especially necessary in the case of high-stress levels, long work hours, and emotionally draining circumstances common among employees in the healthcare sector. The satisfaction of personal needs prevents employee burnout and ensures they develop resilience in order to continue performing their tasks despite the difficulties encountered in the process.

While acknowledging the increasing attention given to these elements, there are various shortcomings in the current research base on this subject matter. The geographical focus of the study stands out as one of the primary deficiencies. Most of the literature has been compiled in the Western world, which has different organizational, cultural, and employee characteristics than those prevailing in developing countries, such as India. In collectivist societies, such as India, social factors like belongingness, relationship, and social identity might carry greater weight in determining employee behavior than in individualistic societies. Hence, the generalization of findings derived from Western societies might not be relevant in developing countries.

In addition to that, the effects of changing trends in the workplace environment on the attitude and organizational commitment of workers have not been examined sufficiently in the literature. The fast development of technology and the adoption of digitization in the healthcare sector have altered the nature of work itself. For example, technologies like electronic health records, telemedicine, and artificial intelligence-based diagnoses have revolutionized jobs, work processes, and even skill sets required to perform them. Still, not much research has been done regarding the

effect of this change in technology on the attitude of workers toward their organization and their level of organizational commitment.

The second important gap involves the lack of attention paid to generational shifts within the workplace with the emergence of Generation Y and Generation Z workers in larger numbers. Such generations usually have different expectations from the work environment than previous generations did. In most cases, they seek challenging jobs, flexibility, quick advancement, and a favorable organizational climate. Their attitude towards employment tends to be more

flexible, and they might be less willing to stay with companies which fail to meet their needs. However, this issue remains relatively understudied by existing literature.

In conclusion, although there is extensive literature on the importance of career development and individual needs, it cannot be denied that there is still a need for further study in this field. The integration of other elements like culture, technology, and generation will lead to a more thorough comprehension of the actions of employees in today's healthcare setting.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The three main theoretical perspectives upon which this research is based include:

The theory of Organizational Commitment (Meyer & Allen, 1991), which accounts for various types of commitments, especially the affective type of commitment, which applies specifically to healthcare organizations.

The social exchange theory (Blau, 1964) states that employees will return their positive experiences with organizations by committing themselves more to the organization.

The Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985) stresses intrinsic motivation, which is characterized by fulfilling psychological needs such as autonomy, competence, and relatedness.

These three theories help explain organizational employee behavior effectively.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The quantitative research method was chosen to investigate the relationship among different variables. The data was collected by taking a response of 107 healthcare practitioners, which included physicians, nurses, and allied health personnel, who worked in urban hospitals.

Purposive sampling was applied to collect data from respondents who varied in terms of demographic variables such as age, gender, and experience. This process took four to six weeks. Ethical issues like anonymity, confidentiality, and informed consent were observed. SPSS was used for data analysis through various statistical methods including descriptive analysis, Chi-Square, Pearson's Correlation, and Linear Regression.

VARIABLES OF THE STUDY

The study includes the following variables:

Independent Variables:

- Sense of Belongingness

Dependent Variables:

- Organizational Commitment

DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Descriptive analysis indicated a balanced gender distribution and a majority of respondents belonging to nursing staff, with an average age of 35 years.

Chi-square Analysis: A significant association was found between gender and sense of belongingness ($p < 0.05$), indicating differences in workplace experiences across gender groups.

Correlation Analysis: A strong positive correlation ($r = 0.713$) was found between belongingness and organizational commitment, suggesting that employees who feel included are more committed. A weak and insignificant correlation ($r = 0.073$) was observed between work experience and retention.

Regression Analysis: Personal needs were found to significantly predict career growth and commitment, with an R^2 value of 0.52, indicating strong explanatory power.

DISCUSSION

The conclusions reached by this research make a valuable contribution towards the comprehension of the significance of psychological and organizational determinants for employee commitment and retention in the healthcare industry. Specifically, the study confirms the claim that psychological and emotional drivers of performance play a more prominent role than demographic factors like job tenure.

One of the key findings of the research is the direct correlation between sense of belonging and organizational

commitment. It seems safe to assume that an individual feels attached to his/her place of work emotionally when he/she feels accepted, recognized and included there. In the healthcare sector, where coordination and cooperation are particularly important, a sense of belonging plays a crucial role. When a person feels part of the organization he works for, he participates in its activities with greater enthusiasm, takes initiative and strives to align his/her own actions with organizational objectives.

In addition, personal needs seem to be very important in terms of both the influence they exert on career development and organizational commitment of the workers. As the results of regressions show, people are much more motivated and happy if they see that their personal and professional needs are satisfied. Therefore, it is very important to pay special attention to managing people based on holistic principles. Most healthcare professionals face high levels of stress, and therefore the issues of work-life balance, emotional health, recognition of accomplishments and job security become extremely important for motivating them.

