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**The Study of Organizational and Occupational Commitment Among Physical Education Employees in Governmental Universities of Iran**

**Reza Andam<sup>1</sup>, Amir Montazeri<sup>2</sup>, Samira Feizi<sup>3</sup>**

1. Assistance professor of Shahrood University, Shahrood, Iran
2. Ph.D. Student in sport management of Ferdowsi University of Mashhad, Mashhad, Iran
3. Ph.D. Student in sport management of Shomal University, Amol, Iran

**Correspondence with:**

**Amir Montazeri**

[amir.montazeri@stu-mail.um.ac.ir](mailto:amir.montazeri@stu-mail.um.ac.ir)

Tel: +98 0912 448 9627

Ferdowsi University of Mashhad

*International Journal of Sport Management Recreation & Tourism*, Vol.14, p.32-48, 2014

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**To link to this article: <http://dx.doi.org/>**

**DOI: 10.5199/ijsmart-1791-874X-15c**

## **The Study of Organizational and Occupational Commitment Among Physical Education Employees in Governmental Universities of Iran**

### **Abstract**

The purpose of this paper was to investigate the organizational behavior of employees (as expressed by organizational and occupational commitment) in physical education offices at Iranian Universities. The sample that was used included 82 employees from 20 Universities in 5 geographic regions of Iran. The research Instruments were the "Organizational and Occupational Commitment Questionnaires" (Allen & Meyer, 1997) comprised 18 items (3 subscales of Affective, Normative and Continuance). The reliability of Organizational Commitment Questionnaire and Occupational Commitment Questionnaire were  $\alpha = .83$  and  $.82$  respectively. The result showed that the average of organizational commitment and occupational commitment was  $3.59 \pm .519$  and  $3.64 \pm .513$  respectively. Also, there was a significant and positive correlation between organizational and occupational commitment ( $r=0.72$ ,  $p=.001$ ). There was a significant difference in occupational commitment with regard to level of education ( $F(3, 77) = 3.343$ ,  $p=.023$ ), But there was no significant difference in organizational commitment and occupational commitment with regard to gender, years of service and employment status. Because of the existence of a positive and meaningful relationship between organizational commitment and occupational commitment, it was advised to the managers of physical education offices to attend seriously to their organizational commitment and its subscales for fast achievement to the organization's aims. Attending to the organizational and occupational commitment of employees will increase the proficiency and effectively of them.

**Keywords:** Affective; Normative; Continuance; Commitment; Physical Education

## **The Study of Organizational and Occupational Commitment Among Physical Education Employees in Governmental Universities of Iran**

### **Introduction**

Human power is one of the most important factors which is too effective and is always under attention of managers and authorities of various organizations. The importance of human power in organizations is undeniable and ignorance to provide appropriate environment for them may create a lot of problems for organizations. One of the hidden but effective factors in occupational behavior of employees is their commitment to their occupation and organization (Ghafouri, Andam, Montazeri & Feizi, 2012). Commitment is an important occupational and organizational attitude which is being paid a lot of attention by many researchers during past years, in a case that such this attitude has a specific position in research literature. The main and major reason for such this importance is that organizational and occupational commitment is an attitude and an occupational procedure that is able to provide sufficient information for planning, organizing, efficiency and desirable targets of the organization (Poursoltania, Faraji & Andam, 2010).

According to studies of Reichheld and Teal (2001) it was supposed that commitment helps efficiency of organization although there is no valid document for sport management in this regard. Studies show that, commitment leads to desirable advantages such as better function and less turnover, absence and displacement. So, managers may assess the level of commitment among personnel and change effective factors to provide necessary targets of their organizations. Due to this significant subject, considering occupational and organizational commitment of employees is so important especially in services organizations such as sports organizations.

Doubtlessly, the results of this study will define the situation of organizational and occupational commitment among physical education employees in universities. Due to current situations, managers may design and execute effective approaches and objective programs for higher performance of employees.

