

Relationship of Personal & Organizational Values with Organizational Commitment

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This study explored the relationship of personal and organizational values with organizational commitment. 220 participants from a large public sector organization were asked to rate on a 7 point scale the 24 items value taxonomy as to how important these are to them as a guiding principle in their lives and then as to how much they perceive their organizations to promote these values. Results reveal that persons who attached more importance to the values of openness, fairness, logic and moral integrity are affectively committed and those who perceive their organizations to promote the values of openness, fairness, logic and moral integrity are committed normatively.

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Introduction

The scientific study of human values has a long history. Allport, Vernon and Lindzey (1970) were among the first social scientists who gave the value concept a more concrete meaning. These authors linked values to ordinary activities such as reading newspapers, watching movies or voting and designed a typology of values. Rokeach's (1973, 1979) work, however, brought about a shift in the thinking from the idea of a typology of values as a fixed and a stable element to values as guiding principles in life which transcend specific situations, may change over time, guide selection of behavior and are part of a dynamic system. Values are drivers of behavior (Rokeach, 1973), including workplace behavior (Schwartz, 1994). Dose (1997:236) observes that "so much of our time is spent in a working environment that work values are particularly significant and salient". Once embraced, values become standards of importance (Gellermann, Frankel & Ladenson, 1990). They also serve as criteria for making decisions and setting priorities and lie behind the explanations and justifications that are given for ones actions. Unlike constructs such as attitudes and opinions, values are relatively

permanent, although capable of being changed under certain conditions. Jones & Gerard (1967) explain value stability by noting that people experience some discomfort or deprivation in acquiring values and thus, values acquire stability because individuals develop attachments to the things they have undergone discomfort to acquire.

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Several researchers have examined the link between values and behavior. Values are believed to have a substantial influence on the affective and behavioral responses of individuals (Locke, 1976; Rokeach, 1973), and changing values are frequently evoked as explanations for employee problems in the workplace (Nord et al, 1988), and increase in unethical business practices (Mitchell & Scott, 1990). At the organizational level, values are viewed as a major component of organizational culture (O'Reilly & Chatman, 1996; Schein, 1985), and are often described as principles responsible for the successful management of a number of companies (e.g., Mitchell & O'Neal, 1994). Rokeach (1979:51) characterized values as "the most distinctive property or defining characteristic of a social institution". Organizations do not really possess values apart from the values of their members. Thus, it may be said that organizational values are shared among the individual members of the organization. Shared values are a major component of an organization's culture (O'Reilly &

Chatman, 1996). However, the values of organizations and their members are not always in alignment.

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Several researchers investigated the concept of congruence between personality and situational variables and its affect on behavior. Fiedler's (1967, 1978) leadership theory, Holland's (1985) theory of vocational choice, Hackman & Oldham's (1980) job characteristics model are but a few examples of the theoretical work that has been based on the idea that characteristics of the person and job interact to determine such things as job choice, satisfaction and employee well-being (Edwards, 1994). One fundamental characteristic that both employees and organizations share is values. It is easy to generate examples to show that individuals would be more comfortable in an environment that is consistent with their values. A person who values honesty and integrity working in an organization that believes in 'getting the job done at all costs' will not be very comfortable. In all likelihood, the result of placing people in situations at odds with their personal values will not be positive for either the employee or the organization. Not only could employees' well-being be at risk but it is also possible that they would be less devoted to the organization and possibly less productive. Furthermore, Natarajan and Nagar (2011) established that value congruence indeed influences job choice decision.

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Researchers have used many different methods of measuring value congruence. One of the least complicated methods employed is to simply ask respondents to estimate the extent their values are similar to those of the other (e.g., Posner, Kouzes & Schmidt, 1985). However, this method is based on several assumptions that the respondent (a) knows what values are, (b) knows what the relevant values are, (c) knows his or her own values, (d) knows the values of the other, and (e) is able to compare these sets of values to produce an overall assessment of their similarity. Accordingly, some researchers, gave the meaning of values and / or the value dimensions upon which to judge differences (Enz, 1988), but this method still assumes that values can be accurately measured without the aid of a values instrument, and that respondents can accurately assess the extent their values are similar to those of the others. These concerns have been addressed in two additional methodologies: (a) having respondents complete two identical value instruments, one on themselves and the second "according to the values of the other" (e.g., Feather, 1979), and (b) having respondents complete a value instrument on themselves and using independent assessments to determine the values of the other on the same dimensions (e.g., Chatman, 1991). Although the former technique raises questions of whether a person can

accurately estimate the values of the other, both techniques restrict respondents to a particular set of values and impose a common measurement methodology on all respondents. Based on this advocacy researchers have been using Feather's (1979) method to measure value congruence (e.g. Finegan, 2000; Gupta, 2009; Ghosh, 2010) and linking it to behavioral outcomes in the work place.

