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INFLUENCE OF MARITAL STRESS ON ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT AMONG TEACHERS AND POLICE OFFICERS

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the extent to which marital stress influence organizational commitment of teachers and police officers. Participants were 300 (149 teachers; 151 police officers). Their ages ranged between 33 and 55 years ($M = 37.24$; $SD = 11.10$). Results indicated that organizational commitment increased with employees' length of service. Marital stress had no significant influence on organizational commitment; but occupational differences existed in organizational commitment with teachers being more committed than police officers. Furthermore, marital stress and type of occupation did not jointly influence organizational commitment.

Key words: Service occupation, police, teacher, commitment.

INTRODUCTION

Employees' commitment has been associated with organizational effectiveness (Beck & Wilson, 1997; Metcalfe & Dick, 2002). Organizational commitment has implications for the organization as a whole as well as for the individuals. Beck and Wilson (1997) believe that it is one of the central features of organizational effectiveness. Furthermore, Metcalfe and Dick (2002) argue that commitment is linked to a lower absenteeism, lower turnover rates and an increased intention to stay with the organization. Moreover, highly committed employees are more likely to contribute to the organization in more positive ways than employees who are less committed.

Real commitment often evolves into exchanging relationships in which individuals may attach themselves to

the organization in return for certain rewards or outcomes. Organizational commitment is a vital tool for enhancing initiative and creativity, especially in schools and organizations (e.g. police); where work is highly programmed (Mattieu & Zajac 1990) and highly demands employees' attention. Marital stress could have adverse effects on employees' attention and commitment to work. It is, therefore, important that the connection between marital stress and employees' commitment (teachers and police personnel) be investigated.

Organizational Commitment

Kobasa (1985) defined commitment as the ability to believe in the truth, importance and interest of what one is doing including work, family and interpersonal relationships in social institutions. Bateman and Strasser (1984) submitted that commitment is multidimensional and involves 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 the desire to maintain membership. Organizational commitment may further be defined as the willingness to work hard and give one's energy and time to a job and ability to go extra mile in getting a job done.

Meyer and Allen (1991) submitted that commitment is a psychological state that characterizes the employee's relationships with the organization and has implications for the decision to continue membership with the organization. According to

them, organizational commitment is classified into three: affective, continuance, and normative commitment. Affective commitment is defined as the emotional attachment, identification, and involvement that an employee has with his organizational goals. Findings in the literature seem to suggest that because of work experiences, which increase the employee feelings of challenge and comfort in the organization, affective commitment may be developed (Irving, Coleman & Cooper, 1997; Mattieu & Zajac, 1990; Meyer & Allen, 1993).

Continuance commitment is the willingness to remain in an organization because of the investment that the employee has, which are *non-transferable*. Non-transferable investments include things such as retirement and relationships with other employees. Continuance commitment also includes factors such as years of employment or benefits that the employee may receive that are unique to the organization (Reichers, 1985).

Satisfaction with work itself is positively related to organizational commitment (Okpara 2004). In a research carried out by Noordin, Abdulrahim, Ibrahim and Omar (2012), they found out that managers who had spent years in the organization are likely to yield greater side bets, such as a pension plan, and thus they develop greater calculative (continuance) organizational commitment. According to Bolon (1997), normative commitment is the commitment that an employee believes that he/she has to the organization or the feelings of obligation to the workplace (Meyer &Allen, 1991). Normative

commitment can be explained by other commitments such as marriage, family, religion, etc. Therefore when it comes to one's commitment to their place of employment they often feel like they have a moral obligation to the organization (Wiener, 1982).

Organizational Commitment among Teachers

A distinctive feature of a successful school organization is that there is cooperation among the teachers, administration, and parents, where each person works with the other to accomplish collaborative goals (Ingersoll, 2001; Little, 1982). Thus, high turnover is less experienced in a school that needs and accomplishes this cohesion in order to achieve success (Rosenholtz, 1989). In a research carried out by Celep (2000) on teachers' organizational commitment in educational setting, he found out that there was high level of commitment of teachers to teaching works. They were satisfied with teaching and they struggled more for doing the best in the school. Perhaps that is why every year more teachers are choosing to leave, contributing to a teachers shortage that has affected the field at the national level (Flynt & Morton, 2009; Yasin, 1999). Similarly, according to the National Center of Educational Statistics in 2007, approximately eight percent of teachers changed professions during the 2003-2004 school years and another eight percent transferred to a different school.

