

NEXUS ON PERCEIVED ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORT AND ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT IN THE GARMENT SECTOR: A QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS



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Abstract

Purpose: *The study sought to investigate the relationship between the Perceived Organizational Support (POS) and Organizational Commitment (OC) in Brandix Essentials, Nivithigala (BEN).*

Methodology: *The BEN had 750 Machine Operators and 254 Machine Operators were considered as the sample size from the population for this study and data were collected using questionnaire as a survey instrument and data were analyzed using multiple liner regression analysis with the help of SPSS 20.*

Findings: *The study found that POS significantly and positively associated with all three dimensions of organizational commitment. POS is significantly and positively impact on AOC, NOC and COC and it was concluded that organizational commitment is an issue in the BEN.*

Research implications: *When comparing with the competing organizations in the garment industry current salary scale of the BEN is not sufficient and ties up with the economic conditions. However, it is better to revise the salary scale of the machine operators. Ensuring the initial training is completed by every employee will create a confidence in their mind regarding their job. It will create the feeling that organization concern about them. The performance appraisal system should fair and link with the reward system so the best performers can receive the rewards for their performance.*

Originality: *The study contributes to the knowledge of management studies especially in the context of organizational commitment and the study was carried out in the context of apparel industry in Sri Lanka. According to the results of the study the significant positive relationship between the POS and OC demonstrates that if the management wants a dedicated workforce who performs well to achieve the organizational goals and objectives, they have to create a better working environment for the machine operators and should provide a substantial support to them to carry out their job effectively and efficiently in order to enhance the commitment of the machine operators at BEN.*

Key words: *Perceived Organizational Support, Organizational Commitment, Affective Organizational Commitment, Normative Organizational Commitment, Continuance Organizational Commitment, and Brandix Essentials Nivithigala.*

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Introduction

Apparel industry has been one of the largest industries in Sri Lanka that employs many workers and contributes to Sri Lankan export economy. It contributes more than 57% from the total industrial export (Shiwanthi, Lokupitiya, & Peiris, 2018) and the foreign exchange. Further, this sector has been a significant contributor to address the unemployment issues through the provision of higher number of career opportunities. However, the industry is facing ever increasing competition and the survival depends on how well they face out its rivals by performing well in terms of their operations and gain the competitive advantage. In the pursuit of competitive advantage in this industry, human resources are considered as an essential component and higher priority of attention as it is unique from other factors of production (money, machineries, and process) has the potential of unlimited capacity when comparing to the other resources. Minbaeva (2018) stated that employee recognition is very important in the pursuit of higher organizational performance and competitive advantage and must be facilitated with higher employee support, proper leadership, and the enhancement of affective commitment within the organization.

A good workforce is expected to provide maximum contribution towards the achievement of organizational goals and the workforce should perform more than their duties and responsibilities towards the betterment of the organization and themselves. A dedicated well-groomed workforce is said to be one of the valuables for an organization. Thus, organizational performance cannot be expected if there is no organizational commitment by the employees. In the case of apparel industry, machine operators are the workers who directly involved in the production process are considered an import set of human resources for the industry and their commitment towards their works and organization is an essential factor that contributes to the success of garments. Therefore, organization is very much concerned about the organizational support towards their employees.

Workers are paid for their labor and organization earn profit and accomplish its objectives and thus organizations heavily depend on its workforce and their performance (Asrar-ul-Haq, Kuchinke, & Iqbal, 2017). This in turn, lead employees feel committed to their organization that offer better perks to them. This is a win-win situation for both organization and workers and this would in turn create

positive impression among employees towards their organizational support (Asrar-ul-Haq et al., 2017).

Perceived Organizational Support (POS) has been an essential contributor towards employees' organizational commitment and POS is defined as the degree to which employees believe the organization values their contributions and cares about their well-being (Caesens, Stinglhamber, Demoulin, & De Wilde, 2017).

Organizational Commitment (OC), on the other hand, is said to be the status of mind that reflects individuals' psychological state that spell out the individuals' association with organization that leads to making decision about continuing membership with the organization (Meyer & Allen, 1997). Robbins (2008) described organizational commitment as a strong preference to remain a member of the organization, and a definite belief and acceptance of, the values and goals of the organization, thus the committed employees aspire to stay with the organization. Study shows that employees who perceive that their organizations provide enough support are likely to be more committed to their job and organizations (Celep & Yilmazturk, 2012).

