

## **Organizational Commitment: A Study of Selected IT-BPO Companies**

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### **Abstract**

The purpose of this research was to study the organizational commitment level among employees in IT-BPO companies. To study the organizational commitment, employee perceptions of organizational commitment have been used. This study utilized a survey research method and relied on previously developed standardized tested instruments related to the variables of interest. For the purpose of study, responses were obtained from 170 executives working in reputed IT-BPO companies in Delhi NCR region. Out of 170 responses considered finally 128 responses were via online link and 42 were via hard copy format. This study also shows comparison on the basis of gender, length of service, and level of management. Analysis on the basis of gender reveals that OCMT score was higher for female employees as compared to male employees. Mean scores of OCMT was also analyzed on the basis of level of management and length of service.

**Key Words:** Organizational Commitment, Affective commitment, Normative Commitment, Continuance Commitment, and IT-BPO

Given the global competitive environment of today, if employees of any organization are confining themselves only with contractual task which they are expected to perform in the organization and do not show any interest in other activities of the organization, then this will have impact not only on the growth and success of organization but also on the growth and development of employee. It is the general view that employees with high level of organizational commitment would do their job efficiently and effectively.

Employee commitment to their organization is one of the most researched themes in organizational study. Today all organizations require employees who are committed to their vision, mission and goals in order to continue to exist. Put differently, organizations need employees who accept their goals and values; willingly exert effort on their behalf; and

strongly desire to remain with them (Mowday, Steers, & Porter, 1979). The evidence indicates that those organizations that have committed employees outperform those that don't. That's why organizations are always looking for the best human resource in all respects. Employees who feel emotionally attached to the organization will have a greater motivation or desire to make a meaningful contribution to the organization (Meyer and Allen, 1997).

It's a proven fact that employees' commitment is necessary for organizational outcomes such as increased sales and profitability (Brett, Cron, & Slocum, 1995), job satisfaction (Lum, Kervin, Klark, Reid, & Sirola, 1998), lower turnover intention (Sims & Kroeck, 1994). Still employees feel less committed to their employing organization (Nussbaum, 1986; Mowday, 1998), this calls for a need to analyze why organizational commitment is diminishing, and how it can be fostered within an organization. Workers who are less committed to their employing organization, will route their commitment in other directions (Meyer and Allen, 1997). These employees may look for marketability of their skills and experience outside the organization, rather than by its implications for their current or future jobs in the organization. Thus, it is important to know how to develop the right type and level of OC to ensure that the better employees are retained.

The proposed study will also provide benchmark opportunity to managers of IT-BPO companies to have an understanding of organizational commitment. Further, analysis of these variables on the basis of gender, level of management, and length of service will also provide significant information to the IT- BPO organizations.

## **ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT- THEORETICAL CONSTRUCT**

There exist various empirical researches that examined organizational commitment as a workplace behavioral outcome. Based on the literature various definitions of organizational commitment are found.

Becker (1960) proposed that commitment is mainly a function of individual behavior; individuals become committed to the organization through their actions and choices over time.

Kanter (1968) defined commitment as "the willingness of social actors to give their energy and loyalty to social systems, the attachment of personality systems to social relationship, which are seen as self-expressive".

Etzioni (1961) suggested that organizational commitment focuses on compliance with organizational objectives by the employee. Thus, the more commitment employees have

towards organizational objective, the more authority or power organization will have over employees.

Hall, Scheider, and Nygren (1970) define organizational commitment as the “process by which the goals of the organizations and those of the individual become increasingly integrated and congruent”.

Sheldon (1971) defines “organizational commitment as an attitude or an orientation towards the organizations, which links or attracts the identity of the person to the organizations”.

Porter, Steers, Mowday, and Boulian (1974), define organizational commitment as “the strength of an individual’s identification with and involvement in a particular organization”. Porter et al. (1974) discuss three major components of organizational commitment as being “a strong belief in and acceptance of the organization’s goals, a willingness to exert considerable effort on behalf of the organization, and a definite desire to maintain organizational membership”.

