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Article

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MANAGEMENT | RESEARCH ARTICLE

Organizational commitment: Does religiosity matter?

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Abstract: *Purpose*: The purpose of this study is to investigate the relationship between three dimensions of organizational commitment, namely; affective commitment, normative commitment, and continuance commitment. *Method*: Data were collected by the use of a structured questionnaire. Five hundred questionnaires were distributed and 306 usable questionnaires were collected back. Structural equation modeling was used to statistically test the model. We used SmartPLS V 2 software to assess measurement and structural model. *Findings and contribution*: The findings showed a positive relationship between religiosity, affective and normative commitment while no association was found between religiosity and continuance commitment. The study contributed to the domain of religion and organizational management by empirically testing the impact between the variables. To the best of the researchers' knowledge, there is no empirical study has been conducted on the said variables to date. *Implication*: Religion is a system of beliefs which effects attitude and behavior of the individual not only in society but also in work place. Keeping the religion and employees separate in work place is similar to keeping the mind away from the body. We believe that man is triune creature, thus organizations must encourage the people to bring their whole self in to give their maximum. *Limitation*: This study only focused on the higher educational institutes for gathering the data and ignored the other sectors, which limits the application of the findings on other sectors. Moreover, as the study was conducted in Pakistan where majority of the population belong to Islam, thus we can say the majority of respondents answered the survey by keeping the Islamic teaching in mind which made the limited generalizability of findings.

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PUBLIC INTEREST STATEMENT

Religion, being a system of beliefs attests its role in drawing behavior and attitude of the people. Religion is an important cultural factor to study because it is one of the most universal and influential social institutions that has a significant influence on people's attitudes, values, and behaviors at both personal and work life. By keeping in mind the importance of religiosity in work place, this study endeavored to investigate the impact of religiosity on organizational commitment. We find a positive association between the both factors and on the basis of finding we suggested some implications for practitioners.

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Subjects: Business, Management and Accounting; Social Sciences; Work & Organizational Psychology

Keywords: religiosity; affective commitment; normative commitment; continuance commitment; structural equation modeling

1. Introduction

The rapidly changing business environment has put a demand on the organizations to remain productive. Therefore, organizations are continuously striving to improve their processes. Organizations are aware of the fact that the competitiveness of business process depends on the human resources. Thus, retaining the competent employees in organization has become one of the major challenges for the organizations. Therefore, practitioners and academicians are in struggle to know the factors which are affecting organizational commitment (OC) of employees.

OC has become one of the tinted areas of research in organizational psychology since last couple of decades. Moreover, OC also helps to understand the psychological process of the individuals in an organization. Individuals, who are more committed to the organization are less likely to quite the organization, are more productive and make considerable efforts in favor of organization (Bouarif, 2015).

There has been a plethora of research on the predictors of OC, such as organizational culture (Joo & Lim, 2009; Sikorska-Simmons, 2005), leadership styles (Ahmadi, Ahmadi, & Zohrabi, 2012; Yahaya & Ebrahim, 2016), personality traits (Kumar & Bakhshi, 2010; Sharma, Sheel, & Vohra, 2013; Syed, Saeed, & Farrukh, 2015), organizational justice (Hassan, 2002), person-organization fit (Behery, 2009) and perceived organization support (Aubé, Rousseau, & Morin, 2007; Uçar & Ötken, 2010), however, a very few researcher has focused on the association between OC and religiosity. In a recent study, (Bouarif, 2015) called an empirical investigation between the religiosity and OC, therefore, this study endeavored to find causal relationship between the said variables.

Religion, being a system of beliefs attests its role in drawing behavior and attitude of the people. Bouarif (2015) quoted Mokhlis (2009), "Religion is an important cultural factor to study because it is one of the most universal and influential social institutions that has a significant influence on people's attitudes, values, and behaviors at both the individual and societal levels" (Mokhlis, 2009).

However, the studies on religion and organization theory are very few. A recent review of literature from 1950 to 2011 by Tracey (2012) revealed that there were just 86 papers published in the major 21management journals which engaged the religion to a greater or lesser extent (Tracey, 2012). It is unfortunate that management researchers have diligently avoided the most influential factor of organizations (Tracey, Phillips, & Lounsbury, 2014).

We believed that avoidance to such important element is really a dilemma, because religion is no more a "Hat" which can be taken off before entering to work place. Religious practices have become a formal part of corporate setting in some countries such as United States (Tracey, 2012).

