Examining Locus of Control (LOC) as a Determinant of Organizational Commitment among University Professors in Pakistan

Saima Munir, Army Public College of Management Sciences, Pakistan
Mehsoon Sajid, Army Public College of Management Sciences, Pakistan

Abstract
The purpose of this paper is to investigate the relationship between locus of control (LOC) and organizational commitment. The research will be conducted on university level Professors in Pakistan. Previous research suggests that Professional orientation of professors and locus of control play an important role in contributing to professors' affective commitment. The finding through this research will explain that participants with more internal locus of control are more likely to have high affective and normative commitment whereas participants with more external locus of control are more likely to have high continuance commitment. The results will be discussed with series of recommendations for university level professors in Pakistan. Implications will be discussed.

Key words: Locus of Control (LOC), Organizational Commitment, Pakistan.

Introduction

The relationship between locus of control and organizational commitment has received attention by a number of researchers (Coleman, et al., 1999; Wang & Chen, 2007). The concept of internal and external locus of control has received a great deal of attention during the last two decades (Galejs, & Hegland, 1982). People with an internal locus of control believe that they can influence their environment, and that their actions affect what happens to them but people with an external locus of control believe that they have little influence over the environment and what happens to them is due to external factors such as luck, or the actions of others (Licata, strawser, & welker, 1986; Carpentor, & Golden, 1997; Spector et al., 2002; Martin et al., 2005). People with internal locuses of control (internal- LOC people) by definition have a stronger tendency than external-LOC people to believe outcomes such as rewards are under their own control (Lam & Schaubroeck, 2000). Locus of control is likely to have a moderating effect on the relationships between Perceived organizational support and the dimensions of organizational commitment (Morin, Rousseau & Aube, 2007). LOC scales now is regarded as one of the "big five" personality variables (Myers, & Booth, 1999; Silva, 2006). The work locus of control scale
measures generalized control beliefs in work settings (Honegger & Appelbaum, 1998). In these studies the researchers have concentrated on a number of factors that contribute towards establishment of relationship between LOC and organizational commitment. The purpose of this study is to examine relationship between locus of control and organizational commitment focusing university professors in Pakistan. Although a number of studies explain the relationship but no such study focusing university professors in Pakistan has been attempted earlier. Thus a research gap exists and this study attempts to fill the research gap. Research indicates that Professors with internal locus of control are more committed and seems positive as compare to external locus of control as Cheng (1990), argues that internals may believe that membership in an organization is a matter of choice and self determination, if they are not committed to the institute they would be likely to leave but when they remain, they tend to be committed to the institute. Individuals with an internal locus of control perceive events and rewards as contingent upon their own actions (Fairly & Tosi, 1989). Externals tend to perceive themselves as vulnerable to the "slings and arrows of outrageous fortune"; as such, they rely more heavily than internals on social cues and social supports (Doherty, 1981). Therefore, it is not surprising that professors who have invested more time in their job show more commitment to their institutes (Cheng, 1990). In light of the existing literature, we postulate that when restructuring transfers more power to professors in matters related to instructional methods, professors will be more motivated and answerable to the quality of their work (Lam, 2005). Studies of Locus of Control have reliably shown that internals attain higher levels of academic success than externals (Gordon, Jones, & Short, 1977). Locus of control; teaching experience and age do affect the relationship between the commitment & organizational variables (Cheng, 1990). A key factor that appeared to account for the consistency between conceptions and their instructional practice was the professors' reflectiveness (Thompson, 1984). According to lam, (2005) professors’ sense of control over their own working environment seemed to be obscured by the existing structural arrangement. It would helpful for all professors, who in general sincerely wish to do their best to become aware of their attitudes and beliefs and what impact these have on institutes (Payne, 1994).

The important objective of this research according to the prospective of professors is that to develop awareness to those institutions that require some advancement concerning their teaching staff and commitment to the organization. This study will also demonstrate that how can a professor of Pakistani universities develop their conceptualization of professionalism to institution and how they should construct commitment to the organization. The findings of this research will truly support and assist the university professors in Pakistan to efficiently make use of these findings.