### **Review of Literature**

Occupational commitment shows a kind of perceptual state and feeling of mental identity toward an occupation. Santos and Emmalou, (1994) believe that

occupational commitment is the feeling of identity and affiliation toward a specific job and occupation and recommend that tendency to be active in a specific occupation is occupational commitment. Occupational commitment refers to faith to personal job and depends on the level of requirements of employees which can be provided by the job. Those who engage with their jobs seriously believe in their jobs as an important part of their personal identity (Hackett, Lapierre & Hausdorf, 2001). Moreover, people with high occupational affiliation devote most of their interests for their jobs. While people believe in their job as a factor of honor and credit, their occupational commitment will increase. Numerous factors create occupational commitment in people. Researchers believe that internal and external factors and motivations are effective in occupational commitment. Lee, Carswell & Allen, (2000) explain that occupational commitment has a great importance because jobs are an important part of the life of people and various studies show that there is a relationship between occupational commitment and loyalty of people to their organization and also occupational commitment is related to function of employees potentially (Poursoltani, Zargar & Andam, 2011).

On the other hand, researchers indicate that organizational commitment is an important variable to understand behavior of employees. Organizational commitment is related to efficiency of employees and affects personal characteristics, job satisfaction, and displacement (Han, 2007). Organizational commitment refers to such a power which forces people to remain in their organization and work for the targets of the organization with tranquility (Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001). Organizational commitment accompanies a series of creative and innovative behaviors. Individual, who has a high level of organizational commitment and remains in the organization, accepts the target of the organization and makes a lot of effort or even devotes himself to reach the targets. Griffin, (1999) believes that organizational commitment reflexes the level of coordination and tranquility.

In initial assessments, commitment has had two behavioral and conceptual components. Two dimensions of continuous commitment and emotional commitment has been added later (Cuskelly, 1995a). Meyer and Allen (1991) proposed a three-component commitment model. They categorized organizational commitment as affective, continuance and normative dimensions. Affective commitment refers to “the employee’s emotional attachment to, identification with, and involvement in the organization. Employees with a strong affective commitment continue employment in the organization because they want to do so”. This factor is conceptualized when the

employee has a strong belief in and acceptance of the organizational goals and objectives. Continuance commitment refers to “awareness of the costs associated with leaving the organization. Employees whose primary link to the organization is based on continuance commitment remain because they need to do so”. This factor is an employee’s commitment based on the cost the employee associates with departing an organization. Normative commitment refers to “the employee’s feeling of obligation to continue employment. Employees with a high level of normative commitment feel that they ought to remain with the organization” (Meyer & Allen, 1991). This factor is conceptualized when an employee has the desire to remain with an organization because of the feeling of social responsibility against leaving. Sinclair (2005) concluded that employees with higher affective commitment are more bound to values and believe more in fulfillment of organizational targets. Turner (2001) considered various dimensions of organizational and occupational commitment (normative, continuous, and affective) among University coaches. The result of his study showed that affective dimension has the higher average and normative and continuous dimensions were in next positions respectively. In occupational commitment coaches had more commitment to affective dimension and there was no difference between these three dimensions in organizational commitment. There is also no significant relationship between gender and occupational and organizational commitment. On the other hand, married female coaches had less emotional commitment toward single women, but on the contrary, married men had more commitment toward single men. In a study by Santos and Emmalou (1998) to consider related factors to occupational and organizational commitment among coaches, the results showed that there is a positive correlation between occupational commitment and organizational commitment. The relations between occupational and organizational commitment in their study indicate that improvement of one of the kinds of commitment has a positive effect on other kinds. This means that any situation in all organizations and occupations to decrease one kind of commitment will decrease the other kind. It is also obvious that managers should focus on social-mental and occupational properties to understand organizational and occupational commitments of employees. Totally, the level of organizational and occupational commitment of employees will be increased if occupational and social features are supported and improved. Carson and Carson (1999) concluded that employees with both organizational and occupational commitment have the highest level

of capability and intention to be engaged in activities to improve services and also have the highest job satisfaction.

