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# A Study of the Relationship Between the Job Satisfaction and Organizational Commitment of Academic Staff in Private Higher Education Institutes in Sri Lanka

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**Abstract:** *As a developing country in Asian region, Sri Lankan higher education sector consists with government universities, private higher education institutes and semi-government universities. Irrespective of the sector, higher education institutes strongly believe about quality of their degree programmes. Higher quality of education can be achieved only by having a academic staff who are motivated, committed and satisfied to what they do. It is the usual perception that when the staff is committed to what they do, it will positively impact on their job performance, service quality and the success of the organization. Hence, it is vital to identify the importance of employees' organizational commitment achieved through job satisfaction in private higher education sector in Sri Lanka. Therefore the primary objective of this study is to study the relationship between the job Satisfaction and organizational commitment of academic staff in private higher education institutes in Sri Lanka. The independent variable is job satisfaction and the dependent variable was organizational commitment. . This study utilized a questionnaire to collect the data which needed to achieve the research objectives. Also researchers have used standard questionnaires to measure job satisfaction which is known as Minnesota Job Satisfaction Scale and organizational commitment was measured through Allen and Mayer Organizational Commitment Scale. Current study was conducted in a natural setting where the work proceeds normally. No any artificial or contrived setting was created where none of the variables were controlled by the researchers in this study. The data was collected from the individual lecturers of five reputed academic institutions in Colombo District and unit of analysis of this study is individual.*

**Keywords:** Job satisfaction, Organizational Commitment, Affective Commitment, Normative Commitment, Continuance Commitment & Private Higher Education Institutes

## 1. Introduction

In today competitive world, organizations cannot perform well unless the employees in such organizations are committed and work effectively. It is important to have faithful employees who do their job tasks independently. Employees nowadays have to work together in teams and have to prove that they are worth being part of these organizations. They also want to be part of a successful organization which provides a good income and good opportunities for growth and development.

In the past, organizations secured the loyalty of their employees by guaranteeing job security. However, many organizations have practiced downsizing, restructuring and transformation as a response to competitive pressures, creating a less secure organization climate. Consequently, a growing number of employees feel that they are victims of broken promise. One of the challenges facing organizations involves maintaining employee commitment (Bergmann et al., 2000). With no assurance of continued employment, workers have now raised their expectations in the other areas.

According to Porter, Crampton, and Smit (1976), organizational commitment could be defined as the feelings and beliefs formed internally or as a set of intentions that enriches and employee's desire to remain

with an organization and to accept its major goals and values. Organizational commitment is conceptualized in three ways: affective commitment, normative commitment, and continuance commitment. Affective commitment is a sense of attachment and a feeling of belonging to the organization. Normative commitment is a feeling of obligation on the part of employees to maintain employment. Continuance commitment is an awareness of costs associated with leaving the organization or awareness of lack of alternatives (Hartmann & Bambacas, 2000; Tan & Akhtar, 1998). In the literature, even though numerous studies have been produced on the area of organizational commitment, there has been lack of agreement on its definition (Meyer & Allen, 1991); because organizational commitment has been variably and extensively defined, measured and researched, and the concept, as a result, has been criticized for lack of correctness, giving rise to disagreement results from various studies. For example, Bateman and Strasser (1984) explained organizational commitment to have different dimensions including employee's loyalty to the organization, their desire to utilize their energy for the organization, extent of goal, value congruency with the organization and willingness to maintain membership.

Empirical findings show that the organizational commitment has been positively related to the organizational outcomes; including job satisfaction, job

characteristic, and organizational characteristic. The present study attempts to explore the relationship between the job satisfaction and organizational commitment of academic staff in private academic institutes in Sri Lanka. Little research with respect to organizational commitment such as affective, normative and continuance commitment has been conducted in the academic sector in Sri Lanka, especially with special reference to the academics in private higher education sector. Researchers seek to study the relationship between the job satisfaction and organizational commitment of academic staff in private academic institutes in Sri Lanka.