According to Skillern, Richardson, Wallman, Prickett, and Marion (1990), teaching involves two kinds of stress -- self-imposed stress and situational stress. Unrealistic expectations are the sources of self-imposed stress. These may begin in the pre-practicum stages of teaching. In the pre-practicum stage of teaching, a teacher may come to expect that professional autonomy and respect will be accorded once teaching has commenced. He/she may also expect students who eagerly accept the knowledge he/she has to offer. However, once teachers begin their practicum, large gap between their expectations and what they experience is likely encountered (Dworkin, 2001). The other kind of stress in teaching, which is extrinsic or situational, results from the job demands, conflict among staff, clash of values, and marital stress (Conley, Bacharach & Bauer, 1989; Skillern et al., 1990).

Organizational Commitment among Police

Despite the fact that organizational commitment has great influence on organizational effectiveness and job performance, there are relatively few studies conducted among police officers. Organizational commitment may serve as a mediating variable for explaining the patrol officers' work related behaviors. Beck and Wilson (1997) reported a strong connection between police socialization and organizational commitment may be because the socialization to a large extent influence organizational commitment (cynical and more experienced officers' influence the newcomers).

Beck (1996) proposed two distinct stages in the development of organizational commitment: (1) rapid and substantial decrease in commitment in the first few years of employment; and (2) commitment levels of officers continued to decline with experience. In a research conducted by Darjan and Milan (2004) in Slovenia using uniform police officers and police officers from criminal investigation division, the result revealed that police officers at the police stations and in the Criminal Investigation Division do not differ in their commitment. The findings show that there is no significant difference in the organizational commitment between uniformed officers and officers working in the CID. The results also revealed that officers were willing to expend additional effort on behalf of the organization; that they are proud to be part of the organization; but they do not like to discuss their organization with people outside it.

Grusky (1966) reported that females were generally more committed than males; and committed police officers perceived their work as interesting and challenging. They were more familiar with organizational goals, felt connected with co-workers; but perceived their leaders as being attentive to them and allow autonomy. Metcalfe and Dick (2000) examined low commitment among constables (lower ranked officers) and relatively high commitment among senior police officers in United Kingdom. Therefore committed officers, in comparison to non-committed officers, rarely consider leaving the organization and do not look for the employment elsewhere.

Marital Stress and Organizational Commitment

Marriage, which is regarded as one of the most important relationships, involves emotional and legal commitments between two individuals for love, happiness, companionship, and the desire to have children, physical attraction or desire to escape from an unhappy situation (Bernard, 1984). Employees' commitment to the job or marriage may suffer if there an inadequate work / family balance. Grzywacz and Bass (2003) in their own research found a higher percentage of working mother (83%) and working father (72%) who reported conflict between their job and family demands. The level of stress employees experience in their marriage may reduce their level of commitment to the organization or vice versa. Stress has generally been viewed as a set of neurological and physiological reactions to perceived threats that serve adaptive functions (Franken, 1994), which the individual feels he/ she may not be able to handle effectively Lazarus (1991). Stress may come from any source including marriage.

Marital stress refers to the perceived disturbance that affects the aims of happiness and other good expectations of couples in marriage (Omoluabi, 1994). Marital stress has become one of the most serious health issues in the modern world as it affects any job and organization (Fortinatos-Ventouratos & Copper 2005). Tsui, Thomas and Edward (1992) posited that family interference with work may have some negative consequences on

employees including commitment to their career.

