

Employees' Belief Regarding Training Benefits and Organizational Commitment: A Case in Banking Sector of Pakistan

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Abstract: The purpose of this research is to study the relationship between Employees' belief about training benefits including personal, job and career related benefits and their impact on organizational commitment in banking sector of Pakistan. The empirical analysis of this study will help management to learn how they can use training programs particularly designing and implementation phases as effective tactical instrument to enhance commitment level of employees in this period of recession. Workforce of Pakistan is not delivering effectively, which, among other factors, may be attributed to lack of desired level of training (designing and implementation) and career development. Corporations are experiencing problems due to the absence or inadequate application of training management policies while maintaining its relationship with commitment level. Establishing employees' belief with respect to training benefits and its link with commitment in the banking sector of Pakistan is also an area lacking due research coverage in the past. It has been tested that employee's belief with regard to (1) personal benefits; (2) career related benefits; and (3) job-related benefits of training is positively linked with organizational commitment. This is a quantitative study measuring belief of employees for training benefits and its effect on their commitment level. For this purpose, survey was conducted from 155 officers rank employees on the basis of probability sampling technique from banks of two major cities (Lahore and Faisalabad) of Pakistan. The results include that there is significant positive relationship between employee perception of training benefits and organizational commitment. Furthermore, results revealed that the employees who are having positive attitude towards training as they perceive that they will get different benefits from training and who expect that they will get benefits by participating in training programs, they are likely to be more committed with their employers than those who perceive training a leisure activity.

Key words: Training Benefits • Career Development • Organizational Commitment • Employee Motivation • Performance

INTRODUCTION

From the start of new millennium, human capital management has emerged as a key deriving force in confronting the ever increasing challenges of globalisation, technological changes and corporate social responsibility issues and above all because of shift from manufacturing organizations to service oriented organizations. In this period of recession and global financial crisis, employability is not merely termed as a permanent employment rather it is a matter of great concern. The word employability is referred as the skill to

get a job or to keep the job [1] [2]. Individuals are experiencing more and more competitive and unreceptive job market in which they must concern with developing, marketing, advertising and selling their human capital [3]. Skills development is playing its due role in developing the sound relationship between employer and employee [4] [5]. There is a need to comprehend the variability in the interests of both the employer and employee. The vested interest of employer is usually in retaining the employee while the focus of the employee is in his/ her career development to meet the long term demands of labour market. Organizations are now striving for exploring new

approaches not only to retain the best employees but also enhancing their performance and productivity. Training and career development function among the various functions of HR is acknowledged as the most significant due to its valuable contribution in gaining competitive advantages [6] [7] [8]. Researchers have been arguing that the importance of training extends beyond the development of skills and knowledge needed to carry out one's job [9] [10]. Theories from management, psychology and labor economics show different and sometimes contrary predictions about the impact of training on employees' attitudes at workplace and their willingness to stay within the company [11][12][13][14].

Recent studies have suggested that motivation for training represents an important factor in improving the effectiveness of training outcomes that ultimately lead to organizational effectiveness [15][16][17]. The motivation will also increase if employees perceive that specific training recommended by the supervisor or management will benefit him/ her in one way or the other [14].

In most of the organizations, employees' training is the foundation stone in Human Resource Development systems [18]. This may have consequences for many of the work-related attitudes. Organizational commitment is increasingly viewed as a predictor of many of the work attitudes, behaviors and behavioral intentions [19]. Studies' results of Human Resource Development practices, including training, have shown that these practices influence organizational commitment [20][21][22]. A method to increase the commitment of employees is to provide them required trainings.

Until now, however, there are very few empirical researches that have examined this association of training benefits to employee and employee commitment towards organization.

The aim of this study is to identify the relationship between employee perception of training benefits and employee organizational commitment in banking sector of Pakistan. The results will help in identification of the exact nature of employees' belief regarding training benefits and organizational commitment. This will support HR practitioners in designing and implementing the effective training programs coupled with enhancing employees' organizational commitment through these training strategies and approaches. This research based on empirical data will pave the way for further research in the field of training and development and raising commitment of employees in all other public and private sectors organizations of Pakistan.

Review of Literature

Organizational Commitment: Employees' organizational commitment has been studied extensively among the researchers of organizational and behavioral studies since the 1960s with Becker's work [23]. Becker concludes that 'commitments come into being when a person, by making a side-bet, links extraneous interests with a consistent line of activity' (p. 32) and, further he concluded that the bonds between individual and organization depend upon "instrumental interests" such as remuneration and benefits organizations offer to their employees.

