

Examining the Impact of Organizational Commitment on Absenteeism in Private Sector Employees

Shinjan Ghosh¹, Niladri Bhowmik²

¹Senior Consultant Psychologist, Amaha Health.

²B.Sc. (Hons) Psychology, Department of Psychology, Adamas University, Kolkata, West Bengal, India

Corresponding Author: Shinjan Ghosh

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ABSTRACT

The present study aimed to examine the impact of Organizational Commitment on Absenteeism in Private Sector Employees. It also aimed at finding out how different kinds of organizational commitments (Affective, Continuance, and Normative) impact absenteeism in private sector employees. Ex post facto research design has been used and data were collected from 100 private sector employees from different organizations in Kolkata through purposive sampling. Necessary information was collected to calculate the rate of absenteeism within the working organization. Further, Organizational commitment was assessed through the Organizational commitment questionnaire (Porter et al., 1974). Statistical analysis through Pearson correlation showed a significant relationship of Absenteeism with Affective and Normative commitment. Multiple linear regression analysis showed that Affective and Normative commitment can significantly predict Absenteeism in employees with 14.2% and 12.1% variation in Absenteeism rates may be attributable to Affective and Normative commitment respectively. The results have been explained in terms of the current scenario of private sector employees. This study highlights the importance of internal motivation for workplace attendance.

Affective and Normative Commitment are linked to reduced absenteeism. Organizational leaders can foster belonging and appreciation to increase affective commitment and productivity. Reinforcing existing ethics and aligning organizational benefits can enhance Normative Commitment.

Keywords: Absenteeism, Human resource, Private sector, Organizational Behaviour, Organizational Commitment

INTRODUCTION

Globalization and lack of government recruitment have led to increased privatization of resources, resulting in a surge of individuals seeking employment in private organizations in India. With a growing number of employees and competition from emerging start-ups, managers in these companies are focused on achieving rapid and dynamic growth. However, a major challenge they face is the issue of high employee absenteeism. Absenteeism pertains to regular or extended periods of absence from work, which can stem from valid causes like illness or personal emergencies, as well as unjustified causes such as unauthorized leave or disengagement. Organizations are concerned about absenteeism as it can lead

to reduced productivity, higher costs, and disruption in workflow.

While organizational leaders often attribute employee absenteeism to personal reasons, research suggests that various organizational factors also play a significant role. Studies indicate that factors like managerial support, leadership styles, and management practices have a notable impact on absenteeism. Employees who take prolonged or frequent leaves often report a lack of support from colleagues and managers as well as authoritarian leadership and unstructured management (Noe et al., 2006; Johns, 2010). However, other studies emphasize personal factors such as lack of motivation, addiction, and personal problems as contributors to absenteeism, downplaying the significance of organizational factors (Gangai, 2016; Grigore, 2020).

In India, research indicates that employee absenteeism can be attributed to various factors. For example, Basariya's (2015) study suggests that personal reasons like illness, lack of planning, disinterest, and insecurities, along with organizational factors such as inadequate support, inflexible control structures and lack of cohesiveness contribute to increased absenteeism. Another study revealed that low efficiency and job satisfaction can also impact absenteeism, subsequently affecting organizational productivity (Karimbil, 2019). Therefore, it is evident that the interplay between organizational and personal factors affects absenteeism with employee commitment being influenced by organizational aspects like support, management, and meeting work expectations.

Organizational commitment refers to employees' dedication, loyalty and attachment to their organization. It impacts retention, performance and overall effectiveness. There are three components of organizational commitment like affective commitment (emotional attachment), continuance commitment (perceived costs of leaving) and normative commitment (moral obligation) (Hadi & Tentama, 2020).

Affective commitment stems from emotional investment, continuance commitment from necessity and normative commitment from moral responsibility. Organizational commitment is influenced by leadership, culture, job satisfaction, support and engagement (Rusu, 2013). High commitment leads to positive attitudes, behaviours and benefits for the organization. Research on the relationship between organizational commitment and absenteeism in employees has yielded diverse findings. For example, Sagie (1998) discovered that both involuntary and voluntary absences from work can be attributed to organizational commitment. Lambert et al. (2014) found that organizational factors significantly influence employee commitment which in turn affects turnover and absenteeism. Conversely, Conway & Briner (2012) found no significant impact of organizational commitment on employee absenteeism.

In the Indian context, Guchait & Cho (2010) found that organizational commitment indirectly affects employee leave frequency. Studies have also found the impact of different dimensions of organizational commitment on absenteeism. Some studies have found that while high affective commitment is related to low absenteeism, there lies no relationship of absence rate with continuance and normative commitment (Somers, 1997; Garland, 2013). Some other studies have also found that both affective commitment and normative commitment are related to less absenteeism (Woods et al, 2012).

