

Organizational Commitment and Leadership in Higher Education Institutions¹

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RESUMEN

El estudio propuesto tiene como objetivo determinar la relación que existe entre el liderazgo de los decanos de instituciones de educación superior y el compromiso organizacional docente en Colombia. Un estudio cuantitativo se llevará a cabo para determinar la relación que existe entre el tipo de liderazgo de los decanos y el compromiso organizacional. El cuestionario de liderazgo desarrollado por Bass (MLQ) en 1985 y el cuestionario de compromiso organizacional (OCQ) desarrollado por Meyer y Allen en 1999 se utilizarán para determinar la relación entre las variables. El estudio incluirá docentes de tiempo completo y cátedra de las Universidades Sergio Arboleda, CESA y Nacional de Colombia.

Palabras clave: compromiso organizacional, liderazgo, instituciones de educación superior

ABSTRACT

The proposed research aims to determine the relationship between dean's leadership and organizational commitment among faculty at universities in Colombia. A quantitative research design will guide the study to determine the relationship among leadership style of deans and organizational commitment. The multifactor leadership questionnaire (MLQ) developed by Bass in 1985 and the organizational commitment questionnaire (OCQ) developed by Meyer and Allen in 1999 will be the instruments administered to collect the data and to explain the relationship among the proposed variables. The study sample includes part-time and full-time faculty of the National University of Colombia, Sergio Arboleda University and CESA University located in the city of Bogotá, Colombia.

Key terms: organizational commitment, leadership, higher education institutions

JEL: I23

1. This article is the result of the research for the concept paper of the doctoral thesis leadership style, "Organizational commitment and burnout syndrome" of the PhD BA of North Central University. The final document was received on February 10th 2014 and approved on March 24th 2014.

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STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The policy set in the Sector Plan - Educational Revolution 2006 – 2010 was designed to improve the quality of education in the country of Colombia at all levels of education (preschool, preschool, elementary, middle and high) and intended that all students, regardless of their origin, social, economic and cultural situation, have opportunities to acquire knowledge, develop skills and values necessary to live, be productive and keep learning throughout life (Colombian Education Ministry, 2012). In higher education institutions the responsibility for attaining the goal of quality rests in their deans (Balyer, 2012; Moman, 2012) that like managers of any organization take administrative actions to comply with an everyday changing environment (Blayer, 2012; Moman, 2012; Navickaitė, 2013). Deans of higher education institutions need to have committed faculty that will achieve the goals effectively (Aydin, Sarier, & Uysal, 2013). The dean's leadership style influence the degree of organizational commitment of faculty (Khasawneh, Omari, & Abu-Tineh, 2012). The leadership style known as transformational leadership is widely used among higher institutions leaders (Onorato, 2013) and has a positive effect in organizational commitment of faculty (Khasawneh, et al., 2012). There is a need to explore the correlation of transformational leadership and organizational commitment in higher education institutions to increase school's performance and compliance with government regulations (Avolio, 2004; Blayer, 2012; Khasawneh, et al., 2012; Moman, 2012). This identification would allow Colombian higher education institutions to be accountable for the educational service they provide to users and also perform self-examination of their institutions and academic programs in an effective way (Colombian Education Ministry, 2012).

PURPOSE STATEMENT

The purpose of the study is to determine the relationship dean's leadership style and organizational commitment of faculty of Colombian higher education institutions. The research will be quantitative in nature and will use the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) and the Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ) as data gathering method. The participant faculty in the study will be selected from the School of Business of the Sergio Arboleda University, CESA University and the Accounting School of the National University of Colombia. The data will be analyzed using the statistic measures: means, standard deviations, Pearson correlations and stepwise regression.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The purpose of the future research is to determine the relationship of dean's leadership behavior and organizational commitment in Colombian higher education institutions. The independent variable leadership will be defined as the characteristic that inspires and motivates employees. The dependent variable will be defined as organizational commitment (the loyalty that faculty have toward the institution).

1. The researcher will address the following questions, null hypothesis and alternative hypotheses.

What, if any, correlation exists between leadership style and organizational commitment among faculty of higher education institutions?

