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The Role of Job Involvement as a Mediator in Employees' Moral Values - Organizational Commitment Relationship: Bosnian Case

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Abstract. The purpose of this paper is to investigate the joint effects of employees' moral values and job involvement on their organizational commitment. Data were collected via a questionnaire survey of private educational institutions in Bosnia and Herzegovina and a total of 100 valid responses were received. It was found that although both moral values and job involvement could enhance organizational commitment, once the effects of job involvement are accounted for, the direct effects of moral values on organizational commitment diminish to almost non-existent. This result provides strong evidence that the influence of employees' moral values on organizational commitment is mediated by job involvement.

Keywords: job involvement; Bosnia and Herzegovina; moral values; organizational commitment.

Introduction

The topic of values has been an important item of debate in many areas, especially in the field of management. Many philosophers and researchers have contributed to the term "values". One of the most used definitions is the one by Rokeach (1973). He described values as prescriptive and enduring standards that have cognitive, affective, and behavioral components. Values affect moral reasoning by influencing judgments about ethical and unethical behavior (Hughes, Ginnett, and Curphy, 1993). There is an increasing body of empirical evidence to support the positive effect of moral and ethical values in organizations on employee commitment and loyalty (Koh and Boo, 2004; Andrews, Baker and Hunt, 2011)

Organizational commitment which is a dependent variable in this study has been very important for organizations because of the desire to retain talented employees. A short definition of organizational commitment is recognition with and devotion to the concerned organization and its targets (Blau & Boal, 1987). Considerable work has been done on organizational commitment by researchers from the field of organizational behavior in the last few decades (Benkhoff, 1997; Mathieu & Zajac, 1990). While some of these studies investigate the relationship between organizational ethics and commitment (Cullen, Parboteeah and Victor, 2003; Trevino *et al.*, 1998; Schiebel and Pochtrager, 2003), others focus on correlations between organizational commitment and job involvement (Cheloha & Farr, 1980; Gechman & Wiener, 1975).

On the other hand, job involvement is an individual's commitment or psychological identification to his / her job in a nutshell (Kanungo, 1982). In most of the studies, it is defined as the degree to which one is psychologically engaged in and concerned with one's current job (Paullay, Alliger and Stone-Romero, 1994; Saleh and Hosek, 1976; Lodahl and Kejner, 1965). Job involvement has gained importance because of its significant role in generating positive organizational outcomes such as employee motivation (Hackman, & Lawler, 1971) and commitment (Meyer, Paunonen, Gellatly, Goffin, & Jackson, 1989; Mathieu, & Zajac, 1990; Ketchand, & Strawser, 2001).

Although moral values and job involvement are both generally recognized as determinants of employee commitment, few studies have accounted for their joint effects on organizational

commitment. The main purpose of this study is to propose job involvement of employees in Bosnia and Herzegovina as a mediator and to measure its effects in moral values - organizational commitment relationship (see Figure 1).

Background and Hypothesis

Rokeach (1973, p. 5) defined values as "determinants of virtually all kinds of behavior that could be called social behavior or social action, attitudes and ideology, evaluations, moral judgments and justifications of self and others, comparisons of self with others, presentations of self to others, and attempts to influence others". Rokeach's definition and values literature show that values are an integral part of our daily lives. They "determine, regulate, and modify relations between individuals, organizations, institutions, and societies" (Agle and Caldwell, 1999, p. 327). In fact, many studies have suggested that values will be even more important in governing the new organizational forms of tomorrow (Bradley and Craig, 1999). According to studies about top management in business organizations, it has become clear that personal values are important determinants in choosing corporate strategy (Guth and Tagiuri, 1965) and individuals with strong value systems have the tendency to behave more ethically than those with weak value combinations (Hughes et al., 1993). Briefly, values guide an individual's behavior and can influence the entire organization (Jiang, Lin and Lin, 2011).