However, most of these studies were conducted before the COVID-19 pandemic, and with the increase in leaves and absenteeism in post-COVID workplaces, the factors influencing absenteeism may have changed. While many studies have shown the relationship between organizational commitment and absenteeism, there is a lack of research specifically examining its impact. Furthermore, no studies have been done to find out which kind of organizational commitment (affective,

continuance or normative) has more impact on absenteeism. Moreover, studies focusing on this topic in the Indian context are also scarce. Therefore, it is necessary to conduct research on the effect of organizational commitment on absenteeism in order to contribute valuable information to the existing research and develop strategies for improving both employee and organizational productivity.

Objectives:

The present research aims to examine the impact of organizational commitment on absenteeism in private sector employees. Further, it is aimed;

- To determine the relationship between different dimensions of organizational commitment and Absenteeism in Private Sector Employees
- To determine the impact of different dimensions of organizational commitment on Absenteeism in Private Sector Employees

Hypotheses:

H1: There lies a significant relationship between Affective Commitment and Absenteeism rate in Private sector employees

H2: There lies a significant relationship between Continuance Commitment and Absenteeism rate in Private sector employees

H3: There lies a significant relationship between Normative Commitment and Absenteeism rate in Private sector employees

H4: Affective Commitment has a significant impact on the Absenteeism rate in Private sector employees

H5: Continuance Commitment has a significant impact on the Absenteeism rate in Private sector employees

H6: Normative Commitment has a significant impact on the Absenteeism rate in Private sector employees.

METHODS

Participants:

The present study comprises of 100 employees selected through purposive sampling technique from different private organizations located in Kolkata based on the following inclusion and exclusion criteria:

Inclusion Criteria:

1. Participants must be currently employed in a private organization for a minimum duration of 1 year
2. Participants must be working full-time as permanent employees
3. Participants must be within the age range of 21-35 years
4. Participants must reside in Kolkata

Exclusion Criteria:

1. Participants who have worked earlier in any government organization
2. Part-time and Contractual employees
3. Participants who are serving their notice period
4. Participants who have responded to similar research questions in the last 1 year

Tools used:

Organizational Commitment

Questionnaire (Porter et al., 1974):

The Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ) is a widely used instrument designed to measure the level of organizational commitment among employees. The questionnaire has a high reliability of 0.875. The questionnaire consists of 24 items and typically includes three dimensions as follows:

Affective Commitment: This scale measures employees' emotional attachment and identification with the organization. It assesses the extent to which employees feel a sense of belonging, loyalty, and emotional investment in the organization.

Continuance Commitment: This scale focuses on the perceived costs associated with leaving the organization. It assesses the extent to which employees feel obligated to

remain with the organization due to factors such as financial concerns or limited alternative job opportunities.

Normative Commitment: This scale measures employees' sense of moral or ethical obligation to stay with the organization. It assesses the extent to which employees feel a duty or responsibility to remain committed to the organization based on societal or personal norms.

Absenteeism Rate:

The formula to calculate the absenteeism rate is as follows:

$$\text{Absenteeism Rate} = (\text{Total Number of Days absent} / \text{Number of Working Days}) * 100$$

Research Design:

An ex-post facto design has been used in this study.

Statistical treatments:

Shapiro-Wilk test of normality: It is used to find out whether the different variable scores obtained from the sample are normally distributed. The presence of normal distribution allows the use of parametric tests for statistical analysis and the absence of normal distribution indicates the need for nonparametric tests.

Pearson Product Moment Correlation: It is used to find out the relationship between different variables used in the study

Multiple Linear Regression: It is used to find out whether the dimensions of Organizational commitment that have a significant correlation with absenteeism rate can also predict the same.

Ethical Consideration:

Informed consent was taken from all the participants before the collection of responses and their permission was also taken for the possible publication of data. They were informed that their identity will be kept confidential and the data will be destroyed once published.

RESULTS

Table 1: Sample Characteristics

Categories	N%
Age	
21-25 years	27%
26- 30 years	52%
31- 35 years	21%
Sexual Identity	
Males	55%
Females	45%
Marital Status	
Single	62%
Married	34%
Divorced	4%
Tenure in the organization	
1-5 years	71%
5-10 years	29%

Table 2: Shapiro Wilk test for normality

Variables	Shapiro Wilk value	Significance level
Affective Commitment	0.980	0.06*
Continuance Commitment	0.991	0.18*
Normative Commitment	0.981	0.07*
Absenteeism rate	0.987	0.09*

*The variable scores are normally distributed and thus, parametric tests have been used

Table 3: Correlation of Absenteeism rate with different dimensions of Organizational Commitment

Organizational Commitment Dimensions and Absenteeism Rate	Correlation coefficient
Affective commitment and Absenteeism rate	-0.432*
Continuance commitment and Absenteeism rate	-0.103
Normative commitment and Absenteeism rate	-0.780*

*Correlation coefficients are significant at 0.05 level of significance

From the above table, Affective commitment and Normative commitment has a significant negative relationship with

Absenteeism rate. No significant relationship has been found between Absenteeism rate and Continuance

commitment. Therefore, Hypotheses 1 & 3 are accepted and Hypothesis 2 is rejected.

