The Effect of Perceived Training on Organizational Commitment

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Abstract

Human resources are the most important assets of any organization and the force behind realization of organizational objectives and plans. Management thinkers believe that realization of organizational objectives is impossible without specialized and committed human resources. This article aims to study the effect of employees’ perception of training on organizational commitment and the effect of organizational commitment on job performance. It is a field survey research of applicative, descriptive and quantitative nature whose statistical population covers employees of Kerman Social Security Organization. Sample size came to be 251 based on Cochran’s formula for limited populations. Data collection was done according to stratified sampling. Structural equation modeling has been used to analyze collected data. Findings showed that all three dimensions of training i.e., Perceived accessibility to training, perceived support for training and perceived benefits from training have positive and significant effect on organizational commitment and commitment to service quality. The effect of organizational commitment on job performance has not been confirmed.

Keywords: Perceived accessibility to training, perceived support for training, perceived benefits from training, organizational commitment, job performance.

Introduction

Nowadays human resources training and development is considered a key strategy to comply with the changing circumstances and to give life to organizations. Human resources could be listed as the most important competitive advantages of an organization. Training is a process which promotes the capabilities of human resources proportionate with the type of work and activity. Training results will be directly depicted in production quality and quantity. Different training courses in organizations are considered important to promote know-how level, job skills and capabilities, increase motivation for better performance and also further efficiency. Gathering sufficient information on employees’ perception of training opportunities could assist organizations in pinpointing fields and dimensions through which the organization could stand out among others.

Bulut and Culha (2010) believe that training is one of the most important organizational investments because it increases employees’ skills, attitudes, tendencies, views and insights (Bulut and Culha, 2010).

Many researchers believe that employee training plays a great role in performance improvement and rendering better services to clients, and therefore assists the organization to achieve a competitive edge (Dhar, 2014, 420). Organizational training is conceptualized within a multidimensional framework consisting of motivation for training, access to training, benefits from training and support for training (Bulut and Culha, 2010). This survey too, conceptualizes employee training in three dimensions of training access, training support and training benefits.

Organizational commitment, as a research structure, came into being before organizational behavior had been discussed (Mc Connell, 2006). Organizational commitment is reflective of individuals’ attitudes against organizational values and objectives. It shows a force which bounds the individual to stay in an organization and try to achieve organizational goals with a sense of belonging. In fact, organizational commitment is a psychological condition which expresses the relationship of employees and organization (Allen and Meyer, 1996). Organizational commitment brings along many positive outcomes for the organization and its employees. Recruitment and deployment of committed individuals has been a well-proven concept to any organization. Thus, researchers try to pinpoint the factors which may affect employees’ organizational commitment. A factor which has recently drawn a lot of attention is individuals’ perception of training courses presented by the organization. In spite of ongoing research in this field, understanding the precise essence of the relationship of employees’ training and organizational commitment remains unclear (Erhardt et al, 2011).

Dhar (2014), has carried out a research on Indian hotel industry about the relationship of service quality and training of employees and the mediating role of organizational commitment. Findings showed that strong relationship exists between factors studied.

Research results from Erhardt et al (2011) have shown that there is a significant relationship between training and organizational commitment. Furthermore, individuals decide to take part in product development team which justifies this relation.

Bulut and Culha (2010) carried out a research titled “The Effects of Organizational Training on Organizational Commitment” to survey the relationship between training and organizational commitment in employees of four and five-star hotels in Turkey based on social exchange and psychological contract. Multiple regression analyses showed all training dimensions affect organizational commitment positively.

Al-Emadi and Marquardt (2007) surveyed the relationship between employees’ beliefs and opinions on training benefits and organizational commitment in a Quatari oil company with a
statistical sample of 283. Findings show that there is positive relationship between employees’ opinion on training benefits and organizational commitment. In this survey all three dimensions of organizational commitment are considered. They also express that conception of the relationship between employee training and organizational commitment is an important factor for the organization to reduce employment and training costs.

In another research Bartlett and Kang (2004) surveyed the relationship of employees’ attitude on training and organizational commitment in US and New Zealand nurses. Results showed that access to training, training support, motivation for training and conceptualized benefits of training were positively effective on normative of organizational commitment.

Ahmad and Bakar (2003), have carried out a survey titled; “Association of Training and Organizational Commitment, Among White-Collar Workers in Malaysia”. They surveyed the relationship of training access, training support, learning motivation, training environment, and perceived training benefit with the three dimensions of organizational commitment (affective commitment, continuance commitment and normative commitment). Findings showed that training access, support for training, motivation to learn, training environment, perceived benefits of training were all significantly correlated with affective commitment, normative commitment and overall organizational commitment. The training environment and perceived benefits were also significantly correlated and perceived commitment. However the accessibility of training, support for training and motivation to learn were not significantly correlated with continuance commitment.