"Values are central to the domain of morality" (Pojman, 1995, p. 93). Morality or moral values concepts were developed by Schwartz (1992, 1994) and used by many researchers. Moral values guide an individual's behavior and influence the individual's interactions with others (Small, 2002). Business interactions are also guided by personal moral values (Lewis, 1985). Personal moral values refer to the criteria by which individuals judge whether behavior is morally right or wrong when interacting with other people. The place where this interaction occurs is the business organization. For better management of organizations, greater knowledge of business-specific moral values is necessary to understand the influence of moral values on the business activities of organizations (Jiang, Lin and Lin, 2011). Recent scandals in the USA involving Tyco, Enron, and WorldCom have forced individuals and organizations to better understand moral values and take them into consideration again. So, managers and human resources practitioners all have a stake in preventing their organization from becoming victims of unethical behaviour (Martin and Austin, 2010).

In this study, the dependent variable which is affected by moral values and job involvement is the employees' organizational commitment. Mowday *et al.* (1982)'s organizational commitment definition has been widely used in the literature. They define organizational commitment as the relative strength of an individual's identification with and involvement in a particular organization. They also mention three characteristics of commitment in their study: a belief in and acceptance of the values of the organization, a strong willingness to put in effort for the organization and the desire to remain with the organization. However, literature relevant for organizational commitment concentrates on its dimensions. There are many models for the organizational commitment dimensions. One of the most famous ones is Allen and Meyer's three-component model (1991). According to this model, the three components are affective, continuance and normative. Affective commitment is the employee's emotional attachment to, identification with, and involvement in the organization. Continuance is commitment based on the costs that the employee associates with leaving the organization. And normative commitment is the employee's feelings of obligation to stay with the organization (Allen and Meyer, 1990b).

There have been many studies which focused on the relationship between morality and employees' organizational commitment. While in some of them, evidence shows that employees' personal belief in work ethics had a direct effect on organizational commitment (Chusmir and Koberg, 1988; Saks, Mudrack, and Ashforth, 1996; Andrews, Baker and Hunt, 2010), others focus on the relationship between organizational ethics and commitment. One of them is Koh and Boo's research (2004). They tried to find the relationship between organizational ethics and employee satisfaction and commitment. According to their study, organizational ethics are positively associated with organizational commitment. Cullen, Parboteeah and Victor (2003)'s two study analyses also found the positive effects of the ethical context on organizational commitment. Their study is consistent with the findings of Trevino *et al.* (1998) that ethical culture and ethical climate

influence organizational commitment. Finally, Schiebel and Pochtrager (2003) have reported that organizational ethics increases employee commitment.

The literature in this setting has found a positive relationship between personal and organizational ethics specifically, and between moral values and organizational commitment generally; and likewise our study conducted in Bosnia and Herzegovina hypothesized that:

H1: Moral values have a direct impact on employee's organizational commitment.

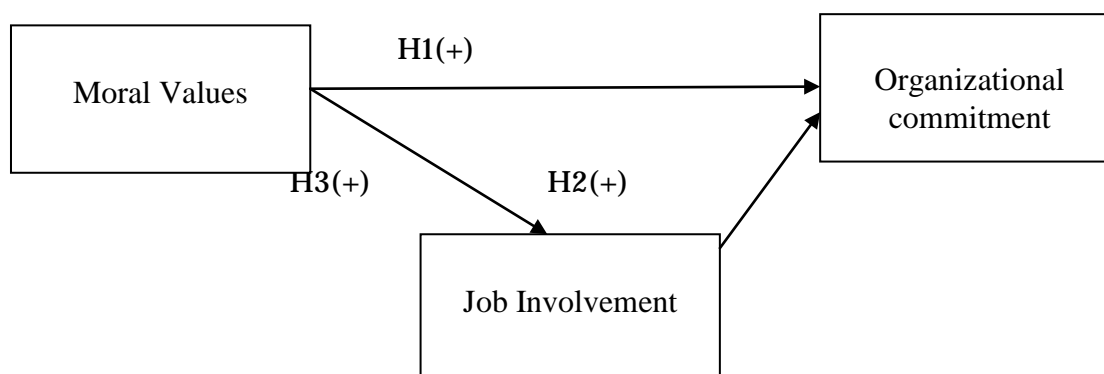


Figure 1 Conceptual Framework

Another concept which has important effect on organizational commitment is job involvement. Job involvement is considered as an important employees' job-related behaviour (Kanungo, 1982) and is defined as "a belief descriptive of the present job and tends to be a function of how much the job can satisfy one's present needs" (p. 342). Morrow (1983, p.488) also defines it as "the degree to which a person is identified psychologically with his work".