However, the lack of commitment from employees causes a negative effect and

lead to Labor Turn Over (LTO) and absenteeism (Luz, de Paula, & de Oliveira, 2018). At present, LTO & absenteeism have been a severe problem especially in apparel industry and it affects the smooth operations of the organization and thus the performance of the organization in every aspect as the industry depends on the scheduled shipments and the higher absenteeism and the turnover lead to enormous problems on the shipment due to the delays. This would in turn lead to other issues like huge overtime cost, new recruitment, and training cost etc. Organizations can perform at higher levels, where their employees are committed to the organization and work as a team member of the organization. Employees should think as an entrepreneur, not just as a traditional employee and must prove their loyalty to the organization (Luz et al., 2018). Brandix Essentials Nivithigala (BEN) is also no exception to this phenomenon and the preliminary interview with few machine operators and their respective managers showed the lack of organizational commitment in BEN has led to poor performance of the organization. The BEN is one of the Garment Exporters located in Nivithigala is Ratnapura, Sri Lanka. It is one of the 747 Garment exporters in Sri Lanka. Brandix is Sri Lanka's single largest

apparel exporter with an annual turnover exceeding \$600 million. The Company employs over 43,000 Associates supported by 38 manufacturing facilities in Sri Lanka, India and Bangladesh. The Group provides over 50% of value addition locally through its backward-linked operations in textiles, thread, buttons, and hangers. A peek into an exclusive portfolio reveals Victoria's Secret, Gap, Next and Marks and Spencer, amongst other excellent company.

Though there have been many different empirical studies (Celep & Yilmazturk, 2012; Ongori, 2007; Robbins, 2008) on evaluating the impacts of Perceived Organizational Support (POS) on Organizational Commitment, few studies have studied the relationship of POS with OC in the context of apparel industry especially in Sri Lanka. POS is a strong predictor of organizational commitment, intention to remain in an organization, and voluntary turnover. Several researchers have shown that POS is positively related to organizational commitment (Erickson & Roloff, 2007; Riggle, Edmondson, & Hansen, 2009). Social exchange theorists demonstrate OC as a manifestation of a relationship between employer and employee where favorable treatment by one is reciprocated

by similar treatment from the other (Sahi & Mahajan, 2014). Chiang, Han, and Chuang (2011) argued that the organization may adopt a high-commitment strategy, including employment practices, appraisal, competitiveness, fair compensation, and comprehensive training and development for employees to have high commitment and motivation. This requires a study to evaluate the situation in the industry in Sri Lanka and intend to contribute to POS literature by evaluating the impact of POS and OC in the context of Sri Lankan Apparel industry.

Theoretical background and hypotheses

Organizational commitment becomes one of the most interested topics in last decade among the research world because its ability to create greater effects on organizational performances. Perryer, Jordan, Firms, and Travaglione (2010) defined organizational commitment as “a stable attitude, reflecting a general affective response towards the organization as a whole and is generally viewed as more stable and global than employee satisfaction, and consequently more closely related to the achievement of long-term organizational goals due to its broader reaching implications”. There are different definitions of organizational

commitment; it can also be defined as “sincere belief in the organization and has implications for the decision to continue membership in the organization”. Organizational commitment refers to an individual’s sense of belonging and psychological attachment to the organization or the “emotional attachment to, identification with, and involvement in, the organization” (Bibi, Khalid, & Hussain, 2019) from the perspective of affective sense, commitment is viewed as the emotional attachment of the employees towards the organization. This in turn, states the willingness of individuals who they want to be a part of organization and identified, and involved in it. Affective commitment enables employees perform their works on their own will and by coercion. Further, the dimension of affective commitment is related to the positive attitude with the place where the employees work. Affective commitment is determined by ‘an employee’s personal choice to remain committed to the organization via some emotional identification with the organization’. Affective commitment is a positive posture toward the organization. Solinger, Van Olffen, and Roe (2008) mentions that attitude of employees is associated with their personal values that they reflect within the organization. As

per Leveson & Joiner (2005), normative commitment is viewed as the feelings of employees to be obligatory towards organization and display the moral behaviors towards it.

