

ORIGINAL PAPER

**Employees' Commitment to the Organization of a Public District
Hospital: a Case Study**

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Abstract

Background: The employees' satisfaction from their job and their commitment to the organization appears to be one of the most determinants factors of organizational effectiveness.

Aim: The aim of this study was the research of commitment to the organization of employees' working at Sparta General Hospital, as well as the correlation between job satisfaction and social, economic, demographic or other factors.

Methodology: The research's sample included 121 employees from all departments of a public district hospital. For research purposes, the Organizational Commitment Questionnaire was used. Data specially designed for the research's purposes.

Results: The largest sample's proportion, declared moderate to very satisfy by their job at that Hospital. The particular job demands, exhausting timetables, stress and organizational weaknesses of the Greek Health System seem to have been key components of the problem. Also, for a large sample proportion, the job demands affect negatively the time and energy that Sparta General Hospital employees' dedicate to themselves and to their families. Almost half of the participants replied that they are not at all satisfied with their payroll. Regarding the rates of emotional, standing and exemplary commitment, showed that gender, education level, marital status, age and total years of professional seniority correlated with the level of emotional commitment. To higher affective commitment is positively correlated with age of employees and years of service.

Conclusions: The research of commitment to the organization can contribute substantially in improving the hospital's and health system's effectiveness, the increment of job's satisfaction, the employees' efficiency.

Keywords: Organizational Commitment, Job Satisfaction, Organizational Behavior, Organizational Culture, Motivating Staff.

Introduction

Organizations are similar to social networks, where human resources are the most important factor for their effectiveness and efficiency (Mosadeghrad et al., 2008; Zyga, 2010). These organizations are not possible to succeed without the efforts and commitment of their employees. Employee satisfaction and commitment to the organization- employer, seems to be one of the crucial factors of the organization's effectiveness (Lok & Crowford, 2003). Organizational commitment plays an important part in the study of organizational behaviour because of the high degree of labour relations between organizational commitment, attitudes and behaviours that have been found in the workplace (Koch & Steers, 1978; Porter et al., 1976; 1974; Angle & Perry, 1981).

Bateman & Strasser (1984), pointed out that the reasons for the study of organizational commitment are related to: (a) the behaviour of employees, and effective performance, (b) behaviour, influencing and team creativity as is their work satisfaction, (c) the characteristics of the role and work of the employee, such as accountability and (d) personal characteristics of the employee, such as age and years of work.

In the literature there are many definitions on organizational commitment. Bateman & Strasser (1984), indicated that organizational commitment is functionally determined that involves the faith of the employee to the organization, his willingness to make an effort for the organization in which he works, the level and the target value in connection with the organization and the desire to maintain cooperation between employees. According to Buchanan (1974), most authors determined that dedication is the bond between the individual (employee) and the organization (employer).

Research on job satisfaction is not a new topic for discussion since various studies have attempted to measure its impact on organizational performance (Spector, 1985). Job satisfaction reflects how employees like their job (Stamps, 1997; Price & Mueller, 1981). Other researchers suggest that job satisfaction is determined by the total amount

of positive and negative perceptions of employees with regard to their working environment (Greenberg & Baron, 2000). According to Porter & Lawer (1973), it is the emotional reaction of the employee at work, based on the comparison between the actual and desired results.

Job satisfaction is generally recognized as a versatile "construction" which includes employee's feelings about all the intrinsic and extrinsic characteristics of work (Mache et al., 2009; Spector, 1997).

Inherent data come from internal rewards such as the work itself and the opportunities for personal development and fulfilment. External data come from external rewards such as satisfaction with salary and benefits, company policies and support, supervision, co-workers, the sense of security and opportunities for advancement (Misener et al., 1996).

Regarding the management of human resources in health service organizations, previous researchers concluded that higher levels of job satisfaction are associated with reduced changes in the workforce and reduced worker absenteeism. The job satisfaction contributes to enhancing trust, loyalty and ultimately to improve the quality of the services (Linn et al., 1985).

