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Preface

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Assessing the impact of COVID-19 Pandemic on Organizational Commitment in IT Industry



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The current study aims to assess the impact of COVID-19 Pandemic on Organizational Commitment. The structured questionnaire developed by Allen and Meyer in 1990 was administered to a sample of 228 male and female employees from 37 Public Limited IT-companies under Software Technology Park of India, Pune. The Levene's test, Shapiro–Wilks test and Mann–Whitney U test were used to analyze the data. Results show that there is a significant difference in the overall organizational Commitment (Affective Commitment, Continuance Commitment and Normative Commitment) among male and female IT employees during COVID-19 Pandemic.

Keywords: Organizational Commitment, COVID-19 Pandemic, Affective Commitment, Continuance Commitment and Normative Commitment

1. Introduction

Commitment to an organization is a psychological state of an employee working in an organization. Affective Commitment, Continuance Commitment and Normative Commitment are the three key components of organizational Commitment (Meyer & Allen, 1997). Organizational Commitment refers to an employee's willingness to work positively in an organization and his Continuance to work for the organization (Mowday, Steers & Porter, 1982). Organizational Commitment has always been of vital importance for the management of the organizations and the occurrence of COVID-19 Pandemic has made it highly crucial. COVID-19 has led to change in the structure, systems, processes and performance of the organizations. Organizational Commitment has also gained more importance because Organizational Commitment is directly related to the employee performance making the concept impossible to neglect (Meyer, et. al., 1989; Siders et. al., 2001; Jaramillo, et. al., 2005).

As per Porter et. al., (1974), Organizational Commitment is characterized by three factors, viz, belief in the organization and acceptance of the organization's goals and values; willingness to make substantial effort; and a positive desire to continue with the organization. Organizational Commitment refers to the connection, involvement and loyalty of employees to their organizations. Committed employees tend to be more goal-oriented in their work and show a fairly high level of efficiency and productivity.

Affective Commitment indicates an individual's emotional attachment to the organization (Meyer & Allen, 1991). The emotional attachment dimension of attachment to an organization is an employee's positive emotional work-related attitudes towards the respective organization (Morrow, 1993). As per Mowday et al. (2013) and Kanter (1968), Affective Commitment is related to an individual's Self-identity, participation in organizations activities and alienation with the goals, beliefs, and values of the organization (Beck & Wilson, 2000). Meyer & Allen (1997) describe Continuance Commitment or a Commitment to continue with the organization as awareness of the costs associated with leaving the organization. Continuance Commitment occurs due to the financial support received by the employee association with the organization (Beck & Wilson, 2000). Also, accumulated investment, viz., gratuity, pension plans, superannuation, seniority, or organization-specific skills and scarcity of employment opportunities force employees to continue their responsibilities within the organization and to commit themselves to the organization because they need to do so (Allen & Meyer, 1990). Meyer & Allen (1997) describe Normative Commitment as a sense of obligation to stay with the organization. According to Meyer & Allen (1991), people bound by norms always feel bound to stay within the organization. As per Suliman & Iles, (2000) it's a give-and-take obligation between the employee and the organization which is based on social exchange theory.

The current study aims to examine all these three dimensions of Organizational Commitment as they are highly significant to determine the level of Organizational Commitment of employees working for a particular organization. COVID-19 has affected many work-variables and few studies examine Organizational Commitment as a major variable. Hence, researcher has made an attempt to study the impact of COVID-19 on Organizational Commitment and the levels of commitment of male and female IT employees.

1.1 COVID-19 Pandemic and Organizational Commitment

Today, the phenomenon and severity of COVID-19 pandemic is well-known and understood worldwide. Seafood market in Wuhan in China has been considered as the center of this severe respiratory syndrome (Tao et al., 2020) and has spread across the world with a very high risk as per Situation Report-101 published in 2020. Globally, by 2022, there have been 631,935,687 confirmed cases of COVID-19, including 6,588,850 deaths (WHO Report, 2022). In India, reported cases are 44,666,924 with 530,532 deaths (WHO Report, 2022). Considering the severity of the virus, a total of 12,885,748,541 vaccine doses have been administered. For a relatively long duration, most nations had sealed borders for reducing the spread of the virus (Ghosh et al., 2020). Worldwide various measures were implemented to slow the dispersal of the COVID-19, such as, lockdown, social distancing, quarantines, apt medical services, availability of masks and health care treatments as well as temporary closures of public places (Kaplan et al., 2020). This occurrence led to emergence of new work norms like Work-From-Home. Organizations faced several challenges like getting the work essentials and equipment available at the safe environment of employees' home. Though there were several restrictions country-wide and world-wide, organizations had to ensure that the work doesn't come to a halt, it has to continue (Kaplan et al., 2020). So, policies were updated to ensure employees work for the stipulated hours and showcase efficiency and productivity. The major concern of the organizations was to pay attention of their employees' wellbeing and occupy them suitably so that they remain committed towards their organizations. Those employees who are committed to their organization always work hard and perform efficiently (Ghosh et al., 2020). Therefore, 'Organizational Commitment' of employees became more essential for management and gained attention by researchers.