Job performance is a set of behavioral and functional patterns including knowledge, skill, competence, conscience and cognitive abilities in work environment (Memarbashi Awal et al, 2011). According to existing theoretical principles job performance is; how well assigned duties and responsibilities are executed, behaviors that individuals show in their job or the extent of efficiency gained because of the engagement of an individual with his job (service, educational and production).

Dowlatabdi Farahani (2008) , in “ A survey of Organizational Commitment in Government Organizations and its Effect on Employees’ Job Performance”, has tried to survey the relationship between organizational commitment as an independent variable and job performance as a dependent variable in two levels of white and blue collar employees. Organizational commitment attitude was measured using Allan and Meyer Index (1990). Job performance index is individuals’ performance evaluation score. Results show: 1. There is no significant relationship between emotive, continuance and assigned commitments in different government organizations. 2. There is no significant relationship between emotive & continuance commitment and employees’ job performance. 3. There is a significant relationship between assigned commitment and job performance in government organizations.

**Theoretical Foundation**

Perceived accessibility to training refers to employees’ perception of training opportunities to attend training courses (regardless of their capabilities and merits), which consists of; choice of training, participation in training programs and follow up of training process (Dhar, 2014, 240). Organizational commitment is the degree of individual’s loyalty to organization (Derry and Iversen, 1998, 12). Bartlett and Kang (2004) revealed that firms which are perceived to have fair accessibility to training programs are more likely to have a greater number of committed employees i.e. giving training programs causes further employees’ commitment (Dhar, 2014, 421) Effective training courses may form the belief that the organization is willing to invest on its employees. It shows that the organization pays attention to employees and this causes employees’ encouragement, persuasion and higher level of commitment to the organization. Surveys carried out in United States and Malaysia reveal that perceived accessibility of training has a significant relationship with commitment. Past research showed that organizations could boost employees’ level of commitment by expanding training programs. Furthermore, when given training opportunities, the extent or level of employees’ commitment increased, hence their rate of participation in training (Dhar, 2014, 421)

Based on the above justifications, the following could be hypothesized:

**First hypothesis:** Employees’ perceived accessibility of training has a positive and significant effect on organizational commitment.

Perceived support for training means that employees will be supported by organizations to participate in training programs to improve their skills and attain higher levels of knowledge. Organization support for employees’ participation in training programs affects employees’ individual behavior for training. Thus, they feel more committed and try to find better solutions to job problems. In contrast, when they feel they lack organization support, they may develop a sense of despair and hopelessness and become less committed to the organization (Dhar, 2014, 421)

According to a survey by Noe and Wilk (1993), the more support employees receive from the organization for training, the more willingness they show to participate in such programs. Bartlett (2001) revealed support for training has direct relationship with the level of employees’ commitment.

The results of the survey by Colquitt, Lepine and Noe (2000) shows that support for participation in training programs, affects individual behavior of employees for training and leads to a higher level of commitment. Support for participation in training programs, increases employees’ willingness to access training programs. When employees are supported for training programs by the organization, their reaction to the organization and their sense of commitment and participation increases (Dhar, 2014, 421)

Based on the above justifications, the following could be hypothesized:

**Second hypothesis:** Employees’ perceived support for training has a positive and significant effect on organizational commitment.

Perceived benefits from training refer to employees’ perception of advantages and benefits which training programs are likely to provide. Benefits of training programs could be divided into three dimensions; a) Personal benefits and uses, b)
Professional benefits and uses, and c) Job benefits and uses (Dhar, 2014) When employees feel their attendance in training programs is to their own benefit as well as to organization’s benefit, they become more willing to participate in such programs. (Fastauer, Dobbins, Russell, Ladd and Kudisch, 1995)

Philips and Stone (2002) observed that successful training programs led to intangible benefits. Intangible benefits are positive results which could not be converted into financial values. They found out that organizational commitment is the intangible benefit of employees’ training programs (Philips and Stone, 2002, 210). Ahmad and Bakar (2003) revealed that employees who conceptualize the benefits of training program attendance, show higher commitment toward their organization and participate in more training activities. They have noticed the deep relationship between training programs and commitment. Employees, who state they could achieve positive results by attending a training program, have more motivation for participation in such courses. Benefits gained by employees through training courses attendance leads to an increase in their organizational commitment, because they think of achieving personal and professional goals as well (Dhar, 2012, 421).

Next hypothesis is therefore presented as follows: Third hypothesis: Employees’ perceived benefits from training have a positive and significant effect on organizational commitment.

Organizational commitment is an attitude which expresses to what degree the members identify themselves with the organization they work in and how involved they are. An individual with high degree of commitment stays in the organization, accepts its objectives and tries his best to the point of sacrifice to achieve its objectives (Organ, 1998). Job performance is how assigned duties and responsibilities are carried out. In other words it is a set of job-related behaviors which are performed by individuals (Moorhead and Griffine, 1998).