According to Buchanan (1974) most of the scholars define commitment as a bond between an individual (the employee) and the organization (the employer).

Salancik (1977) defined organizational commitment as “a state of being in which an individual becomes bound by actions to beliefs that sustains activities and involvement”.

Bateman and Strasser (1984) state that organizational commitment has been operationally defined as “multidimensional in nature, involving an employee’s loyalty to the organization, willingness to exert effort on behalf of the organization, degree of goal and value congruency with the organization, and desire to maintain membership”.

Meyer and Allen (1991) and Dunham et al. (1994) identified three types of commitment; affective commitment, continuance commitment, and normative commitment.

**Affective Commitment:** It is defined as the emotional attachment, identification, and involvement that an employee has with its organization and goals (Mowday et al., 1979, Meyer et al., 1993; O’Reily and Chatman, 1986). Porter et al., (1974) define affective commitment by three factors (1) “belief in and acceptance of the organization’s goals and values, (2) a willingness to focus effort on helping the organization achieve its goals, and (3) a desire to maintain organizational membership”. Meyer and Allen (1997) suggest that employees retain their membership out of personal choice and this is their commitment to the organization.

There are employees who exhibit a strong belief in and acceptance of the new organization's goals and values. Such employees also exhibit considerable effort and exhibit a strong desire to maintain their membership with the new organization. Meyer and Allen (1997) call this form of commitment to the organization as affective commitment.

**Continuance commitment:** It is the willingness of an employee to remain in an organization because of the investment that the employee has with "nontransferable" investments (Muhammad, 2012). Nontransferable investments in an organization include things such as retirement benefits, relationships with other employees, or things that are special to the organization (Reichers, 1985). Continuance commitment also includes factors that are organization specific such as years of employment or benefits that the employee may receive (Reichers, 1985). Meyer and Allen (1997) explain that it becomes very difficult for an employee to leave the organization who shares continuance commitment with their employer. Thus this group of employees remains with the new organization not out of loyalty or innate beliefs but for the reason that they have no job alternatives or have too much invested in the organization to leave.

**Normative commitment:** According to normative commitment, an individual demonstrates commitment behavior to the organization solely because she or he believes it is the moral, ethical, and right thing to do. For example, if a company spends resources in training of an employee, then employee may feel duty-bound to repay the debt. It is the outcome of feeling of obligation to remain with an organization (Prabhakar and Ram, 2011). Such a feeling of obligation are induced from what Wiener (1982) characterized as "generalized value of loyalty and duty". As a result of cultural socialization that places high value on loyalty and devotion to institutions, it's a natural willingness of an individual to remain loyal and committed to institutions such as family, marriage, country, religion, and employment organization. Wiener (1982) suggests that this group of employees does not develop as strong an emotional attachment to the organization. However, employees who possess high levels of normative commitment continue to work productively as a result of cultural, familial, and work place ethics that direct their behavior.

By understanding the significance of all three components employers had the opportunity to gain focused understanding of factors that influenced an employee's relationship with an organization.

## **ETHICAL CLIMATE - THEORETICAL CONSTRUCT**

An organization's ethical climate contributes to employees at all level to makes ethical decisions. This is not only related with the content of decision-“what should I do?” but also process of decision “how should I do?”(Cullen et al.,1989).

Ethical climate is a type of an organization's work climate (Kelly and Cullen, 2006). Victor and Cullen (1988) defined the ethical climate of an organization as “the prevailing perceptions of typical organizational practices and procedures that have ethical content constitute the ethical work climate”. According to Despande (1996), an organization's ethical climate is “shared perception of personnel about how ethical issues should be addressed and what ethically correct behavior is”. Ethical climate refers to “the prevailing attitudes about the firm's standards concerning appropriate conduct” in the organization (Kelley and Dorsch, 1991).