## 2. Research Problem

The indicators of the quality of education demonstrate not only the qualitative aspects of the education, but also the environment conducive to create knowledge and to make use of knowledge in the economy. Higher quality of education can be achieved only by having a staff who are motivated and committed to what they do. It is the usual perception that when the staff is committed to what they do, it will positively impact on their job performance, service quality and the success of the organization. Hence, it is vital to identify the importance of employees' organizational commitment achieved through job satisfaction in private higher education sector in Sri Lanka.

Moreover, people now build careers across organizations and display loyalty to themselves, their skills, their professions, and their project teams (Bradach, 1997). Commitment helps ensure that employees do what is right. Organizations are concerned about the commitment of their employees because their success depends upon employee dedication. With a leaner workforce, absenteeism and tardiness become significant problems. If employees become less committed to organizations because of a lack of reciprocity, they will channel their commitment elsewhere. Despite the importance of studying commitment, little research has been devoted to a depth study of the impact of employee perceived job satisfaction, job characteristic, organizational characteristic and role on organizational commitment. The primary purpose of this research is to identify the relationship between Job Satisfaction and Organizational Commitment.

This knowledge helps institutes better understand and appreciate employee preferences when developing programmes and policies designed to influence employee job commitment through increased job satisfaction. Accordingly, the research problem for this study would be, Is there any relationship between job satisfaction and organizational commitment in private higher education institutes in Sri Lanka?

## 3. Objectives of the Study

This research study expected to achieve the following objectives.

1. General objective: To identify the relationship between Employee Satisfaction and Organizational Commitment.
2. Specific objective: To assess the current status of Employee Satisfaction of the employees.
3. Specific objective: To assess the current status of Organizational Commitment of the employees.

## 4. Literature Review

Job satisfaction can be defined as the extent to which people like or dislike their jobs (Spector, 1997). It is an employee's affective reaction to a job, based on a comparison between actual outcomes and desired outcomes (Mosadeghrad et al., 2008). In some literature the Job satisfaction is known as how pleased a person is with his or her work, and hence the concept of job satisfaction has been defined as how people feel about their jobs and different aspects of their jobs (Spector, 1997). Some researchers have claimed that the job satisfaction is a product of the determinants that lie in the job itself, if they reside in the worker's cognitive mind, or if satisfaction is a result of an interaction between the employee's psychological mind and the work environments (Locke, 1969; Spector, 1997).

According to Misener (1996) job satisfaction is commonly recognized as a multi-layered construct that includes employees' feelings about a variety of both intrinsic and extrinsic job elements. Intrinsic elements of job satisfaction, derived from internally mediated rewards, including the job itself and opportunities for personal growth and accomplishment; and extrinsic elements of job satisfaction, include externally mediated rewards such as satisfaction with pay and benefits, company policies and support, supervision, co-workers, job security and chances for promotion.

As per the previous studies there are nine most common job satisfaction domains are salaries and benefits, recognition and promotion, management and supervision, co-workers, task requirement, organization policies, working conditions, nature of the job and job security (Mosadeghrad et al., 2008). Also some researchers cited that nine facts of job satisfaction as pay, promotion, supervision, benefits, contingent rewards, operating procedures, co-workers, nature of the work and communication (Spector, 1997).

When referring to the concept of organizational commitment, it can be defined as a psychological state that characterizes the employee's relationships with the organization and has implications for the decision to continue membership in the organization (Meyer & Allen, 1997). According to same authors organizational commitment can be differentiated into three components; including 'Affective Commitment', 'Continuance Commitment' and 'Normative Commitment'.