Continuance commitment is generally defined as preference to work continually in an organization because of personal investment called as nontransferable investments such as close working relationships with co-workers, career investments and retirement investments, acquired job skills which are unique to a particular organization, duration of working in a particular organization, involvement in the community in which the employer is located, and leaving and finding another employment opportunities in another organization becomes as costly as possible (Umoh, Amah, & Wokocha, 2014)

Organizational commitment of the employees can be improved by increasing POS. Organizational support makes the employees more positive and desirable for their jobs. On the one hand, organizational support increases occupational involvement and commitment by improving employees functioning and growth. On the other hand, organizational support also decreases negative behaviors of employees such as aggression and

occupational stress, thus reducing their tendency to leave their job (Bibi, Kalim, & Khalid, 2018). According to Kim, Eisenberger, and Baik (2016) high POS made more creative suggestions for improving operations. Therefore, organizations can treat well their employees by developing policies and strategies. These policies and strategies contribute to positive employee beliefs and attitudes about the organization. Perceived organizational support points to all of employees' perception about the value which organizations give them. Those are regarding their partnership and attendance of organization to their welfare (Salehzadeh, Asadi, Pool, Ansari, & Haroni, 2014). The concept of perceived organizational support was developed by (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). It describes the employee's willingness about organization commitment with respect to employees' welfare. Organizational support refers to employees' belief about the degree to which the organization cares about their well-being and values their service. Perceived organizational support can be defined as a social exchange relationship, which is resultant from exchanges between the organization and its employees (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). Based on the organization support theory, employees' intention to assign the

human-like characteristics to organization encourages the development of perceived organizational support (Donald, Hlanganipai, & Shambare, 2016).

According to organizational support theory, the development of POS is encouraged by employees' tendency to assign the organization humanlike characteristics (Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchison, & Sowa, 1986). From the perspective of Levinson (1965), any action instituted against a person by an agent of an organization reflects the intention of organization and not solely related to the personal motives of the agent initiated and this is further legally, morally, and financially supported by organization for the actions done by the agents concerned. Further, the personification of actions becomes an indication to its employees that their organizations favor or disfavor to them. According to the Social exchange theorists, it is claimed that resources given by others are highly appreciated when it is on the premise of discretionary choice and not by the circumstances of the giver and thus the intentional aids in the form resources are appreciated and it is a sign that the donor really respects the values of the recipient (Lemmon, Glibkowski, Wayne, Chaudhry, &

Marinova, 2016). Factors like rewards from organizations, conducive working conditions, payment, opportunities for promotions, policies of organization, and job enrichment contribute mostly POS and those factors are from voluntary actions of organization in contrast to the influences like union negotiations or governmental health and safety regulations exerted from outside (Eisenberger, Cummings, Armeli, &

Lynch, 1997). This is similar to a situation where supervisors perform their duties on behalf of their organization as an agent and when the employees receive unbiased and good treatment from them, they support to POS.

The following conceptual framework and hypotheses have been developed to assess the impact of POS on OC as shown in Figure 1.

