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Desire to work in an organization forever among university employees in Botswana

Fako TT¹, Wilson DR^{2*}, Linn JG³, Forcheh N⁴, Nkhukhu E⁵ and Harris MA⁶

¹Office of the Vice Chancellor, University of Botswana, Botswana.

²Walden University and Middle Tennessee State University, USA.

³Optimal Solutions in Healthcare and International Development, USA.

⁴Department of Statistics, University of Botswana, Botswana.

⁵Department of Sociology, University of Botswana, Botswana.

⁶Department of Sociology and Social Work, Northern Arizona University, USA.

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The importance of commitment of employees to their organizations is evident in the volume of research that continues to be conducted on the subject and in the research findings that have linked high levels of commitment to favourable organizational outcomes. Factors that lead to differential levels of commitment appear to differ from one context to another. For this reason, each organisation should periodically determine the extent to which its employees remain committed, as well as factors that distinguish highly committed employees from those who are less committed to the organisation. This study uses one aspect of the construct of *affective commitment*, namely, the “desire to work for the organisation for ever” to study the extent to which a representative sample of 360 employees at a university were committed to the organization. Chi-squared tests of association were used to determine univariate correlates of commitment, while multiple logistic regression analysis was used to determine a parsimonious predictive model for commitment. A total of 15 of the numerous factors initially investigated were found to be statistically associated with “desire to work for the organisation for ever”. A multivariate logistic regression model revealed that only six of the factors associated with “desire to work for the organisation for ever” were adequate to predict the type of commitment investigated. These factors were educational attainment, use of food supplements, frequency of symptoms of fatigue, support from supervisors and responsiveness of the management.

Key words: Affective commitment, employee, management, university, Botswana.

INTRODUCTION

Research conducted in the last five decades by both academics and practitioners reflects the importance of organizational commitment for organizations (Qaisar et al., 2012). The commitment of employees to their places of work is of considerable interest for the existence and success of many organizations (Yavuz, 2010) and is one of the most important elements that help organizations

achieve their goals (Khalili and Asmawi, 2012). It is at the heart of human resource management (Gbadamosi et al., 2007) and has resulted in research with a strong focus on how organizations can improve the organizational commitment of their employees (Newman et al., 2011). Employers who attempt to identify and satisfy the needs of their employees motivate employees

*Corresponding author. E-mail: debrarosewilson@comcast.net.

to be more satisfied with their jobs (Brown and job (Vakola and Nikolaou, 2005); reduced interest in working, impaired individual functioning (Fairbrother and Warn, 2003); negative work related attitudes and behaviors (Fako, 2010); reduced levels of altruistic and compliant behaviours; a tendency to describe the organization in negative terms (Moyday et al., 1982); disrespect for the organization and its values, and a negative influence on other employees (Bolin and Heatherley, 2001).

Lack of organizational commitment may also lead to: occupational stress (Bogler and Somech, 2004; Joiner and Bakalis, 2006); burnout (Joolideh and Yeshodhara, 2009); withdrawal intentions and behaviours (Joiner and Bakalis, 2006); lateness, absenteeism and turnover (Dishon and Koslowsky, 2002); disruption of the day's work schedule, poor customer service, lower customer satisfaction (Joiner and Bakalis, 2006); increased costs of recruitment and retention of staff (Al-Hussami, 2008); and loss of productivity (Bennett, 2002; Dishon and Koslowsky, 2002), which may ultimately impact negatively on the organization and the economy (Carmeli and Gefen, 2005).

Conceptual framework

In the literature, the commitment of employees to the work place is referred to as organizational commitment (Porter et al, 1974; Bamberg et al., 2008) and is defined as the strength of an individual's identification with and involvement in a particular organization (Markovits et al. 2010). It is characterised by a belief in and acceptance of organizational goals and values (Identification), a willingness to exert considerable effort on behalf of the organization (Involvement), and a strong desire to maintain membership in the organization (Loyalty) (Mowday et al., 1979; Moyday, Porter et al., 1982). It has been conceptualized variously as a one-dimensional or multidimensional attitudinal variable (Markovits et al. 2010) that includes affective commitment, normative commitment and continuance commitment (Meyer and Allen, 1997). The three dimensions of commitment encompass investments of devotion and dedication, elements of moral character and expectations of personal benefits (Liou, 2008).