Tracey et al. (2014) stated few barriers that hindered the researcher to involve in the study of religion in organization management theory (OMT). The first barrier they identified is "Religion as private affair," the scholars in OMT take religion as private affair which has nothing to do with the work life, especially in western culture, where it emerged during the pre-modernity era and the religion was separated from the business .This might be the reason that the scholar of OMT did not put efforts to study this important element (Tracey et al., 2014).

The second barrier which was identified is the myth that "importance of religion is declining," as mentioned above that the religion was separated from the business world which is in line with the secularization theory which claim that impact of religion on life has been in decline long time ago and the people has become less religious. Thus, putting efforts to study religion in organization is of no use.

The third explanation of the scarcity of research on religion and organization is, "not an appropriate subject of study" in OMT. Tracey et al. (2014) stated that the lack of research on religion and organization was the perception of the scholars that religion holds a marginal palace in OMT.

Since there has been a lack of interest and inclusion of religion in organizational studies, contrary to this, there have also been few attempts to study the religion and organization. (see e.g. Wilde, Geraty, Nelson, & Bowman, 2010). Furthermore, there are few areas which are considered to be more vital in which study of religion should be conducted and one of those areas is OC. Thus, this study is an attempt to disclose the impact of religiosity on OC.

2. Religiosity

Delener (1990) defined religiosity as "the degree to which specific beliefs in religious values and idea are held and practiced by an individual." Religiosity is also described as the faith that a person has in God (McDaniel & Burnett, 1990). Religiosity is a unique concept, especially in explaining organizational. This combination will result in a model that can be used to develop business activities that generate profits. In addition, the elements of religiosity, such as ethics and values, would be able to shape the individual attitudes and behaviors, so that in the exercise of their business is not only oriented to the achievement of profit. Thus, religiosity will play a role as a factor for stabilization of the social system in force in the community (Dodd & Gotsis, 2007).

2.1. Religiosity and organizational commitment

OC is a psychological attachment of the individual with their organization. According to Allen and Meyer (1996), this psychological linkages takes three different forms, affective commitment (AC), normative commitment, and continuance commitment. These types are discussed in next section

In organizations, religion has been linked in a greater sense of purpose among the employee of the organization (Delbcq, 2015), decision-making, ethical behavior, and over all organizational performance. Ferreira Vasconcelos (2009) argued, for instance, that managerial religious practices of prayer have the potential to act as a calming device and heighten the manager's capacity for self-control, appropriate behavior, and effective decision-making (Ferreira Vasconcelos, 2009).

People's workplace behavior is influenced by a number of factors, among them their family, religion, education, gender, culture, nationality, and society (Hage & Posner, 2015). Religious affiliation and the values associated with particular faith traditions necessarily influence the way that people think and behave, including their attitudes toward authority and nature of intra-personal relationships. Religion is a believe system which is woven into the work life of employees, and it serves as principle for reacting and interpreting many organizational experiences including the OC.

Vecchio (1980) stated that religious beliefs and values are predictor of OC; Similarly, Meyer and Allen (1991) exerted that religiosity influences the employees' perception regarding organizational goals and the desire of employees to retain the membership in organization. Prior researches have also found that religiosity influenced the job attitude of employees (Kutcher, Bragger, Rodriguez-Srednicki, & Masco, 2010).

Furthermore, Natlianis and Raja (2002) found that religiosity exerts a positive influence on job attitude such as loyalty, co-operation, obedience, and commitment. Religion influences a range of phenomena that are relevant to the workplace, from attitudes toward work in general to ethical decision-making to organizational citizenship behaviors.(Kutcher et al., 2010).

2.2. Religiosity and dimensions of organizational commitment

AC is emotional attachment of the employees with his/her organization (Allen & Meyer, 1996). AC is effected by three major factors, personal characteristics, work experiences, and structural characteristics and job related scenarios. Religious affiliation comes under the personal dispositions (Chusmir & Koberg, 1988; King & Williamson, 2005). It is unfortunate that there has been very less empirical studies which investigated the impact of religiosity on AC, thus it is not very clear about the association of religiosity with AC, either its positive or negative. However, it is subject to the environmental and contextual factors (Hackman & Oldham, 1976). From this we can hypothesize:

H1: Religiosity has a significant impact on affective commitment.