Table 4: Multiple Linear Regression Analysis to find out the association between Affective and Normative Organizational commitment with Absenteeism rate

Dimensions	Regression Coefficient	R square
Affective commitment	0.377*	0.142
Normative commitment	0.348*	0.121

*Regression coefficients are significant at 0.05 level of significance

From the above table, there lies a significant association between Affective commitment and Absenteeism rate & Normative commitment and Absenteeism rate. As Continuance commitment did not show a significant relationship with absenteeism rate, therefore, it was not chosen for linear regression analysis. Therefore, Hypotheses 4 & 6 are accepted and Hypothesis 5 is rejected.

DISCUSSION

The present study examined the impact of organizational commitment and its different dimensions on the absenteeism rate of private sector employees in Kolkata. Based on the findings presented in Table 3, Affective commitment and Normative Commitment have a significant negative relationship with absenteeism rate. This indicates that the participants with high affective commitment and normative commitment reported lesser absenteeism as compared to the participants with low affective and normative commitment. From Table 3, it can also be seen that there lies no significant relationship between Continuance commitment. From Table 4, both Affective and Normative commitment has a significant association with the Absenteeism rate and thus, it can be said that both can be taken as significant predictors of Absenteeism. As there is an established negative correlation, therefore, it can be said that Low affective and normative commitment in employees can predict a higher absenteeism rate. Table 4 also shows that 14.2% and 12.1% variations in Absenteeism rate can be attributed to Affective commitment and Normative commitment respectively.

The present findings about affective commitment's impact on absenteeism can be supported by the studies of Somers (1997) and Garland (2013). On the other hand, present findings about the effect of both affective and normative commitment on absenteeism rate of private sector employees can be supported by the study of Woods *et al.* (2012). The studies by Somers (1997) and Garland (2013) have also shown a lack of relationship between continuance commitment and absenteeism. Affective commitment indicates the amount of emotional attachment an employee has to the organization. A person with high affective attachment feels more connected to the organization and perceives the organizational visions to be synchronized with their own vision. They feel belonged to the organization and thus, might like to attend the job on most to all days and take fewer leaves (Raza *et al.*, 2020). These might be an important reason behind the 14.2% variations in absenteeism attributable to affective commitment according to the present research.

Normative commitment indicates staying loyal and committed to an organization due to moral obligations and norms. In a collectivistic culture like India, staying loyal to groups like family and friends is a social norm and might spread to the norm to stay committed to an organization. There are a lot of people who take frequent absences from work as unethical and unprofessional and try to stick to their norms and be more productive and present in the workplace. These employees might consider taking leaves only if it is due to some unmanageable and unforeseeable reasons and those instances might be rare. These might be important reasons behind the

12.1% variation in absenteeism attributable to normative commitment. Continuance commitment indicates being committed only for the benefits such as stability, and salary as well due to lack of job opportunities elsewhere.

India is a country where there is a scarcity of proper job recruitment and thus, a lot of employees might have continuance commitment with their organization. It needs to be understood that while affective and normative commitment are related to internal factors such as emotional bonding, belongingness and ethics, continuance commitment is related to external factors. A person with continuance commitment towards their organization might not like being in the organizational setup consistently and might only stay in the job for the benefits. Therefore, it might be that a person with a high continuance commitment might still have a high absenteeism rate. In the present study, though a negative correlation has been found between continuance commitment and absenteeism yet that correlation is low and insignificant. This indicates that continuance commitment might not predict absenteeism of employees.

CONCLUSION

It can be concluded from the findings of the present study that Affective and Normative dimensions of Organizational commitment have a significant negative relationship with Absenteeism, i.e., an increase in these dimensions might lead to a decrease in absenteeism. It can also be concluded that Affective and Normative commitment are potential predictors of Absenteeism in private sector employees and thus, are important factors to consider to deal with the issue of increasing absenteeism in private sectors.

One of the major implications of this study is its indication of toward the need for internal motivation for consistently attending a workplace. As discussed earlier, the two dimensions (Affective & Normative Commitment) that have shown a relationship and association with

absenteeism are both related to internal factors such as the perception of similarity of vision with the organization and moral obligations of serving an organization consistently.

Therefore, the organizational leaders may come up with strategies to make the employee feel belonging, appreciated, and comfortable in the workplace in order to increase their affective commitment, reduce absenteeism and eventually increase productivity.

Though, Normative commitment is more ingrained in the moral system of an employee yet certain measures can be taken to increase it. If the work culture policies become such that the internal & external benefits of working in the organization are far more than costs then the existing organizational ethics of an employee can be reinforced and thus, absenteeism can be reduced. On the other hand, if the employee is repeatedly made to fall into a dilemma between satisfaction in the workplace and their morals of being committed then eventually, their productivity might reduce.

Finally, the findings of this study can have major implications in the Indian private sector considering the issue of increasing absenteeism. The discussed factors can be worked on with respect to India's collectivistic culture and eventually there are chances of reduction of absenteeism and an increase in employee and organizational productivity.

The present study considered only 100 private sector employees and it is accepted that the impact of organizational commitment on absenteeism could be better examined with a larger sample. Though, normality of distribution was established yet the use of a purposive sampling method may turn out to be another limitation.

Declaration by Authors

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