Ethical orientations of the organization have been argued to have an effect on employees' attitude. Ethical climate arise when employees believe that certain form of ethical behavior are expected standards for decision making within the organization. Ethical climate developed by top management is an important factordriving not only ethical behavior but also job related outcomes.If an organization is committed to being ethical, this can have a direct impact on employees' behaviors(Vitell and Hidalgo, 2006). So organization can design an ethical structure and create an ethical climate thatsupports and encourages people to act ethically in the organization by both implementing and enforcing rules andpolicies on ethical behaviors, rewarding ethical behaviors and punishing unethical behaviors (Schwepker, 2001).

As far as relationship between organizational commitment and ethical climate is concerned researches indicate that there is a positive relationship between organization's ethical climate and organizationalcommitment. Organizations that depict strong ethical values may benefit from having more committed employees tothe organization (Vitell and Hidalgo, 2006).Schwepker (2001) found that strong enforcements of ethical rules and codes were positively related to organizational commitment.Schwepker (2001)foundapositiverelationshipbetweensalespeople's Perception oforganization'sethicalclimateandtheirOC. Further, Sim and Kroeck (1994) and Schwepker (1999) found that if people feel that there is conflict between organizations' values and their own ethical values, then they are less committed to the organization.

## **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

- To analyze the level of organizational commitment among IT- BPO employees.
- To explore the gender differences i.e., male and female with regard to organizational commitment among employees in IT- BPO companies.
- To assess the difference that exists between the three levels of management with regard to organizational commitment among employees in IT- BPO companies.
- To assess the difference between the length of service with regard to organizational commitment among employees in IT-BPO companies.
- To study the relationship between organizational commitment components among employees in IT-BPO Companies.

### **HYPOTHESIS OF THE STUDY**

On the basis of above objectives, the following null hypothesis (H<sub>0</sub>) and alternate hypotheses (H<sub>a</sub>) have been formulated:

- ◆ H<sub>01</sub> – There is no significant difference between male and female employees in relation to their organizational commitment scores in IT-BPO companies.
- ◆ H<sub>02</sub> – There is no significant difference between levels of management with regard to organizational commitment scores among employees in IT-BPO companies.
- ◆ H<sub>03</sub> – There is no significant difference between length of service with regard to organizational commitment scores among employees in IT-BPO companies.
- ◆ H<sub>04</sub> – There is no significant relationship among organizational commitment components in IT-BPO companies.

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

In the present study to measure organizational commitment questionnaire designed by Meyer, Allen, and Smith (1993) consisting of six items in each commitment component (affective, continuance, and normative) was adopted to assess three-component OC. Data were generated in six point-Likert scale (6 = 'strongly agree'; 1 = 'strongly disagree').

### **DATA COLLECTION**

The purpose of this study was to assess the level of organizational commitment in a sample of IT-BPO employees. In the present study a sample of employees from IT-BPO sector has been selected because in recent years this sector has become one of the most significant growth catalyst of Indian economy and this is one of the under researched area as far as Job behaviors of IT-BPO employees are concerned. An online link was created for questionnaire used in the study using Google Docs which is now known as Google drive and 128 responses were obtained through this link. Further out of 80 questionnaires distributed to the respondents only 42 were filled and returned. Thus out of 170 responses considered finally 128 responses were via online link and 42 were via hard copy format.

**Table 1: Summary of Responses Obtained from IT-BPO Companies**

IT Companies	Responses Obtained	BPO Companies	Responses Obtained
NIIT Technologies	19	Wipro	22
TCS	14	Genpect	27
Aricent	10	E-Funds	12
IBM	15	HCL Tech BPO	34
		IBM Daksh	17
Total Responses Obtained	58		112

As shown in table 1, 58 respondents were from 4 reputed IT companies in Delhi NCR region and 112 respondents from 5 reputed BPO companies in Delhi NCR region. Out of 58 respondents from four IT companies 19 were from NIIT technologies, 14 were from TCS, 10 were from Aricent, and 15 were from IBM. Also out of 112 respondents from five reputed BPO companies 22 were from Wipro, 27 were from Genpect, 12 were from E-Funds, 34 were from HCL Tech BPO, and 17 were from IBM Daksh. The method of sampling used for this study was based on non – probability convenience sampling.