2. Review of Literature

Several studies have been conducted to examine and measure whether COVID-19 pandemic has impacted various organizational work variables. In this review, COVID-19, Organizational Commitment and the relation between COVID-19 and Organizational Commitment is discussed based on the available literature. Few studies state that level of Commitment is higher in females than males (Alvi & Ahmed, 1987; Cemile, 1992; Marsden et al., 1993; Peterson, 2004; Celep & Yilmazturk, 2012; Nagar, 2012; Çoğaltay, 2015; Chanana, N., 2021). Affective Commitment of females is higher than that of males and Normative Commitment of males is higher than that of female IT employees (Cemile, 1992). A study by Khalili & Asmawi (2012) and Ch et al. (2013), revealed that males and females have a similar level of Affective Commitment, Continuance Commitment and overall organizational Commitment whereas females have a higher level of Normative Commitment than males. Also, as per Leszczynska (2018), Normative Commitment to male and females are alike. However, few studies like Zufiesha et al. (2017) state that Normative Commitment is higher among males as compared to females, whereas, Affective Commitment and Continuance Commitment of females is higher than males.

A study conducted by Feng & Savani (2020) compared variables before and during the Pandemic. Results of this study stated that Women reported similar work productivity and job satisfaction as men before the Pandemic. However, further result revealed that women were less productive and less satisfied with job than men after the outbreak of the Pandemic. As stated in the study by Aghalari et al. (2021), at the time of the Coronavirus outbreak, the healthcare workers in Babol had very positive and high organizational and social Commitment. Study reported by Carli (2020) found that higher number of females have lost their jobs compared to males. Higher number of females worked in essential jobs that expose them to infection and psychological stress (Carli, 2020). Women have had more work disruption as compared to men because of increases in childcare and other responsibilities. While speaking of Work-from-Home or virtual work environment during Lockdown period of COVID-19, few studies state that the satisfaction level of the employees is reported to be less in online working (Suganya & Sankarshwari, 2020). In another study, it is found that male employees and female employees are satisfied with the job condition of virtual work during the COVID-19 pandemic (John et al., 2020). Studies like Chen et al. (2020), Hawani & Chikha (2020), Systems et al. (2021) revealed that COVID-19 pandemic had significant impact of job satisfaction, performance and thereby led to higher Commitment, whereas, Rn et al. (2020) found that increased level of fear of COVID-19 was associated with decreased job satisfaction, increased psychological distress, and increased organizational and professional turnover intentions. It can be inferred from his study that Commitment level of employees decreased during pandemic times. As per the paper by Ali et al. (2021) it is found that online or virtual work due to the COVID-19 pandemic negatively affected the psychological state of the IT employees. This established mental distress in IT employees. As per the study by Hidayat et al. (2021) employees were happy and satisfied during COVID-19 pandemic as all required facilities were provided by the organizations leading to higher Commitment.

Few studies discussed in this paper also considered the gender differences and impact of it on several work factors. The study by Bruning & Snyder (1983), Akintayo (2010), Abdullah & Ramay (2012), Kónya et al. (2016) state that there is no significant impact of gender differences on organizational Commitment. Different studies revealed several factors that influence Organizational commitment of employees viz., Work-family role conflict (Akintayo, 2010), discretionary measure (Peterson, 2004), Peer networking (Macintosh & Krush, 2014) level of management and educational qualification (Khera, 2017), delegation-related rewards, fatigue, supervisor/co-worker support, and role clarity (Kokubun, 2017) interpersonal relationship and working environment (Lee & Cho, 2018), conscientiousness (Leszczynska, 2018), role space, Employee perception (Mohammad, 2018), Job stress (Zandi et al., 2020). These factors affect organizational Commitment. On the contrary, the study by Ariffin and Ha (2014)

showcased that there is no significant difference between males and females’ level of Affective, continuance, and Normative dimensions of organizational Commitment. Nevertheless, the study by Suki & Suki (2012) has revealed that organizational Commitment affects efficiency, employee performance and organizational performance. Highly committed employees have a stronger desire to associate with the organization. During COVID-19, it has thereby gained importance which made it a highly essential variable of the current study.