Cuskelly, (1995a) in his study entitle: “study of organizational commitment and turnover amongst volunteer administrators in sports” understood that some variables such as age, number of years as an organizational member and hours per week put into administration have a great relationship with organizational commitment. Volunteer turnover also had a relationship with changes level of organizational commitment. Turnover was a serious problem for many sport organizations. Cuskelly, (1995b) also in another study entitled: “The influence of committee functioning on organizational commitment of volunteer administrators in sport” assessed 159 randomly selected volunteer managers among 17 sports’ clubs and associations and concluded that there is a significant relationship between organizational commitment and weekly work hours. There was also a negative relation between organizational commitment and level of education. At last, volunteer administrators in national and local level had more commitment toward administrators in regional level.

Winterstein (1998) investigated the commitment of head athletic trainers in their intercollegiate work environment. Head athletic trainers (n=330) of NCAA Division I, II, and III were used as the sample for the study. Results revealed that continuous commitment was significantly lower than the affective and normative commitment. In addition, results showed Division I and Division II head athletic trainers demonstrated higher levels of normative commitment to their athletic departments and affective and normative commitment to their co-workers than their Division III head athletic trainers. Chang and Chelladurai (2003) considered job attitudes among full-time and part-time workers in South Korea sport organizations. Their studies showed that full-time workers obtained higher scores toward part-time employees in affective commitment and organizational citizenship behavior. On other words, part-time workers obtained higher scores in continuous commitment. The results also showed that there was a positive relationship between affective commitment and organizational citizenship behavior in both groups and there was a negative and significant relationship between continuous commitment and organizational citizenship behavior among full-time workers. Kim, Jones & Rodriguez, (2008) by means of Meyer and Allen’s (1997) questionnaire considered organizational commitment among various work statuses (volunteers, practicum/internship workers, part-time workers and full-time workers) in a University athletic department. Volunteers and practicum/internship workers had a significant

higher affective and normative commitment toward part-time workers and had lower affective commitment toward full-time workers. Full-time workers had also higher continuous commitment.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions guided this study:

RQ1: What are the demographic characteristics of employees?

RQ2: Do organizational commitment and occupational commitment of employees in a satisfactory condition (optimal level)?

RQ3: Are there any relationship among organizational commitment and occupational commitment of employees?

RQ4: Are there any differences in occupational and organizational commitment between selected demographic characteristics (gender, years of service, employment status, level of education) of employees?

## **Methodology**

### ***Sample***

In this study, the participants were selected from all employees of physical education office at Universities throughout Iran. The sample sizes comprised of 82 employees were selected in 20 universities, located in 5 various geographical regions of Iran (north, south, east, west and centre) - 4 universities in each region - were selected based on cluster-random sampling procedure.

### ***Questionnaire***

For the purpose of gathering the required data in this study, Meyer & Allen (1997) questionnaires were the tools of assessment for organizational commitment and occupational commitment, each of them consisted of 18 items and three sub scales (affective, continuous and normative). The questionnaires were based on 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (completely disagree), 2 (disagree), 3 (neutral), 4 (agree), and 5 (completely agree). A panel of experts was asked to thoroughly examine the questionnaires for face and content validity. A panel of experts included sport management professors (n=5) and individuals who had conducted research on OB (n=5). The reliability of the organizational commitment questionnaire and occupational commitment questionnaire were assessed through Cronbach's coefficient alpha ( $\alpha$ ). The reliability of the scale was found to be:  $\alpha = 0.83$  and  $\alpha = 0.82$  respectively.

### ***Process***

The questionnaires were mailed to physical education offices of selected universities, 5 questionnaires for each university. A total of 100 survey instruments were distributed and the same number was returned. From this total, 18 were excluded because they were not complete. A total of 82 (82%) questionnaires were utilized for the data analysis.

The participants were assured that all information gathered would be held confidential, presented in group form and only used in this study. The surveys distributed included a) a letter explaining the project and requesting the participation, b) the instrument, and c) a self-addressed stamped envelope in case participants wished to respond by mail. Finally, participants expressing an interest in the results will receive a summary of the findings and their interpretations upon their request.