Organizational researchers from all around the world consider job involvement as an important factor which affects both employees' as well as organizational outcomes (Lawler, 1986). Employees with high levels of job involvement make the job a central part of their personal character and focus most of their attention on their jobs (Hackett, Lapierre and Hausdorf, 2001). Job involvement and commitment or loyalty have become key structures in many studies and most of them found a strong relationship and correlations between them (Cheloha and Farr, 1980; Gechman and Wiener, 1975; Hall and Schneider, 1972; Mowday, Porter and Steers, 1982; Mowday, Steers, and Porter, 1979; Rabinowitz and Hall, 1977; Weissenberg and Gruenfeld, 1968; Wood, 1974). In Cohen's (2000) study, for example, the relationship between job involvement and organizational commitment was strong. Mathieu and Zajac (1990) also found moderate relationship between job involvement and organizational commitment. Finally, employees that internalize the appropriateness of being loyal to their organization (Meyer and Allen, 1997) are likely to be more involved in their job than those who do not. In accordance with recent empirical studies that demonstrated the positive impact of job involvement on employees' organizational commitment; the second hypothesis of this study is that:

H2: Job involvement has a positive impact on organizational commitment.

Unfortunately, less research attention has been devoted to exploring the extent to which organizational commitment is associated with employees' moral values or work ethic and their job involvement. Relevant literature indicates that job-involved persons perceive work as a very important aspect of their lives (Dubin, 1956; Rabinowitz and Hall, 1977) and the ultimate determinant of job involvement should, according to this logic, be the value of one's work in life (Kanungo, 1979); hence, employees with a strong work ethic should devote a significant amount of time and involvement to their job (Lodhal, 1964; Lodhal and Kejner, 1965). In a recent meta-analysis, Brown (1996) reported a strong corrected correlation between work ethic and job involvement. However, employees with a strong work ethic are not only likely to be more involved in their job, but also have a strong commitment (Carmeli, 2005).

Bosnia and Herzegovina is a developing country in the eastern part of Europe which experienced destruction in terms of trade and industry because of ethnic problems and conflicts in 1990s. Now, the country has gone through major restructuring processes and attempts to join in the European community. Private and public institutions, which were closed during the conflict

years, have been reopened; trade and employment opportunities in the country have increased and new companies have been established in a safe atmosphere during the previous decade. What are moral values and job involvement of employees like, especially in private companies and institutions after conflict; and what is the role of job involvement in the moral values - employees' organizational commitment relationship in this country are questions which have awakened curiosity. On the basis of the above mentioned arguments, this study posits that:

H3: Job involvement is a key mediator in the employees' moral values - organizational commitment relationship.

Research Method

Sample and data collection

A two-page questionnaire with three sections was used to collect data. The first section of the questionnaire consisted of questions about general properties of organizational commitment. Questions about the work experience of employees and the number of different countries where employees had worked before the current organization were asked in this section. The second section was about demographics. The last section included questions designed to measure moral values and commitment of employees, and their job involvement in the current organization.

All of the 14 questions were measured with a seven-point Likert scale, with scale anchors ranging from "1" (strongly disagree) to "7" (strongly agree). The questionnaire was first prepared in English and then translated into Bosnian language. The translation of the questionnaire was done by experts who know both languages and respective cultures. Retesting of the questionnaire was administered with ten respondents chosen conveniently from some employees. The aim of the retest was to assess the validity of the questionnaire. The questions that were not fully understood were evaluated again and finalized for data collection.

Data were collected from private education institutions in Sarajevo, the capital city of Bosnia and Herzegovina. A total of 200 survey instruments were distributed to employees in three schools and a university. Participation was voluntary. The employees were requested to participate in the survey and to return the completed survey the next day. A total of 102 respondents returned surveys, of which 100 were usable, resulting in a response rate of 50 %.

Demographic and general information about employment and organizational commitment were analyzed through frequency and descriptive statistics. The dependent and independent variables were analyzed with a linear regression test.