H1o: There is no correlation between leadership style and organizational commitment among faculty of higher education institutions.

H1a: A statistically significant correlation exists between leadership style and organizational commitment among faculty of higher education institutions.

2. What, if any, differences exist with respect to organizational commitment and leadership style between public and private universities among faculty of higher education institutions?

H1o: There is no difference between leadership style and organizational commitment between public and private universities among faculty of higher education institutions.

H1a: There is a difference between leadership style and organizational commitment between public and private universities among faculty of higher education institutions.

RESEARCH METHOD

The study will be quantitative in nature because it will use surveys to collect data. The sample population will be comprised of 216 faculty's members of Colombian higher education institutions at the Sergio Arboleda University, CESA University and the National University in Bogotá, Colombia. They will answer the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) developed by Bass in 1985 to determine the types of leadership styles and the Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ) developed by Meyer and Allen in 1990 to determine organizational commitment. The research design is consistent with several studies regarding transformational leadership that used MLQ (Ali, 2011; Avolio, 2004; Bass & Avolio, 1989) and studies regarding organizational commitment that used OCQ (Ali, 2011). However, the population sample depends on the willingness of faculty to participate in the study.

The quantitative approach is more appropriate for the research because it will use surveys as data collection method. Surveys are tools that are easy for the participants to access. Furthermore, the participants are part time faculty and often do not have enough time to dedicate to an interview, making the interview unfeasible. The data collected will help to explain the relationship between transformational leadership and organizational commitment among faculty of Colombian higher education institutions.

BRIEF LITERATURE REVIEW

In the proposed quantitative correlational study, the direct effects the variable of faculty perception of deans' leadership has on organizational commitment of faculty will be determined. The literature review section includes a critical analysis and synthesis of relevant studies organizational commitment in higher education institutions and dean's leadership and its relationship to organizational commitment. The journal articles for the literature review were obtained using on-line databases such as EBSCOhost Electronic Journal Service and redalyc.org (network of the scientific journals of Latin America, the Caribbean, Spain, and Portugal). Key search terms used to find the literature were (a) leadership in higher education, (b) dean's leadership, (c) organizational commitment in higher education and (d). The most relevant literature was chosen from the peer review articles. The information of this literature review was organized by topics, (a) organizational commitment in higher education institutions, (b) leadership of deans in higher education and, (c) leadership and organizational commitment in education.

ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Organizational commitment is the attachment to the organization, the place where employees feel identified, involved, and members of a group (Meyer & Allen, 1990). Commitment of faculty to higher education institutions can be explained by several variables. Organizational commitment is related to roles, salary, and faculty's feelings toward some of the aspects of the organization. An increase in role ambiguity and role conflict decreases organizational commitment (Gormley & Kennerly, 2010). Faculty members' organizational commitment goes up with increases in salary, because they feel more valued based on salary (Khan, Shah, Dajjad, Khan & Khan, 2013; O'Meara, 2014). Faculty can feel satisfied with teaching and researching thereby increasing their organizational commitment (Bayona, Goñi, & Madorrán, 2009). In addition, faculty who work in a pleasant atmosphere, where they perceive positive organizational support (POS) (Baotham, 2011), socialization of campus values (Lawrence, Ott, & Bell, 2012), and where they notice they have opportunities for promotion and advancement, possess positive organizational commitment (Bayona, et al., 2009). Likewise, psychological empowerment increases organizational commitment (Choong, Wong, & Lau, 2011). Psychological empowerment is defined as the personal sense in the workplace, where employees feel they perform a meaningful job that has an impact on others and that allows them to show their competence and self-determination (Choong et al., 2011). Finally, a strong organizational culture increases organizational commitment because workers feel more identified with the organization (Shah, Salih, Menon & Phulpoto, 2012). Beyond these factors, a number of demographic variables such as length of employment, designation within the institution, age and gender have been studied in relation to organizational commitment as well.