Affective commitment refers to employees' perceptions of their emotional attachment to their organization and its goals (Meyer et al., 2002). It has been identified that employees with high affective attachment to organization

have strong motivation to contribute to the organization goals because they see them as theirs (Shore & Tetrick, 1991). Kate and Masako (2002) have identified that individual and organizational factors may influence the level of 'Affective Commitment'. Individual factors consists of factors such as personality, values orientation, education or age, while organizational factors include believing that employee's roles and job goals are clearly defined and receive management support. 'Continuance Commitment' refers to cognitive attachment between employees and their organizations because of the costs associated with leaving the organization (Meyer et al., 2002; Kate & Masako, 2002). It is based on the assumption that individuals do not leave an organization if they would lose their benefits such as take a pay cut, and incur job search expenses and risk of being unemployed (Murray, 1991). The main factors that may lead to 'Continuous Commitment' include the level of investment employees have accumulated in an organization and lack of alternative jobs outside the organization. If employees identify that there are less work opportunities exist outside their organizations, the perceived costs of leaving current organizations will be higher, and they will ripen a stronger sense of continuance commitment to their organizations (Meyer et al., 1993). 'Normative Commitment' represents typical feelings of obligation to remain with an Organization (Meyer et al., 2002). Accordingly 'Normative Commitment' is based on an ideology or a sense of obligation; employee feels obligated to stay with the organization as it is the moral and right thing to do. The factors that may influence the level of 'Normative Commitment' are education, age and related factors. According to Kate and Masako (2002), 'Normative Commitment' will be based on organization investment in an employee who then feels a 'moral' obligation to stay with the organization, also based on employee's social or cultural norms and believes that one should be loyal to one's organization.

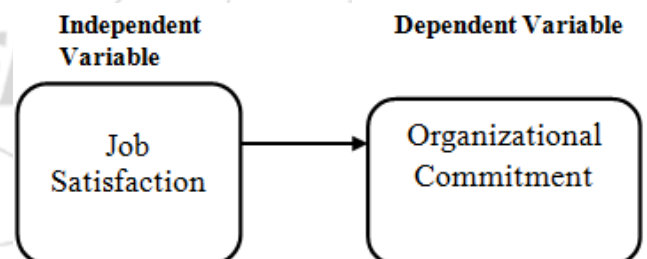
Considering the past literature, most of the researches have observed that there is a positive relationship between the 'Job Satisfaction' and 'Organizational Commitment'. The literature suggests that the job satisfaction is forerunner to organizational commitment where as some researchers have observed that high level of organizational commitment cause job satisfaction which is an inverse relationship (Mosadeghrad et al, 2008). The study by Mosadeghrad et al. (2008), have witnessed an asymmetric relationship where satisfaction had a stronger effect on commitment than the inverse. The relationship deriving from satisfaction to organizational commitment is much stronger than the relationship running in the other way. Furthermore, correlation analysis of this study revealed that job satisfaction dimensions such as nature of the job, management and supervision, task requirement, co-workers, job security, and recognition and promotion had more effect on employees' organizational commitment. When considering the individual variables, it was found that the nature of the work, co-workers, and management and supervision had the most effect on 'Affective Commitment'. Also, management and supervision, nature of work and job security had the most effect on 'Continuance Commitment'. Finally, it has been revealed

that, nature of the job and co-workers had the most effect on 'Normative Commitment' as well. The researchers besides suggest that, even though the two variables are considered highly interrelated; they can be both positively and negatively correlated. An employee can have positive feelings towards the organization, its values and objectives, but at the same time he or she can be unsatisfied with the job (Meyer et al., 2002).

When reviewing the significance of the job satisfaction and commitment, some of the research outcomes indicate that satisfied employees tend to be committed to an organization, and employees who are satisfied and committed are more likely to attend work, stay with an organization, arrive at work on time, perform well and engage in behaviors helpful to the organization (Aamodt, 2007). Meyer and Allen (2002), determined that employees with high levels of organizational commitment had job satisfaction, low levels of work-home conflicts, and low levels of work stress (Meyer et al., 2002).