Measures

The four-item scale developed by the authors was used to measure moral values of employees. And then, some items of two instruments were modified and used to assess employees' job involvement in educational institutions by combining three items from the Organizational Commitment Questionnaire developed by Porter et al (1974), with two items from the job involvement questionnaire developed by Kanungo (1982). These five items were carefully selected and combined in one single instrument. These are the items included in the modified instrument: (1) I am willing to put in a great deal of effort beyond that normally expected in order to help this company be successful, (2) This company inspires the very best in me in the way of job performance, (3) I find that my values and the company's values are very similar, (4) I am very much involved personally in my employing company, (5) My job means a lot more to me than just money.

Finally, to measure employees' commitment to their organizations, the four- item scale was adopted from Zeithaml, Berry, and Parasuraman (1996). These are the items: (1) I say positive things about my organization to other people, (2) If I had to choose a job over again, I would consider this organization my first choice, (3) I intend to stay with this organization at least for the next few years, (4) I would easily accept a job from an alternative employer that offers better economic benefits.

Analysis and Results

Table 1 presents the demographic characteristics of the employees. 56 % of employees were in the "over 30" age range. While males constituted 68,0 % of the survey, 31,0 % of employees were females. 85,0 % of employees had income levels between 330-1600 USD.

Table 1: Demographic Variables of Employees

Demographic Variables	N	%		N	%		N	%
Income Level			Gender			Age Group		
very low (0-330 USD)	4	4,0	Male	68	68,0	20-25	17	17,0
low (330-660 USD)	43	43,0	Female	31	31,0	26-29	36	36,0
average (660-1600 USD)	42	42,0	Total	99	99,0	30-35	20	20,0
high (1600-2600 USD)	7	7,0				36-40	21	21,0
very high (2600 and more)	2	2,0				above 40	5	5,0
Total	98	98,0	Missing	1	1,0	Total	99	99,0
Missing	2	2,0	Total	100	100,0	Missing	1	1,0
Total	100	100,0				Total	100	100,0

Table 2 presents general properties of the employees reported in the surveys. 43 % of employees have been working in their firms for 3 or more years. 49,0 % of the employees have no work experience in different countries. 47,0 % of them have work experience longer than 5 years. While 55,0 % of the employees who participated in the survey are Bosnian, 42 % of them are from other nations. 48,0 % had college or graduate education. 61 % of the participants have administrative responsibility in their current organizations. Finally, Table 2 shows the desire of employees to leave their organization if they are offered a higher salary, status and friendlier environment and freedom. According to results of this part of survey questions, employees find enough opportunities for status, salary and freedom in their current organizations.

Table 2: General information about Employees

General Information	N	%		N	%
Work Experience in Different countries			Duration in Current Business		
1	32	32,0	1	30	30,0
2	9	9,0	2	27	27,0
3	6	6,0	3	13	13,0
4	2	2,0	4	13	13,0
5 or more	2	2,0	5 or more	17	17,0
none	49	49,0			
Total	100	100,0	Total	100	100,0
Work Experience in total			Nationality		
1	15	15,0	Turkish	40	40,0
2	13	13,0	Bosnian	55	55,0
3	14	14,0	Malaysian	1	1,0
4	10	10,0	Uzbekistan	1	1,0
5 or more	47	47,0			
Total	99	99,0	Total	97	97,0
Missing	1	1,0	Missing	3	3,0
Total	100	100,0	Total	100	100,0

Education			Administrative Responsibility in Current Organization		
undergraduate	24	24,0	Yes	61	61,0
graduate	48	48,0	No	38	38,0
postgraduate	18	18,0			
Total	90	90,0	Total	99	99,0
Missing	10	10,0	Missing	1	1,0
Total	100	100,0	Total	100	100,0
Desire for higher Salary			Desire for More Freedom		
yes	23	23,0	Yes	35	35,0
no	71	71,0	No	62	62,0
Total	94	94,0	Total	97	97,0
Missing	6	6,0	Missing	3	3,0
Total	100	100,0	Total	100	100,0
Desire for higher Status			Desire for more Friendly Environment		
yes	18	18,0	Yes	27	27,0
no	77	77,0	No	67	67,0
Total	95	95,0	Total	94	94,0
Missing	5	5,0	Missing	6	6,0
Total	100	100,0	Total	100	100,0

The hypotheses were analyzed by a linear regression test. In the first two hypotheses, the study predicts a direct effect of Moral Values (H1) and Job involvement (H2) on employees' organizational commitment. The results show that the effects of Moral Values ($b = 0.38$, $p = 0.000$) and Job involvement ($b = 0.76$, $p = 0.000$) on organizational commitment are both highly significant, hence they support for H1 and H2 (Table 3).