Organizational commitment has an important place in the study of organizational behavior. This is to some extent true because a vast number of studies have found relationships between organizational commitment and attitudes and behaviors in the workplace (Porter, Steers, Mowday & Boulian, 1974; Koch & Steers, 1978). The literature has multiple definitions of organizational commitment. Meyer & Allen (1991) identified three types of commitments; affective commitment, normative commitment, and continuance commitment. They defined affective commitment as the emotional attachment, identification, and involvement that an employee has with its organization and its goals, normative commitment as a feeling of obligation towards the organization and continuance commitment as the willingness to remain in an organization because of the investment that the employee has which are nontransferable. Affective and normative commitments have been found to be predictors of positive organizational behavior, including increased work performance, tenure and attendance (Allen & Meyer, 1996). Continuance commitment, on the other hand, has been found to be negatively related or unrelated to positive organizational behaviors.

Given the importance of commitment for organizational effectiveness and the lack of research in the Indian context tracing the antecedents of organizational commitment in personal and organizational values and its congruence, it is aimed to examine the possible relationships between them.

Respondents

Questionnaires were distributed to 220 employees of a large public sector organization. All the 220 people returned the completed questionnaire, yielding a return rate of 100%. The respondents were drawn from all the departments and included both male and female employees to maintain heterogeneity of sample.

Measures

Personal Values: To measure values the scale constructed by McDonald & Gandz (1991, 1992) was used. This scale comprised 24 items and was found to be having a test-retest reliability of .76, and the inter-rater reliability of .77. Both the convergent and discriminant validity are also very high. The respondents were asked to read each of the 24 personal values one by one and record their response for each value on a 7 point scale. A response of 1 would mean that the value under consideration is not at all important to the respondent as a guiding principle in life and a response of 7 would mean that the value under consideration is very important.

Organizational Values: To measure organizational values the respondents

were asked to read each of the same 24 values one by one and record their response for each value on a 7 point scale based on how they perceive this value being promoted in their organization. A response of 1 would mean that the value under consideration is not at all promoted and a response of 7 would mean that the value under consideration is very highly promoted.

Organizational Commitment: To measure organizational commitment the scale developed by Meyer, Allen, & Smith (1993) was used. This scale measured commitment in three components namely affective, normative and continuance commitments. This scale has 18-items in it with six items measuring one particular component of commitment. This scale has been widely used in the field and has median reliabilities (assessed using coefficient alphas) across many studies of .85 for affective commitment, .73 for normative commitment and .79 for continuance commitment. A detailed discussion of the construct validity of this scale is found in Allen & Meyer (1996). The respondents were asked to read each of the 18 statements one by one and record their response on a 7 point scale. A response of 1 would mean that they very strongly disagree and 7 would mean that they very strongly agree with the statement.

Data Collection

The questionnaires were distributed to the group which normally comprised 10 - 15 subjects in each department in each location. The respondents were encouraged to clarify doubts if any before re-

sponding to any of the items. They were also assured that their responses will be kept confidential and will be used for academic purpose only and that their responses cannot be traced back to them. Respondents were then asked to read the instructions carefully and were told that there was nothing like a right or wrong answer to any of the questions.

Principal Component Factor Analysis

To determine how different values could be grouped into higher-order categories, a principal component factor analysis with a Varimax rotation was run on the 24 personal-value ratings. The resulting solution displayed eight factors with Eigen values greater than 1, accounting for 66.56% of the variance, with the individual factors contributing 15.08, 9.59, 8.56, 8.55, 6.65, 6.55, 6.40 and 5.16% of variance, respectively. The items with highest rotated factor loadings were summed together to define a component scale. The subscales are briefly described below.

Factor 1: Harmony. Items with high loading on this factor were characterized by a feeling of harmony with the environment. The items that defined this factor were humor, consideration, courtesy, cooperation, forgiveness, formality and social equality. The coefficient alpha was .81 for the personal and .79 for the organizational values.

Factor 2: Justice. Items with high loading on this factor were characterized by a feeling of fairness and justice.

The items that defined this factor were fairness, openness, logic and moral integrity. The coefficient alpha was .67 for personal and .87 for organizational values.

Factor 3: Bottom-Line. The third scale summed the ratings for adaptability, diligence and economy which were more to do with economic / bottom-line aspects of an organization. The coefficient alpha was .57 for personal values and .36 for organizational values.

Factor 4: Progress. The fourth scale summed the ratings of broadmindedness, creativity and development and labeled 'Progress'. The coefficient alpha was .56 for personal and .78 for organizational values.

Factor 5: Conservative. The fifth scale summed the ratings of cautiousness, experimentation and obedience and was labeled 'conservative'. The coefficient alpha was .44 for person values and .34 for organizational values.

Factor 6: Orderliness. The sixth scale included only one item i.e. orderliness and was thus labeled 'orderliness'.

Factor 7: Leadership. The seventh scale summed the ratings for aggressiveness and initiative and was thus labeled 'leadership' with coefficient alpha .41 for personal and .47 for organizational values.

Factor 8: Freedom. The eighth scale summed the rating of a single item i.e. autonomy and labeled 'freedom'.