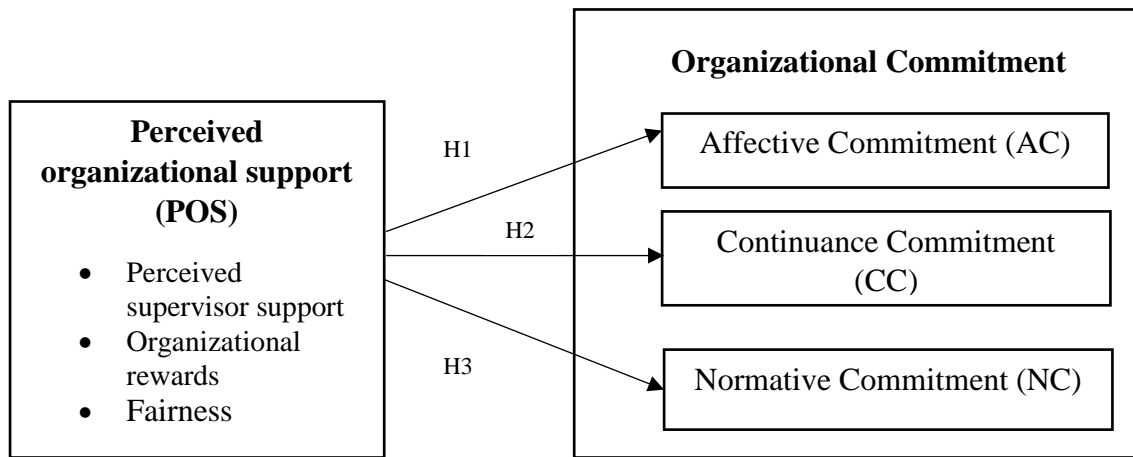


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

H1: POS positively impacts on Affective Commitment (AC)

H2: POS positively impacts on Normative Commitment (NC)

H3: POS negatively impacts on Continuance Commitment (CC)

Methodology

Measures

The constructs POS and OC were measured using predeveloped and tested measures. A self-administered questionnaire was prepared to collect the data from the survey participant of machine operators at BEN using a 7-point Likert-scale ranging from 7 (strongly agree) to 1 (strongly disagree). The POS

was measured using the items from the Survey of Perceived Organization Support (SPOS) used by Eisenberger et al. (1986) and the OC was measured using the scale used by (Allen & Meyer, 1990). Reliability of the measures has been tested by using Cronbach's alpha. Kline (1999) notes that, the cut-off points of internal consistency as 0.7. Therefore, Cronbach's alpha should exceed 0.7. In this research, all the measures reported Cronbach's Alpha values greater than the 0.7.

Population and sample

The cadre of the BEN consists with 750 machine operators at present including Jumper Machine Operators. The researcher studied 254 Machine Operators at BEN as the sample of the study (Krejcie & Morgan, 1970). The study used primary data that was collected from the survey participant using the questionnaire developed along with demographic information of the respondents.

Data Analysis Method

Questionnaire was issued for 254 respondents and 210 questionnaires were

returned and the analysis was also done from it. Descriptive, correlation, and multiple regression analysis were made using the SPSS Version 20.

Results

Descriptive Analysis

Descriptive statistics of the demographic profiles has been summarized in the Table 1 below and Most of the machine operators are below 25 years of age (60.47%) and they are mostly school leavers and join in their early career and 31.90% of them are between 26 – 35 years old and less than 2% are 45 years old. Most of them work as machine operators work for 1-3 years (32.85%) and it may be due to the contract of employment. Most of the machine operators are female (76.19%) and 23.80% are male machine operators and thus female employees occupy most of the placement at the BEN and most female work in the apparel industry in Sri Lanka. As far as their educational qualification is concerned, 61.90% of the machine operators were up to G.C.E O/L and 23.80% were up to Grade 8.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics

Nature of the sample	Frequency	%
Age composition		
below 25 years	127	60.47
26-35	67	31.90
36-45	12	5.71
more than 45 years	4	1.90
Tenure		
less than 1 year	64	30.47
1-3 years	69	32.85
3-5 years	55	26.19
More than 5 years	22	10.47
Gender		
Male	50	23.80
Female	160	76.19
Educational qualification		
Up to grade 5	7	3.33
Up to grade 8	50	23.80
Up to G.C.E O/L	130	61.90
Up to G.C.E A/L	23	10.95

Descriptive analysis was also performed to identify the level of both independent and dependent variables. The results have been presented in the Table 2 below. Mean value of each variable represents the level of the variable. Respondents

were asked to indicate their answers on a 7-point Likert scale and Mean value and standard deviation are calculated to understand the current level of each variable.

Table 2: Descriptive Analysis of Variables

Variable	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Perceived Organizational Support (POS)	210	3.33	6.67	5.4992	.61535
Affective Commitment (AC)	210	2.83	7.00	5.6603	.66304

Continuance Commitment (CC)	210	3.17	6.83	5.4405	.64066
Normative Commitment (NC)	210	2.92	6.25	4.7563	.54541

Correlation Analysis

The results of the correlation analysis have been given in the Table 3 below. Perceived Organizational Support was positively correlated with all the three dimensions of organizational Commitment as with Affective Commitment (0.270), with Normative Commitment (0.199) and with

Continuance Commitment (0.282) significantly. Values appear to be less than the 0.5 indicates the relationships between those variables were weak. However, those weak relationships between the variables were significant at 99% confidence level.