In fact, the literature indicates that the staff of a hospital facing difficulties in meeting the needs of patients when the workers themselves feel that they have their needs uncovered within their working environment (Labiris et al., 2008).

The design of this study was triggered by the absence of relative research data from Greece which relate to the investigation of devotion to the body of health professionals in the public and private entity.

Materials and Methods

Design

The study was non experimental and descriptive and was conducted in a public district hospital in a prefecture of Greece.

Aim

The aim of this study was to investigate the loyalty of employees in the organization of a general regional hospital, as a factor of

organizational effectiveness and its correlation with job satisfaction and possible correlation of employee loyalty with social, economic, demographic or other factors.

Setting and sample

The sample for this study was all employees of the study hospital. The inclusion criteria were the following: a) age (over 18 years), b) The willingness of individuals to participate in this study, c) able to speak and write the Greek language. This study was conducted from June to November 2011.

A convenience sample of nursing, medical, technical and administrative staff of the hospital that met the inclusion criteria and agreed to participate in the survey was 150. There were 150 questionnaires distributed, of which finally answered the 121 (81% responsiveness rate).

Procedure

The researchers provided to the participants the self-administered questionnaires in sealed envelopes, which after completion they delivered (in person) back to the researchers in order to preserve confidentiality. The researchers were available for the participants in order to inform for the whole process.

After the completion of the questionnaires, the researchers were evaluating them and filing the results in separate logs for each individual.

The decision as to whether the conditions for participation in the survey were met was taken by the researchers of this study. Individuals participating in the study were informed about the purpose of the study and would assure about the privacy and anonymity of the process. Each person would create a secret personal code and this will be surveyed (instead of his name). Moreover, the whole process will be dealt by the same person, thus reducing the chances of information leakage and ensures frame with increased trust between researchers and people would take part in the survey.

Instruments

Data were collected with a questionnaire that included the Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ), and Socio Demographic characteristics.

The Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ) was developed by John P. Meyer & Natalie J. Allen (Department of Psychology, The University of Western Ontario, 2004). After securing the written permission of the authors, it was accurately translated into Greek and then reversed translated for the purposes of the study.

The questionnaire examines the concept of employee loyalty to the organization. It is a self-report questionnaire consisting of 18 proposals on which subjects indicate the extent of their agreement on a scale of seven Likert type grades (where 1 denotes the maximum disagreement and 7 the maximum agreement).

The English version of the questionnaire has acceptable discriminate validity (Mowday; Steers & Porter, 1979). The index Cronbach's a range from 0.55 to 0.80. Initially, the questionnaire reflects the degree of satisfaction of employees from the object and location of their work, from the time spent at work and the degree of satisfaction from their remuneration.

Then, the questionnaire records the responses of participants in a series of proposals that reflect the emotional, standing and exemplary commitment they feel about the organization and the department they work for. The second part of the questionnaire that included questions on socio-demographics characteristics (marital status, siblings, children, education level, and employment status, gender and age).

Also, they were asked to answer questions related to years of service with their position in the organization, satisfaction with work and pay.

Ethical Issues

The study was approved by the Ethics Committee of the study hospital and the ethical board of the University of Peloponnesus. During the study complete discretion as to the information concerning the examinees were kept and the safety of the material was safeguarded.

The anonymity of the test was patented and the results were used solely for the purposes of the research and only by this research group. The stress or emotion of the test on the participants was limited to a minimum.

Statistical Analysis

The descriptors of variables were examined and analyzed. The frequency and relative frequency were used, to describe the demographic characteristics and questions of the basic questionnaire.

Then, we compared the demographic characteristics and questions about the degree of satisfaction of employees from the object and location of their work, from the time spent at work and the degree of satisfaction from their remuneration. Furthermore, we compared the demographic characteristics and the emotional scale, permanent and exemplary commitment.