Literature Review

Myers, 1999 defined Locus of Control as the extent to which individuals perceive that their actions have little influence on the life conditions that they face and the extent to which they attribute their circumstances and rewards to fate, luck, and chance, instead of believing that their circumstances and rewards are influenced by their own actions. Locus of control (LOC) is defined as reflects an individual's tendency to believe that he or she controls events in life (internality) or that such control resides elsewhere, such as with powerful others (externality) (Spector et al., 2001; Spector et al., 2002). In other words, internal LOC is associated with high affective and normative commitment to change whereas external LOC is associated with high
continuance commitment to change (Chen & Wang, 2007). Research on locus of control has revealed significant differences between internals and externals in their propensity to influence others and attitudes towards social influence (Elango van, Xie, 1999). When individuals believe that they have very little control over what happens to them they are considered to have an external locus of control on the other hand individuals with internal locus of control believe that they are responsible for what happens to them (Adeyemi-Bello, 2003). An internally controlled individual perceives events which affect him as being produced by his own behavior whereas externally controlled individual perceives events which affect him as being largely produced by luck, fate, and the control of others (Gigliotti, 1976). Individuals who have an internal locus of control (hereafter "internals") tend to believe that their actions directly influence outcomes (Hyatt, & Prawitt, 2001). Internal locus of control individuals can be said to ascribe control of events to themselves, while external locus of control individuals can be said to attribute control to outside forces (Kinicki, & Vecchio, 1994). They are more likely to perceive that the rewards they receive are the result of their own actions than are people with more external locus of control (Lam and Schaubroeck, 2000). An "internal" person believes that he is in control of his life and that work and effort will result in reward, an "external" person believes that his life is determined by chance, fate or "powerful others" and that reinforcements are distributed in a more or less random way with a resulting lack of relationship between actions and outcomes (Linter & Ducette, 1974). It is likely that persons with an internal locus of control may need fewer enactive mastery experiences to improve efficacy perceptions and performance (Gist, 1987). For example, internals may perceive "constraints" in the environment as loose and malleable; they turn competitors' challenges into opportunities for innovation & externals may see their environments as having many rigid boundaries that cannot be violated (Miller et al., 1982).

The importance of locus of control as a moderator between participation and performance-satisfaction as determinant of the type of organization preferred (Frucot & Shearon, 1991). The key concepts embedded in the construct of locus of control are one's perception of control and the external influences or reinforcements (Galejs, & Hegland, 1982). The effect of locus of control on the performance of high-level managers was significantly stronger than its impact on the performance of lower-level managers (Frucot, & Shearon, 1991). Locus of control is the extent to which individuals attribute the events in their lives to actions or forces beyond their control (Adeyemi-Bello, 2003).

The moderating effect of LOC also exists on the relationships between job satisfaction and organizational commitment (Chiu et al., 2005). The literature concerning locus of control strongly validates its usefulness in an academic setting (Lintner, & Ducette, 1974). There are a number of studies in which locus of control was studied in academic setting. Locus of control is influenced by the educational atmosphere (Lifshitz, 1973). A key factor that appeared to account for the consistency between conceptions and their instructional practice was the professors' reflectiveness (Thompson, 1984). Specifically, under "high" flexible institution structure, professors enjoyed a higher level of control, displayed a higher level of motivation on their jobs and grasped more opportunities for mutual learning and professional exchange (Lam, 2005). The present study verifies that locus of control, as a specific personality variable, can predict employees’ commitment to a specific change (Wang & Chen, 2007). The findings reviewed above suggest that LOC may moderate the relationship between job satisfaction and organizational commitment (Chiu et al., 2005). Employees may be more or less receptive or resistant to identity oriented or identity consequential modes of organizational control (Alvesson & willmott, 2002).
Organizational commitment is viewed as the totality of internalized normative pressures to act in a way that meets organizational goals and interests (Wiener, 1982). Organizational commitment has been defined as a mindset, which ties the individual to the organization (Dockel, 2003). Mayer & Schoorman (1998) identified that the nature of employees' commitment to their employing organization has long been a topic of great interest to organizational researchers. The issue of organizational commitment (OC) continues to receive attention from both scientists and practitioners (Cohen, 1992). For the employee, lifetime employment enables the development of commitment to the organization (Jaeger & Baliga, 1985). Employees tend to curtail their commitment to organizational objectives when they are not satisfied with what they gain from the organization (England & Harpaz, 1990). Commitment is considered to be a relatively stable attitude that develops slowly over time as individuals establish a relationship with the organization (Mottaz, 1987). It is possible that person and situation variables combine differently to influence organizational commitment and job satisfaction (Meyer, Irving, & Allen, 1998). The positive relationship between perceived control and organizational commitment is significantly higher in the presence than in the absence of layoffs (Brockner, et al., (2004). It is also possible that changes in the traditional employment relationship may alter the nature of one's commitment to the organization, rather than eliminating one's organizational commitment (Jernigan, & Beggs, 2005). Professionals employed by organizations are usually allocated more active tasks than are nonprofessionals goals (Scott et al., 1967). Various factors are known to contribute to employees’ organizational commitment and productivity: these include tenure, position, income, age, education, and psychological predisposition (Eaton, 2003).