Affective commitment: Is an employee's emotional attachment to, identification with and involvement in the organization (Meyer and Allen, 1997). It is an individual's psychological bond that comprises an affect for and social attachment to the organization (Still 1983). It involves loyalty (Gbadamosi et al., 2007) and investments of devotion and dedication (Liou, 2008) to the organization that makes separation from the organization difficult for the employee (Chang and Choi, 2007). Affective commitment is a psychological state which has implications for the employee's decision to continue

membership in the organization and to remain as a loyal and "committed" employee (Bamberg et al., 2008).

Employees' persistence in making sacrifices for the good of the organization, as evidenced by devotion of personal time to organizational activities is a demonstration of this state (Liou, 2008). Employees with affective commitment work in the organization because they want to (Mayer and Allen, 1997), and identify with the organisation because they share the goals and objectives of the organization (Gbadamosi et al., 2007). Affective commitment is often a result of events, actions and policies by which the organization creates positive emotional connections with members of the work group. The positive results of affective commitment include greater job satisfaction, increases in job performance, good employee citizenship behaviours, a decrease in turnover rates and an increase in opportunities to develop leadership skills (Meyer and Allen, 1997).

Normative commitment: Involves an employee's sense of obligation to the organization and reflects the degree to which one's values and beliefs conform to those of the organization (Meyer and Allen, 1997). It encompasses elements of moral character (Liou, 2008), an altruistic concern for the organization and a sense of guilt resulting from thoughts about leaving. The feelings of obligation to stay with the employer result from the internalization of normative pressures exerted on an individual prior to, or following, entry and the need to conform with social pressures from significant others who believe the employee should continue working in the organization (Gbadamosi et al., 2007). Employees with normative commitment work in the organization because they feel they ought to, they believe it is the "right and moral" thing to do, or they have a desire to compensate favours that they received from the organization (Joolideh and Yeshodhara, 2009). While normative commitment is positively related to performance, it does not relate as strongly as affective commitment (Karrasch, 2003).

Continuance commitment: Is based on the calculation of the relative benefits that an employee associates with staying in the organization against the costs of leaving the organization, or on a perceived lack of alternative employment opportunities (Allen and Meyer, 1990; Meyer et al, 1991; Meyer and Allen, 1997). It is a sort of "marriage of convenience", which is guided by a sense of economic survival and other forms of enlightened self-interest. Continuance commitment encompasses expectations of personal benefits (Liou, 2008) as opposed to emotional involvement, investments of devotion and dedication or elements of moral character. Employees with continuance commitment stay with their organizations because they need to, and may perform only as required to keep their jobs. They are "forced by circumstances" to continue to be in the organization while contemplating alternative employment.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

Although organisational commitment is an important and widely researched concept (Markovits et al., 2010), it has attracted relatively little research attention in developing countries (Suliman and Lles, 2000; Kim and Meuler, 2011). Theories of organizational commitment have been developed and tested in western countries (Gbadamosi et al., 2007). As a result, there is considerable uncertainty as to the relevance of much of the research on organizational commitment to contexts outside Western environments (Chan and Choi, 2007). In addition, very little research on organizational commitment has been conducted within educational settings (Chughtai and Zafar, 2006; Luo et al., 2009). Not many empirical studies have been conducted among university employees (Hassan and Hashim, 2011).

This study seeks to enhance understanding of organizational commitment within an educational setting in a sub-Saharan African country. The study explored one aspect of affective commitment, “desire to work for an organization forever”, among university of Botswana employees, which has been shown to have the strongest positive correlations with job performance, followed by normative commitment, and contrasted with continuance commitment, which tends to be unrelated or negatively correlated to work behaviors (Joolideh and Yeshodhara, 2009). Desire to continue membership within an organization directly addresses employee loyalty, attachment to, identification with, involvement in, devotion and dedication to the organization. Desire to work in an organization forever is relevant for good human resource management (HRM) practice, which promotes the retention of valuable employees with positive work-related attitudes and behaviors. The specific objectives of the study were to:

1. Determine the extent to which university employees expressed the desire to work for their organization forever.
2. Identify factors associated with “desire to work for an organization forever” among university employees.
3. Derive a parsimonious model consisting of key factors for predicting “desire to work for an organization forever”.