Research regarding several demographic variables that influence positively or negatively organizational commitment have been conducted revealing remarkable findings. Length of employment affects organizational commitment (Khan et al., 2011). For example, faculty members who have more years of teaching show more organizational commitment (Khan et al., 2013). Similarly, as faculty's designation within the institution increases, so does the organizational commitment (Khan et al., 2013). This means that organizational commitment increases as faculty are being promoted from lecturer, to assistant professor, to associate professor, and to professor (Khan et al., 2013). More interestingly, age and gender influence organizational commitment. Women showed a higher degree of commitment than men did in similar circumstances presumably because they are more eager to keep their jobs and have lower expectations than men (Fisher, Boyle, & Fulop, 2010; Tabbodi, 2009). Studies regarding the influence of age show contradictory results. Tabbodi (2009) and Farooq, Irfan, and Farooq (2011) concluded that young employees showed more organizational commitment than their older counterparts did because they want to be useful to the organization and keep their jobs. However, Carver, Candela, and Gutierrez (2011) found that the veterans' generation (born 1925-1945) in a nursing faculty showed more organizational commitment than the baby boomer generation (born 1946-1964) and their Generation X counterparts (born 1961-1980). Demographic variables such as years of employment and gender increase organizational commitment. However, results of studies regarding the effect of age in organizational commitment are inconclusive.

In a study regarding organizational commitment, 125 faculty members of Pakistan universities answered the OCQ to determine if selected personal characteristics, such as age, tenure, marital status, level of education, facets of job satisfaction, and the two dimensions of organizational justice (distributive justice and procedural justice), significantly explained variance in the organizational commitment of Pakistani university teachers (Chughtai & Zafar, 2006). The participants responded the OCQ developed by Mowday, Porter, and Steers in 1982, the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire Short Form developed by Weiss, Dawis, England, and Lofquist in 1967, the Distributive Justice Index developed by Price and Mueller in 1986, and the procedural justice scale taken

from previous research conducted by McFarlin and Sweeny in 1992 (Chughtai & Zafar, 2006). For the purpose of the study, distributive justice was defined as the perception of fairness of the compensation of faculty and procedural justice was defined as the perception of the means that determined compensation (Chughtai & Zafar, 2006). However, one of the limitations of the study was that it did not examine other organizational outcomes such as absenteeism and citizenship.

The data were analyzed using multiple regression analysis with stepwise regression. The results showed that organizational commitment was predicted by distributive justice; trust in management, and procedural justice. The results were also consistent with Lawrence, Ott, and Bell's (2012) research and revealed that organizational commitment was positively related to job satisfaction and personal characteristics of age, tenure, marital status, and level of education as a group. Furthermore, organizational commitment was negatively related to turnover intentions and positively related to satisfaction with the immediate supervisor (Chughtai & Zafar, 2006).

Chughtai and Zafar (2006) indicated that organizational commitment was positively related to faculty satisfaction with the immediate supervisor. The immediate boss often represents the organization to faculty. Therefore, the immediate boss's attitudes and actions will be interpreted as the institution's attitudes and actions (Chughtai & Zafar, 2006). Faculty satisfaction increases with the immediate boss's care and support because he or she builds their trust. The immediate boss's honest leadership, personal interest, and trust in faculty increase their satisfaction as well (Chughtai & Zafar, 2006). The immediate supervisor is also in charge of determining the work of the faculty. Enriching work that embodies challenging, interesting, and motivating tasks will improve satisfaction. Finally, the immediate boss's decision regarding training opportunities for faculty will enhance faculty perception regarding care and support by the organization. Leaders within higher education institutions should try to raise awareness among immediate supervisors regarding the importance of good leadership in order to increase faculty organizational commitment (Chughtai & Zafar, 2006).

Thus, organizational commitment of faculty can be explained by organizational justice, personal characteristics, and job satisfaction (Chughtai & Zafar, 2006). Likewise, facets of job satisfaction, such as security, supervision, and training opportunities, increased organizational commitment (Chughtai & Zafar, 2006). Organizational justice explains positive variance in organizational commitment. Additional research about other variables that influence the organizational commitment of faculty is needed to develop higher levels of organizational commitment in higher education and decrease turnover of faculty (Chughtai & Zafar, 2006).

The positive organizational commitment of faculty in higher education institutions increases employees' attitudes toward the job and improves their performance and effectiveness (Baotham, 2011; Jing & Zhang, 2014; Maldonado-Radillo, Guillén & Carranza, 2012). Faculty who showed normative commitment had an active participation in work-related tasks and reported high work achievement related to teaching and researching because they believed that is their responsibility toward the institution (Jing & Zhang, 2014). Normative commitment is defined as the obligation to remain in the organization because of normative pressures (Meyer & Allen, 2001). The understanding of organizational commitment outcomes is important for leaders and policymakers, because they can improve working conditions and the wellbeing of faculty by increasing organizational commitment in institutions of higher education (Baotham, 2011). In addition, improvement plans can be developed that identify dissatisfaction factors in the faculty's job so those factors can be suppressed, thus increasing job satisfaction and organizational commitment (Baotham, 2011).

Faculty levels of organizational commitment vary depending on the type of university. Faculty members working in private universities are less committed to the organization than faculty working at public universities (Zia & Tufail 2011). In a 2012 study by Maldonado-Radillo et al. (2012), 63 faculty and 93 administrative employees of a public university answered the OCQ proposed by Meyer and Allen (1990) in order to determine their organizational commitment to a public university. The data were analyzed using statistical measures of means, medians, frequencies, and ANOVA. The researchers found that the participants in the study felt very satisfied with their employer. However, the faculty felt more satisfied than did administrative employees. High levels of satisfaction are desirable, because they help to maintain the sustainability and collective capacity of the institution (Maldonado-Radillo et al., 2012). Nevertheless, the researchers did not select the sample in a probabilistic way, and it is possible that the population was not well represented in the sample.

LEADERSHIP OF DEANS IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Deans of higher education institutions hold a first-level position as supervisors in the organization, and that puts them between faculty and senior administrators (Sypawka, Mallet & McFadden, 2010). Their academic and administrative roles include problem solving on a daily basis, knowledge of changes in the educational world, maintaining academic integrity, and counseling and advising students (Singh & Purohit, 2010). In addition, a dean's role includes recruiting high-quality faculty, providing faculty preparation programs, and helping build the curriculum (Rowland, 2009). They possess knowledge about the faculty's jobs and observe their work in order to increase productivity and decrease turnover (Hamdia & Phadett, 2011; Sypawka et al., 2010). An important aspect of their job is that deans lead the faculty and programs and complement the leadership of the president who leads the organization toward achieving its vision (Bradford, 2010).

Deans use different types of leadership in their roles to accomplish their objectives (Bradford, 2010). Some deans use one of the four styles of leadership: structural, human resource, political, and symbolic. The structural style focuses on formal relationships, the human resource style emphasizes the needs of the individual, the political style considers negotiating and compromising, and the symbolic style centers on organizational culture (Sypawka et al., 2010). The human resource and structural styles are important for deans in order to increase the faculty's efficiency. The human resource style is employee centered and increases morale and productivity. The structural style concentrates on management, and deans set clear directions, make employees accountable for results, and resolve the organization's problems using policies and rules (Sypawka et al., 2010).

Moreover, deans can use a transformational, transactional, or laissez faire leadership style in performing their duties (Jones & Rudd, 2008). In their quantitative study regarding the leadership style of deans, Jones and Rudd (2008) explored the utilization of transactional, transformational, and laissez-faire leadership as well as the elements of transactional and transformational leadership. Fifty-six deans of colleges of agricultural and life sciences at land-grant universities answered the multifactor leadership questionnaire (MLQ) to assess leadership style. The researchers calculated means, *N*, and standard deviations in order to find the leadership style scores, which ranged from 0 to 4, where 0 = not used at all, 0-1 = used minimally, 1-2 = used once in a while, 2-3 = used fairly often, and 3-4 = used frequently (Jones & Rudd, 2008). Jones and Rudd (2008) calculated the means for transformational leadership, transactional leadership, and laissez faire leadership and obtained scores of 3.28, 2.24, and 1 respectively, showing that transformational leadership was the most used among female and male deans. The researchers found no relationship between leadership style and gender or ethnicity. Transformational leadership is a desir-

able leadership style, because leaders using this style are more effective and successful (Bass, 1985). Further studies regarding additional factors that influence leadership style are needed to increase success and viability of programs (Jones & Rudd, 2008).

The future of higher education institutions depends on effective leadership of deans (Sypawka et al., 2010). Deans need to use their leadership to inspire faculty to achieve their potential and organizational goals and increase organizational commitment (Gormley & Kennerly, 2010; Sypawka et al., 2010). In addition, deans need to lead programs and overcome administrative, political, and economic challenges for the organization to be successful (Sypawka et al., 2010). One of the leadership styles that is more successful and effective is transformational leadership (Jones & Rudd, 2008). Transformational leadership promotes teamwork, collaboration, and new ways of problem solving, and pursues common goals and values (Jones & Rudd, 2008). Higher institutions that have transformational leaders have a promising future full of success and continued viability (Jones & Rudd, 2008). Some deans have an absence of leadership, or laissez-faire, which negatively affects their subordinates' satisfaction, effectiveness, role clarity, and performance (Hinkin & Schriesheim, 2008). Nevertheless, the leadership style of deans allows them to respond to the situations they encounter in their organizations, guide their subordinates, use resources (Ahmad, 2011), and accomplish the organization's objectives (Sypawka et al., 2010).

LEADERSHIP AND ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT IN EDUCATION

Organizational success lies within the leadership styles of their leaders because they are responsible for the efficacy and performance of their subordinates (Saeed, Mahmood, & Ahmad, 2013). Regardless of the economic sector in which employees work, leadership influences their organizational commitment (Rehman, Shareef, Mahmood, & Ishaque., 2012; Saeed et al., 2013). For example, the organizational commitment of faculty in higher education institutions is related to the leadership style of their leader (Saeed et al., 2013; Tabbodi, 2009). The faculty's organizational commitment plays a key role in the university's success, because committed faculty perform better in their roles as teachers and researchers, thus enhancing students' and programs' success (Nordin, 2012).

Limited research regarding leadership and its relation to organizational commitment has focused on the educational sector in developing countries. Rehman et al. (2012) explored the leadership perception of academic and administrative employees in the Pakistani educational sector and its relation to organizational commitment. One hundred and one academics and administrative staff answered the MLQ developed by Avolio in 1997 and the OCQ developed by Mowday in 1979 to determine if transactional and transformational leadership were positively related to organizational commitment (Rehman et al., 2012). The data were analyzed calculating a Pearson correlation, means, standard deviations, R , R^2 , ANOVA and t -test in order to determine the correlation among variables. The transformational leadership style was more positively related to organizational commitment ($R = .327$) than transactional leadership ($R = .310$). However, there was no preference among managers between the transactional ($M = 3.52$, $SD = .484$) and transformational ($M = 3.5276$, $SD = .65737$) leadership styles. Finally, leadership styles explained a significant proportion of variance in organizational commitment ($R^2 = .177$) (Rehman et al., 2012). In conclusion, transformational and transactional leadership styles influenced organizational commitment in higher education institutions. Nevertheless, the study presented some limitations, because other factors, like work environment, competition, population, and demographics were not covered in the research (Rehman et al., 2012).

The organizational commitment of the faculty has a close relationship with the quality of the programs, because committed faculty perform better and work harder for goal achievement

(Yu, 2013). Furthermore, the relationship between leadership and organizational commitment is mediated by several constructs, such as goal setting, self-efficacy, goal self-concordance (Yu, 2013), and emotional intelligence (Nordin, 2012). A quantitative study regarding mediators of the relationship between leadership and organizational commitment in higher education institutions was conducted by Yu (2013). Six hundred a seventy five deans and faculty who worked in 68 Chinese universities answered the transformational leadership questionnaire (TLQ) developed by Li and Shin in 2005, the job related questionnaire proposed by Sheldon and Elliot, the OCQ developed by Meyer and Allen in 1996, and the scale of general self-efficacy developed by Shwarzer and Aristi in 1997 (Yu, 2013). Transformational leadership was related to goal setting ($r = 0.501, p < 0.01$), organizational commitment ($r = 0.557, p < 0.01$), self-efficacy ($r = 0.448, p < 0.01$) and goal self-concordance ($r = 0.317, p < 0.01$) (Yu, 2013). In conclusion, transformational leadership influenced organizational commitment, and their relationship is mediated by goal setting. Goal setting among faculty members promotes autonomous motivation, self-efficacy, and career achievement, helping transformational leaders to be more effective and increasing organizational commitment (Yu, 2013). The study could have used a longitudinal method to measure the variables across a period to determine if the variables changed over time. Moreover, further study regarding transformational leadership and organizational commitment at a group or organization level should be done to determine if they coexist with the individual level of transformational leadership and organizational commitment (Yu, 2013).