The second dimension of OC proposed by Allen and Mayer is normative commitment (NC). It is "an obligation to remain with an organization." Religiosity may affect the normative commitment through morality and religious values (Bouarif, 2015). Religion exert the importance of sense of duty, loyalty, and responsibility, thus, make individual to be committed to their workplace. "Normative commitment is formed through organizational socialization" (Roundy, 2009). This socialization may instill a set of normative pressures that emphasize obligation and duty to one's place of work. High religious people have higher level of moral sense which makes them to adopt the attitude, behavior, and decision which are based on their moral values (Bouarif, 2015). Therefore, the religious people are more likely to be morally committed to their workplace. Wiener (1982) stated that individuals who are normatively committed to their organization, they believe that it is the right and moral thing to do (Wiener,1982). Thus, from this we hypothesize that

H2: There is a significant relationship between religiosity and normative commitment.

The third component of OC proposed by Meyer and Allen (1991) is continuance commitment. Meyer and Allen (1991) defined continuance commitment as "an awareness of the costs associated with leaving the organization" and is based on a "need" to remain with an organization (Meyer & Allen, 1991). This type of commitment is more linked to the calculated cost. Continuance commitment is more instrumental. According to Allport and Ross (1967), people with low religiosity i.e. with high "extrinsic" religious motivation "use their religion." Extrinsic religious people are more relativists when it comes to making moral decisions or behave morally. Hence, they may place significant value on financial and material rewards that a job offers. Also, they may be more attached and dependent on the "perceived costs" of leaving or remaining in their organization. As a result, their commitment to their organization is calculated and may engage more in continuance commitment. Therefore, we hypothesize

H3: There is a significant relationship between religiosity and continuance commitment.

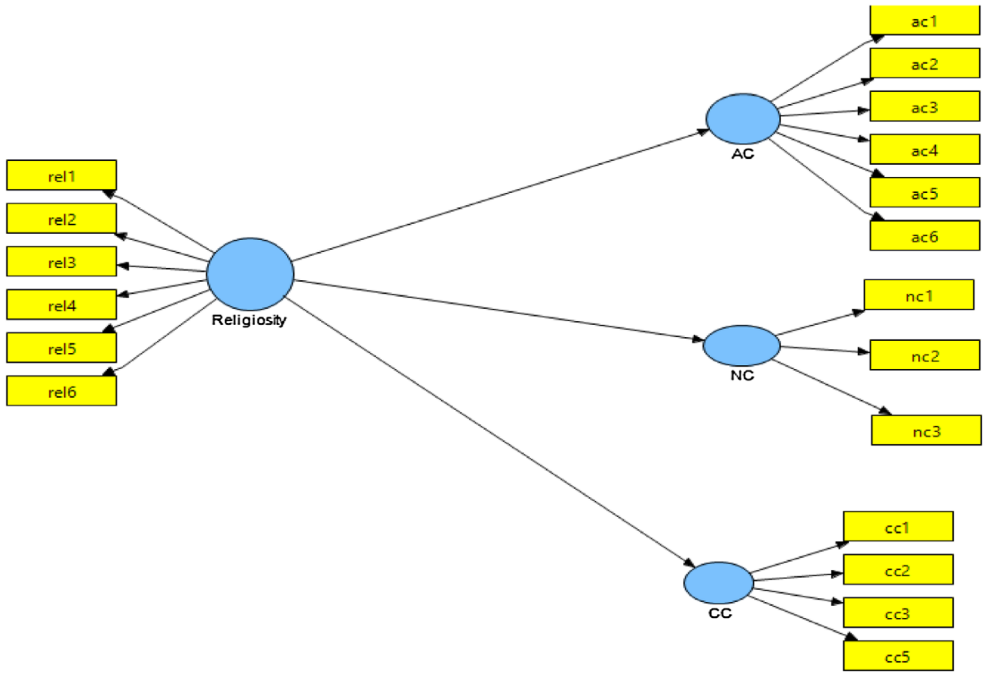
3. Measures

Religiosity (Mansori, 2012; Mokhlis, 2008; Meyer & Allen, 1991) commitment model was used to elicit responses about the three dimensions of OC.

3.1. Sample size and data collection

The target population is the deans of faculty/schools, professors, associate professors, and assistant professors of state run institutions of higher education located in Lahore and Islamabad, Pakistan. The sampling procedure is important for insuring the validity of the collected data as well as representation of the population in order to draw generalized conclusions on the entire population (Pedhazur & Schmelkin, 1991). This study utilizes a university faculty/school as a sampling frame which is the list of ultimate sampling entities. The sampling frame has been obtained from 20 state

Figure 1. Model of the study.



run universities. The population frame is consisted of more than 1,000 departments of universities, selected from public sector universities/degree awarding institutes in Pakistan. The survey questionnaires were sent to more than 500 faculty members. A total number of 306 responses were given by the respondents which made the response rate around 61.2%.