MATERIALS AND METHODOLOGY

Sampling

The target population of the study was university of Botswana employees who were involved in teaching and research work and those who worked as managers and administrators at different levels. The sampling frame consisted of 648 employees (academic and administrative support staff) who occupied an office with a telephone on the Gaborone campuses of the university. The margin of error (E) for the proportion who had a “desire to stay at the organization forever” was set to $E = 0.025$, and a confidence level that the estimated proportion would lie within this margin of

error to be 95%, and hence determined the required sample size (n) to be 400 using the formula $n = k / (1 + k / N)$, where

$$k = \frac{1}{4} \left(\frac{z_{\alpha/2}}{E} \right)^2 \text{ and } (\alpha=0.05) \text{ (see Freund et al 1993: p475).}$$

Employees were stratified according to the department or unit in which they worked. Departments with about 15 employees were treated as distinct sampling units. Smaller departments or administrative units were grouped to form sampling units of about 15 members. Very large departments and administrative units were split into sampling units of about 15 members. Approximately two-thirds (8 to 10) members of each sampling unit were selected based on their availability at the time of the interview. Out of 400 questionnaires distributed and collected from respondents in their offices during working hours, 360 were usable for analyses; representing a response rate of 90% and approximately 56% of the sampling frame at the time of the survey. Informed consent was obtained from all respondents.

Measurement of the variables

The research construct under investigation is affective commitment empirically indicated by the “desire to work for the organisation for ever”, which was measured by asking respondents to indicate the extent to which they agreed with the statement: ‘If I had my way, I would work for my organization forever’. Response categories consisted of (1) strongly agree, (2) agree, (3) disagree, and (4) strongly disagree. Other indicators of organizational commitment were measured by asking respondents to indicate the extent to which they agreed with each of the following statements: (1) ‘I wish I could find another job elsewhere’; (2) ‘I spend a lot of my free time on job related activities’. Gender, age-group, marital status, number of dependent children, level of education, monthly salary were measured using appropriate questionnaire items for each variable.

Overall wellbeing was measured by asking each respondent to indicate the categories that best described his/her overall wellbeing. Response categories included ‘excellent’; ‘good’; ‘satisfactory’; and ‘poor’. Physical fitness was measured by asking respondents to indicate the category that best described their level of physical fitness. Response categories included ‘very fit’; ‘in good shape’; ‘not so fit’; and ‘in bad shape’. Personal coping strategies were measured by asking respondents to indicate the frequency with which they did each of the following activities: physical exercise, writing down plans for the day, maintaining a healthy diet, using food supplements, and taking time off work for leisure.

In order to determine how respondents felt about various aspects of their work environment, they were asked to rate each aspect of their work environment on a scale of five from: excellent to very poor. The aspects of the work environment that were investigated included: friendliness and courteousness of co-workers; friendliness and courteousness of students; the conduct of meetings in departments; the responsiveness and efficiency of the management; the responsiveness of immediate supervisors; the quality of communication between the management and staff; the cleanliness and tidiness of the work environment; the layout of physical facilities; the appropriateness of their qualifications for their assumed responsibilities; competition and conflict of work demands; amount of support from co-workers, amount of support from supervisors; frequency of conflict with co-workers, and frequency of conflict with supervisors.

In order to determine how respondents felt about various characteristics of their jobs, they were asked to indicate whether they: (1) Strongly Agreed, (2) Agreed, (3) Disagreed, or (4) Strongly Disagreed with each of the following statements: the job I do largely

involves routine operations; there is adequate equipment for the type of job I do; there is considerable variety and variability in my job; the level of technology in the organization is up to the standard it should be; I generally feel underutilized; I am generally overworked; I have to put in extra hours to cope with my work; I feel misplaced in my department; I like my job but the job is too demanding; and there is equity in the distribution of the workload in my department. Autonomy was measured by asking respondents to indicate the amount of autonomy they had at work. Clarity of respondents' responsibilities was measured by asking the question: "How clearly spelled out do you feel your responsibilities are at work?" Adequacy of training for the job was measured by asking respondents to rate the adequacy of their training for the job on a scale of zero to 10. Respondents were asked to rate issues in family and personal life on a scale of zero to 10. The issues addressed included emotional support from the immediate family, happiness in private life, coping with domestic responsibilities, conflict between family and work responsibilities, conflict within the domestic home environment, stress from the immediate family, work that tends to overshadow personal life, overall stability of the home environment, sense of self-esteem, and sense of personal fulfillment.