Specifically, to control the correlation of the basic questions of the questionnaire with demographic qualitative characteristics (gender, marital status, educational level and occupational status) the Mann-Whitney test was used.

Then, checking the age and years of professional experience (total and current) with the basic questions of the questionnaire, used the non-parametric correlation coefficient Spearman rho.

Still, for testing the correlation between demographic characteristics and quality of the emotional scale, the t-test was used. Finally, to check the correlation of quantitative demographic characteristics and the emotional scale, we applied parametric correlation coefficient Pearson r.

The p-value listed based on two-tailed tests. The p-value with a value lower than 0.05 was considered as statistically significant result.

To perform the statistical analysis used the software SPSS (SPSS Inc., 2003, Chicago, USA).

Results

The collection of demographic data in this research included the recording of basic demographic data of individuals, such as gender, age, marital status, educational profile (level of education), ethnicity, employment status (civil servant or contractor, present position and work object) and total work experience, and years of experience working in the section at present. The demographic data of the study population are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Demographic data of the participants.

	n	(%)
Gender		
Female	92	77.3
Male	27	22.7
Marital status		
Single	41	34.2
Married	73	60.8
Divorced	6	5.0
Preteen children		
No	18	31.6
Yes	39	68.4
Custody of children		
No	7	17.5
Yes	33	82.5
Educational Level		
Secondary	56	46.3
Technological	47	38.8
Higher	7	5.8
Masters Level	11	9.1
Nationality		
Greek	100	100.0
Professional status		
Civil servant	119	98.4
Contractor	2	1.7
Professional staff		
Nursing	82	72.0
Medical	5	4.3
Technical	10	8.8
Administrative	17	14.9
Department		
Sterilization dpt	3	2.7
Biomedicine	1	0.9
Administration	3	2.7
Labs	1	0.9
Pharmacy	1	0.9
Gynecological	2	1.8
Secretariat	1	0.9
IT	1	0.9
Medical Service	1	0.9
Cardiac	8	7.1
Patients Flow	1	0.9
Social service	1	0.9
Microbiology lab	3	2.7
Dialysis unit	9	8.0
Ophthalmology	1	0.9
Financial	4	3.5
Orthopaedic	12	10.6
Urology	6	5.3
Internal medicine	8	7.1
Procurement	1	0.9
Human Recourses	3	2.7
Outpatient	3	2.7
Emergency	8	7.1
Technical	5	4.4
Pain	1	0.9
Surgical	25	22.1

In Table 2 are the descriptive statistics for quantitative demographic characteristics of the total sample.

Table 2. Descriptive statistics for quantitative demographic characteristics for the total sample.

Demo graphic data	Mediu m	Standar d Deviatio n	Mi n	Ma x
Age (years)	39.4	8.48	25	58
No of children	2	0.66	1	4
Total professional years	14.3	9.04	0	32
Professional experience at the current position	6.9	7.47	0	32

As it concerns the satisfaction of employees from the object and location of their work, from the time spent at work and the degree of satisfaction from their pay the results showed that 44,6 and 43.8% of participants stated that they are "moderate" and "very" satisfied with the scope of work, respectively. Still, the majority of the sample, 57% answered that they are "moderately" satisfied with their job. Twenty eight point nine percent said they are "very" satisfied, while a small percentage, 3.3% and 6.6% answered "no" and "little" respectively. Then, 30.6% of participants said that the demands of work affect in "very" negative time and energy they devote to themselves. Another 24% believe that their influence "moderate" and 21.5% "a little". Additionally, 28.1% said that the demands of work affect in "very" negative time and energy they devote to their family. Moreover 24% believe that they affect "a little" negative time and energy they devote to their family. While, 14% and 14.9% say the demands of work affect "not at all" and "too much" respectively. Still, the majority of the sample, 47.9% said that family obligations do not affect "any" negative time and energy they devote to their work. While the same

question 29.8% answered "a little" and 18.2% "moderate". Finally, 48.8% of respondents say they are "not at all" satisfied with their remuneration. The 24% and 24.8% of people say "slightly" and "moderately" satisfied respectively. Note that none (0%) replied that there are "very" satisfied.

