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Employees' Organizational Commitment: Its Negative Aspects For Organizations

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Abstract

The present study investigates the relationships between employees' organizational commitment and withholding effort, resistance to change, and burnout as negative aspects of organizational commitment. The research involved 1053 Lithuanian employees working in different public and private organizations. A questionnaire made up of Organizational commitment questionnaire (Meyer et al., 1993), Withholding effort scale (Kidwell, Robie, 2003, taken from Schnake, 2007), Resistance to change scale (Oreg, 2003), Maslach Burnout inventory (*MBI-GS*; Maslach, et al., 1996), and sociodemographic questions was used for gathering data. The stepwise multiple regression analysis revealed that affective commitment was the most positive component of organizational commitment for organization, whereas continuance commitment has had negative aspects for organization mostly. The conclusion has been made that various components of organizational commitment have different implications for organization.

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1. Introduction

For years, research has focused on the positive implications of organizational commitment for organizations, i.e. OCB (García-Cabrera & García-Soto, 2011; Lavelle, Brockner, et al., 2009), work motivation (Altindis, 2011; Kuvaass, 2006), productivity, lower level of turnover intention and absenteeism. Therefore, many scientists and practitioners describe the organizational commitment as a desirable and powerful tool to bind

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employees to the organization and enhance its productivity and effectiveness. This notwithstanding, in some cases organizational commitment may disturb social and personal functioning of employee as well as effective functioning of organization. As J. P. Meyer and N. J. Allen (1991) stated, the implications mostly depends on the component of commitment. Nonetheless, researchers frequently employ affective component of organizational commitment in order to explore positive consequences for employees or organizations (Kuvaas, 2006; Yiing & Ahmad, 2009; Ariani, 2012), while continuance commitment is occasionally left behind of interest. Still several investigations have demonstrated some negative consequences of continuance commitment for employee well-being emphasizing that the more employees are continuously committed the more they experience stress, work family conflict, lower life satisfaction (Meyer et al., 2002; Panaccio, Vanderberghe, 2009).

Not only employee but also an organization may experience negative consequences related to high level of continuance commitment. According to N. J. Allen and J. P. Meyer (1990), continuance commitment is based on investments which employee makes and the lack of employment alternatives. When employee has few alternatives he fears to lose an employment and feels being trapped in the organization (Vanderberghe et al., 2007). Thus a strong sense of being "trapped" is stressful for employee (Meyer et al., 2002). Instead of effective job performance, the employee could be frustrated, react inadequately and withhold his/ her effort or even loaf at work. As a consequence, employee could easily emotionally exhaust and feel less professionally effective. Beside of that, it seems likely that high level of continuous commitment leads to rigidity and resistance to change because employee with lack of alternatives is externally regulated (Meyer et al., 2004) and should not be prepared to involve in process of changes. It is evident that resistance to change could be strengthened by professional burnout (Leiter & Harvie, 2011).

Unfortunately, the present studies do not give a clear and comprehensive picture of possible negative implications of different components of organizational commitment for organizations. Moreover, these complex theoretical assumptions require empirical verification. Therefore, the purpose of the present study was to investigate the relationships between employees' organizational commitment, withholding effort, resistance to change, and burnout in Lithuanian sample of employees.

2. Method

2.1. Participants

The research involved 1053 Lithuanian employees. Participants have been working in different public (N=250, 24 %) and private (N=803, 76 %) organizations. Respondents were 316 (30%) males and 737 (70%) females. They were between ages of 19 to 70 years ($M = 37,87$, $SD = 11,56$). Generally, respondents have been working from a few months to more than 20 years in the current organization.

2.2. Instruments

Burnout was assessed by Maslach Burnout Inventory-General Survey (MBI-GS; Maslach et al., 1996) Lithuanian version. This inventory measures three components of burnout: emotional exhaustion (Cronbach $\alpha = 0.85$; 5 items), cynicism (Cronbach $\alpha = 0.75$; 5 items,) and professional efficacy (Cronbach $\alpha = 0.75$; 6 items).

Withholding effort was measured using three subscales from Effort propensity scale (Kidwell, Robie, 2003, taken from Schnake, 2007) consisted of 9 items (3 items in each subscale): withholding effort (Cronbach $\alpha = 0.56$), withdrawal behaviour (Cronbach $\alpha = 0.72$), and propensity to turnover (Cronbach $\alpha = 0.90$). Items were rated on a 7-point Likert-type scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). The scale was translated into Lithuanian language using a two-way translation method.

Organizational commitment was assessed using the 18-item revised Organizational commitment scale (Meyer et al., 1993). Items were rated on a 7-point Likert-type scale ranged from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). Affective (Cronbach $\alpha = 0.72$), continuance (Cronbach $\alpha = 0.67$) and normative (Cronbach $\alpha = 0.69$) commitment were each represented by six items. The scale was translated into Lithuanian language using a two-way translation method.

Resistance to change was measured by Resistance to change scale (RTC; Oreg, 2003), consisted of 17 items using 7-point ratings (1 = strongly disagree to 7 = strongly agree). The scale was translated into Lithuanian language using a two-way translation. Cronbach's α coefficients of reliability was 0.76.

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