3. Rationale of the Study

COVID-19 Pandemic has brought in a critical scenario across majority of the countries in the world. It has been highly alarming as Coronavirus and its different variants are highly contagious and spread fast. To cater to the Pandemic situation, IT companies started various measures; IT sector being in the forefront in bringing in new solutions for virtual work setup. Several studies have been conducted to study the impact of COVID-19 on various workplace factors in different sectors, where majority of studies cater to studying COVID-19 with respect to Job satisfaction, job performance etc. by using various methodologies. Researcher is keen to conduct the current study as it aims to observe the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on level of organizational Commitment among groups of male and female IT employees working in Public Limited IT-companies under Software Technology Park of India, Pune.

3.1 Development of Theoretical Model

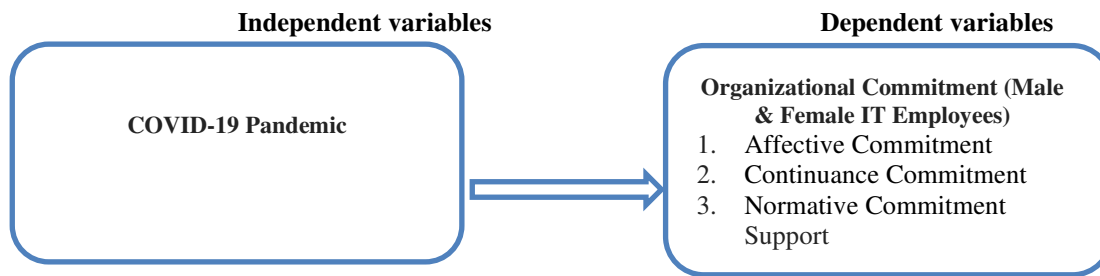


Figure 1 Theoretical Model: Relationship between Independent Variables and Dependent Variables

4. Research Methodology

The main purpose of this study is to measure the level of organizational Commitment (Affective Commitment, Continuance Commitment, and Normative Commitment) among male and female IT employees during COVID-19 pandemic. To meet the objectives, primary data has been collected by distributing structured questionnaire to the relevant sample of 228 IT employees (Group of 100 Males and 128 Females) from 37 Public Limited IT-companies under Software Technology Park of India, Pune. The administered questionnaire is developed by Allen & Meyer in 1990. Eight relevant items were selected each for Affective Commitment scale, Continuance Commitment scale, and Normative Commitment scale to meet the set objectives.

Dependent Variable:

Organizational Commitment (Affective Commitment, Continuance Commitment, and Normative Commitment)

Independent Variable:

COVID-19 pandemic

4.1 Hypothesis Formulation

From the relevant literature, the following four hypotheses are developed to reach the objective of the current study stated as under:

H₀₁: There is no significant difference in Affective Commitment among male and female IT employees during COVID-19 pandemic.

H₀₂: There is no significant difference in the Continuance Commitment among male and female IT employees during COVID-19 pandemic.

H₀₃: There is no significant difference in the Normative Commitment among male and female IT employees during COVID-19 pandemic.

H₀₄: There is no significant difference in the overall organizational Commitment among male and female IT employees during COVID-19 pandemic.

4.2 Data Analysis

In the current study, Mean and Standard Deviation are used for the descriptive statistics. The Shapiro–Wilks test is used for assumption of normality. To test the assumption of homogeneity of variance, Levene’s test for equality of variances is used (Field, A., 2013). Mann–Whitney U tests are used to compare the male and female groups.

5. Results and Interpretation

5.1 Descriptive Analysis

As per the results of TABLE 1, the Descriptive statistics, the level of organizational Commitment during the COVID-19 pandemic among males and females are stated as follows. Mean score of Affective Commitment in Males is 19.097 which is slightly lower than of females' i.e. 19.158. Mean score of Continuance Commitment in Males is 20.492 which is lower than of females i.e. 27.575. Mean score of Normative Commitment in Males is 18.230 which is slightly lower than of females i.e. 17.792. Mean score of overall organizational Commitment in Males is 56.820 which is slightly lower than of females' i.e. 61.517.