## 5. Conceptual Framework

Independent variable and dependent variables are used by the researcher in order to develop conceptual framework. This conceptual framework is logically developed, designed and explained. According to the primary objective of this study, to identify the relationship between job satisfaction and organizational commitment in private higher educational institutes, job satisfaction is selected as independent variable and organizational commitment as dependent variable.



Source: Researchers' original construction

### 5.1 Hypothesis

Based on the above mentioned conceptual framework, below mentioned hypothesis developed by the researchers to achieve research objectives.

- H<sub>0</sub>: There is no relationship between job satisfaction and organizational commitment
- H<sub>1</sub>: There is a relationship between job satisfaction and organizational commitment

## 6. Research Methodology

For the ease of execution the researchers selected five private higher education institutes in Colombo District. From each institute samples of 20 lecturers were selected using simple random sampling technique. Simple random sampling was adopted by researchers. This study is a quantitative research. Researchers utilized a questionnaire

to collect the data needed to achieve the above mentioned objectives. Also they have used standard questionnaires to measure job satisfaction which is known as Minnesota Job Satisfaction Scale and organizational commitment was measured through Allen and Mayer Organizational Commitment Scale. Current study was conducted in a natural setting where the work proceeds normally. No any artificial or contrived setting was created where none of the variables were controlled by the researchers in this study. The data was collected from the individual lecturers of five reputed academic institutions in Colombo District and unit of analysis of this study is individual.

Sekaran (2009) mentioned that a study can be done in which data are gathered just once, perhaps over a period of days or weeks or months, in order to answer a research question. Such studies are called one shot or cross sectional studies. Data collection with respect to this particular research was targeted to be a one month from September 2016 to October 2016 period of time. Therefore this study was cross sectional in nature.

This questionnaire was distributed to 100 lecturers and the entire questionnaires were returned with 100% response rate. The data was analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS 17) software to ensure that the relevant issues are examined comprehensively. Both simple and advanced statistical tools and methods were used whenever appropriate for analyzing the relationship among the variables in the current research model using a deductive approach. The data analysis consists with univariate and bivariate analysis.

## 7. Analysis and Discussion

### 7.1 Reliability Testing

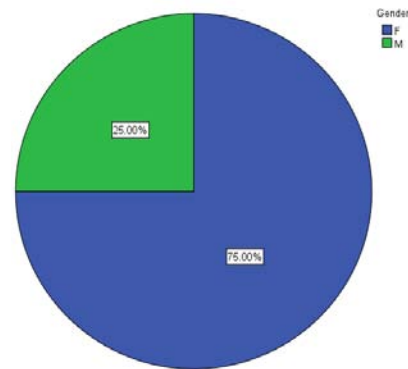
For testing the internal consistency of the questionnaire the Cronbach's coefficient alpha was used. The results of Cronbach's alpha test are shown in the table 1. All the alpha values are well above the rule of thumb of .7 for a reliable scale, which suggests that the internal reliability of each instrument and sub instrument is satisfactory.

**Table 1: Cronbach's Alpha Coefficients**

Dimensions	Cronbach's Alpha
Job Satisfaction	0.925
Organizational Commitment	0.701

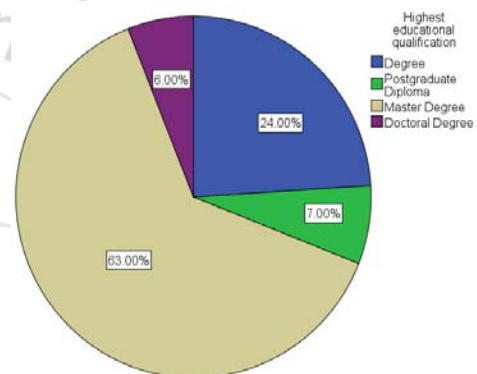
Cronbach's alpha if item deleted coefficients proved that there was no opportunity to further improve the reliability of the measure since Cronbach's alpha if item deleted coefficients of the items were less than the Cronbach's alpha coefficients of the measure.