For the correlation of the qualitative demographic characteristics with various questions regarding the degree of satisfaction of employees from the object and location of their work, from the time spent at work and the degree of satisfaction from their remuneration, the non-parametric control median price comparison between two independent samples, the Mann-Whitney test was applied.

The results showed that there is statistically significant difference in median response of participants to the question "Determine what is the satisfaction level from the subject of your work," and among people of secondary and higher education. In particular, workers with secondary education indicate "moderate" satisfaction from their job in comparison with higher education employees who report "very" satisfied with the object of their work. The difference in median values of participants' responses in two different categories of education is statistically significant ($p= 0.042$). Regarding the relationship of gender, marital status and occupational status with the relevant questions, statistically significant correlation was found.

The results from the correlation of various questions regarding the degree of satisfaction of employees from the object and location of their work, from the time spent at work and the degree of satisfaction from their pay, with the quantitative demographic characteristics by using the non-parametric Spearman rho correlation coefficient showed that there is a statistically significant negative correlation between the responses of participants to the question "The work demands negatively affect the time and energy you devote to yourself?", and years of professional service in the current position of the participants. In particular, it appears that as the years increase their current professional experience, ($p\text{-value} = 0,008$) the feeling that work demands negatively

affect the time and energy spent by employees themselves and conversely reduced. Moreover, it appears statistically significant negative correlation between the responses of participants to the question "The work demands negatively affect the time and energy you devote to your family?" and years of professional service in the current position of the participants in the sample. In particular, it appears that as the years increase their current professional experience, (p -value= 0.007) the feeling that work demands negatively affect the time and energy spent by workers in family and conversely reduced. With regard to the relationship between participants' age and years of total work experience with relevant questions, did not show any statistically significant correlation.

Furthermore the statistical analysis showed that working women have higher emotional commitment on average than men working in the same organization. The difference in the mean values of the scale of emotional commitment and gender is marginally statistically significant (p -value = 0.056). Regarding the correlation scale of permanent commitment and exemplary commitment and sex did not show statistically significant correlation.

It has been demonstrated also a statistically significant difference in mean emotional engagement scale depending on the marital status of the participants. In particular, it appears that married employees have higher emotional commitment on average compared to workers who are single or divorced (p -value = 0.001). As for the correlation scale permanent commitment and exemplary commitment and marital status did not show a statistically significant correlation.

In addition, there is a statistically significant positive correlation between affective commitment scales with total years of professional work experience. In particular, it appears that as the total years of service are increasing, it is also increased (p -value =0,016) the emotional commitment of employees with the hospital and vice versa. Finally, it is not a statistically significant relationship between work experience that people have in their current job and the

emotional scale, permanent or exemplary commitment

Discussion

The descriptive results obtained from this study show that the majority of the sample report "moderate" up to "very" satisfied with their job under the study hospital. Moreover, it appears that most are moderately satisfied with their job.

The specific requirements not only of the nursing job but of all employees who work in a health organization, exhausting hours, the stress they face, but also the organizational weaknesses of the health system are all key components of the problem (Shader et al., 2001, Aiken et al., 2002). Most surveys, report moderate satisfaction for the majority of workers in a public hospital, regardless of the department in which they work to (Lu et al., 2007; Sharp, 2008). Such factors are more related to organizational constraints, working conditions and job stress. Employees' experiencing frustration and exhaustion from work do not have control over working conditions, which determine the work for which they are responsible (Aiken et al., 2002). Similar information is found for the nursing staff in the UK, according to the study by the Royal College of Nursing (ESNE, 2005).

Greece is not an exception since a survey at a public hospital found that 51.1% of nurses expressed dissatisfaction mainly due to working conditions and low esteem enjoyed by tender (Pozoukidou et al., 1995). The demands of work seem to weigh much time and energy spent by participants themselves and their family for a large percentage of the sample.