Results

Table 1 shows the descriptive and inter-correlation between personal and organizational values with organizational

commitment. It is seen that inter-correlation between organizational values and commitment is more significant than personal values.

Table 1 Mean, SD & Inter-correlations of Personal and Organizational Values with Organizational Commitment N=220

Personal Values	Mean	SD	Organizational Commitment		
			Affective	Normative	Continuance
1. Harmony	40.19	5.56	.425**	.194**	-.153*
2. Justice	24.99	2.66	.024	.093	.093
3. Bottom-Line	16.78	2.61	-.138*	-.157*	.060
4. Progress	18.47	1.93	.025	.090	.025
5. Conservative	15.15	2.58	.196**	.150*	-.163*
6. Orderliness	6.26	0.94	.017	.124	.110
7. Leadership	11.50	1.66	-.037	.060	-.141*
8. Freedom	5.86	1.06	-.144*	-.060	-.015
Organizational Values					
1. Harmony	34.92	6.53	.425**	.306**	.031
2. Justice	19.30	5.23	.583**	.343**	-.089
3. Bottom-Line	15.70	2.67	.203**	.124	-.101
4. Progress	14.32	3.34	.371**	.300**	.008
5. Conservative	15.68	2.62	.015	.093	.085
6. Orderliness	5.67	1.16	.133*	.083	.004
7. Leadership	10.26	2.21	.188**	.275**	-.041
8. Freedom	4.43	1.46	.069	.140*	.093

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

* . Correlation significant at 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 2 reveals the results of stepwise regression analysis of personal and organizational values on all the three components of organizational commitment. Out of the eight factors of personal values (p) and eight factors of organizational values (o), factors justice (p), harmony (p) and conservative (o) have predicted affective commitment and together they have explained 39% of the variance. The most potent predictor is factor justice (p) which alone explained 34% of the variance. Factors justice (o),

leadership (o), bottom-line (p) and orderliness (p) have predicted normative commitment and together explained 18% of the variance. The most potent predictor was factor justice (o) which alone explained 11% of the variance. Factors conservative (p) and orderliness (p) predicted continuance commitment and together predicted 5% of the variance. The most potent predictor was factor conservative (p) which alone explained 2.6% of the variance.

Table 2 Stepwise Regression Analysis of Personal and Organizational Value Predicting Affective, Normative and Continuance Commitment N = 220

S. No	Predictor	Affective Commitment	Normative Commitment	Continuance Commitment
1	Justice (P)	.583**	-	
2	Harmony (P)	.218**	-	
3	Conservative (O)	-.116**	-	
4	Justice (O)	-	.343**	
5	Leadership (O)	-	.154**	
6	Bottom-Line (P)	-	-.134**	
7	Orderliness (P)	-	.167**	.153**
8	Conservative (P)	-	-	-.163*

Vales presented are standardized regression coefficient (betas).

(P) – Personal Values

(O) – Organizational Values

** p< 0.01

* p< 0.05

Discussion

There are two very important findings in this study. Firstly, values of factor ‘Justice’ which includes fairness, openness, logic and moral integrity are more potent predictors of affective and normative organizational commitment. A person who attaches greater importance to these values will be affectively committed and the one who perceives the organization to promote these values will be normatively committed. It is only reasonable to expect that a person to whom the value of openness, fairness, logic and moral integrity are important will want that these values are promoted in his organization too. Thus, it may be said that a person who attached greater importance to the values of fairness, openness, logic and moral integrity and also perceived his organization to promote these values will be committed to the organization both affectively and normatively which is the highest form of organizational commit-

ment. Secondly, it may be said that higher the congruence between the personal and perceived organizational values of fairness, openness, logic and moral integrity higher will be the affective and normative commitments. Definitely in such cases the withdrawal cognition will be the least. However, in the organization of study, it may be seen from table 1 that the mean difference of factor ‘Justice’ for personal and perceived organizational values is quite high and hence it may be said that there is less congruence and hence employees may not be committed to the organization. This fact was ascertained based on content analysis of the open ended questions which quite reflects that all is not well in this organization.

Conclusion

Values of openness, fairness, logic and moral integrity are most important predictors of organizational commitment and personal values, perceived organiza-

tional values and congruence between the two are significant in determining organizational commitment. Further, if the organization selects personnel with high values of openness, fairness, logic and moral integrity and promote these values in the organization it will have a workforce more affectively and normatively committed.

Limitation

Though the study has its limitations, it has opened up new avenues for further research. This study can be criticized firstly for the fact that only one organization was studied and consequently, the values of that organization may be coincidentally similar to the general human preference for justice and benevolence. Secondly, reliabilities of some of the subscales of values were very low and this calls for re-examination of the value structure itself based on a larger sample. Another criticism of this study might be that common method variance may be inflating the correlations between personal and organizational values. Common method variance, in this case, refers to the problem that occurs when the same participant measures both personal and organizational values using the same type of paper-and-pencil response format. The correlation between the measures will be higher than it ideally should be because participants will apply the same biases to each task.

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