Theoretical Framework

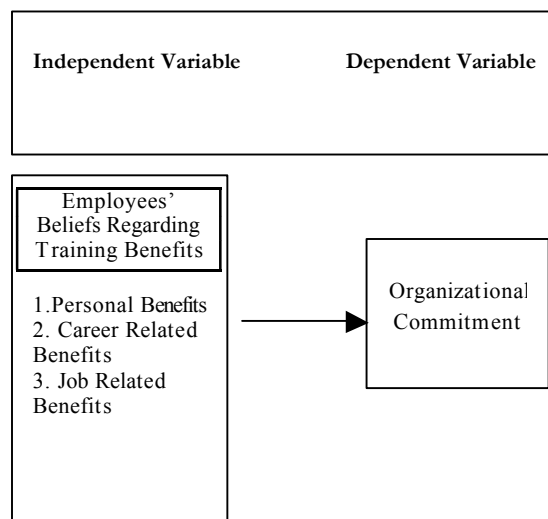


Fig. 1: Model indicating relationship between training and organizational commitment

Organizational behavior researchers have discussed employees' organizational commitment in term of the nature of association between employee and employer [24] employee's level of loyalty/ devotion with his/ her employer [25][26] integration of employee's personal objectives and organizational goals [27][28] recognition with or attachment or connection with employer organization [29] employee keenness to put extensive efforts on behalf of his/ her employer organization and employee's strong aspiration to remain the member of organization [30] and its impact of increasing job performance and lowering absenteeism and employee turnover [31].

Meyer and Allen [32] find that just monetary rewards do not cause organizational commitment, rather employee commitment with organization rely upon the opportunities given by the employer to conduct important, meaningful and challenging work. Moreover, the provision of opportunities of networking with interesting people and the environment that provides employees the opportunity to develop and learn new skills for their development. Organizational commitment has also been defined as an attitudinal and a behavioral construct. The attitudinal aspect to employees' organizational commitment is based on an emotional or psychological attachment that is being developed between employee and his/ her employer organization [32]. And the behavioral way to organizational commitment depends upon the cost-benefit analysis for leaving the employer or remains attached with the organization [23]. According to Meyer and Allen [32] a committed employee is one that remains with the organization both during good and bad times, follows regularity on work, safeguard the assets of employer and share the goals and objectives of employer organization. Meyer and Allen [32] point out that employees having strong commitment with organization will be more productive and valuable for organization than the employees having weak commitment with their employers. Randall [33] identify in his meta-analysis study that there is positive relationship between employees' organizational commitment and employee attendance at work, coming to their work on time, be the part of employer organization and in making efforts to perform their job along with improving their performance at work place. Early researchers consider organizational commitment as one dimensional construct [30]. However, now organizational commitment is widely accepted as multidimensional concept after Meyer and Allen studies in 1997 [32].

Meyer and Allen [34] define the three constructs of organizational commitment in this way: "Affective commitment refers to the psychological attachment to the organization, continuance commitment refers to the costs associated with leaving the organization and normative commitment refers to a perceived obligation to remain with the organization" (p. 1). It should be said that it is more suitable to consider affective, continuance and normative commitment to be the components of employees' organizational commitment rather than types of organizational commitment.

Perceived Benefits of Employee Training: Management of individual skills is an important aspect of doing business today and employee development will likely grow in the future [35]. The benefits of employee development extend beyond the actual skills gained and their contribution to an individual's productivity [36]. Noe [37] defines training as designed activities from employer's side with the purpose of enhancing the level of knowledge and skills or to modify the behaviors or attitudes of the employees in such a way that will be aligned with the goals and objectives of organization.

Researchers found that training activities not only develop employees and develop their abilities and skills but also influence their work-place behaviors like increase employee job satisfaction and their commitment to employer [38] [39] [40] [41].

Given the challenges in measuring the performance of employees, a more rewarding line of inquiry may be to examine the relationship between employee training and workplace attitudes desired by the employer, which have found to be related positively to the effectiveness of organizational [42]. One work-related attitude out of many attitudes that is being studied for the relationship of training with management of employee behavior is organizational commitment, a concept that is being studied extensively as an important variable in explaining behaviors related to work because it is assumed that it has impact on performance [43] [44]. The most used definition of training in relation with organizational commitment is 'a management practice that can be controlled or managed to elicit a desired set of unwritten, reciprocal attitudes and behaviors, including job involvement, motivation and organizational commitment' [45] [38]. Research studies have found that there are strong relationships when performance has been isolated into in-role performance i.e. performance required to perform the job and extra-role performance i.e. behaviors and attitudes above and