Analysis of data

For purposes of analyses, "desire to work for the university forever" was converted to a binary variable (1 = desire to work for the university forever, and 0 = do not desire to work for the university forever). Respondents who 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed' with the statement: "If I had my way, I would work for my organization forever", were regarded as having a "desire to work for the university forever" while respondents who 'disagreed' or 'strongly disagreed' were regarded as having "no desire to work for the university forever". All variables included in the analyses were either categorical or were re-coded as such.

Bivariate analyses were undertaken to explore the relationships between "desire to work for the university forever" and individual factors using chi-squared test of association, with statistical significance set to $\alpha = 0.05$. The individual variables were grouped into the following baskets of variables: (1) measures of commitment; (2) background variables; (3) measures of personal well being; (4) personal coping strategies; (5) aspects of the work environment; (6) issues in family and private life. The outcome of the bivariate analyses was to identify variables that had a significant association with 'desire to work for the University forever'. The variables that were found to have a statistically significant association with the dependent variable were used in a multiple logistic regression procedure to determine a parsimonious model for predicting the likelihood that an employee with a set of given attributes would be willing to work or not willing to work for the University forever. McCullagh (1979, 1980), Agresti (1990, 2003), Powers and Xie (2000) and Lawal (2003) provide comprehensive discussions on the use of logistic regression and related regression models for modeling categorical response variables and categorical predictive factors. Specifically, suppose that X_j , $j = 1, \dots, p$, is a binary explanatory variable with values 0 or 1, $\mathbf{x}_i = (X_1, \dots, X_p)'$ is the vector of the profile for the i -th individual, $P_{ij} = \Pr(y_i = j | \mathbf{x}_i)$, is the probability that the individual would desire to work for the University forever, then

$$\ln \left(\frac{P_{i1}}{P_{i0}} \right) = \mathbf{x}_i' \boldsymbol{\beta} \quad (\text{Powers and Xie, 2000}). \quad \text{Furthermore,}$$

$$e^{\mathbf{x}_i' \boldsymbol{\beta}} = P_{i1} / P_{i0} \quad \text{gives the odds that an individual with the}$$

profile given by $\mathbf{x}_i = (X_1, \dots, X_p)'$ would wish to work for the university forever relative to an individual without such a profile. The elements of the vector $\boldsymbol{\beta}$ give the odds ratio for the corresponding level of each factor relative to the reference category of the factor.

In order to determine the parsimonious set of variables for predicting employee's "desire to work for the university forever", variables retained from the bivariate analysis were entered into the model sequentially using the conditional log likelihood method. This method starts by creating a model that includes only the single most significant variable for predicting "desire to work for the university forever" based on the log-likelihood value. The second model is obtained by adding the variable that leads to the most significant improvement in the first model using the likelihood ratio criterion. The process is continued until no other variable leads to a significant improvement of the model. At each stage of the model, the proportion of staff correctly re-classified is computed and serves as a measure of model fit. Since variable addition is based on the likelihood criteria, the percentage of staff correctly re-classified is not a monotonic increasing function of the number of variables added.

RESULTS

The sample consisted of 360 respondents, of which 191(53%) had indicated desire to work for the university forever. Most (66%) of the respondents were male. Almost one-third (31%) were under 35years of age. Just over two-thirds (68%) were married, 20% had no children, 40% had one or two children and 40% had three or more children. The highest educational attainment of the respondents was a Doctorate (37%) followed by a masters degree (36%). Some 43% of the respondents had worked at the university for between four and nine years. About a quarter (26%) of the respondents had worked at the university for 10 or more years.

The questionnaire included a comprehensive list of 10 sets of variables reported in the literature to be potential correlates of organizational commitment. These included four demographic background variables, five socio-economic background variables, five measures of personal wellbeing, six personal coping strategies, three indicators of friendliness within the work environment, four measures of support and encouragement within the work environment, six work environment variables, three indicators of the extent of individual discretion and freedom within the job, five indicators of issues in family and private life, and three other measures of organizational commitment (that is, searching for a job elsewhere, acceptance of changes at work, and spending free time on work).