When employees are under pressure by others to accept group expectations and rules, they eventually internalize these rules and feel committed to group values (Jaworski, 1998, Schwepker and Hartline, 2005). They feel committed to the organization and this logically leads to ethical behaviors from employees, such that more committed members follow organization’s rules and values, play their roles more effectively and carry out their duties more efficiently. They are less likely to leave the organization for new opportunities (Baker et al, 2006). Committed employees often help the organization and their colleagues to create an appropriate intra-organizational atmosphere. Service workers who feel committed to organization are often willing to work longer than scheduled. In a wide survey on front line service employees, Mac Kenzie et al (1998) revealed that commitment to organization enhances intra-organizational behaviors.

Fourth Hypothesis: Organizational commitment affects job performance positively and significantly.

Based on the four above-mentioned hypotheses research model presented in Fig. 1.

Research Methodology
To carry out this empirical survey, Likert five-choice questionnaire (completely agree to completely disagree) has been administered. Statistical population consists of all employees of Kerman Social Security Organization. Sampling is of stratified type. Cochran formula for limited population was used to calculate sample size. Sample size turned out to be 200 with an error level of 1.0 and confidence level of %95. 270 questionnaires were handed out to the personnel. From questionnaires returned, 251 which were completely filled were used in final analysis in proportion to the number of employees in each division. To measure each variable, appropriate questions were designed. To assure reliability of the questionnaire, form, content and structure were examined. First, questions were given to academic scholars to check form and content. Afterwards, they were pre-tested for contextual form reaffirmation. Validity factors were analyzed as well. Measurement scale reliability was computed via Cronbach’s alpha method.

Table 1. Measurement scales of research variables and Cronbach’s alpha

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Variable measurement scales</th>
<th>No. of item</th>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Cronbach’s Alpha</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Perceived accessibility to training</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Bartlett, (2001)</td>
<td>0.944</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>perceived support for training</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Bulut &amp; Culha, (1993)</td>
<td>0.959</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>perceived benefits from training</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Bulut &amp; Culha (2010)</td>
<td>0.932</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Organizational commitment</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Jaworski &amp; Kohli, (1993)</td>
<td>0.945</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>job performance</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Babin &amp; Boles, (1996)</td>
<td>0.922</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As evident, Cronbach’s alpha coefficient is higher than 0.7 for measurement scale of each variable. These values assures reliability of measurement scales.

Data Analysis
Out of a total population of 251, 71 persons i.e. %27.9 were female and 180 persons i.e. %72.1 were male. The highest age frequency belonged to ages 40-49 (%37.5). Holders of bachelor degree gained the highest frequency which is indicative of high level education. Highest frequency of numbers of years of experience was 17-22 years (%31.1). To assure appropriateness of statistical method, Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was administered to investigate statistical population normality. Table 2, shows central & dispersion indices and test results.

Table 2. Variable indices of dispersion and level of significance of each variable.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Sig</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Perceived accessibility to training</td>
<td>3.174</td>
<td>1.159</td>
<td>0.070</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>perceived support for training</td>
<td>3.231</td>
<td>1.257</td>
<td>0.064</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>perceived benefits from training</td>
<td>3.13</td>
<td>1.13</td>
<td>0.060</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Organizational commitment</td>
<td>3.21</td>
<td>1.18</td>
<td>0.089</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>job performance</td>
<td>3.59</td>
<td>0.97</td>
<td>0.083</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A significance higher than .05 shows that sample distribution is normal.

Conceptual framework test

Table 3. Goodness of fit indices

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Index</th>
<th>RMSEA</th>
<th>NFI</th>
<th>GFI</th>
<th>RFI</th>
<th>CFI</th>
<th>IFI</th>
<th>χ²/df</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Favorable Limit</td>
<td>&lt; 0.08</td>
<td>&gt; 0.9</td>
<td>&gt; 0.8</td>
<td>&gt; 0.9</td>
<td>&gt; 0.8</td>
<td>&gt; 0.9</td>
<td>&lt; 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Value Obtained</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>0.95</td>
<td>0.80</td>
<td>0.94</td>
<td>0.98</td>
<td>0.98</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Index Status</td>
<td>Favorable</td>
<td>Favorable</td>
<td>Favorable</td>
<td>Favorable</td>
<td>Favorable</td>
<td>Favorable</td>
<td>Favorable</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Indices show that gathered data for measuring the variables are fit and sufficient. Therefore, results are quite reliable.

Employees’ perceived benefits from training have a positive and significant effect on organizational commitment. β= 0.21 and t= 2.95, support third hypothesis.

With values; β= 0.10 and t= 1.53, fourth hypothesis i.e. positive and significant effect of organizational commitment on job performance could not be supported.