Thomas (1997), in his research, concluded that at the NHS in the UK, stress at work and hence the resentment that arises from this, is derived from factors such as increased workloads, reduced staff, organizational change and job insecurity. The role of the individual in the workplace, workplace relationships (relationship with colleagues and partners with managers, relationship with subordinates), the structure and climate of the organization of the workplace and the relationship of family and working life-drag problems of labor in the family and vice

versa, the dual careers of both spouses borne by workers in the health services. Particularly, women working in health organizations have anxiety disorders, as revealed by a survey in Greek hospitals (Tselebis et al., 2006).

Also, in our survey, almost half of the participants answered that it is "not at all" satisfied with their remuneration. The salary is one of the most essential factors, associated with intense feelings of dissatisfaction in relation to job satisfaction and in combination with the current prevailing economic situation in Greece. According to the International Council of Nurses (2003), the belief of workers that their pay is undervalued in relation to education, the offered work and responsibility borne by their professional role, is a universal phenomenon in organizations health (ICN, 2003). This finding is of particular importance when there is evidence to suggest the association between low employee morale and low economic earnings (Callaghan, 2003).

The results of the statistical analysis compared with the basic questions of the questionnaire, may lead to the conclusion that educational level plays an important role in determining the degree of satisfaction with the object of work. In particular, it appears that workers who have completed secondary education indicate "moderate" satisfaction from their job in comparison with higher education employees who reply that they are "very" satisfied with the object of their work. In a survey in relation to educational level, concluded that the high level of education plays a key role in job satisfaction, perhaps because people with better training and education can respond more efficiently to the challenges of their work (Suliman, 2007).

Of course there the opposite point of view, according to which, Schultz (1982), in his research argued that education has a negative effect on job satisfaction since the high educational level creates higher expectations to an employee who is experiencing frustration when performing routine tasks.

Moreover, an important role in reducing the feeling that work demands negatively affect the time and energy spent by employees themselves and their families, have the

increased years of professional service in this position. This supports the theory of Meyer & Allen (1990), which states that the commitment is positively related to work experience and promotes a feeling of comfort and commitment to the organization, but with corresponding consequences on a personal and family level.

Regarding the scales of emotional, lasting and exemplary commitment, shows that gender, education level, marital status, age and total years of professional service correlated with the level of emotional commitment. In particular, female employees who are married and those who have completed secondary education develop greater emotional commitment towards the study hospital, to which they are working. Finally, the age of senior workers seems to play an important role towards the formation of higher emotional engagement, as well the most years of total work experience.

Several surveys have been conducted based on the above scales and in relation to age and years of service to an organization. More specifically, Mowday et al. (1992), and Steers (1997), investigated the role of personal characteristics and found that a person's features and experience in an organization can determine its dedication to it. Corresponding research Allen & Meyer (1993), Buchanan (1974) & Hall et al. (1977) showed a positive correlation between the age of the employee's length of service in the organization and devotion.

Limitations of the study

One limitation of this study is that the subjects were drawn from one hospital in one Greek city. Other limitations of this study were the use of a convenience sample and the small period of time in which data collection was performed. There is a need for further research using random sampling from hospitals in different cities in order to enhance the generality of the results.

Conclusion

In conclusion, with this study the characteristics of employees in the study hospital that affect the degree of satisfaction with the scope and location of the work, the time spent at work and the degree of

satisfaction their remuneration were determined . At the same time, the factors that play a role in the development of emotional commitment of employees to the hospital were highlighted. Although several studies have been performed regarding organizational commitment and there is an extensive literature reporting on this issue, there is a lack of further research on sub factors of job satisfaction affecting loyalty of employees in the organization they work in. Therefore, this study can contribute significantly to the improvement of organizational effectiveness in the hospital, taking into account factors that affect the satisfaction felt by the employees from their work and their dedication to the organization.

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