Table 1 shows a summary of 15 variables that were significantly associated with "desire to work for the university forever". Results show that respondents who were not looking for a job elsewhere were more likely to report "desire to work for the university forever" than those who were looking for a job elsewhere ($p < 0.001$). While 69.5% of those who were not looking for a job elsewhere indicated their desire to work for the University forever, only 35.3% of those who were searching for a job

Table 1. Association between employees' desire to work for UB forever and independent factors

Sno	Factors	% who desire to work for UB forever		Chi-squared*	P-value
		Yes	No		
1	Not looking for job elsewhere	69.5	35.3	41.4	<0.001
2	Often uses food Supplements	64.0	49.2	5.9	0.016
3	Highest qualification is below Master degree	63.4	49.0	5.7	0.017
4	Responsiveness of Management is good	63.2	39.0	20.1	<0.001
5	Often writes daily plan	60.2	47.2	6.0	0.014
6	Accepts changes at work	59.3	44.6	7.3	0.007
7	Do not often feel sleeplessness, exhaustion and fatigue	59.0	39.0	11.5	0.001
8	There is equity in workload Distribution	57.8	46.3	4.6	0.032
9	Support from supervisors is high	57.7	36.1	10.8	0.001
10	Responsibilities at work are clear	57.4	40.2	7.8	0.005
11	There is not much conflict between family and work responsibilities	56.7	44.3	4.4	0.037
12	Support from co-workers is good	56.3	39.7	6.6	0.010
13	Students are Friendly	56.3	42.7	4.7	0.031
14	Work environment is pleasant	56.2	28.9	10.1	0.001
15	Co-workers are friendly	55.4	32.4	5.7	0.017
	Overall desire to work at UB for ever	53.1	46.9		

*Each chi-squared has 1df since both the dependent variable "desire to work for UB forever" and each factor has 2 levels (yes/no). The percentages are out of those in each category of the independent variable who said they desire to work for UB forever.

elsewhere reported desire to work for the university forever.

Employees who often used food supplements were significantly more likely ($p=0.016$) to want to work for the university forever than those who did not. Similarly, those whose highest educational attainment was below a masters degree and those who found the management to be responsive were more likely to express "desire to work for the university forever". The data show that 63.2% of respondents who found the management to be

responsive indicated desire to work for the university forever compared to only 39% of those who did not find the management to be responsive.

The next group of factors that distinguished employees who were more likely to express desire to work for the university forever from their counterparts who did not were those that: often wrote down daily plans ($p=0.014$); accepted changes at the workplace ($p=0.007$), did not often feel symptoms of fatigue ($p=0.001$); felt that there was equity in the distribution of the workload ($p=0.032$),

Table 2. Predictive ability of model by factors added to the model

Step	Improvement		Model			Percent Correctly re-classified	Variable In	
	Chi-squared	df	Sig.	Chi square	df			Sig.
1	41.0	1	.000	41.0	1	0.000	67.8	Looking for job elsewhere
2	17.0	2	.000	58.0	3	0.000	67.8	Educational attainment
3	9.3	1	.002	67.3	4	0.000	68.5	Use of Supplements
4	8.0	1	.005	75.3	5	0.000	71.0	Support from supervisors
5	6.5	1	.011	81.8	6	0.000	70.3	Symptoms of Fatigue
6	6.1	1	.014	87.9	7	0.000	70.7	Responsiveness of management

experienced high levels of support from their supervisors ($p=0.001$), felt that responsibilities at work were clear ($p=0.005$), felt that there was not much conflict between family and work responsibilities ($p=0.037$), felt considerable support from co-workers ($p=0.010$), felt that students were friendly ($p=0.031$), felt that the work environment was pleasant ($p=0.001$) and those who felt that co-workers were friendly ($p=0.017$).

Respondents who were least likely to want to work for the university forever were those that found the work environment unpleasant (29%), followed by those who found their co-workers to be unfriendly (32%); those who were looking for a job elsewhere (35%) and those who had little or no support from their supervisors (36%). The results point to the importance of a pleasant family-type work environment with friendly co-workers, and supportive supervisors in order for employees to be committed to their place of work and to want to work for the university forever.