Table 4. Investigating research hypothesis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hypothesis</th>
<th>β</th>
<th>T-value</th>
<th>Result</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Perceived accessibility to training → Organizational commitment</td>
<td>0.36</td>
<td>4.71</td>
<td>confirmed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>perceived support for training → Organizational commitment</td>
<td>0.27</td>
<td>3.21</td>
<td>confirmed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>perceived benefits from training → Organizational commitment</td>
<td>0.21</td>
<td>2.95</td>
<td>confirmed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational commitment → job performance</td>
<td>0.10</td>
<td>1.53</td>
<td>Rejection</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Discussion and Conclusion
First hypothesis claims that employees’ perceived accessibility of training affects organizational commitment positively and significantly. Here, path coefficient is 0.36 which is reflective of the existence of positive effect between these two factors. The outcome complies with Dhar’s study and supports our claim which confirms this positive and significant relation. Employees’ level of commitment is high when provided with training opportunities which gives them higher rates of participation. In other words, training opportunities boost employees’ commitment. Therefore organizations may increase the level of employees’ commitment by expanding training programs.

Second hypothesis states that employees’ perceived support for training has a positive and significant effect on organizational commitment. A path coefficient of 0.27 here means there is a positive effect between these two factors and indicates that perceived support for training affects employees’ organizational commitment to the extent of %27. A survey done by Dhar (2014) about employees’ perceived support for training on organizational commitment and the effect of organizational commitment on service quality in India confirms the hypothesis.
He reveals that there is a positive relationship between perceived support for training and organizational commitment. Bartlett (2001) has also shown that support for training has direct relationship with the level of employees’ normative commitment. Spriego (2015) in his PhD dissertation emphasizes the positive effect of American young employees’ perceived support for training on organizational commitment. Therefore, affinity of second hypothesis result with the above studies could be confirmed.

It may be stated that employees who are supported by their organization to participate in training programs, get their skills sharpened and climb to higher levels. Feeling commitment to their organization, they try as much as possible to find better solutions to work problems. In contrast, when employees feel they lack support from their organization, they may become hopeless and disparate and lose their sense of commitment (Dhar, 2014, 421)

Third hypothesis states perceived benefits from training has a positive and significant effect on organizational commitment.

Coefficient path of 0.21 shows the positive effect of the two factors and referring to t= 2.95 is indicative of a significant effect of perceived benefits from training on organizational commitment. Therefore, third hypothesis could be confirmed.


When employees take part in training programs, their skills and abilities sharpen and their performance improves. In addition, participation assists them to pinpoint their goals and gives them a chance to seek new paths of progression. Therefore, when employees find out that attendance in training programs is beneficial to them, their level of loyalty is likely to increase toward the organization.

Since Beta=0.1 and lack of effectiveness %95, the fourth hypothesis has become void. The same negative result is obtained by Ellinger et al (2012) in a survey on the effect of organizational investment in social capital on organizational commitment and intra-organizational behaviors.

This negative effect could be justified by the fact that the nature of commitment is attitudinal. In order that commitment gets converted into performance, other factors than attitude and behavior are needed. In other words, conversion of an individual’s commitment into performance needs many factors. Furthermore, the job itself has to be well-structured and well-oriented. Commitment cannot be converted into performance in all situations. The specific structure of Kerman Social Security Organization, the bureaucratic structure dominant and lack of performance measurement and evaluation system hinders personnel performance improvement. Generally, in bureaucratic structures, the aim revolves round process controls, not performance controls. Therefore, in such organizations, commitment could not be an accurate predictor of performance.

Based on the above, we herewith present the following recommendations:

1) Employees’ perceived accessibility of training indicates %36 of organizational commitment. Management shall prioritize employee improvement procedures. Training seems to be the most effective means of efficiency enhancement. Therefore, it is recommended to plan training programs and post their time and place to employees. Furthermore, Management could arrange in-house training programs in appropriate hours to enhance employees’ training participation.

2) Managers’ support for participation of employees in training programs affects % 27 of organizational commitment changes. Management shall provide an environment in which employees are persuaded to participate in training programs. Employees should be given opportunity to apply and improve their knowledge and skill gained from training courses in different projects. Thus, training results could be evaluated as well. An environment shall be created in which employees could easily discuss their training needs for their jobs, with management. Finally, the organization could take advantage of training with up-to-date contents to enhance employees’ general knowledge and awareness to improve job affairs and service quality. Before training program design training needs assessment should be done to create interest and boost efficiency.

3) Effect of employees’ perceived benefits from training fall within the range of %21 of changes of organizational commitment. Organization management shall indicate professional and job benefits gained from participation in training programs. Management is required to find, support, encourage, improve and promote employees whose participation in training programs has enhanced their knowledge and skills.

References:


