

## **Does Person-Organization Fit and Affective Organizational Commitment Relationship is Moderated by Personality Traits: Analysis of Extraversion and Emotional stability**

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### **Abstract**

*Purpose* \_\_ The core objective of this study was to explore the relationship between person-organization fit and effective organizational commitment. In addition to examine moderating effect of Emotional stability and extraversion (Personality Traits), whether these strengthen or weaken the association of Person Organization fit and effective organizational commitment.

*Design/Methodology* \_\_ Data was collected through structured questionnaires using Likert Scale which were distributed among a convenience sample of 230 employees of five large public organization of Pakistan. The data was analyzed using SPSS software.

*Findings* \_\_ The results reveal that P-O fit has significant positive impact on effective organizational commitment. In addition, findings suggest that emotional stability and extraversion personality traits of employee do not moderate relationship between person organization fit and affective commitment significantly.

*Research Limitations* \_\_ Sample size was small and data was collected only from public organizations. The future research needs to be conducted in private sector as well to make general applicability of proposed model in other organizations.

*Practical Implications* \_\_ This study provides means by which organizations can develop schemes and evaluate the personality factors of existing employees which greatly enhance the effective organizational commitment.

**Key words** \_\_ Employees, Person organization Fit, effective organizational commitment, extraversion, emotional stability, Personality traits

## **Introduction:**

Person organization fit an integral part in selection process of organization and is defined as the compatibility and congruency between the values of individuals and organization. The similarity between characteristics of organization and individuals has a great impact on employees' attitude and job outcomes including organizational commitment, job satisfaction and employee retention. Ketchad and Strawser (2001) proposed that person organization fit is a key determinant of affective organizational commitment.

The person organization fit is based on social exchange theory defined as "Organizations supply financial, physical and psychological resources as well as the task related interpersonal and growth opportunities that are demanded by employees. Similarly organizations demand contributions from their employees in term of time, effort, commitment, knowledge, skills and abilities (Kristof, 1996, p.3).

A number of researchers have studied different types of Fit (Person supervisor Fit, Person Environment etc.) in relation to job outcomes like job satisfaction, affective commitment and turnover intentions. But in advancement and maintenance of affective commitment, Person- Organization Fit has been recognized as a potentially significant key factor (Mowday, Porter & Steers, 1982). Recent meta-analysis conducted by Kristof, Zimmerman and Johnson (2005) to test impact of Person Organization Fit on affective commitment provides strong supportive evidences of this relationship.

A little work done on personality traits, suggesting that they positively impact the relationship between Person-Organization Fit and Affective Commitment of employees. But limited research has been found enhancing the moderating impact of Big five personality traits of employees specifically emphasizing extraversion and emotional stability on person organization fit and Affective Commitment relationship. In previous studies researchers have used Big Five personality model to examine personality (Fields, 2002). Therefore the present study expands previous research by introducing big five personality for measurement of impact of employees' personality traits on affective commitment. The big five personality model proposes five broad factors as personality measures which are emotional stability, extraversion, sociability, agreeableness, openness to experience. Valuable work has been done on the positive impact of personality on employees' performance on job (Hurtz & Donovan, 2000) but little research found linking Big Five personality traits to organizational affective commitment. For this purpose the current piece of research focuses only on two factors; extraversion and emotional stability of big five personality model to measure employee personality and its impact on strengthening affective organizational commitment. Extroverts are identified as energetic, creative, talkative and social, whereas emotional stability is characterized by self confidence, feelings of calmness and cool. The reason for analyzing employees' personality in terms of extraversion and emotional stability is that these two traits are more critical and their high ratings develop best fit between person and supervisor. Earlier researchers showed that big five personality traits specifically emotional stability and extraversion have significant impact on affective commitment and person supervisor relationship and 25% of variation in supervisor leadership is due to personality (Smith & Canger, 2004).