3.1.1. Analysis

This research utilized the partial least square SEM (PLS-SEM) tool for the assessments of measurement and structural model. The SmartPLS2.0 software (Ringle, Wende and Will, 2005) is used to execute the PLS-SEM analyses. The constructs in the study i.e. religiosity and three dimensions of organization commitment i.e. normative, affective, and continuance commitment were drawn as first order reflective constructs (Figure 1).

3.1.2. Measurement model

For assessing the quality criteria PLS algorithm was used by adopting path weighting scheme and the settings for parameters were fixed at 300 iterations. Internal consistency, composite reliability, average variance extraction convergent validity, and discriminant validity (Fornell-Larcker criterion) were assessed for the reflective measurement model. (Cenfetelli & Bassellier, 2009; Hair, Hult, Ringle, & Sarsted, 2014).The threshold values for factor leading are set as 0.5, for AVE values should be >0.50 and for composite reliability values should be greater than 0.70. All the threshold criteria were achieved, thus helping us to move for the evaluation of structural model. Tables 1 and 2 shows the values for quality criteria of measurement model.

3.2. Structural equation modeling

The assessment of the structural model includes the check for Multicollinearity the significance of path coefficients (bootstrapping) and R^2. We used SmartPLS version 2 to evaluate structural model (Table 3).

In order to check the Multicollinearity issue among the variable of the study we imported latent variable scores to IBM SPSS 22. The levels of collinearity are assessed by tolerance and variance inflation factor (VIF) values. A tolerance value of 0.20 or lower and VIF value of five and higher indicate a potential collinearity problem (Hair et al., 2014). The values on the Table 3 indicated no Multicollinearity issue.

Table 1. Measurement model quality criteria

1st order	Items	Loadings	AVE	CR	Cronbach α
Affective commitment			0.5783	0.8562	0.886
	ac1	0.8456	0.5638	0.8853	0.8437
	ac2	0.6864			
	ac3	0.4715			
	ac4	0.4781			
	ac5	0.5543			
	ac6	0.5139			
Normative commitment			0.5847	0.8073	0.7663
	nc1	0.6293			
	nc2	0.8105			
	nc3	0.8665			
Continuance commitment			0.5398	0.8229	0.7208
	cc1	0.8111			
	cc2	0.7617			
	cc3	0.509			
	cc5	0.7656			
Religiosity			0.5656	0.8859	0.8448
	rel1	0.7945			
	rel2	0.653			
	rel3	0.8224			
	rel4	0.8143			
	rel5	0.819			
	rel6	0.8678			

Table 2. Discriminant validity

	AC	CC	NC	Religiosity
AC	**0.818**			
CC	0.299	**0.722**		
NC	0.5773	0.3226	**0.776**	
Religiosity	0.283	0.2417	0.1397	**0.797**

Note: Diagonals represent the square root of the AVE while the other entries represent the squared correlations.

Table 3. Multicollinearity

Variables	Collinearity statistics	
	Tolerance	VIF
Religiosity	0.716	1.396
Normative	0.912	1.097
Continuance	0.657	1.522
Affective	0.678	1.091