### ***Data Analysis***

The data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS 19.0). Descriptive statistics method such as frequency and percentage distributions was used to assess demographic characteristics and to define the importance of variables. Cronbach's coefficient alpha ( $\alpha$ ) was used to define reliability of questionnaires. Based on result of kolmogorov-Smirnov test, research data had normal distribution; so, parametric statistical tests (ANOVA, One-sample t- tests and Pearson correlation) were used inferential analyze data in significantly levels of 0.05 and 0.01.

## **Results**

In order to have a better recognition about statistical sample, general characteristics of participants were assessed such as gender, age, marital status, level of education, employment status and years of service. Among 82 participants, 47.6% ( $n = 39$ ) were women and 52.4% ( $n = 43$ ) were men. Age of participants ranged from 24 to 53 years with a mean age of 34.53 years ( $s.d. = 7.02$ ); 31.7% ( $n = 26$ ) of them were single and 68.3% ( $n = 56$ ) were married. Regarding the education level, the highest percentage, 63.4% ( $n = 52$ ) were Bachelor of Arts graduate. The majority of employees, 47.6% ( $n = 39$ ) had contract (non-permanent) of employment status (table 1). 57.3% ( $n = 47$ ) of personnel had 5 to 10 years of service, 20.7% ( $n = 17$ ) had 10 to 15 years of service, 9.8% ( $n = 8$ ) had 15 to 20 years of service, 11% ( $n = 9$ ) had more than 20 years of service and 1.2% ( $n = 1$ ) had less than 5 years of service.

**Table 1.** Frequency and percentage of the level of educational and employment status.

Characteristics	Classification	Frequency	Percent (%)
Level of education	High school graduate	9	11
	Associate of arts	5	6.1
	Bachelor of arts	52	63.4
	Master of arts	15	18.3
	No reply	1	1.2
Employment status	Formal (permanent)	29	35.4
	Semi-formal (non-permanent)	9	11
	Contract (non-permanent)	39	47.6
	Others	5	6.1

One-sample t-test testing related to the comparison of average of organizational and occupational commitment of employees with theoretical mean<sup>1</sup> showed that ( $t(81) = 10.45, p = .001$ ) for organizational commitment and ( $t(81) = 11.42, p = .001$ ) for occupational commitment, therefore concluded that the average of organizational commitment ( $M_{obs} = 3.59 > M_{cri} = 3$ ) and occupational commitment ( $M_{obs} = 3.64 > M_{cri} = 3$ ) statistically significant difference with theoretical mean. It is also concluded that the rate of organizational and occupational commitment of employees was in an optimal level (see table 2).

**Table 2.** One-sample t-test for occupational and organizational commitments.

Scale	N	Observed Mean	Theoretical Mean	Mean Difference	t	df	Sig.
Organizational Commitment	82	3.59	3	.59	10.45	81	.001*
Occupational Commitment	82	3.64	3	.64	11.42	81	.001*

\*It is significant at the .01 level

1 - Theoretical mean: sum of grades of different points on spectrum divided on the number of points.

The result of Pearson correlation test showed that there was a significant and positive relationship between organizational commitment and occupational commitment ( $r=.72$ ,  $p=.001$ ), organizational commitment and affective sub scale of occupational commitment ( $r=.58$ ,  $p=.001$ ), organizational commitment and normative subscale of occupational commitment ( $r=.68$ ,  $p=.001$ ) and organizational commitment and continuous sub scale of occupational commitment ( $r=.38$ ,  $p=.001$ ). In other words, increasing the level of commitment in subscales of occupational commitments will increase total organizational commitment. There is also a positive and significant relationship between occupational commitment and affective subscale of organizational commitment ( $r=.54$ ,  $p=.001$ ), occupational commitment and normative subscale of organizational commitment ( $r=.71$ ,  $p=.001$ ) and occupational commitment and continuous subscale of organizational commitment ( $r=.55$ ,  $p=.001$ ), in other words, increasing the level of commitment in subscales of organizational commitments will increase total occupational commitment (see table 3).

**Table 3.** The results of Pearson correlation test about relationship between organizational and occupational commitment and their subscales.