Lack of person-organization fit poses great problems for the organization. Firstly, as human resource is key factor for the success of any organization, they must be provided with all the resources to work effectively. When organizations fail to provide organization fit, they are unable to attract and retain competitive and talented workforce. Secondly, competitors can take advantage of this situation by attracting these dissatisfied and unwilling employees by offering them better fit according to their personality. Finally, people perceive that they do not feel congruency of their values and individual characteristics; they not only go for other job opportunities but also make use of bad words of mouth about that organization. This significantly deteriorate the image and reputation of organization.

The present study provides future contribution to understand impact of person Organization Fit for affective commitment of employees to respective organization with the moderating effect of their personality traits (extraversion & emotional stability). The objective of current piece of research is to facilitate middle and top level management of public sector organization and institutes to increase affective commitment and loyalty of employees and university lecturers. This study could be beneficial for human resource managers for formulation and implementation of strategies regarding employees' personality traits and person- organization fit that increase level of performance of temporary and permanent staff. This ultimately leads to achievement of personal and professional goals like job satisfaction and emotional attachment to organization. Extraversion and emotional stability, employees' personality characteristics create great person-supervisor fit and person- organization fit which enable the employees to identify themselves with the goals and objectives of respective organization and accomplishment of affective commitment.

The purpose of this study is to build up and empirically test a model that throw light on the role of person-organization fit in developing employee affective commitment with in organization. This piece of research aims to extend the literature on person –organization fit, employee affective commitment, and personality traits (extraversion and emotional stability) by: (1) investigating the role of person-organization fit in predicting and enhancing employee affective commitment at workplace, and (2) simultaneously evaluating moderating role of personality traits particularly focusing on extraversion and emotional stability that either these strengthen or weaken the relationship between person-organization fit and affective commitment of employees.

The present study significantly contributes to theoretical body of knowledge by investigating the role of employees fit in the organization in predicting level of their affective commitment under the umbrella of theory of social exchange (Thibault and Kelley, 1952). According to this theory when employees receive physical and psychological resources from their organization, they feel themselves fit in the workplace environment. Thus in exchange to this employee think that they must pay to the organization in same way through commitment, and other extra role behaviors as person-organization fit fortify their need of belongingness. Secondly, this research has great importance for job seekers as job search criterion. Furthermore this knowledge can potentially increase the efficiency and productivity of business by improving working conditions and developing fit for employees in their respective organizations.

The proposal of the study is ordered into five chapters. The first chapter comprises the introduction; the second chapter is reviews the existing literature, discussing the relationship between variables; the third chapters forwards the theoretical framework and methodology of this research

(including data collection techniques and analytical procedure) to test the hypotheses of the study and draw conclusion; fourth chapter focuses on analysis and results; and last chapter consists of discussion based on the findings along with implications of results, limitations, and future directions.

## **Literature Review**

### **Person - Organization Fit:**

The person organization fit is the compatibility of an employee with the working conditions, culture and values of respective organization (Kristof, 1996). According to Holland (1973) congruence is obtain when an employee's personal characteristics are similar to working environment. The person organization fit is similarity of values between employees and organization in which he/she is working.

In previous research person organization fit was examined as congruence between employee's personality type and climate of working organization (Tom, 1971). Person organization fit has been analyzed as critical predictor of job satisfaction and organization commitment. According to Huang, cheng and chou (2005) person organization fit is a key factor which greatly influence the employee outcomes (work attitudes, turnover intentions, psychological behavior and work performance). Person organization fit could be a good predictor of extra effort and commitment to organization (Huang et al., 2005).

Person organization fit finds its fundamentals in social exchange theory in which exchange of resources and growth opportunities in return for commitment, significant contributions and retention takes place among employees and organizations. The expectation about mutual exchange can play significant role in employee's adjustability and compatability to organizational culture. (Kristof, 1996). Development of person organization

fit can result in favorable individual attitude (such as job satisfaction, team work and affective commitment) and desirable employees' behaviors (such as increased on job performance and decreased turnover intentions).

**Affective Organizational Commitment:**

Organizational commitment is defined as “The relative strength of individual’s identification with and involvement in a particular organization” (Mowday, Porter & Steers, 1982, p. 27). A psychological state that binds individuals to organizations is termed as organizational commitment (Allen & Mayer & Smith, 1993).