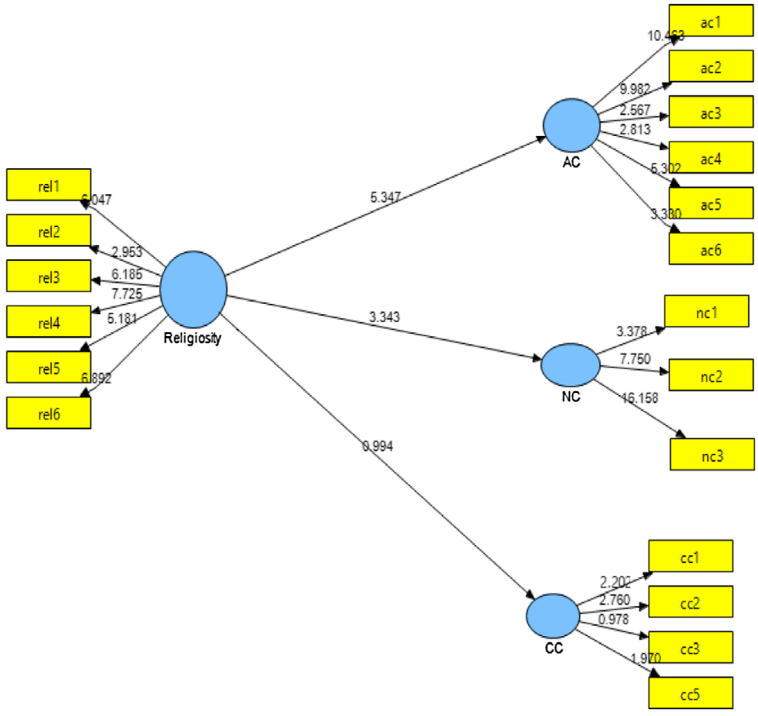
Table 4. R^2 values

Variable	R^2
Affective commitment	0.42
Normative commitment	0.35
Continuance commitment	0.026

Table 5. Hypothesis testing

	Beta	SE	*T* value	Decision
Religiosity -> AC	0.2748	0.0537	5.34	Supported
Religiosity -> CC	0.153	0.1579	0.99	Not supported
Religiosity -> NC	0.2095	0.0636	3.43	Supported

Figure 2. Bootstrapping results.



After passing the test of Multicollinearity, we further moved to check the model's predictive relevance. The R^2 value of the endogenous variables are shown in the Table 4.

3.3. Hypothesis testing

The relationship of structural model is determined by the path coefficient among the construct of the study (Hair et al., 2014).Critical values for two tailed and one tailed are 1.96 and 1.65, respectively. By the use of bootstrapping function of SmartPLS 2 we calculated the *t* statistics with 5,000 re-sampling as suggested by Hair et al. (2014) (Table 5, Figure 2).

4. Discussion

Results of bootstrap procedure of SmartPLS revealed a positive relationship between AC and religiosity ($\beta = 0.275$, $t = 5.347$), as stated before AC is an emotional attachment of the individual with his or her organization. Thus, we can conclude that the greater religiosity may increase the effective commitment of the individuals. Furthermore, findings also revealed a positive relationship between normative commitment and religiosity ($\beta = 0.209$, $t = 3.43$). As mentioned before that the normative

commitment is an obligation to remain with an organization. Religiosity influences the normative commitment through morality and religious values. Religion teaches the sense of duty, loyalty, responsibility, and set values which make an individual to be committed to his or her work place. Thus, religious people are high in moral sense and they adopt the attitudes, behavior, and actions on the basis of their moral values. Therefore, the religious people are more committed to their work.

As stated before continuance commitment is related to cost and benefits, Allen and Meyer, 1990 stated that low religious people may give significant value to financial and material rewards and benefits. However, the results of this study indicated a no relationship between the religiosity and continuance commitment ($\beta = 0.153$, $t = 0.99$). This might be because of the population trend, as the study was conducted in Pakistani culture, where most people belongs to Islam, and Islam gives importance to be kind to other, Quran says "Allah commands you to uphold justice and to do well to others and to give others." (16:90). Thus, working only for one's own sake is contradictory to the Islamic teaching.

5. Conclusion

The study of religion in OMT has been an ignored area of research; this study endeavored to fill this gap by investigating the impact of religiosity on the OC, one of the important construct in the organizational studies. Findings of study showed a positive impact on the AC and normative commitment, while no association was found between the continuance commitments. The significance and contribution of the study is discussed in the following sections.

5.1. Managerial implication and contribution

Religion is a system of believes which effect this attitude and behavior of the individual not only in society but also in work place. Keeping the religion and employees separate in work place is similar to keeping the mind away from the body. We believe that man is triune creature, thus organizations must encourage the people to bring their whole self.

In addition, despite the fact that religion plays an important role in people's lives, it is still considered as a topic to be avoided in organizational management. Thus, this article attempts to underline that religion, which is part of the personal characteristics of individuals, should take an important place in managerial studies. This study added a unique contribution in domain of religion and OMT by empirically attesting the importance of religion in organization.

5.2. Limitation and suggestion

Despite rigorous efforts this study holds some limitations. Firstly, study only focused on the higher educational institutes for gathering the data and ignored the other sectors, which limits the application of the findings on other sectors. Secondly the major limitation was the selection of population, as the study was conducted in Pakistan where majority of the population belong to Islam, thus we can say the majority of respondents answered the survey by keeping the Islamic teaching in mind which made the limited generalizability of findings.

5.3. Future research suggestions

It is strongly recommended that the future researches should be conducted in a multicultural and multi religion-based economies in order to have broader application of the findings. Furthermore, future researches should incorporate different dimensions of religiosity measure.

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