Parsimonious hierarchical model for employee's desire to work for universal basic (UB) forever

The 15 variables that were found to have an association with desire to work for UB forever were included in the multiple logistic regression analysis using the forward stepwise procedure to determine a parsimonious hierarchical model for predicting the likelihood that an employee would want to work for the University forever. The most significant predictor of the dependent variable, "desire to work for the university forever", based on the likelihood criterion, was included first in the model. Conditional on the first variable being in the model, the second most significant predictor was added, and so on, provided the change in likelihood was statistically significant.

Table 2, shows the order in which the variables were entered into the model along with model improvement statistics. Based on the significance of change in chi-squared statistics, the most significant predictor of "desire to work for the university forever" turned out to be whether or not an employee was looking for a job elsewhere. Conditional upon whether or not an employee

was looking for a job elsewhere, the next most important predictor of desire to work for the university forever was the highest educational attainment, use of food supplements, support from supervisors, symptoms of fatigue and the responsiveness of the management.

The predictive validity of the final model was fairly good as it correctly re-classified 71% of the respondents. Detailed analysis reveals that 77% of employees with a desire to work for the university forever and 65% of those who had no desire to work for the university forever were correctly re-classified using the model. Although the model at step 4 had the highest reclassification rate of 71.0% compared to the final model with 70.7%, the addition of "frequency of experiencing symptoms of fatigue" and "the responsiveness of the management" led to significant improvements in the model chi-squared. Hence the parsimonious model for predicting whether or not an employee was likely to want to work for the university forever, should include the following six factors: (1) looking for a job elsewhere, (2) highest educational attainment, (3) use of food supplements, (4) level of support from supervisors, (5) frequency of feeling symptoms of fatigue, and (6) the responsiveness of the management.

The model odd-ratio is $\exp(1.142 + 1.87 + \dots + 0.67 - 3.12) = 40.9$. This means that an employee who felt that the management was responsive, received considerable support from his/her supervisor, did not often experience symptoms of fatigue, used food supplements, had not attained a PhD and was not looking for a job elsewhere was about 40 times more likely to want to work for the university forever, than one who had the opposite of each of these experiences. The final column of Table 3 shows the relative odds for each factor within this model. An employee who was not looking for a job elsewhere was four times more likely to desire to work for the University forever (odds = 4.1) than one who was not looking for a job elsewhere. An employee with a Master's degree was 2.4 times more likely to want to work for the University forever than his/her counterpart with a PhD. A person whose highest qualification was lower than a Master's degree was even more likely (odds = 3.9) to want to work for the University forever than one with a Doctorate. An employee who did

Table 3. Multiple logistic regression model to predict the Likelihood that UB employees would desire to work for the university forever

Factor	B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Odds Ratio
1) Not looking for job elsewhere	1.42	0.273	27.0	1	0.000	4.1
2) Highest educational attainment			16.88	2	0.000	
Doctorate	0					1.0
Masters	0.87	0.307	8.0	1	0.005	2.4
Below Masters	1.35	0.344	15.5	1	0.000	3.9
3) Often uses food supplements	0.95	0.327	8.4	1	0.004	2.6
4) Does not often feel symptoms of fatigue	0.80	0.297	7.3	1	0.007	2.2
5) Receives support from supervisors	0.77	0.330	5.4	1	0.020	2.2
6) Feels that the management is responsive	0.67	0.272	6.0	1	0.014	2.0
Constant	-3.12	0.474	43.3	1	0.000	0.0

not often experience symptoms of fatigue was 2.2 times more likely to want to work for the University forever than one who often experienced symptoms of fatigue. Similarly, an employee who often used food supplements was about two-and-a-half times (odds = 2.6) more likely to desire to work for the University forever than one who did not use food supplements.

Employees who received considerable support from their supervisors were twice as likely (odds = 2.2) to desire to work for the university forever than those who received little of no support from their supervisors. Similarly, employees who felt that the management was responsive were almost twice as likely (odds = 1.95) to desire to work for the university forever than those who felt that the management were not responsive.

DISCUSSION

Prior research has shown that demographic variables such as age, gender, education, job level and organizational tenure were potential predictors of organizational commitment (Yucel and Bektas, 2012). In this study, most demographic characteristics did not have a significant effect on “desire to work for UB forever”. Although some studies have found gender differences in organizational commitment (Colbert and Kwon, 2000; Kwom and Banks, 2004; Lam and Zhang, 2003; Aremu and Adejoyu, 2003; Arnold, 2003; Singh and Vinnicombe, 2000), our results are consistent with findings of studies that found no association between organizational commitment and gender (Kidd, 2006; Geijsel, et al., 2003; Singh et al., 2002; Suliman and Lles, 2000).