### 7.2 Data Presentation and Analysis



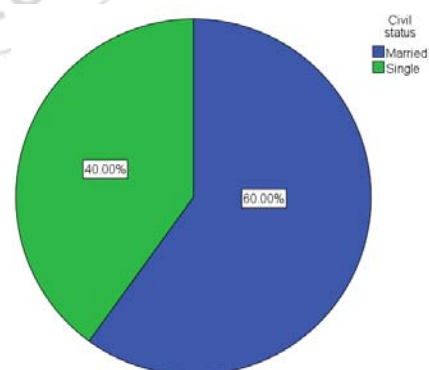
**Figure 1: Gender Distribution of the Respondents**

As figure 1 shows that the majority of lecturers, 75% of the sample represents female. 25% of the samples were male lecturers.



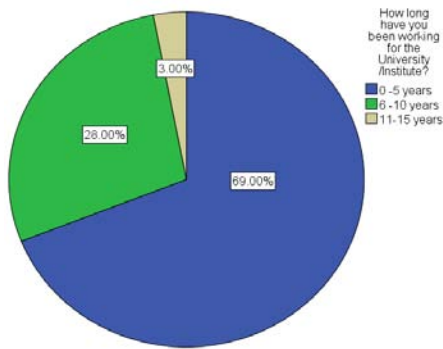
**Figure 2: Distribution of the Educational Qualifications of the Respondents**

According to the Figure 02, 63% of the respondents were Master degree holders and 24% represents bachelor's degree holders where 7% completed their postgraduate diploma qualification and 6% have their PhD qualification.



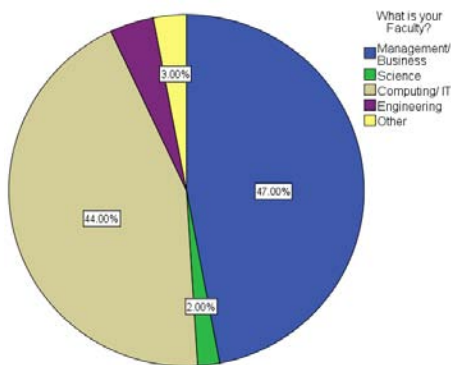
**Figure 3: Distribution of the Civil Status of the Respondents**

Figure 03 shows that 60% of the respondents are married and 40% of the respondents are unmarried.



**Figure 4:** Distribution of the Service Period of the Respondents

Figure 04 shows that 69% of the respondents' service period is 0-5 years and 28% of the respondents' service period is 6-10 years. Out of 100 respondents 3% represent 11-15 years service period.



**Figure 5:** Distribution of the Faculty of the Respondents

Figure 05 represents that 47% of the respondents belongs to the Faculty of Management/ Business. 44% of the respondents belong to Faculty of Computing/ IT. 4% belongs to Faculty of Engineering and 3% represent the lecturers from other faculties. Minority of respondents which is 2% belongs to Faculty of Science.

### 7.3 Univariate Analysis

The frequency distribution analysis was made for the variables individually.

**Table 2:** Descriptive Statistics for Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction		
N	Valid	100
	Missing	0
Mean		3.63
Median		4.00
Mode		4
Std. Deviation		.787
Variance		.619
Skewness		-.251
Std. Error of Skewness		.241
Kurtosis		-.262
Std. Error of Kurtosis		.478
Minimum		2

Job satisfaction		
N	Valid	100
	Missing	0
Mean		3.63
Median		4.00
Mode		4
Std. Deviation		.787
Variance		.619
Skewness		-.251
Std. Error of Skewness		.241
Kurtosis		-.262
Std. Error of Kurtosis		.478
Minimum		2
Maximum		5

The frequency distribution analysis was completed for the main variable of Job Satisfaction. As indicated in table 02, the mean value of the distribution is 3.63 and the standard deviation is 0.787. The skewness is -0.251 of the distribution and kurtosis is -0.262 of the distribution.