#### **LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE AREA OF THE STUDY**

The results of this study should be interpreted keeping in mind the limitations. One limitation involves the fact that we did not measure organizational commitment from both the supervisor and employee perspective. Instead, we got our data from the employee responses to the survey. If the data on organizational commitment were collected from supervisors or peers of the respondents, the findings may well have turned out to be different than the ones reported in this research. Thus future research may focus on obtaining responses from both the supervisor and employee perspective and comparing them.

Since primary data have been collected through questionnaire method, the present study is subject to the common limitations of the most behavioral studies as there may be chance of measurement error or bias.

Another limitation of this study was its cross-sectional, rather than longitudinal design. Also, the cross-sectional design did allow comparison of scores over a period of time.

This study was conducted in IT-BPO companies of Delhi NCR region. Future researches can focus on cross-cultural studies, and explore the cultural influence on organizational commitment.

### **STATISTICAL ANALYSIS**

The data for present study has been collected through 170 respondents from various IT- BPO companies. The following table shows the different variables and the frequency distribution of the respondents:

**Table 2: Profile of Test Categories**

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Level of Management</b>		
Lower Level	70	41.20%
Middle Level	65	38.20%
Senior Level	35	20.60%
<b>Length of Service</b>		



Below 5 years	71	41.80%
5-10 years	66	38.80%
10 years and above	33	19.40%
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	112	65.90%
Female	58	34.10%

### RELIABILITY TEST

As a first step, scale reliability coefficient for the instrument used in the study was computed. Cronbach's alpha is used as an index of Reliability. Reliability test is a respondent centric test which finds that the instrument we are using will always elicit consistent and reliable response even if questions were replaced with other similar questions.

Alpha coefficient ranges in value from 0 to 1 and may be used to describe the reliability of factors extracted from dichotomous (that is, questions with two possible answers) and/or multi-point formatted questionnaires or scales (i.e., rating scale: 1 = poor, 5 = excellent). The higher the score, the more reliable the generated scale is. Nunnally (1978) maintains that reliabilities which are less than 0.6 are considered poor; those in the 0.7 range are acceptable, while those above 0.8 are good. From table 3 we can see that reliability test of variable OCMT is 0.801.

**Table 3: Reliability Statistics**

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Cronbach's Alpha</b>	<b>No. of Items</b>
AC	0.605	6
CC	0.631	6
NC	0.752	6
OCMT	0.801	18

### ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT SCALE

The table 4 shows the mean score, standard deviation, maximum and minimum value for all the components of organizational commitment scale. Mean score for organizational commitment is 3.879. Out of all the 3 components of OCMT mean score is higher for CC followed by AC and then for NC.

**Table 4: Descriptive Statistics for OCMT and EC Scale**

Variables	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Rank
AC	170	2.67	5.00	3.913	.5071	2
CC	170	2.67	5.00	3.936	.4306	1
NC	170	2.17	4.83	3.788	.5727	3
OCMT	170	2.83	4.89	3.879	.3927	

CC has got 1<sup>st</sup> rank among organizational commitment components. Continuance commitment refers to the cost associated with leaving the organization in terms of years of employment, relationships with other employee, and things that are special or unique to the organization. Scarcity of job alternatives is another reason behind continuance commitment.

AC has got 2<sup>nd</sup> rank among organizational commitment components. Affective commitment refers to the employee's emotional attachment to, identification with, and involvement in the organization. Employees high on AC scores implies that such employee feels organization problem as their own, would be happy to spend rest of their career in the organization and feel like part of family in the current organization.

NC has got 3<sup>rd</sup> rank among organizational commitment components. Normative commitment reflects a feeling of obligation to continue employment. Employees with high on NC scores feel that it is their moral obligation to continue with their current organization and this organization deserves loyalty.