Table 3: Correlation Analysis

Variable	Mean	SD	1	2	3
Affective Commitment	5.4992	.61535			
Continuance Commitment	5.6603	.66304	.870		
Normative Commitment	5.4405	.64066	.952	.891	
Perceived Organizational Support	4.7563	.54541	.270	.199	.282

** Correlation is significant at the .01 level (1- tailed)

Regression analysis

The model summary has been given in the Table 4 below. The value of the explanatory power (R^2) shows the degree to which extent the variance of the dependent variable is explained by independent variable. When examining the R square, it can be concluded that

41.2% of the variance of Affective Organizational Commitment of BEN is explained by POS. 40% of the variance of Normative Organizational Commitment and 42.5% of the variance of Continuance Organizational Commitment of BEN is explained by POS.

Table 4: Model Summary

	R	R square	Adjusted R square	Std. Error of the Estimate
POS and AOC	.270	.412	.068	.59397
POS and NOC	.282	.400	.075	.61610
POS and COC	.199	.425	.035	.65129

The values of coefficient of determinations of variables concerned have been given in the Tables 5, 6, 7

Table 5: Coefficient of Determination

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std Error	Beta		
Constant	4.052	.361		11.236	.000
POS	.304	.075	.270	4.039	.000

Table 6: Coefficient of Determination

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std Error	Beta		
constant	3.864	.374		10.330	.000
POS	.331	.078	.282	4.242	.000

Testing of Hypotheses

H1: POS is positively impact on Affective Organizational Commitment

Unstandardized coefficient beta value of the POS is .304 and significant value is 0.000 And significant value POS is less than 0.05. Which means POS is significant predictor of Affective Organizational Commitment. Thus, for

every unit increase in POS, Affective Organizational Commitment is expected to increase by .304 According to the impact is positive one between those variables. According to that hypothesis of "POS is positively impact on Affective Organizational Commitment" (H1) accepted with significantly.

H2: POS is positively impact on Normative Organizational Commitment

Unstandardized coefficient beta value of the POS is .331 and significant value is .000 And significant value POS is less than 0.05. Which means POS is significant predictor of Normative Organizational Commitment. Thus, for every unit increase in POS, Normative Organizational Commitment is expected to increase by 0.331. According to the impact is positive one between those variables. According to that hypothesis of "POS is positively impact on Normative Organizational Commitment" (H2) accepted with significantly.

H3: POS is negatively impact on Continuance Organizational Commitment

Unstandardized coefficient beta value of the POS is .304 and significant value is .054 and significant value POS is greater than 0.05. Which means POS is insignificant predictor of Continuance Organizational Commitment. Thus, for every unit increase in POS, Continuance Organizational Commitment is expected to increase by 0.304. According to the impact is positive one between those variables. According to that hypothesis of "POS is positively impact on Continuance Organizational

Commitment" (H2) cannot be accepted with significantly.

Discussion

The previous research discusses about the positive relationship between the POS and AOC. Shore and Wayne (1993) stated that when employees think that they receive higher levels of organizational support, they are most likely to offer back their affective commitment and that affective and calculative involvements in the organization could be achieved through the perception that employees are taken care of and valued by the organizations. Employees who perceived high support expressed stronger feelings of affiliation and loyalty to the organization and this goes along with the previous literature and the findings of the research evidenced a positive impact of POS on AOC. However, the impact that the PS has weak in this scenario. Hence machine operators those who felt valued and supported by their organizations seem more emotionally attached to the organization. Further, Colakoglu, Culha, and Atay (2010) concluded that individuals who felt valued and supported by their organizations are more emotionally attached to the organization and feel morally obligated to remain with that organization and when the employees