Although it has been shown that as employee age increases organizational commitment increases, probably due to adaptation to the organization that occurs over time (Brown and Sargeant, 2007), our results were consistent with a number of studies in academic settings that have found no association between organizational commitment and age (Chughtai and Zafar, 2006; Joolideh and Yeshodhara, 2009; Lemons and Jones,

2001). Similarly, although some research has found that those with longer tenure are likely to become emotionally involved with the organization (Riordan et al., 2003) and are more likely to stay (Ettorre, 1997; McGregor, et al., 1989), this study did not find a significant association between organizational tenure and “desire to work for UB forever”. As with other demographic variables, our results indicate no association between marital status and desire to work for UB forever, although some studies (Joiner and Bakalis, 2006; Sikorska-Simmons, 2005) have found an association between marital status and commitment.

Level of education was the only demographic variable that had an association with desire to work at UB forever. Consistent with other studies (Chan and Choi, 2007; Joiner and Bakalis, 2006; Gilbert and Ivancevich, 1999), our results showed an inverse relationship between level of education and “desire to work for UB forever”. Respondents with Doctoral degrees were less likely to want to work for UB forever. Respondents with a Master’s degree were twice as likely to want to work for UB forever than those with a Doctoral degree, while those who had less than a Master’s degree were four times more likely to want to work for UB forever than those with a Doctoral degree. By contrast, some studies have found a positive association between level of education and commitment (Fuller et al., 2006; Malhotra and Murkherjee, 2004) while others have found no association between the two variables (Chughtai and Zafar, 2006; Bogler and Somech, 2004; Suliman and Lles, 2000).

It could be that respondents with a Doctoral degree, which should give them a greater sense of professionalism, may be committed to their scholarly professions, academic disciplines and careers in higher education than to the University in which they work (Brown and Sargeant, 2007). It has been recently argued (editorial, human resource management review, 2013) that the target of employees commitment, which includes goals, teams, projects careers and values, may under many situations be more important to the organization

and to the employee than commitment to the employing organization per se. Thus, while organizations need a committed workforce more than ever, employees' commitment need not be directed at the employing organization. The employing organization will benefit by providing an environment for the expression of employees' commitment to meaningful goals, teams, projects careers and values.

In line with results of other research (Foote et al. 2005; Gbadamosi, 2003; Lemons and Jones, 2001; Taly et al., 2004) we found a positive association between the responsiveness of the management and desire to work for the organization forever. Respondents who felt that the management were responsive were almost twice as likely to want to work for the University forever than those who felt that the management were unresponsive. Similarly, respondents who received considerable support from supervisors were twice as likely to want to work for the university forever than those who received little support from their supervisors.

Perceived responsiveness of the management and the immediate supervisors suggests good quality employee-employer relationships that lead to positive attitudes and outcomes that have been associated with "high productivity, loyalty, punctuality, dedication, and commitment that tend to promote the organization's success (Brown and Sargeant, 2007, p 212). Since higher educational institutions are human-intensive collegial settings in which human relations and dynamics play a significant role, the quality of the relationship, collegiality, trust and support between the management, supervisors and their colleagues plays an important role (Celep and Yilmazturk, 2012) in the desire to continue participation in the institution, commitment to mutually beneficial ideals and goals, and the realization of educational objectives. The trust that workers have in their leaders and colleagues increases organizational loyalty, organizational citizenship behaviors' and organizational success.

A supportive environment requires a responsive management team, administrators, supervisors and colleagues who are focused on employee retention, satisfaction and commitment. A strategy to engender commitment will require paying attention to the health and wellness needs of employees, human resources policies that promote fair and equitable workload distribution practices as well as opportunities for regular recognition and reward of performance. Such a strategy should engender greater organizational commitment.