beyond what performance employee's job requires [46] [47]. Therefore, the relationship of employees' organizational commitment and desired job related outcomes is of great use for HRD professional. Some HRD authors have recommended that training should be plan to increased organizational commitment as an outcome [48,49]. More specifically, it is said that greater level of employees' organizational commitment has been found to influence motivation for (1) employee participation in training [10]; (2) levels of employee's knowledge participating in training program [40] and (3) the transfer-of-training process [50]. Despite of this factor that increased employees' organizational commitment is an objective of training activities, organizational commitment is acknowledged as a strong influencer on training process [32]. The theoretical framework that is guiding in this investigation is based on the concept of psychological contract and the employment relationship [51] [52]. Human resource management practices considered as affecting the Psychological contract [53] [54]; some theorists point out that "a major function of HRM is to foster an appropriate psychological contract" [55]. Training can be consider as human resource practice that can be designed, planed, controlled and managed to gain desired outcomes of unwritten and reciprocal attitudes and behaviors of employee at work, like job involvement, organizational commitment motivation. In return of this behavior demonstration, employees have changed their view point about what they feel is "owned" to them in return of their labor and services by their employer. Numerous employees consider training as "right of membership" [56] and as one of the benefit they get from their employment [57]. This study discusses various approaches through which positive impact of training strategies and activities on organizational commitment can be ascertained and resultantly improved. Hence the association between employees' beliefs of training provided by their employer and their level of commitment to employer is of paramount importance in determining the outcomes of training. And if this relationship is established, it will open many research implications for HRD professionals. Nordhaug [18] had earlier suggested that "HRD activities in work organizations may have a substantial rewarding potential and are thereby an implicit part of reward systems" (p. 373). Therefore, training is playing its role in affecting the work related attitudes and behavior of individual employees.

Phillips [58] describe that increased level of employees' organizational commitment is one of the benefits of training. Phillips and Stone [59] pointed out that 'Most successful training programs result in some intangible benefits'. Intangible benefits are those positive results that either cannot be converted to monetary values' (p. 210). Phillips [60], along with Phillips and Stone [59], identify that increased level of employees' organizational commitment is one of the intangible benefit of employee training. Noe and Wilk [61] grouped employee training benefits into three categories: (a) job-related benefits, (b) personal benefits and (c) career related benefits. Personal benefits explain as the extent to which employees think that by attending and participating in training activities their job performance will improve, it help then in networking and facilitate them in personal development. Career-related benefits include leading to determine and attaining career objectives and creating opportunities to identify and select new career options. Job-related benefits are those benefits that provide necessary skills and abilities required to perform job and leads towards better relationship with peers and with managers [61].

The perceived benefits of training for employees have been found to influence employee participation in training activities. Those who have positive beliefs about training benefits are considered to show high level of commitment feelings to the employer provided training.

On the basis of above discussion of literature, the following hypotheses are established for this study.

H1: Employees' belief regarding personal benefits of training positively relates with employee organizational commitment.

H2: Employees' belief regarding career-related benefits of training positively relates with employee organizational commitment.

H3: Employees' belief regarding job-related benefits of training positively relates with employee organizational commitment.

Research Methodology: This is a quantitative cum qualitative cross sectional study conducted through self-administered questionnaire. Regression analysis as one of the widely accepted scientific method used to test

research hypothesis. Representative sample size comprising 250 employees from 25 bank branches in Faisalabad and Lahore were taken who have at least two years of experience in current organization and participate in formal training program(s) with current organization. 176 questionnaires were received back and finally 155 were used for data analysis so the response rate was 62%. Previous researches have shown that organizations having more than 100 employees give more training and training opportunities to their employees. Therefore, organizations having more than 100 employees and conduct trainings were selected for data collection.

Employee belief regarding benefits of training is measured by Noe and Wilk's [61] 14-items questionnaire. First five items measure the personal benefits from training, next six items assess the benefits of employee training related to career and last three items measure the job-related benefits of training. Meyer and Allen's [32] 22-items organizational commitment questionnaire was used to measure organizational commitment construct. 7-point likert scale was used to measure the response that range from strong agree=7 to strongly disagree=1.

RESULT

Male respondents were 129 out of 155 (83.2%) and 26 out of 155 (16.8%) were female. Almost 52 % of respondents were in age range of 25-30 years, 20 % belongs to age range of 30-35 years, 18.7% belonged to age range of 20-25 and 9 % respondents were at age of from 35-40. 77.4 % of respondents were master degree holders, 12.9 % were bachelor degree holders and 8.4 % respondents were having educational level below bachelors. 65.8 % participants were of officer/ executive rank, 26.6 % were of rank equal to assistant manager and 9% participants were having rank equal to manager position. And as far as training programs is concerned, 38.7 % participants participate in maximum up to 2 formal training programs, 32.5 % respondents were participate in formal training programs from 2 to 5 maximum and 26 % respondents were those who participate in more than 5 formal training programs. All demographic factors were also measured with the relationship of organizational commitment, but no demographic factor is having significant relationship with organizational commitment.