#### COMPARISON OF OCMT ON THE BASIS OF GENDER

**Table 5: Comparison of OCMT and EC on the basis of Gender**

Variables	Male	Female
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	Mean	Mean
AC	3.844	4.046
CC	3.897	4.012
NC	3.726	3.908
OCMT	3.822	3.989

Table 5 shows that OCMT score was higher for female employees (3.99) as compared to male employees (3.82). Comparison on the basis of organizational commitment reveals that AC, NC, and CC scores were higher for female employees (4.05, 3.91, and 4.02) as compared to their male counterparts (3.84, 3.73, and 3.90).

- ◆ H01 – There is no significant difference between male and female employees in relation to their organizational commitment scores in IT-BPO companies.

**Table 6: Summary of T-test on the basis of Gender**

Variables	Equal Variances Assumed		
	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)
AC	-2.503	168	0.013
CC	-1.647	168	0.101
NC	-1.980	168	0.049
OCMT	-2.661	168	0.009

To test this hypothesis we have used independent sample t-test. Since in case of variable CC value of significance for t-statistic from table 6 is greater than 0.05, therefore, we accept the null hypothesis that no significant difference between male and female employees exist in relation to their CC and EC score. However for variables AC, NC, and OCMT value of significance is less than 0.05, therefore, we accept the alternative hypothesis that there exist

significant difference between male and female employees in relation to their AC, NC, and OCMT scores.

### COMPARISON OF VARIABLES ON THE BASIS OF LEVEL OF MANAGEMENT

The table 7 reflects comparison of OCMT score on the basis of level of management. Overall OCMT score is higher for ULM followed by MLM, and LLM. Comparison of organizational commitment components scores reveals that scores for AC, CC, and NC are highest for upper level management. Further AC and NC score is higher for MLM as compared to LLM and CC score is higher for LLM as compared to MLM.

**Table 7: Comparison of OCB, IRB, OCMT and JI on the basis of Level of Management**

Variables	Lower Level Management	Middle Level Management	Upper Level Management
	Mean	Mean	Mean
AC	3.7646	3.8364	4.3714
CC	3.8583	3.8515	4.2476
NC	3.6833	3.7121	4.1476
OCMT	3.7688	3.8000	4.2556
EC	5.7110	6.1240	6.2510

- ◆ H02 – There is no significant difference between levels of management with regard to organizational commitment score among employees in IT-BPO companies.

**Table 8: ANOVA Table for Level of Management**

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Result

AC	Between Groups	9.441	2	4.720	23.175	0.000	Reject
	Within Groups	34.015	167	0.204			
	Total	43.456	169				
CC	Between Groups	4.274	2	2.137	13.186	0.000	Reject
	Within Groups	27.064	167	0.162			
	Total	31.337	169				
NC	Between Groups	5.719	2	2.860	9.607	0.000	Reject
	Within Groups	49.713	167	0.298			
	Total	55.432	169				
OCMT	Between Groups	6.278	2	3.139	26.505	0.000	Reject
	Within Groups	19.779	167	0.118			
	Total	26.058	169				

Since the significance value of F-statistics in all cases is less than alpha (0.05) in the table 8, therefore we reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternate hypothesis that significant difference exist across three levels of management.

### COMPARISON OF VARIABLES ON THE BASIS OF LENGTH OF SERVICE

The table 9 reflects comparison of OCMT score on the basis of length of service.