LIMITATIONS

Although there are several conventional measures of affective commitment (example, Chughtai and Zafar, 2006; Fuller et al., 2006; Ivancevich, 1999; Joiner and Bakalis, 2006; Kidd, 2006; Zafar, 2006), the construct

"affective commitment" was measured with a proxy single item through which respondents were asked to indicate whether or not they agreed with the statement: "If I had my way, I would work for my organization forever". Although this is one of the items that have been used to with other items to derive a measure of affective commitment, the use of a single item has its own limitations and the results should therefore be interpreted and used with caution.

The majority of studies have treated commitment forms separately despite the view that commitment is a global psychological state characterized by varying levels and dimensions of commitment, which combine to form commitment profiles (that is, combinations of various forms of commitment) in which individuals could be simultaneously attempting to reduce cognitive dissonance associated with being unable to leave the organization, which is continuous commitment (due to perceived sacrifice associated with leaving or perceived lack of employment alternatives) by rationalizing that they want to (affective commitment) or are obligated to (normative commitment) remain within the organization (Stanley, et al., 2013). Respondents could have had a committed profile consisting of high levels of affective commitment, normative commitment, and continuance commitment (which included perceived sacrifice and few alternatives).

It could be argued that agreeing with the statement may be a reflection of the fact that respondents had no real equivalent alternative employment in a university in Botswana. At the time of collecting the data the University of Botswana was the only national and comprehensive university in the country. Other post-secondary school institutions were private providers of a limited selection of specialized tertiary programmes. In addition, the national economy was fairly strong when compared to other economies in the region. The national currency was the strongest in Southern Africa.

In the circumstances, "desire to work for UB forever" could have been a response that reflected the inadequate choices of alternative employment and the need to avoid the costs associated with leaving UB (continuance commitment). An employee who is committed to supporting a family (nuclear or extended) and school-going children (own or of relatives) for many years to come may agree to working for UB forever out of a need for survival and not out of a sense of emotional attachment to UB. Some respondents could have expressed desire to work for UB forever because of a sense of obligation (normative commitment).

Conclusion

This study points to the need for the university to continuously identify and promote attributes that are associated with high levels of commitment among its

employees. The results of the study indicate that employees who desire to work for UB forever have the following attributes:

- 1.They are well organized as reflected by often writing plans for the day;
- 2.They are flexible, and able to accept changes at work;
- 3.They are able to balance family and work life well;
- 4.They have clearly defined work responsibilities;
- 5.They have an equitably distributed workload;
- 6.They receive support from co-workers;
- 7.They find co-workers to be friendly;
- 8.They find students to be friendly;
- 9.They find the work environment pleasant.

While the above factors are associated with “desire to work for the University forever”, they are not predictive. Multivariate analyses have identified the following attributes of employees who are most likely to “desire to work for UB forever”:

- 1.They are not looking for a job elsewhere
- 2.They typically do not have a doctoral degree;
- 3.They are generally healthy and use food supplements;
- 4.They work with supportive supervisors in a friendly environment;
- 5.They do not typically experience signs of exhaustion and fatigue;
- 6.They typically find the management of the organization to be responsive.

Knowledge of factors in the control of the management and supervisors can guide interventions to improve the work environment and conditions of service. Interviews for university positions could include questions that seek to identify candidates who have desirable attributes that reflect commitment. This should result in employees who are a ‘good fit’ within the organization. Because of the limitations of our measure of affective commitment, and of the changing dimensions and conceptualization of the construct “commitment” it is prudent to treat our findings with an open mind. Respondents who expressed desire to work for UB forever were committed to the University (the organization), which gave an opportunity to pursue their, dreams, values, careers and professions with teams of colleagues in and out of a university, which happened to find expression at UB, which did not have an equivalent alternative in Botswana.

Another issue that may confound “desire to work for UB forever” is that of organizational identity – the degree to which an individual may see him/her self as an employee of UB. Key antecedents of this may be perceived distinctiveness (the specialness of working for UB as the only national university, and the prestige of the UB as an organization. This may be especially true for those individuals who see UB as the only game in town and do jobs (occupations) that do not exist in other industries outside of higher education.

Desire to work for the organization forever, could also be construed as one of two constructs – organizational attachment and occupational attachment, which are related (Hassan 2012). A conventional measure of affective commitment (example, Chughtai and Zafar, 2006; Fuller et al., 2006; Ivancevich, 1999; Joiner and Bakalis, 2006; Kidd, 2006; Zafar, 2006) would have helped to avoid questions that may arise in interpretation of the results.

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