Ajaja (2004) and Collins and George (2004) in their studies reported that married employees, unlike those that are single, tend to be face the bipolar challenges of marital life and that of workplace, which may negatively affect their commitment and effectiveness at home as well as at work. Wang and Walumbuwa (2007) reported that high marital stress had a significant negative influence on job commitment; causing increased inefficiency and ineffectiveness in employees. Using a Nigerian sample, in a study on work-family roles and organizational commitment, Akintayo (2010) reported that that married respondents exhibited lower organizational commitment than the single respondents.

The National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (1999) emphasized that when there is marital stress, the individual is prone to harmful physical and emotional responses that occur when the requirements of the job do not match the capabilities, resources and needs of workers. This implies that only employees who can effectively cope with such interferences can function both as a worker and as a family person. Those who cannot cope may forgo the marriage or the job (Ingersoll & Smith, 2003; Kersaint, Lewis, Potter & Meisels, 2007). Based on the above analysis, we tested the following hypotheses.

Hypotheses

1. Organizational commitment will increase significantly with employees' length of service.
2. Marital stress and type of occupation type and will have a significant independent and joint influence on organizational commitment.

METHODS

Design and Participants

This research adopted a 2 x 2 factorial design. A total of 300 participants (149 teachers; 151 police officers) drawn from public schools and two large police divisions, respectively, participated in the study. Their ages ranged between 33 and 55 years (M = 37.24; SD = 11.10). The highest academic qualification of the respondents was first degree and the lowest was Ordinary Level Certificate.

Measures

Marital stress was measured with Marital Stress Inventory developed by Omoluabi (1994). The scale contained 50 items rated on a 5-point scale (1 = Slight effect; 5 = Severe effect). Sample item included: "Insufficient attention from spouse". Omoluabi (1994) reported Cronbach's alpha coefficient of .92, and Beta coefficient of .96 for the scale. A Cronbach's alpha of .95 was obtained in the present study. High score on the scale indicated that the respondent was experiencing high marital stress.

Organizational commitment was measured with Buchanan's (1974) Organizational Commitment Scale. The scale contained 23 items of 3 subscales (identification = 6 items, job involvement 6 items, and loyalty 11 items) rated on a 7-point scale (1 = Strongly disagree; 7 = Strongly agree) Sample item included: "The major satisfaction in my life comes from my job". Buchanan (1974) reported coefficients alphas of .86, .84, .92, and .94 for identification, involvement, loyalty and overall scale, respectively. Waar, Cook and Wall (1979) correlated the organizational commitment scale with overall job satisfaction and obtained a concurrent validity coefficient of .62. In the present study, the scale had a Cronbach's alpha of .69. Analysis was based on participants' total score. High score on the scale was an indication that the employees were highly committed to the organization.

Procedure

After permission had been obtained from the relevant authorities in the selected schools and police divisions, the individuals were intimated with objectives of the study. The questionnaires were administered to those who were willing to participate in the study. Data collection took about two months. Out of 360 questionnaires administered, 300 were found usable.

Data Analysis

We tested hypothesis 1 with Pearson correlation and evaluated hypothesis 2 with a 2 x 2 ANOVA.

RESULTS

The results of the descriptive and correlations of the variables are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Showing the reliability coefficients and the relationships among the variables.

Variables	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1. Age	-	-	-											
2. Sex	-	-	-.09	-										
3. Marital status	-	-	.03	.16*	-									
4. No of children	-	-	.50**	-.09	.02	-								
5. Type of family	-	-	.29**	.01	.09	.40**	-							
6. Religious affiliation	-	-	.09	.01	.02	.13*	.30**	-						
7. Job level	-	-	.56**	-.01	-.04	.28**	.18**	-.03	-					
8. Edu. qualification	-	-	.30**	-.04	.00	-.07	-.09	-.08	.58**	-				
9. Length of service	11.75	8.18	.62**	-.05	.09	.50**	.29**	.06	.46**	-.01	-			
10. Marital stress	141.89	36.36	.02	-.06	.08	.05	.10	.15**	-.02	-.09	.03	-		
11. Occupation	-	-	.23**	.15*	.08	-.12	.00	-.03	.44**	.59**	.08	-.07	-	
12. Organizational commitment	98.49	13.58	.06	-.03	.04	.11	-.07	.07	.00	-.11	.12*	.10	.12*	-

Note: **$p < .01$. *$p < .05$. N = 300.