Organizational commitment is a multidimensional job outcome. It has three components which are Affective (employee’s emotional attachment to, identification with and engagement in organizational goals and objectives), Continuance (an awareness about costs associated with losing the organization) and Normative (a feeling of obligation to continue job in the respective organization). The present study focuses only on affective commitment of employees and its relationship with person organization fit. Affective commitment is psychological attachment and belongingness to an organization through development of feelings such as ownership, loyalty and high level of satisfaction. The bases of affective commitment are identity relevance, shared values and personal involvement.

It has been found in earlier researches that person organization fit makes employees strongly committed to respective organization. Meyer and Hoscovitch (2001) found that shared values of person and organization are solid bases for affective commitment. The relationship between affective commitment and person organization fit has been confirmed by empirical studies (Cable & Dekue, 2002; Van Vianen, 2000 & Wasti, 2003). Person organization fit enhances affective organizational commitment. Committed

employees are likely to reinforce and strengthen the existing structure and values of an organization (Herndon et al., 2001). Boosting employees' response toward working environment of organization, results in enhanced affective commitment, which will ultimately lead to accomplishment of organizational goals.

In all, congruency between values and culture of organization and employees may in turn reinforce employee's affective commitment for their organizations. Therefore based on social exchange theory it is hypothesized:

***H1. Person organization fit strengthens employees' affective commitment towards the organization.***

**The moderating role of Personality traits:**

In past studies have been conducted on Big Five personality traits and their impact on job outcomes. But limited research has been found enhancing the moderating impact of Big five personality traits of employees specifically emphasizing extraversion and emotional stability on person organization fit and Affective Commitment relationship. In previous studies researchers have used Big Five personality model to examine personality (Fields, 2002). Big Five personality model is important to use for certain reasons like 1) It provides meaningful and critical categories of personality traits, 2) It is common framework which helps in research. Therefore the present study expands previous research by introducing big five personality for measurement of impact of employees' personality traits on affective commitment. The big five personality model proposes five broad factors as personality measures which are emotional stability, extraversion, sociability, agreeableness, openness to experience. Valuable work has been done on the positive impact of personality on employees' performance on job (Hurtz & Donovan, 2000) but little research found linking Big Five personality traits to organizational affective commitment. For this purpose



the current piece of research focuses only on two factors; extraversion and emotional stability of big five personality model to measure employee personality and its impact on strengthening affective organizational commitment.

Extrovert persons are creative, talkative and social in their nature. They are identified by searching for excitement and therefore show great commitment toward social activities and groups. Such behaviors of extroverts may lead them to display commitment toward organizational work by organizing different type of meetings and sharing their ideas and knowledge through presentation of development projects.

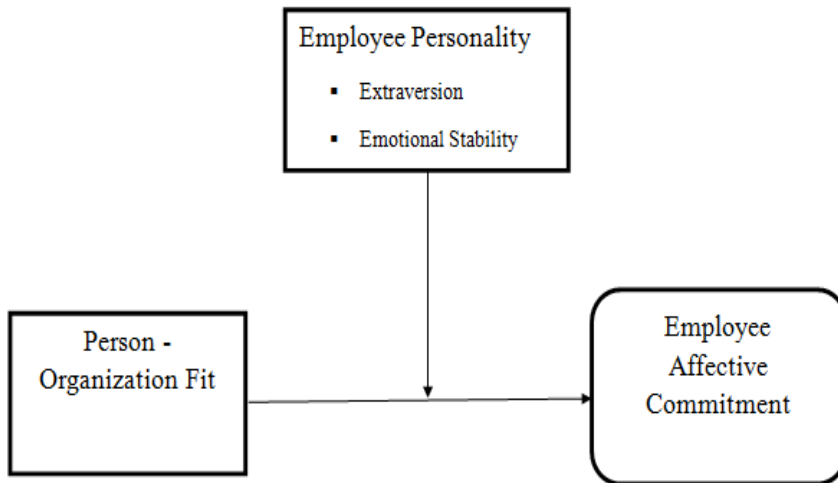
Emotionally stable persons are characterized by cool, self confidence, calmness, having positive emotions and dealing great pressures with their strong personalities. Therefore employees with such personality trait demonstrate affective commitment toward organization.