H3 predicts that job involvement is a mediator between moral values and organizational commitment. We followed the procedure recommended by Baron and Kenny (1986) in testing the existence of mediating effects:

- the independent variable must affect the dependent variable;
- the independent variable must affect the mediators;
- the mediators must affect the dependent variable; and
- when mediators enter the model, the contribution of a previously significant independent variable must drop substantially for partial mediation and become insignificant for full mediation.

Supports for H3 were found. In specific, H1 provides the evidence that moral values affect organizational commitment, satisfying the first condition set by Baron and Kenny (1986). The third condition that the mediators must affect the dependent variable is also met, since job involvement is found to have positive effects on organizational commitment. Finally, although moral values is a significant independent variable, when job involvement (mediator) is added to the model, the effects of moral values on organizational commitment (dependent variable) ceases to be significant ($b = 0.053$, $p = 0.467$), providing strong support for the full mediation of job involvement on the effects of moral values on organizational commitment.

Table 3: Regression Model Results

	1. Equation: Mediator Variable= f(Independent Variable)	2. Equation: Dependent Variable= f(Independent Variable)	3. Equation: Dependent Variable = f(Independent Variable and Mediator Variable)	
Model	Independent Variable values	Independent Variable values	Independent Variable values	Mediator Variable Values
M. Values - J. Involvement - org. commitment	0.768(0.068) (11.81)	0.381(0.12) (4.039)	0.053(0.092) (0.73)	0.745(0.076) (10.231)

Discussion and Conclusion

This study assesses the role of job involvement as a mediator in the relationship between moral values and organizational commitment. It is found that although both moral values and job involvement could enhance organizational commitment, once the effects of job involvement are accounted for, the direct effects of moral values on organizational commitment diminish to almost non-existent.

Firstly, congruent with recent literature (Andrews, Baker and Hunt, 2011), this study found a positive effect of moral values on organizational commitment. If an employee finds his or her values and the company's values very similar, his or her commitment to the firm increases and this affects outcomes of the company positively. People in Bosnia and Herzegovina suffered in the ethnic conflict of 1990s. This cruel conflict has taught them how to appreciate values, especially moral values. The results of this study show that the Bosnian people who see similar moral values in the company where they work appreciate it and become loyal to it.

Job involvement is a very important concept which has significant influence on organizational commitment. According to Saleh and Hosek (1976), if the employee identifies himself/herself with his/her job, he/she participates in it and considers his/her performance important to his/her self-worth. The higher positive relationships in previous studies between job involvement and organizational commitment prove this idea (Cohen, 2000; Mathieu and Zajac, 1990). The results of this study are consistent with the literature. People who are involved with their job have the tendency to become loyal to their organization and try to contribute to it. Job involvement also seems a very good mediator between moral values and organizational commitment. Even though both moral values and job involvement could influence organizational commitment in a positive way, once the effects of job involvement are accounted for, the direct effects of moral values on organizational commitment decrease. So, this study suggests that job involvement and morality of employees are very important in making employees loyal to their organization. Managers who understand this and try to enhance these two concepts with seminars and training programs will be able to increase the commitment of employees to their organization.

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УДК 33

Роль вовлечения в работу как посредника в формировании моральных ценностей сотрудников – взаимодействие с организационной работой: на примере Боснии

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Аннотация. Цель данной работы – исследование совместного влияния моральных ценностей сотрудников и их вовлечение в работу на организационную работу. Материал был собран с помощью анкетного опроса в частных педагогических вузах Боснии и Герцеговины. В результате было получено 100 отзывов. Было установлено, что хотя моральные ценности и вовлечение в работу могут улучшить организационную работу, если брать за основу влияние вовлеченности в работу, то прямое влияние моральных ценностей на организационные способности практически сходит на нет. Данный результат доказывает, что влияние моральных ценностей сотрудников на организационную работу опосредуется вовлечением в работу.

Ключевые слова: вовлечение в работу; Босния и Герцеговина; моральные ценности; организационная работа.