feel that their organization value and support to them highly, they become obliged to organization where they work. when the employees feel that their organization value and support to them highly, they become obliged to organization where they work (Normative Organizational Commitment). And thus, it is confirmed with those previous findings results of the current study reveals that there is a positive impact of POS on NOC of the Machine Operators at the BEN. As for the AOC the impact is seems to be weak in this study. Last objective of the current study was to find out the impact of POS on COC of the Machine Operators at the BEN. Kurtessis et al. (2017) found that POS decreases employees' feelings of COC, which develops when employees are forced to stay with an organization because of the high costs of leaving. In contrast to the findings that employees who remains with organization if they feel higher level of POS and not cost associated with it when they leave organization, and the result of the current study indicates that the POS positively impact on COC. This indicates if machine operators feel they are being cared by their organization they will develop higher level of COC. Further it indicates when the machine operators feel their

organization is supportive then they will feel the high cost of leaving because of that caring and the concern of their well-being by the organization.

Implications

If the machine operators have a favorable support in the organization, they will perform better than now and thus create a commitment with them resulting with a feeling of not to quite from the job in the organization. According to the results of the study the significant positive relationship between the POS and OC demonstrates that if the management wants a dedicated workforce who performs well to achieve the organizational goals and objectives, they have to create a better working environment for the machine operators and should provide a substantial support to them to carry out their job effectively and efficiently in order to enhance the commitment of the machine operators at BEN. Every employee is willing to receive an appreciation for their achievements in the work and the performance appraisal system plays a vital role in this scenario. The appraisal system of the BEN seems functioning with less transparency. The procedure of appraising the employees should strengthen as to recognize the best

individual performers and appreciate them. The performance appraisal system should fair and link with the reward system so the best performers can receive the rewards for their performance. As usually the machine operators work in a highly stressed environment in any garment factory it is same as the BEN. The daily targets are not reasonable and realistic in some situations with the tight shipments. But it will create a high job stress with the machine operators as they are the people forced by the management regarding the production. So, it is better to consider about the daily targets of the machine operators as it should be reasonable and realistic. Compensation is one of the main factors that affect to the satisfaction of the employees and sufficient salary will generate the feeling that organization values the contribution of them. When comparing with the competing organizations in the garment industry current salary scale of the BEN is not sufficient and ties up with the economic conditions. However, it is better to revise the salary scale of the machine operators. The initial job training that a machine operator receives at the BEN is 10 working days from the commencement date and then transfers into the production section. Most of the time employees have no chance to

complete their initial training at the training school. Ensure the initial training is completed by every employee will create a confidence in their mind regarding their job. It will create the feeling that organization concern about them.

Conclusion

In conclusion, both the researchers and practitioners accept the organizational commitment is an important factor for organizational performance and the findings of this research too confirm that POS is significant factor in determining the organizational commitment and thus to be focused on the context of the BEN. Researcher concluded that organizational commitment is an issue in BEN. Hence, it confirms the research problem. Second, POS is significantly and positively impact on affective organizational commitment. The study confirmed that the employees who feels their organization as supportive were more emotionally attached to the organization and like to continue the membership of the organization. Third, POS was significantly and positively affected to normative organizational commitment. This concluded that employees who felt support of the organization are having a feeling of repaying it to the organization by

continuing working with the organization. Fourth, even after controlling for tenure, POS was positively and significantly affected to continuance organizational commitment. Hence, it confirms employees who felt support from the organization tend to develop higher continuance organizational commitment. Finally, the study concluded that POS significantly and positively associated with all three dimensions of organizational commitment.

Limitations and area for future research

As every research, the current study also consist with some limitations as follows. The study aimed at the common problem that most of the organizations facing in the garment industry, but the current study was conducted at BEN only. Therefore, it is difficult to generalize the garment industry. Since the OC is more likely to be a psychological parameter it is difficult to measure it 100% accurately because, the responses may be varying from situation to situation. The perception will not be truth in this scenario. The study was conducted based on the machine operators only. Therefore, the common source error can be there. Since the OC and POS are more likely to be a psychological parameter it is difficult

to measure it 100% accurately because, the responses may be varying from situation to situation. The perception will not be the truth in this scenario. The future research could be carried out by considering the entire apparel industry with more factors that determine the OC.

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