Building on the notation that employee personality is key determinant of job outcomes and it strengthen the employees' affective organizational commitment, on the basis of personality trait theory and organizational support theory we hypothesized:

**H2.** *Personality will positively moderate the relationship between person- organization fit an affective commitment if employee is extrovert.*

**H3.** *Personality will positively moderate the relationship between person- organization fit an affective commitment if employee is emotionally stable.*

## Theoretical Model of Study



*Figure 1: Moderating Role of Personality Traits (Extraversion and Emotional Stability) in the Relationship between Person-Organization Fit on Affective Organizational Commitment.*

### **Consolidated form of Hypotheses:**

- H1.** Person organization fit strengthens employees' affective commitment towards the organization.
- H2.** Personality will positively moderate the relationship between person-organization fit an affective commitment if employee is extrovert.
- H3.** Personality will positively moderate the relationship between person-organization fit an affective commitment if employee is emotionally stable.

## **METHOD**

### ***Research Design***

A causal study was conducted to check impact of person organization fit on employees' organizational affective commitment with moderation of Big

Five personality traits of employees. Variables were studied in field settings; not a single environmental aspect was controlled. Measurement of all variables in natural settings makes research interference minimal. Furthermore, unit of analysis was different organization working in Pakistan and the time horizon of research was cross-sectional i.e. data was collected only once.

### ***Participants and Data collection***

For current study, participants consist of full time employees of 5 large organizations operating in education (four companies) and service (one company) industries of Pakistan. Self-administered questionnaires were used to collect data. A total of 230 questionnaires were distributed among targeted participants to collect data on desired variables. 202 questionnaires were received back, out of which 190 were identified as usable for data analysis. The response rate was 82 percent. Sample size selected was considerable and provided sufficient data for analysis of results.

Total sample size consists of 52.9 % per cent males and 47.1 % per cent females having an average age lying between the ranges of 21 to 45 years. Information on questionnaires was gathered not only permanent employees but contractual employees as well to minimize the risk of correlation inflation due to common source bias (Podsakoff, Mackenzie & Podsakoff, 2003).

### ***Measures***

*Person-organization fit*, Respondents' congruence between their individual values, believes perceptions and culture of organization was assessed with 3- items scale (adapted version) created by Cable and DeRue (2002). Likert scale was used in administered questionnaire which consists of five responses for each item. (Ending points: 1 = Strongly Agree, 5 = Strongly

Disagree). 0.852 was reliability value found for P-O fit scale for current set of data.

*Organizational affective commitment*, An 8-item scale was adopted to evaluate individuals' emotional belongingness to their respective organizations, which was developed by Mayer and Allen (1997). Each item was subjected to answer on a five point Likert scale ranging between 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The reliability of this scale was found to be 0.838.

*Extraversion*, Responses for extraversion were measured with 4- items scale (NEO-FFI; Costa & McCrae, 1992). Likert scale was used in administered questionnaire which consists of five responses for each item. (Ending points: 1 = Strongly Agree, 5 = Strongly Disagree). 0.687 was reliability value found for extraversion scale for current set of data.

*Emotional Stability*, Responses for emotional stability were measured with 5- items scale (NEO-FFI; Costa & McCrae, 1992). Likert scale was used in administered questionnaire which consists of five responses for each item. (Ending points: 1 = Strongly Agree, 5 = Strongly Disagree). 0.687 was reliability value found for emotional stability scale for current set of data.

### ***Statistical Analysis***

Pearson's correlation analysis was used to analyze the relationship among Person-Organization fit, Organizational affective commitment and employees personality traits (extraversion & emotional stability). To test the research hypotheses and moderating effect of person supervisor fit, data on desired variable was entered into Hierarchical regression equation.