According to the below table, around 92% of participants are satisfied with their organization. While around 8% of participants experienced moderate level of satisfaction with their organization.

Job satisfaction					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Somewhat Satisfied	8	8.0	8.0	8.0
	Satisfied	32	32.0	32.0	40.0
	Very Satisfied	49	49.0	49.0	89.0
	Extremely Satisfied	11	11.0	11.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

**Table 3:** Descriptive Statistics for Organizational Commitment

Organizational Commitment		
N	Valid	100
	Missing	0
Mean		3.31
Median		3.00
Mode		3
Std. Deviation		.581
Variance		.337
Skewness		-.791
Std. Error of Skewness		.241
Kurtosis		3.083
Std. Error of Kurtosis		.478
Minimum		1
Maximum		4

The frequency distribution analysis was completed for the next main variable of Organizational Commitment. As indicated in table 03, the mean value of the distribution is

3.31 and the standard deviation is 0.581. The skewness is -.791 of the distribution and kurtosis is 3.083 of the distribution.

Organizational Commitment					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Not Satisfied	2	2.0	2.0	2.0
	Satisfied	63	63.0	63.0	65.0
	Very Satisfied	35	35.0	35.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

According to the table 4.13, around 98% of participants are demonstrated organizational commitment. While around 2% of participants experienced poor organizational commitment.

#### 7.4 Bivariate analysis

The Bivariate analysis involved simultaneous analysis of data measured on two variables. This analysis was made to determine the nature, direction and significance of the bivariate variables. The correlation analysis and the simple regression analysis statistical techniques were selected to do the above bivariate analysis

Correlations			
		Job satisfaction	Organizational Commitment
Job satisfaction	Pearson Correlation	1	.121
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.231
	N	100	100
Organizational Commitment	Pearson Correlation	.121	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.231	
	N	100	100

For this analysis the job satisfaction is correlated against the organizational commitment scores. According to the table 6 the correlation coefficient is .121 (2tailed test). This is a positive value and it indicates that the relationship between two variables are weak. Since the significance is 0.231 cannot reject the null hypothesis because it is more than 0.05. Therefore null hypothesis is accepted. According to the findings there is no relationship between job satisfaction and organizational commitment of academic staff in private academic institutes in Sri Lanka.

### 8. Conclusion, Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

Since the job satisfaction level is in a higher rate as the mean value is 3.63. It can be concluded that the employees of the selected organizations are satisfied with their job. Organizational commitment level is 3.31 compared to the job satisfaction level commitment level of the employees are low. Majority of the respondents'

tenure with the organization also less than 5 years. Due to this fact organizational commitment level might be lower. From the analysis it has been discovered most of the workers are not satisfied with their salary. Management of the organization should take this fact into consideration and take corrective action which will help to enhance employees' commitment towards the organization.

This study was limited only to the Private Higher Education Institutes in Colombo District, Sri Lanka which represents that the scope of the study had got narrowed down. Furthermore, there were certain constrains relating to data collection where the respondents took a long period to reply for the given questionnaire. Most of the respondents were reluctant to give the required details and thus they did not submit the questionnaires on time. As a result of this issue, the number of data that expected in this study could not achieved initially and to overcome this limitation the researchers had to redistribute the questionnaires among the selected sample. Apart from the limitations presented with the respondents, some of the limitations were raised from the management of certain higher educational institutes, where they did not allow the researchers to carry out the survey among their employees as it can be led to damage the image and the dignity of the institute.

This study has been done based on the academics in private higher education institutions. Therefore, future researchers can do the same study based on the academics in public sector higher education institutions. Furthermore, researchers can conduct a study on the relationship between job satisfaction and organizational commitment of non-academic staff in both public and private higher education institutions.

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