Table 1: Regression Analysis of Training Benefits and Organizational Commitment (PB = Personal Benefits, CB = Career-Related Benefits, JB = Job-Related Benefits and OC = Organizational Commitment)

| Model | Unstandardized Coefficients | | Standardized Coefficients | | Sig. | R Square | F |
|-------|-----------------------------|------------|---------------------------|------|-------|----------|--------|
| | B | Std. Error | Beta | T | | | |
| 1 | (Constant) | 2.592 | .442 | | 5.869 | .000 | 10.245 |
| | PB | .130 | .070 | .146 | 1.856 | .023 | |
| | CB | .181 | .073 | .232 | 2.466 | .015 | |
| | JB | .105 | .061 | .155 | 1.717 | .038 | |

Table 2: Correlations Matrix of Training Benefits and Organizational Commitment (PB = Personal Benefits, CB = Career-Related Benefits, JB = Job-Related Benefits and OC = Organizational Commitment)

| | | PB | CB | JB | OC |
|----|---------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| PB | Pearson Correlation | 1 | .328** | .165* | .247** |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | | .000 | .041 | .002 |
| | N | 155 | 155 | 155 | 155 |
| CB | Pearson Correlation | .328** | 1 | .566** | .367** |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 | | .000 | .000 |
| | N | 155 | 155 | 155 | 155 |
| JB | Pearson Correlation | .165* | .566** | 1 | .310** |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .041 | .000 | | .000 |
| | N | 155 | 155 | 155 | 155 |
| OC | Pearson Correlation | .247** | .367** | .310** | 1 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .002 | .000 | .000 | |
| | N | 155 | 155 | 155 | 155 |

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Cronbach's alpha test was conducted to measure the reliabilities of all the scales used in data collection. Reliability results for employee perception of personal training benefits was 0.694 for personal benefits of training; 0.74 for career related training benefits and 0.626 was for job related training benefits. Cronbach's alpha was 0.821 for employees' organizational commitment.

The results of regression analysis presented in Table 1 shows that there is significant relation between all three independent variables employee perception of personal, career-related and job-related benefits of training and overall employees' organizational commitment ($p=0.023$, $p=0.015$ and $p=0.038$ respectively). So all three hypothesis of this study are supported.

DISCUSSION

The results of hypothesis testing show that there is significant positive relationship between employee perception of training benefits and organizational commitment. These results depict that the employees who are having positive attitude towards training as they think that they will get different benefits from training and who expect that they will get benefits by participating in training programs, they are likely to be more committed with their employer organizations than those who perceive training a leisure activity. The results of this study are consistent with the literature of employee perception of training benefits and organizational commitment [62], [63], [38], [64], [10] that further strengthen the literature emphasising on employee commitment through providing meaningful trainings and training opportunities to employees.

Participation in training programs enables an employee to improve his/ her performance, get personal development through training. Training participation also facilitate an employee in doing networking which has its own benefits (personal training benefits). Furthermore, participating in training programs benefit employee to identify and achieve his/her career goals choose different careers and opportunities (career related training benefits). It is also worth noting that training participation give numerous job related benefits to employee like performing job efficiently and effectively after training, improving relationships with peers and supervisor (job related training benefits). Ogilvie [65] has suggested that the relevance of training program is very important and irrelevant training programs have negative association with organizational commitment.

In short, the results from hypothesis testing conclude that congenial and favourable working environment in term of training benefits (personal, career related and job related) have positive impact on level of employees' attachment with organization. Moreover, the results of hypothesis testing shows that the more the employee is acquiring and learning new skills and knowledge, the more employee likely to be the member of the organization. This strong commitment may be the result of raise in compensation as a result of acquiring more skills and knowledge by participating in training. This finding is aligned with the finding of Becker study [66] who concluded that the attachment of individual employee is based on 'instrumental interests' such as pay and benefits employer is providing to its employee.

CONCLUSION

This study explored the relationship of organizational commitment and employees' perception of training benefits. It was found that all three types of training benefits (personal, career-related and job-related) have positive and direct effect on employees' organizational commitment in banking sector of Pakistan. Comprehending the relationship between employee perception of training benefits and organizational commitment is deriving factor in assisting the organizations to curtail their budgeted costs incurred on recruitment, selection and training processes. Moreover, organizations may enhance the level of organizational commitment and through training, employers have opportunity to develop and improve training activities to enhance employees' organizational commitment. The underlying theme is that employees who receive training might think that the organization values them as individuals and therefore develop a stronger commitment with organization.

Future Implication: This research was conducted in the banking sector in two major cities of the province of Punjab, Pakistan. To make the research more generalizable, future research can be conducted in other provinces too and also in other important sectors including textile sector, IT sector and educational institutes both from public or private sector. More representative sample can be used to increase the confidence of the conceptual model. Moreover, study can be triangulated by using qualitative research methods like in-depth interviews and observations. Comparison of

various sectors and inclusion of demographic variables help enhance the understanding about variation in organizational commitment in various sectors at various levels. This will bring new insights in the literature of HRM and organizational behavior along with its implications for HRM practitioners in organizations.

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