As with previous research, we found significant relations between LOC and organizational commitment (Coleman, Irving & Cooper 1999). More recent work has refined the organizational commitment construct, recognizing that a multidimensional approach to its study is more fruitful (Mayer & Schoorman, 1998). Organizational commitment is an important variable which can be used to determine effectiveness of organization & this study has gained substantial attention, focusing on organizational commitment thousands of articles have been written. Organizational commitment has three forms which play an essential role within an organization; forms are continuance commitment, normative commitment, & affective commitment. Each component of commitment has its own behavioral consequences to the individual employee or the organization (Gautam, 2001). In this context the key constructs of interest are organizational commitment (defined in terms of affective commitment, continuance commitment and normative commitment) (Iles, Forster & Tinling, 1996). Affective commitment refers to a psychological attachment to the organization (i.e., individuals stay with the organization because they want to). Continuance commitment refers to costs associated with leaving the organization and the perceived lack of alternatives (i.e., individuals stay with the organization because they need to). Normative commitment refers to a perceived obligation to remain with the organization (i.e., individuals stay with the organization because they feel they should) (Coleman, Irving & Cooper 1999). Affective commitment reflects employees' emotional attachment to, identification with, and involvement in, the organization, continuance commitment involves recognition of the costs associated with leaving the organization, and normative commitment reflects employees' feelings of obligation to remain with the organization (Meyer, Irving, & Allen, 1998). Gautam et al. (2005) found that Affective commitment (AC) ties people through their emotional attachment, involvement, and identification with the organization, Continuance commitment (CC) depends on employees’ awareness of the costs of
leaving the organization, Normative commitment (NC) rests on employees’ obligatory feelings towards coworkers or management. Coleman, Irving & Cooper (1999) argues that externals are more likely to perceive that they have fewer employment alternatives than internals, which could, in turn, lead externals to develop continuance commitment to their organizations.

Relationship between locus of control and organizational commitment has received considerable attention by researchers. The importance of organizational commitment has resulted in a large research literature that has attempted to identify various sources of commitment (Knudsen et al., 2003) Locus of control significantly predicted both leader-member exchange and organizational commitment (Kinicki & Vecchio, 1994). Even more important since it is considered as the driving force behind an organizations performance (Ahmad & Bakar, 2003). Positive responses of individuals affected by organizational change are conceptualized in terms of perceptions of both higher levels of commitment to the change itself and stronger commitment to the organization (Fedor, Caldwell & Herold, 2006). It has been positively associated with behaviors supporting the goals of an organization and with organizational rewards (Shore, Barksdale & Shore, 1995). Organizations that wish to enhance the commitment of their employees should strive for congruence between organizational rewards and important work values of their members (Elizur & Koslowsky, 2001).

H1: Based on above literature the Hypothesis of our research is that Locus of control (LOC) is significantly and positively related to organizational commitment.