A university's goals regarding its faculty include having outstanding researchers, hiring quality faculty, helping human development, supporting the faculty's personal goals, and increasing faculty belief in their capacity (Othman Mohammed, & D'silva, 2013). In order to achieve such objectives, universities need effective leaders who bring out the full potential of the faculty, thus increasing their commitment (Othman et al., 2013). Othman et al. (2013) explored the relationship between leadership style of the immediate supervisor and organizational commitment of Nigerian public university lecturers. The data were collected among 181 university lecturers currently undergoing postgraduate studies in Malaysian universities. They answered the MLQ developed by Bass and Avolio in 1995 and the OCQ developed by Meyer and Allen in 1997 (Othman et al., 2013). The results showed that all dimensions of transformational leadership were correlated to organizational commitment.

Leadership includes several dimensions: individual consideration, intellectual stimulation, inspiration motivation and idealized influence (Othman et al., 2013). The dimension of transformational leadership individual consideration was positively correlated to organizational commitment ($r = 0.503, p < 0.01$). The dimension of transformational leadership intellectual stimulation was positively correlated to organizational commitment ($r = 0.516, p < 0.01$). The dimension of transformational leadership inspirational motivation was positively correlated to organizational commitment ($r = 0.537, p < 0.01$). The dimension of transformational idealized influence behavior was positively correlated to organizational commitment ($r = 0.431, p < 0.01$), and the dimension of transformational idealized influence attributed was positively correlated to organizational commitment ($r = 0.560, p < 0.01$). Finally, 33.5% of the variation in organizational commitment was explained by transactional and transformational leadership style ($R^2 = 33.5 F = 10.434$, significant change at 0.000) (Othman et al., 2013). Othman et al. (2013) concluded that transformational and transactional leadership style was positively related to organizational commitment among Nigerian public university lecturers. However, the study was limited because it did not investigate the influence of leadership style on different dimensions of organizational commitment (affective, continuance, and normative) (Othman et al., 2013).

The performance of an organization is related to the commitment of its employees (Rehman et al., 2012). Leadership style influences organizational commitment in the educational sector

(Rehman et al., 2012) because the faculty's perception of their leaders' leadership style influences them directly (Yu, 2013). Such influence is exerted through systems of performance appraisal, rewards, and personal relations (Yu, 2013). Transformational leaders, with their charisma, consideration for the faculty's work, and personal development, set appropriate goals and directions for the faculty, which promotes organizational commitment and helps attain the university administrators' objectives and success (Yu, 2013).

The performance of a higher education institution is related to the commitment of its faculty (Rehman et al., 2012). Leadership style influences organizational commitment in the educational sector (Rehman et al., 2012) because the faculty's perception of their leaders' leadership style influences them directly (Chughtai & Zafar, 2006; Othman et al., 2013; Rehman et al., 2012). Transformational leaders, with their charisma, consideration for the faculty's work, and personal development, set appropriate goals and directions for the faculty. Such leadership style promotes organizational commitment and helps attain the university administrators' objectives and success (Yu, 2013). Even though, previous research concluded that there is a direct relationship between dean's leadership style and organizational commitment of faculty, there is a lack of research regarding the effect dean's leadership style and organizational commitment of faculty in Latin American countries and more specifically in Colombia. Future studies are needed in order to generalize the relationship between the variables in Colombia and allow Colombian higher education institutions to be aware of the way leadership of deans influence organizational commitment of faculty as a way to improve the academic achievement of Colombian universities.

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