## **RESULTS**

Demographical categorization table shows the gender distribution among career stage (three levels). 170 was the total number of respondents, out of which 52.9 % were males and 47.1 % were females. In sample size of 170,

26 males and 31 females belongs to junior level, 45 males and 40 females are from middle level and 19 males and 09 females belongs to senior level of career stage.

Table 2 shows descriptive statistics which includes mean, standard deviation and correlations for all central variables of study. All scales were satisfactory in their internal consistency. Results for correlations reflects that person organization fit is positively associated with employees affective organizational commitment ( $r = 0.410$ ,  $p = 0.01$ ). In addition both of personality traits that is extroversion ( $r = 0.328$ ,  $p = 0.01$ ) and emotional stability ( $r = 0.242$ ,  $p = 0.01$ ) are in positive association with employees affective organizational commitment. All correlations among central variables of study are highly significant at 1 %.

Values of standard deviation reflects that the variables of affective commitment ( $SD=0.73974$ ), person organization fit ( $SD=0.88616$ ), extroversion ( $SD=0.68757$ ) and emotional stability ( $SD=0.73926$ ) are almost equally deviated from their mean values. For all study variables hypotheses are in expected directions.

Table 3 displays the overall fitness of good for proposed model ( $R^2 = 0.239$ ). The results show that there is a highly significant impact of person organization fit and personality on employee affective organizational commitment. Value of  $R^2$  represents the variation in affective organizational commitment i.e. 23.9 % caused by person organization fit and employee personality traits (Extroversion & emotional stability) remaining all other variables constant. In addition table 3 also throw light on individual impact of person organization fit and personality traits on affective organizational commitment (DV). Betas are showing the rate of change caused by each predictor in dependent variable. Out of total

variation, 32.9 % of affective organizational commitment is explained by person organization fit, 22.9 % by extroversion and emotional

Table 4 provides the assessment of the possible moderation caused by personality traits of employees which are extroversion (Ex) and emotional stability (Ems) in the relationship of person organization fit (POF) and employee affective organizational commitment (AC). Results of table 4 demonstrate that there is no significant moderation effect of employees' personality traits in this relationship. Although extroversion and emotional stability have individual significant impact on affective organizational commitment but when interaction terms of extroversion and emotional stability with person organization fit are introduced, it make the existing relationship insignificant. Comparing values of  $R^2$  obtained in step 1 and step 2 clearly reflect that as there is no significant change and improvement in fitness of good of proposed model by introducing interaction terms of moderators with independent variable, therefore there is no moderation of personality in the relationship between person organization fit and affective organizational commitment. Value of  $R^2$  change (0.003) is another sign of insignificant moderation. Negative values of betas for both interaction terms shows that extroversion ( $\beta = -0.164$ ) and emotional stability ( $\beta = -0.283$ ) are negatively impacting the employees' affective organizational commitment which is against the expected hypotheses of current study.

## **DISCUSSION**

The main objective of current piece of study was to broaden the previous research on person organization fit and employees' affective organizational commitment in eastern context with moderation impact of employees' personality traits. Two traits from Big five personality traits model were

targeted for current study which are extroversion (energetic, talkative and social) and emotional stability (tolerant, low in neuroticism, positive emotions).

The current study supported investigation of previous researchers on the impact of person organization fit on employees' organizational affective commitment significantly. Results showed that when person organization fit is analyzed as match of values, perceptions and believes, it is associated with organizational effective commitment. The present research added to previous studies and empirical evidences that higher the person organization fit, higher will be organizational affective commitment. The argument for this could be that when employees find match of their believes, perceptions and values with those of the organizations, they identified themselves with the goals and objectives of organization and start owning them which ultimately leads to organizational affective commitment. Current findings are in congruence with those of previous researchers such as Kristof-Brown (2000). Person organization fit is an important and valid determinant of organizational affective commitment for both temporary and regular employees. Findings of current piece of research, add value to prior empirical studies that congruence of values does matter for organizational affective commitment. Social exchange theory provides strong and fundamental evidence for significant relationship between person organization fit and organizational affective commitment.