One more important conclusion one can make while analyzing the research results is that work experience of employees is not related to the phenomenon of turnover at all. Therefore, one should conclude that the old beliefs about the correlation between the number of years of working in an organization and its loyalty are no longer valid. Nowadays, employees prefer to concentrate on such factors as workplace atmosphere, opportunities for growing and personal development, etc., rather than their tenure in a particular organization.

The research results also show a statistically significant relationship between gender and sense of belongingness. This means that there may be differences in how employees of different genders perceive their working environment, especially concerning inclusiveness and emotional ties. Thus, the research highlights the need for more targeted HR policies rather than those aimed at a general workforce.

The results obtained during the research support the key tenets of Self Determination Theory since they show the importance of the fulfillment of psychological needs, such as relatedness and competence, for motivating workers. The high significance of the sense of belongingness testifies to the importance of the former, while personal needs reveal the importance of autonomy and well-being. Moreover, the results also confirm the tenets of Social Exchange Theory. Employees, who felt valued by their organization and whose needs were satisfied, were more likely to commit to it.

In summary, the whole analysis shows that commitment among health care employees is neither a result of extrinsic motivators nor longevity at work but is rather a product of deeper psychological and emotional issues. It is the recognition of these aspects that will enable organizations to develop a committed workforce.

Managerial Implications

The conclusions drawn from this study hold several vital implications for healthcare managers and HR practitioners who strive to improve employee commitment and retention. These implications are especially valuable when considering the current difficulties

associated with sustaining a stable human resource management process in the healthcare industry.

The main implication of all of this is that the healthcare organization must create a strong feeling of belonging within the organization. In order to do so, healthcare organizations will have to build inclusive workplaces for their workers where they will feel appreciated. Some of the things that may help them accomplish that include team-building exercises, good communication, and inclusion from the management.

The other major implication of organizational change is that personal requirements have to be taken into consideration. This means that organizations have to understand that the individuals working for them are not just professionals, but people who have their own set of demands and issues. Assistance in balancing professional and personal life, taking care of their psychological state, and improving overall well-being may help in achieving better results.

Opportunities for career development have become another crucial area which plays an important role in determining motivation and retention of employees. Healthcare organizations must make investments in the areas of education and training in order to provide opportunities to their employees to develop their competencies and move forward in their careers.

In conclusion, since the results of the research indicate that work experience is insignificant in determining employee retention, firms should shift their employee retention policies from being centered on longevity. This should be achieved through

designing jobs that will attract workers to work for them for longer periods of time.

The link between gender and sense of belongingness underlines the need for diversity and inclusion programs. Companies should develop policies that ensure fairness in the workplace

and prevent any form of bias. By fostering a respectful and inclusive environment, companies can create a better working atmosphere that encourages commitment from employees.

In addition, the use of technology and contemporary human resource management approaches could assist organizations in understanding their employees' requirements better. HR data analysis, employee surveys, and performance metrics could provide useful information on the behavior of employees.

In conclusion, there is a need for a holistic perspective on employee management in healthcare institutions, which should not only concentrate on conventional aspects but should encompass areas such as belonging, individual needs, career advancement, and inclusion.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

However, in spite of the significant contribution that the current study makes concerning the interplay between organizational characteristics and employee performance within the healthcare industry, it is imperative to point out some of the limitations that have been observed in the course of undertaking the investigation.

One of the major limitations associated with this study is that there was only a limited number of participants

involved in the collection of data. There were 68 healthcare workers who participated in the process; this sample size was just enough to conduct exploratory analysis but might have failed to reflect a wide spectrum of opinions held by other members of the healthcare workforce. With a higher number of respondents included in the study, more statistical analysis could be conducted, including structural equation modeling.

Another constraint is related to the geographical context in which the research was conducted. The study was carried out among healthcare practitioners at secondary and tertiary care urban hospitals, which usually possess greater facilities and capabilities than their rural counterparts. Consequently, the results derived from the study cannot be generalized to healthcare workers operating in rural areas or primary care facilities, wherein issues like inadequate facilities, staff shortages, and limited job opportunities may profoundly influence worker attitudes.

Moreover, there was an excessive usage of self-reporting technique for data collection, which implies that the researcher had to take into consideration the effect of possible response bias. In this regard, some of the participants might answer in accordance with the socially desirable

norms rather than give truthful answers to the questions related to organizational behavior, level of satisfaction, and organizational commitment. It is also important to remember that sometimes people do not know how they act or what attitude they have towards something.

The other significant limitation is that of the cross-sectional research design of the study. Due to the fact that the data was collected once at a certain point in time, there is no way of knowing how the perception and experience of the employees change throughout the period due to organizational changes, changes in the leadership of the organization, changes in the policies, as well as economic conditions outside of the organization.