Research Methodology

Data for the present study were collected based on sample of different university professors in Pakistan. Questionnaires were delivered to all the professors working in different renowned universities of Pakistan within a particular region. The respondents are told that the data collected will be used only for the research purpose. There were three sections having 30 questions, first section asked for the demographics information include age, gender, tenure, qualification etc, second section was about locus of control and third section was about organizational commitment. In first section nominal scale was used whereas in the other two sections respondents are asked to indicate the extent by using likert-scale ranging from 1, ‘strongly disagree’ to 5, ‘strongly agree’ was used. Survey completed, 200 questionnaires were distributed, in all, 170 full- and part-time faculty from different institutions responded, the overall response rate was 85%.

Data Analysis Method

The statistical software package named as SPSS 12.0 have been used for the analysis. The proceeding discussion presents the analysis/result of the hypothesis of the study with conclusion at the end.
Several demographic factors which are possibly related to locus of control and organizational commitment were included in the research: age, gender, qualification marital status, and tenure. According to Table 1, 45.30% of the respondents are between the ages of 20-30 (n=77). This indicates that many of the respondents are relatively young professors. The tenure results show that most of the respondents have 5 years or less experience with the institution i.e. 65.30% (n=111), indicating short job history at their relative institutions. The gender result shows that 66.47% of the respondents are male (n=113), and females are 33.53% of the total sample size (n=57). Results of Table 1 show that 50.00% of the respondents have their masters degree (n=85) whereas the remaining include 5.882% bachelor degree holders (n=10), 35.30% of respondents are M.Phil. (n=60) and 8.823% respondent are doctoral (n=15). According to table 31.75% of
the respondents are Urdu speaking (n=54), 7.058% are English speaking (n=12), 35.88% are Punjabi speaking (n=61), 7.647% Pushto speaking (n=13), other language respondents are of 9.411% (n=16). The marital frequency results shows that 46.47% of the respondents are un-married (n=79) while 53.53% are married (n=91) and is a part of a family unit.

**Correlation Analysis**

**Table: 2**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard deviation</th>
<th>Locus of control</th>
<th>Organizational commitment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Locus of control</td>
<td>3.58</td>
<td>0.408</td>
<td>1.000</td>
<td>0.210(**)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational</td>
<td>3.89</td>
<td>0.647</td>
<td>0.210(**)</td>
<td>1.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 2** shows the standard deviation and correlation among the independent and dependent variable. Mean of locus of control is 3.58 and organizational commitment mean is 3.89. Whereas the standard deviation results of the independent variable locus of control (LOC) is 0.408 and standard deviation of the dependent variable of organizational commitment is 0.647 respectively. Locus of control results indicates a significance of 0.210(**). This shows that locus of control has positive impact on organizational commitment but the variation is very less. In this table 2** indicates that p < 0.01. Therefore the relationship between locus of control (LOC) and organizational commitment is positively significant.

**Regression Analysis**

**Table: 3**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Beta (β)</th>
<th>t-value</th>
<th>p-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Locus of control</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>6.265</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational</td>
<td>0.210</td>
<td>2.788</td>
<td>0.006</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N= 170, R square = 0.044
Adjusted R² = 0.039  F= 7.773 (significance of f)
Table 3: show the results of relation between the independent variables with dependent variable. The value of adjusted R Square is (0.039), value of R Square is (0.044), and value of F is (7.773). The result of the regression analysis indicates the t-value of locus of control is 6.265 including P value is showing the level of significance 0.000 which is highly significant. Whereas organizational commitment (β) value is 0.210, t-value is 2.788 and P value is 0.006 respectively. These values prove that locus of control has positive impact on organizational commitment.

Discussion

Pakistan is an underdeveloped country with a population of 160 million approximately. The literacy rate of Pakistan is 46%, which is less than any other developing nation. So it is very important to understand the reasons due to which there are lack of professors and institutions in Pakistan. A higher growth rate in the number of schools than in the number of professors tends to imply that the quality of education is declining with the passage of time. This may be the direct result of the decline in the number of professors available per School this would tend to suggest that the professor: student ratios have worsened (Ismail, 1996).