The most important part of current study was to check moderating effect of employees' personality traits (extraversion & emotional stability) on the relationship of person organization fit and organizational affective commitment. It was hypothesized that extraversion and emotional stability will positively moderate the relationship and will more strengthen it. But results of present study did not provide support in expected directions.

Regression analysis reflected that people high in extraversion and emotional stability possess low organizational affective commitment. A supporting argument for these results could be that no doubt personality traits may enhance organizational affective commitment, suggesting that an employee high in extraversion and emotional stability displays organizational affective commitment as compared to individuals low on these traits, when some other important factors LMX, empowerment and person environment fit are present. In absence of these factors, contributions of these personality characteristics are of no relevance. Person supervisor fit not only influence the employee effectiveness but also influence their attitudes. This implies that lower the person organization fit, lower will be LMX and ultimately lower would be organizational affective commitment regardless of extraversion and emotional stability.

Extroverts are identified with self-confidence, dominance, social and generating great enthusiasm, creative, wants to set their own objectives and apply their ideas. But unfortunately in our country individuals are not provided with authority and empowerment to achieve organizational goals by their own unique way. Rather they are given set pattern, which they have to follow. This is the main cultural difference among east and west, which makes extroverts as well as emotionally stable people low in organizational affective commitment and look for other jobs providing them career growth. Because extroverts show great commitment to their professions as compared to organization and its goals. This factor makes them high in continuance commitment as people stay in organization for economic benefits associated with job in return for their efforts.

## **LIMITATIONS**



As far as limitations of present research are concerned, the first problem was that sample size was too small for obtaining precise results. Secondly self administered questionnaire was used to collect data on central variables of study. Thus results may have affected by common method variance. Common method variance is defined by Avolio, Yammarino and Bass (1991) as “the overlap in variance between two variables attributable to the type of measurement instrument used rather than due to a relationship between the underlying constructs” (p. 572).

Furthermore only Likert scale was used to record employee responses. This might have influence the results because respondents are confined to set options whereas they might have some what different opinion. Finally sample size was selected only from public sector. To make this study generalizeable and valid for all organizations, it must also be in private sector as well.

## **RESEARCH IMPLICATION AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS**

Despite of certain limitations, the current piece of study’s findings presents practical as well as theoretical level valuable and credible implications for organizations working in Pakistan regarding enhancement of organizational affective commitment by identifying its critical determinants like LMX, person environment and empowerment. Therefore organizations should establish strategies which put emphasis on LMX, personality and empowerment that can play the key role in organization’s performance through increased commitment because these factors are basic sources of organizational affective commitment. In addition these results also provide organization with understanding that to what extent employees’ personality traits influence o organizational affective commitment. Specifically, the present study points out that indeed extraversion and emotional stability are associated with organizational affective commitment.

Therefore motivating employees through empowerment and recognition would lead to show organizational affective commitment and put extra effort through organizational citizenship behavior, if employees are managed in effective way. Presence of respect, trust and partnership among supervisor and individual makes employees' empowerment successful, because only in this way supervisor will consider their ideas and enhance their self determination perception. In return organizational affective commitment by employees will get strengthen. Future research should be conducted to check combined effect of LMX, empowerment, person organization fit in presence of Big Five personality traits on organizational affective commitment to reconfirm the logic of current research. It is also required to analyze variables which can moderate proposed relationship of this research. For valid results and increased generalizability, sample size should be selected more than 500 for future research. Furthermore researchers must investigate the impact of Big Five personality traits on organizational affective commitment in cross cultures such as comparison of impact of personality on organizational affective commitment in east and west cultures.

## **CONCLUSION**

This piece of research explored positive relationship among person organization fit and organizational affective commitment, which will be enhanced by employees' personality traits n presence of empowerment and LMX. The findings of this study have practical and theoretical implications and future directions which are valuable and credible for organizations and researchers as well.

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