Scales and Sub Scales	N	r	Sig.
Organizational Commitment and Occupational Commitment	82	.72	.001*
Organizational Commitment and Affective subscale of Occupational commitment	82	.58	.001*
Organizational Commitment and Normative subscale of Occupational Commitment	82	.68	.001*
Organizational Commitment and Continuous subscale of Occupational Commitment	82	.38	.001*
Occupational Commitment and Affective subscale of Organizational Commitment	82	.54	.001*
Occupational Commitment and Normative subscale of Organizational Commitment	82	.71	.001*
Occupational Commitment and Continuous subscale of Organizational Commitment	82	.55	.001*

\*It is significant at the .01 level

In a follow-up independent-samples T-test (see table 4), there were no significant gender differences in organizational commitment ( $t(80) = -1.12, p = .26$ ) and occupational commitment ( $t(80) = -.308, p = .75$ ).

**Table 4:** The difference between means of organizational and occupational commitment according to gender.

Scale	Gender	N	Mean	t	df	Sig.
Organizational Commitment	Female	39	3.53	-1.12	80	.26
	Male	43	3.66			
Occupational Commitment	Female	39	3.62	-.308	80	.75
	Male	43	3.66			

The results of AVONA test showed that there was no significant difference between organizational commitment ( $F(4.77) = 1.023, p = .401$ ) and occupational commitment ( $F(4.77) = .490, p = .743$ ) according to years of service. So, it can be mentioned that there is no difference between organizational and occupational commitments according to years of service (see table 5).

**Table 5.** ANOVA test about the organizational and occupational commitments by years of service.

Scale	Variables	Sum of squares	Mean squares	df	F	Sig.
Organizational Commitment	Between groups	1.101	.275	4	1.023	.401
	Within groups	20.722	.269	77		
Occupational Commitment	Between groups	.531	.133	4	.490	.743
	Within groups	20.863	.271	77		

The result of ANOVA test showed that there was no significant difference between organizational commitment ( $F(3.78) = .134, p = .94$ ) and occupational commitment ( $F(3.78) = .918, p = .436$ ) according to employment status; so, the theory of

equal organizational and occupational commitments based on employment status is accepted (see table 6).

**Table 6:** ANOVA test about the organizational and occupational commitment by employment status.

Scale	Variables	Sum of squares	Mean squares	df	F	Sig.
Organizational Commitment	Between groups	.112	.037	3	.134	.940
	Within groups	21.712	.278	78		
Occupational Commitment	Between groups	.730	.243	3	.918	.436
	Within groups	20.664	.265	78		

The result of ANOVA test showed that there were no significant differences between organizational commitment and level of education ( $F(3,77) = .658, p = .58$ ); but there were significant difference in occupational commitment ( $F(3,77) = 3.343, p = .023$ ) (see table 7). Results of post hoc Tukey test showed that the employees with high school graduate ( $4.06 \pm .61$ ) and MA degree ( $3.41 \pm .6$ ) groups differed significantly (Mean Difference = 0.65,  $p = .013$ ).

**Table 7.** ANOVA test about the organizational and occupational commitment by level of education.

Scale	Variables	Sum of squares	Mean squares	df	F	Sig.
Organizational commitment	Between groups	.499	.166	3	.658	.580
	Within groups	19.437	.252	77		
Occupational commitment	Between groups	2.442	.814	3	3.343	.023*
	Within groups	18.748	.243	77		

\*It is significant at the .05 level

### Discussion and Conclusion

Results were clear that 52.4 percent of employees in physical education offices in universities are men and the rest 47.6 percent are women. Mean age of employees is  $34.53 \pm 7.02$  and most of them (63.4%) hold bachelor degree. Most of the employees (57.3%) had 5 to 10 years working background in their organization and most of them (47.6%) had a working contract (non-permanent) with their offices.