The results in Table 1 indicated that length of service had a significant positive relationship with organizational commitment [r (298) = .12, $p <$ .05]. This result confirmed hypothesis 1 which states that a significant positive relationship would exist

between organizational commitment and length of service.

To ascertain whether marital stress and type of occupation had a significant independent and joint influence on organizational commitment, a 2 x 2 ANOVA was performed on the data. The results are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: **Summary of 2 x 2 ANOVA on Organizational Commitment**

Sources	SS	df	MS	F	P
Marital Stress	148..41	1	418.42	2.31	> .05
Occupation	764.05	1	764.05	4.21	< .05
Marital stress x Type of occupation	149.04	1	149.04	0.82	> .05
Error	53739.06	296			
Total	55126.99	299			

As shown in Table 2, marital stress had no significant independent influence on organizational commitment [F (1,296) = 2.31, p > .05]. Type of occupation had a significant influence on organizational commitment such that teachers tended to be more committed than police officers [F (1,296) = 4.21, p < .05]. There was no significant joint influence of marital stress and type of occupation on organizational commitment [F (1,296) = 0.82, p > .05). These results partly confirmed hypothesis 2.

DISCUSSION

This study examined the influence of marital stress on organizational commitment in teachers and police officers. The results of the study showed that there was a significant relationship between organizational commitment and length of service. This implies that an individual employee who had stayed long on a particular job may be more committed to the organization compared to those who have only stayed for a short time.

This result supported the findings of previous studies (e.g. Mattieu & Zajac, 1990; Meyer & Allen, 1997; Noordin et al., 2012). These authors reported that as employees' length of service with a particular organization increases, they develop emotional attachment with the organization, which makes it difficult them to switch jobs. The result from this study supported the theory of organizational commitment that employees whose primary link to the organization is based on continuance commitment remain with the organization because they feel they need to do so for material benefits (Meyer & Allen, 1993). The reason may be that only employees with high commitment remained while uncommitted employees left the organization.

The second hypothesis, which stated that occupation type and marital

stress would have significant independent and joint influence on organizational commitment, was partly confirmed by the result in Table 2. This result supported Okpara (2004) who found that satisfaction with work itself was positively related to organizational commitment. Organizations could retain their employees if the job is interesting, challenging and give them a sense of accomplishment.

This implies that the kind of occupation employees choose tends to enhance they commitment to the organization; no matter the marital stress experienced. Celep's (2000) finding on teachers' organizational commitment was supported by the result of this research. He reported that there was high level of commitment of teachers to teaching works. This may be because teachers compared with police, perceived opportunities to use their skills for career development. The more employees perceive that they have opportunities for professional growth; the more they will strive to act for the good of the organization and the profession (Skillern et al., 1990).

Marital stress did not influence organizational commitment. The result of this research did not support the findings of Ajaja (2004), Akintayo (2010), and Collins and George (2004). They reported that married employees tended to face the bipolar challenges of marital life and that of workplace compared with those who were single, which negatively affected their commitment to the organizations and lowered their level of effectiveness at home. This implies that family interference with work was not as strong as Tsui et al. (1992) and Wang and Walumbuwa (2007) reported. In Nigeria, where there are little or no employment opportunities, employees would not want to lose their jobs due to stress from their marriages. Therefore, employees' level of organizational commitment increased not minding the kind of problems being faced at home.

CONCLUSION

It has shown in the results of this research that there is a significant relationship between organizational commitment and length of service and that marital stress had no significant influence on organizational commitment between teachers and police officers. This means that whether a teacher or police officer is facing low or high marital stress, it did not have effect on his or her level of commitment to the organization. Type of occupation (teaching or policing) and length of service had significant influence on organizational commitment. This means that the type of occupation and how long an employee had worked in an organization determined the extent of his or her commitment to the organization.

This study was not without limitations. The number of participants and the fact that data was based on employees' self-report might question the internal and external validity of the study. Future studies should involve more participants and combine methods of data collection.

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