Our research is conducted on university level professors of Pakistan. Teaching is considered to be not properly paid profession in Pakistan. The revenue expenditure on education has rarely been more than 2.5%. In a country like Pakistan teaching profession play a vital role towards women society as more women are found teaching in different colleges and universities. Teaching sector in Pakistan continues to be a promising sector as it presents lots of opportunities. There are two sectors, one is government and the other one is private sector. We collected our data from both public and private sector universities. We circulated our questionnaires in different renowned universities of Pakistan including the top 10 universities and get the responses. We found out that many of the respondents were male and the percentage of female was relatively less i.e. 66.47% male and 33.53% female. As Pakistani culture is male dominate, women are generally under-employed and are socially disadvantaged. As university study means imparting professional education so more men are found working on university level than women. This research is carried out in the Punjab province of Pakistan but the employees are also found, belonging to the other provinces having different native languages. The percentages of such respondents are 31.75% are those who speak Urdu, 35.88% speaks Punjabi, 7.647 Pashto and 9.411% speak other languages. The professors gave their opinion about how far they think locus of control affect their commitment.

The main objective of this research was to examine the relationship between locus of control (Loc) and organizational commitment. Our independent variable of the research is locus of control, which effect on organizational commitment is determined. As the findings suggests that the value of correlation analysis of locus of control over organizational commitment is 0.210(**). The result shows both the variables are statistically significant and supports our hypothesis. Which was Locus of control (Loc) is significantly and positively related to organizational commitment. It indicates that locus of control positively affects the organizational commitment as the correlation shows positive result but this relationship is not very strong. The variation between dependent and the independent variable is just 4% which means there is no as such importance of locus of control for the professors or the impact of locus of control on professors is very little. The reason might be that there are many other factors other than locus of control (LOC) which have greater influence on professors than locus of control.
In addition, the regression analysis is also carried out for these variables. We examined the $\beta$ value for dependent variable, organizational commitment is $\beta = 0.210$. Whereas the t-value for both variables are also found out, locus of control ($LOC$) t-value = 6.265 and organizational commitment t-value = 2.788. The value of $R^2$ is also found out from regression analysis which is $R^2 = 0.044$ and adjusted $R^2 = 0.039$

Like many other studies this study has some limitations. First of all the data collected from the professors who answered the questionnaire may not be representative of working people in real environment. Second, related to the first limitation, it is difficult to imagine the respondents would behave in the same manner as they respond to the statements related to organizational commitment.