The results from the present study have shown that the mean score for organizational commitment was statistically significant more than theoretical mean ( $t(81) = 10.45, p = .001$ ). And also the mean score for occupational commitment was statistically significant more than theoretical mean ( $t(81) = 11.42, p = .001$ ). These findings showed that employees have relatively high commitment and loyalty toward their organization and occupation. According to the research by Mayer and Allen (1997), employees who are more committed have characteristics such as higher job performance, higher organizational citizenship, more ethical behavior, less stress, less job displeasure, and diminished intent to leave. These outcomes are critical determinants of an organization's human resources effectiveness and the human resources effectiveness is an indicator of organizational effectiveness (Robbins, 1996). More recent research by Clugston (2000) indicated that commitment partially mediates the relationship between job satisfaction and turnover intention. Managers and authorities should make enough effort to elevate the level of commitment and conscience among employees according to positive effects of such these decisions (eagerly following of targets, tendency to make effort beyond duties, acceptance of targets and values of organization, tendency to be a member of organization) and negative effects (resistance against changes, probability of retirement and ousting, increase of costs due to instability of positions, reduction in efficiency).

Study results showed that there was a significant and positive relationship between organizational commitment and occupational commitment ( $r = .72, p = .001$ ). This relationship means that higher commitment to an organization will increase occupational commitment too. Our result supports the results of studies of Carson and Carson (1999) and Santos & Emmalou (1998). It can be indicate that improvement of any kind of commitment has a positive effect on other kinds of commitment. In other words, any position or occupation which decreases the level of commitment will decrease other kinds too (Santos & Emmalou, 1998). There is also a positive and significant relation between organizational commitment and subscales (affective, normative and

continuous) of occupational commitment and also between occupational commitment and subscales of organizational commitment.

The results of study showed that there was no significant difference between organizational commitment and occupational commitment according to gender. Such this finding correlates with achievements of Turner and Chelladurai (2005) and Turner (2001). Aven, Parker & McEvoy (1993) concluded that is possible to reach similar commitments among women and men, provided that organizations have an equal and similar confrontation with all of their employees. In our society (in Iran), the presence of women in working environment has been higher for women during recent decades. It may be mentioned as a reason for equal level of commitment.

According to the results, there was no statistically significant difference between organizational and occupational commitments based on years of service. The findings do not supported the result of study of Cuskelly (1995a). He found significant relationship between membership background of volunteer managers and their organizational commitment (Cuskelly, 1995a).

The results of this research showed that there was no significant difference between organizational commitment and occupational commitment according to employment status. Chang and Chelladurai (2003) in their study concluded that full-time workers had higher scores on affective commitment than the scores of the part-time group. On the other hand, the part-time workers had a higher score on continuous commitment. Also, Kim, Jones and Rodriguez (2008), found that the affective commitment of full-time workers was the highest while part-time workers were significantly lower than the other groups in normative commitment. So the result of this paper do not supported the findings of Chang and Chelladurai (2003), and Kim, Jones and Rodriguez (2008).

According to achievements of this study, it seems that employment status has no effect on employees' organizational and occupational commitment at physical education offices of universities.

The result of ANOVA test showed that no significant difference was also observed based on level of education in organizational commitment, but significant difference was found in occupational commitment. Results of post hoc Tukey test showed that the employees with high school graduate and MA degree groups differed significantly (Mean Difference=0.65,  $p=.013$ ). Mean score of occupational commitment of employees with master's degree lower than the employees had high school graduate. It

seems that duties and occupation of employees with high level of education (particularly employees with M.A.) does not provide their needs and demands, and they may have a relative negative viewpoint about their job. It is expected that managers and decision makers for physical education offices at universities pay enough attention in this regard and provide an appropriate working environment especially for those employees with high level of education. Carson and Carson (1999) say that employees with both organizational and occupational commitments have also the higher level of capability and tendency to involve in activities and higher satisfaction.

At last and according to the findings of this research about organizational commitment and occupational commitment and their relationship with each other, it is concluded that these two kinds of commitment may have appropriate or inappropriate effect on employees of physical education offices of universities. Reichheld (1996) stated that Loyalty to customer, employees and investors is a basic issue and can be a source of development and progress of the organization. He emphasized that loyal employees are so valuable for the organization. So, it is suggested to various sport organizations especially physical education offices of universities to arrange required programs to remove any obstacle against organizational and occupational commitment and take correct management measures to improve and elevate the level of these commitments among employees. Such these commitments are effective factors to increase efficiency, function and participation of personnel and to decrease delay and absence.

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