**Table 9: Comparison of OCMT and EC on the basis of Length of Service**

Variables	Below 5 Years	5-10 Years	Above 10 Years	F-Values	Sig.	Result
	Mean	Mean	Mean			

AC	3.7895	3.9836	4.0657	0.560	0.456	Accept
CC	3.8640	3.9399	4.0960	2.419	0.123	Accept
NC	3.6820	3.8224	3.9697	1.747	0.189	Accept
OCMT	3.7785	3.9153	4.0438	1.983	0.162	Accept

Overall all OCMT score is highest for employees with length of service above 10 years, followed by employees with length of service 5-10 years and then for employees with length of service below 5 years. Comparison of organizational commitment components scores reveals that scores for AC, CC, and NC are higher for employees with length of service above 10 years, followed by employees with length of service 5-10 years and then for employees with length of service below 5 years. EC score is highest for employees with length of service above 10 years, followed by employees with length of service 5-10 years and then for employees with length of service below 5 years.

- ◆ **H03 – There is no significant difference between length of service with regard to organizational commitment score among employees in IT-BPO companies.**

Since the significance value of F-statistics in all cases is greater than alpha (0.05) in the table 10, therefore we accept the null that there exist no significant difference for variables AC, CC, NC, and OCMT on the basis of length of service

### **INTERCORRELATIONS**

- ◆ H04 – There is no significant relationship between organizational commitment components among employees in IT-BPO companies.

**Table 11: Intercorrelation of Organizational Commitment and Ethical Climate**

Variables	AC	CC	NC	OCMT	EC
AC	1				
CC	0.389 <sup>''</sup>	1			
OCMT	0.783 <sup>''</sup>	0.726 <sup>''</sup>	0.818 <sup>''</sup>	1	

Table 11 shows correlation coefficient for different pair of organizational commitment variables. Strong and positive intercorrelation exist among all the organizational commitment components.

## **RESULTS AND SUMMARY FINDINGS**

The finding of the analysis has been summarized below:

1. Overall reliability coefficients for the instruments used in the study was 0.801 for OCMT scale.
2. Out of all the three components for organizational commitment, mean score is highest for CC (3.94) followed by AC (3.91) and then for NC (3.79). CC reflects willingness of employee to remain in the organization because of the non –transferable investment such as years of employment, relationships with other employees, and the benefits that the employee may receive which are unique to the organization.
3. Further OCMT score was higher for female employees (3.99) as compared to male employees (3.82). Comparison on the basis of organizational commitment reveals that AC, NC, and CC scores were higher for female employees (4.05, 3.91, and 4.02) as compared to their male counterparts (3.84, 3.73, and 3.90).
4. For variables AC, NC, and OCMT there exists significant difference between male and female employees. Also for variable CC there exists no significant difference between mean scores of male and female employees.
5. Overall OCMT score is higher for ULM (4.26) followed by MLM (3.80), and then for (3.77) LLM.
6. Analysis on the basis of ANOVA test reveals that there exists significant difference in the mean scores of AC, CC, NC, OCMT and CC with regard to level of management.
7. Overall OCMT score is highest for employees with length of service above 10 years, followed by employees with length of service 5-10 years, and then for employees with length of service below 5 years.
8. Analysis on the basis of ANOVA test for variables AC, NC, CC, and OCMT reveals that there exists no significant difference in the mean scores with regard to length of service.
9. Analysis of correlation matrix reveals that OCMT and its component are significantly and positively correlated.

## **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The main objective of the study was to investigate the level of organizational commitment among employees in IT-BPO companies. Given the trend of high attrition rate among employees at lower level management in IT-BPO companies, these organizations can promote a better work culture and improved performance among employees if management provides appropriate ethical climate to its employees which in turn will also enhance employees' commitment to the organizational. It is the responsibility of top management to enhance organizational commitment in workplace by developing and encouraging ethical climate among the employees. Organizations should make an effort to develop and maintain commitment among employees so as to foster positive job behaviors on the part of employee which is necessary to increase the competitive position of the organization.

Organization must work towards enhancing employees emotional attachment to the organization by providing better job designs, assigning diverse task, showing faith in employee capability, effective training and development program, empowerment, revision in pay scales keeping in view the inflation rate prevailing these days, supportive work environment, and adequate growth planning for the employee in the organization. Thus fostering high levels of commitment through improving the ethical climate can be an effective strategy to foster positive behaviors on the part of employee.

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