**Implications**

Our research extended previous findings by demonstrating relations between LOC and multiple forms of organizational commitment (Coleman, et al., 1999). Our findings regarding relationship between locus of control & organizational commitment suggests that professors towards their profession shows positive involvement. The overall pattern of these results it would appear that the Strategic Locus of Control Scale is sufficiently reliable and valid, for use in future strategic management studies (Hodgkinson, 1992). Future researchers should further explore antecedents and outcomes of managerial perceptions of employee commitment to better understand the basis for and consequences of these perceptions (Shore, Barksdale & Shore, 1995). These findings suggest the importance of fit with institutional mission in efforts to encourage faculty commitment to teaching (Fairweather & Rhoads, 1995). Because importance of teaching have become an important topic internationally. The findings of present study show that university level professors hold positive behavior regarding their career development issues. Our results also suggest that if motivation level is high then level of commitment will also increase & will show positive results. Specifically illustrated are the consequences of decentralized decision making versus the state's hierarchical control for professors' workplace commitment (Rosenholtz, 1987). Local facilitators organize the commitment of professors and administrators, arrange learning opportunities for institutional personnel, acquire materials, handle schedules, evaluate changes in institution, and plan for ongoing change (Rosenholtz, 1987). These results suggests that commitment with teaching occupation is very necessary in the universities of Pakistan. Social relationships that embody values of participation and community in their concrete practices contribute to empowering people (Gamson, 1991). A university departmental chairman may be expected to ensure good teaching, but may lack important rights, such as the sampling right, over his faculty goals (Scott et al., 1967). Individual level commitment, attendance behavior, and tenure intentions were examined as a function of the individual's degree of difference from others on such social categories as age, tenure, education, and race (Tsui, Egan, & O'Reilly, 1992). A primary locus of control resides in families-in particular, in parent-child relationships (Heimer & Matsueda, 1994). Here, because of the organizational commitment and the knowledge base of workers, quality problems can be raised, discussed and dealt with most successfully (Jaeger & Baliga, 1985). This may undermine their commitment to the organization and even lead them to disguise the nature of their employment (Hodson & Sullivan, 1985). This is the first study to demonstrate the moderating effects of locus of control using an exogenous, firm-level measure of the work environment, rather than an endogenous, subject-assessed measure (Hyatt, & Prawitt, 2001). Locus of control, perhaps the most studied control-related variable, reflects a person's belief in personal control in life (internality) rather than in control by
outside forces or individuals (externality) (Spector et al., 2002). An implication of these propositions, and worthy of further inquiry, is the possibility that firm performance may be affected by the locus of control characterizing the firms’ most senior managers (Carpentor, & Golden, 1997). Although immediate acquisition may open up potential opportunities that might not persist if commitment was delayed (Folta, 1998). It seems that higher educational organizations may also be able to heighten their effectiveness by increasing faculty involvement (Devadoss, Muth, 1984). We posit that such organization will have a higher capacity to acquire, retain, and retrieve decision information relative to other organizations (Walsh, & Ungson, 1991). Low commitment to the organization is likely to be a more potent contributor to the decision to terminate than job dissatisfaction (Parasuraman, & Alutto, 1984). The manner in which power is converted into resources may vary with still other environmental or organizational circumstances (Provan, Beyer, & Kruytbosch, 1980). Values-based organization appears to hold excellent potential for future research designed to uncover the process that firms use to select and pursue partners and to reveal the ultimate determinants of successful External relationships (Voss, Cable, & Voss, 2000). In particular, in order to be in a better position to analyze gender differences future studies should compare the work experiences of men and women who work in either the same or at least in very similar occupations or jobs (Kinnunen, Mauno, Natti, & Happonen, 2000). It used to be assumed that access to the full range of knowledge is desirable, and that higher education is the appropriate gateway to that reservoir (Gumport, 2000). If supervisors are aware of the impact of their behavior on subordinates’ organizational commitment, then they may be able to influence employees’ commitment by actively managing their own behavior (Jernigan, & Begg, 2005). The latter study indicates that few find it necessary to change their approach to learning to succeed at university (Watkins, 1987). The main objective of this research is to find out that how many professors are highly committed towards their profession in the universities of Pakistan so that we can contribute more research in future and try to maintain positive & stronger behavior in the professors of all countries with the help of present and future findings. The present investigation was designed to determine if a relationship between task persistence and Locus of Control also exists, a relationship which may underlie the effect of Locus of Control on academic achievement (Gordon, Jones, & Short, 1977). Organizational commitment emerges more from career issues than it does from job issues (Jans, 1989). In a professional organization, the members who are most successful, most talented and most confident may be freer to change jobs, if such a move promises either to preserve or to enhance their professional standing (Miller, & Labovitz, 1973). It can be concluded that the experimental realization of participation interacted with the personality variable, locus of control, and that this interaction significantly affected performance (Brownell, 1981). These results show that locus of control is an important antecedent of the quality of relationship that people develop with their manager, and this determines a range of work-related reactions (Martin et al., 2005). The obvious advantage was that this study contributed to cumulation of knowledge about under-researched countries like Pakistan (Aycan et al., 2000). However, research on locus of control is very limited & there is a need for further research & the basic objective is to facilitate people through present study which could be beneficial for future researchers.
References


Acknowledgement

We would like to express our gratitude to PhD scholar Sir Sajid Bashir for his valuable comments, boundless support in bringing this article to fruition and we are grateful to his kind and honorable supervision. We express special appreciation to our Dean Dr. Hamid Rafique Khattak, who has given consistent help by his gracious behavior in all phases of this research article. In the end, we thank all those who were directly or indirectly involved in the completion of this article.