



Factors associated with the goal commitment of radiography departments' staff in organizational change

Eija Grönroos^{a,*}, Arja Pajukari^b, Kaija Matinheikki-Kokko^{c,d}

^a Helsinki Metropolia University of Applied Sciences, Degree Programme in Radiography and Radiotherapy, Mannerheimintie 172, 00300 Helsinki, Finland

^b MHS, Hus-Röntgen, PL 809, 00029 Hus, Finland

^c Helsinki Metropolia University of Applied Sciences, Mannerheimintie 172, 00300 Helsinki, Finland

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Staff

Abstract *Purpose:* The aim of the study is to examine factors associated with the goal commitment of radiography departments' staff. The associations studied are (1) organizational change, (2) work-related factors, (3) psychosocial work environment, and (4) intention to leave.

Method: The follow-up study was performed between 2005 and 2007 in co-operation with 10 radiography departments of two Finnish municipalities. In 2005 the response rate was 60% ($n = 97/163$) and in 2007 it was 49% ($n = 73/150$).

Results: The goal commitment had dropped during the organizational change from 3.96 in 2005 to 3.60 in 2007 (scale 1–5) ($p = 0.001$). Best predictors for the goal commitment of radiography departments' staff were having children (OR 4.4) and perceiving functional environment clearly (OR 2.6). Correlation between the goal commitment and intention to leave of the staff was -0.32 ($p = 0.01$).

Conclusion: From the viewpoint of the commitment of the radiography departments' staff, the trend of uniting quite independent health care units into larger entities seems not to be beneficial. This study reveals that commitment to one's work unit is most of all a question of stability and job security. This is a fact the leadership of the radiography departments should take into account, appreciate and support to assure the tenure and productivity of their workforce.

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* Corresponding author. Tel.: +358 50 347 81 77 (mobile).

E-mail addresses: eija.gronroos@metropolia.fi (E. Grönroos), arja.pajukari@hus.fi (A. Pajukari).

^d Tel.: +358 40 3340855 (mobile).

Introduction

Goal commitment as a concept

Despite the large amount of research on goal commitment, very little attention has been paid to specific organizational settings in which goal commitment develops and to the factors behind this phenomenon. Here the focus is on the factors associated with the goal commitment of radiography departments' staff. It is necessary to study radiography departments apart from other health care units because radiography units have their special features unique to the work environment, type of work and staff-patient relationships.

Commitment is a very complex and multifaceted concept which has been defined in various ways. The concepts of *goal commitment* and *organizational commitment* overlap because many definitions and operationalizations of organizational commitment also include commitment to the organization's goals. On the other hand, they are clearly two different concepts because an individual's goal commitment can also focus on aims or objectives other than those espoused by the organization. Some researchers such as Vandenberghe et al.¹ have referred to a goal commitment using the concept *commitment foci* which represents individuals, groups or entities to which the employee is attached. According to studies, goal commitment precedes organizational commitment.^{2,3} Ellemers et al.⁴ and Den Hartog and Belschack⁵ separate *organizational, team, supervisor* and *career commitment*. Commitment can also be seen from the viewpoint of *occupational commitment*⁶ or *organizational climate*.^{7,8} Commitment to and acceptance of the goals by the radiography departments can be seen as commitment not only to an organization but also to its goals.

Etzioni⁹ defines commitment as 'an employee's general compliance with organizational directives'. Also Gurney et al.¹⁰ consider organizational commitment from the viewpoint of loyalty to the organization. According to Porter et al.¹¹ it is 'the strength of an individual's identification with an involvement in a particular organization', that is to say, identification to its values, policies, goals and outcome. These aspects also come up in the definition of Corser¹² and also in a proximal work group commitment definition of Anderson and West.¹³

Mowday et al.^{14,15} define commitment as an 'effective response to and identification with and involvement in the organization'. Some definitions in more recent research emphasize the employee's attitudinal and emotional link to an organization.^{16,17} Definitions by Solinger et al.,¹⁷ Meyer et al.,^{3,18} Roehling et al.¹⁹ and Muller et al.²⁰ include attitudinal (general organizational commitment) and behavioural (normative and continuance commitment) components of commitment. Another way of viewing commitment is to study it as more unidimensional and focused (e.g. to ones work unit) construction, which is done in this study.^{1,7,8} The goal commitment has been recognized here as a distinct psychological state that characterizes the employee's relationship with the organization and supports their organizational tenure. Empirical studies of the phenomenon in the context of radiography have, however, been scarce.

Factors associated with health care staff goal commitment

Associations of health care staff commitment has been widely studied especially from the viewpoint of employees late arrival to work and absenteeism,²¹ turnover intentions^{22–25} and person's wish to stay at that place of employment.^{26,27} These studies have discovered that commitment has strong associations with these variables which are central questions of productivity of the organization. Riketta and Van Dick²⁸ found that attachment to a more proximal, lower-order focus (work group) is generally stronger than the attachment to a more distal, higher-order one (organization). They also found that proximal focus has stronger association to performance than distal focus. This is one reason why it is useful to study work unit-level goal attachment and commitment.

Working full-time has been found to correlate positively with organizational commitment.²⁵ According to Gregory et al.²⁹ organizational culture has a great impact on health care staff commitment. Job complexity³⁰ and autonomy,³¹ quality of leadership,³² job satisfaction, role ambiguity and clarity^{29,33} are among many other factors which have been found to be associated with health care staff commitment.

Radiography departments' staff and commitment

In the oldest study about the topic by Akroyd et al.³⁴ supervision of younger radiographers (20–37 years) and involvement of older radiographers (38–66 years) were found to be significant predictors of organizational commitment. Akroyd et al.³⁵ and Makanjee et al.³⁶ found that radiographers had a moderate to poor level of commitment to their employers. A study by Akroyd et al.³⁵ on radiographers' commitment showed a link to their educational level, perceived level of organizational support, role clarity and transformational leadership style. Makanjee et al.³⁶ found that radiographers' organizational commitment was associated with organizational culture and climate, management style, and leadership ability of the head of department and supervisor, and career development. All these studies about radiographers^{34–36} applied Meyer and Allen's three-dimensional conceptualization of commitment. None of these studies included the entire staff working in radiography departments; the focus was on radiographers.

The aim of this study is to examine factors associated with the goal commitment of radiography departments' staff. The associations studied are (1) organizational change, (2) work-related factors, (3) psychosocial work environment, and (4) intention to leave.

Method

Participating departments

The follow-up study was performed between 2005 and 2007 in co-operation with the radiography departments of two municipalities in Southern Finland. Before 1.1.2006 10 radiography departments taking part in the study formed two municipally led imaging units. One of them comprised

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