In addition, the research uses a selected set of variables, including belongingness, career development, personal requirements, and experience. Although they play a crucial role, some other significant elements, like leadership style, organizational culture, pay, job design, and workload, are ignored by researchers. Such an approach might contribute to the underestimation of all factors impacting employees' loyalty and retention.

Moreover, one has to note certain methodological limitations related to this research. First of all, there is a danger associated with using Chi-square analysis in case of small numbers in the cells. Non-compliance with assumptions of the applied statistical test might make interpretation of the relations incorrect.

Furthermore, the research fails to incorporate the moderating and mediating roles played by certain variables like trust, inclusion, and engagement among others that would determine the relationship between the independent and dependent variables. Without these moderating and mediating variables, there is no way of comprehending the mechanisms that drive the behavior of employees.

Despite the shortcomings, this research has laid down important

foundations regarding psychological and organizational elements that can have a bearing on employee performance in the health care industry.

SCOPE FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The implications and limitations of this study suggest multiple possibilities of further research that could help develop an even better knowledge about the aspects of commitment and retention among employees of the healthcare sector. The extension of the boundaries of the discussed issue can lead to the creation of more efficient approaches to solving the problem.

The most vital trend in the research of the future is the implementation of longitudinal study designs. As opposed to cross-sectional designs, a longitudinal design helps track down the dynamics of changes among employees. It helps discover causal relationships among different aspects of organizational management.

Future research can also address the issue of expanding the number of respondents, thus enhancing the sample size. The inclusion of participants from various geographical locations, especially those residing in healthcare organizations situated in both rural and semi-urban areas, would facilitate a broader analysis of workforce characteristics. Comparative studies that incorporate various regions or even nations can be conducted to determine cross-cultural differences in employee attitudes, especially in collectivist and individualistic cultures.

One other critical aspect for further investigation pertains to the incorporation of other organizational variables. Elements like leadership practices, organizational culture, salary packages, job satisfaction, and the working environment significantly

impact employee behavior and must be included in future models.

Another significant area that requires further attention is that of the implications of recent trends, including artificial intelligence, digitalization, and hybrid work arrangements. Given the increased technological adoption in the healthcare industry, researchers will have to investigate the implications of such changes for employees' roles, job satisfaction, and identification with their organization. For example, remote healthcare delivery may change team communication and reduce social interactions, negatively impacting engagement.

Finally, researchers should address issues connected with the increasing presence of Generation Z workers in the healthcare field. This phenomenon will likely change the nature of employee perceptions toward work and the company's policies, thus influencing organizational commitment.

Another potential avenue that shows promise is the investigation of mediating and moderating factors like trust, inclusion, engagement, and psychological safety. Mediating and moderating factors will lead to the generation of more robust predictive models as they provide information on the impact of organizational practices on employee welfare.

There is also a need for the attention to be focused on underrepresented and marginalized groups in the healthcare workforce. Studies involving rural healthcare employees, LGBTQ+ employees, and socioeconomically disadvantaged populations can generate useful information regarding special considerations.

Last but not least, another way forward includes conducting research

utilizing mixed-methods. While quantitative analysis yields important statistical information, qualitative research methods can be used to gain insight into the experiences of healthcare workers and what motivates them.

CONCLUSION

This paper offers a complete investigation into the various factors that impact the degree of commitment and retention among employees in the healthcare industry. It should be noted that there is a significant shift towards psychological and emotional factors influencing the conduct of today's employees.

In light of all the variables investigated, the sense of belongingness appeared as one of the strongest factors influencing organizational commitment. Employees that feel appreciated, respected, and included by their organization are more likely to form emotional ties with the organization and exhibit greater involvement and dedication towards it.

In addition, it is vital to take into consideration how to satisfy the employees' personal requirements, which may include the aspect of having work-life balance, being recognized, among others. The organization should strive to satisfy such personal requirements for its employees in order for them to be motivated, committed, and satisfied within the course of performing their duties at work.

One of the key findings in this study, which adds value to the research field is that experience at work does not necessarily determine whether employees will stay with their employers. This finding debunks the common notion regarding this matter because it has been observed that modern-day employees have shifted their

priorities when it comes to their job satisfaction.

Furthermore, the research also emphasizes the significance of the issue of diversity and inclusion given the disparity in the levels of belongingness among different gender segments. Organizations must be aware of and cater to the varied requirements of their employees.

In terms of theory, the study validates current theories like Self-Determination Theory and Social Exchange Theory and applies these in the healthcare sector. The interrelatedness of psychological, social, and organizational determinants of behavioral outcomes is also illustrated.

In terms of practice, the paper presents practical lessons that organizations can use for the betterment of their employees. Through promoting belongingness, addressing personal needs, offering development, and maintaining inclusiveness, an organization will produce committed and resilient employees who can provide quality healthcare services.

In summary, it is clear from the research that employee commitment and retention within the healthcare field are affected by emotions, psychology, and development. Organizations that consider these three dimensions are in a much better position to deal with the modern healthcare setting.

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