Affective Commitment

Mean score of Affective Commitment in Males is (19.097) and that of females is (19.158) which is less than the standard mean of 24. Hence, the result found that both male and female IT employees have lower Affective Commitment during COVID-19 Pandemic.

Table 1 Descriptive Statistics

	Gender	N	Observed mean	Standard mean	SD
Affective Commitment	Male	100	19.097	24	3.0400
	Female	128	19.158	24	3.7510
Continuance Commitment	Male	100	20.492	24	5.3801
	Female	128	27.575	24	3.3394
Normative Commitment	Male	100	18.230	24	4.0987
	Female	128	17.792	24	4.0211
Overall Organizational Commitment	Male	100	56.820	72	8.5432
	Female	128	61.517	72	6.7790

Continuance Commitment

Mean score of Continuance Commitment in Males is 20.492 which is less than the standard mean of 24 and that of females is 27.575 which is higher than the standard mean of 24. Hence, the result found that the female IT employees have higher Continuance Commitment than male IT employees during COVID-19 Pandemic.

Normative Commitment

Mean score of Normative Commitment in Males is 18.230 which is less than the standard mean of 24 and that of females is 17.792 which is less than the standard mean of 24. Hence, the result found that the males and female IT employees have lower Normative Commitment during COVID-19.

Overall organizational Commitment

Mean score of Overall organizational Commitment in Males is 56.820 which is less than the standard mean of 72 and that of females is 61.517 which is also less than the standard mean of 72. Hence, the result found that the males and female IT employees have lower Overall organizational Commitment during COVID-19.

5.2 Comparative Analysis

Table 2 shows the comparison of Affective Commitment, Continuance Commitment, Normative Commitment, Overall Organizational Commitment among the group of male and female IT employees.

It's seen that at 5% level of significance, the Shapiro-Wilks test of normality had the significant value for majority of the variables which is <0.05. Therefore, the assumption of normality has not been met.

Table 2 Normality test of organizational Commitment Factors

Shapiro–Wilk	Statistic	Df	Sig.
Affective Commitment	0.984	228	0.002
Continuance Commitment	0.971	228	0.001
Normative Commitment	0.966	228	0.001
Overall Organizational Commitment	0.988	228	0.166

As per the Table 3, ($p > 0.05$), which shows that significant values of Affective Commitment and Normative Commitment are higher than 0.05. Significant values of Continuance Commitment and overall organizational Commitment are less than 0.05 i.e. ($p < 0.05$). Hence, it is inferred that although there are significant differences among the variances of Continuance Commitment and

overall organizational Commitment; there is no significant difference among the variances of Affective Commitment and Normative Commitment. Therefore, it can be stated that assumption of homogeneity of variance is not observed. On the basis of observed score of Shapiro–Wilk test and Levene statistics, it is concluded that assumptions of normality of data and homogeneity of variances are not met. Hence, ‘Mann Whitney U’ test is undertaken.

Table 3 Homogeneity of Variances Test of Organizational Commitment Factors

Homogeneity of variances tests	Levene statistic	Sig.
Affective Commitment	0.475	0.490
Continuance Commitment	11.681	0.001
Normative Commitment	0.544	0.498
Overall Organizational Commitment	6.778	0.033

H₀ 1. : There is no significant difference in the Affective Commitment among male and female IT employees during COVID-19 pandemic.

It’s observed from the scores of Mann–Whitney U test in Table 4 that there is no significant difference between male and female IT employees as Mann–Whitney U = 32203.600, z = -1.51, and p = 0.906 > 0.05. Hence, null hypothesis is accepted. So, it can be inferred that there is no significant difference in the Affective Commitment among male and female IT employees during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Table 4 Mann-Whitney U test of Affective Commitment

Affective Commitment			
Comparing group	Mann–Whitney U	z	Asymp sig. (2- tailed)
Group 1 Male	32203.600	-1.51	0.906
Group 2 Female			

H₀ 2. There is no significant difference in the Continuance Commitment among male and female IT employees during COVID-19 pandemic.

It’s observed from the scores of Mann–Whitney U test in Table 5 that there is a significant difference in the mean rank of Continuance Commitment among male and female IT employees (p = 0.000 < 0.05]. Therefore, Null hypothesis is rejected. It can be inferred that there is difference in Continuance Commitment between males and females during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Table 5 Mann-Whitney U test of Continuance Commitment

Continuance Commitment			
Comparing group	Mann–Whitney U	Z	Asymp sig. (2- tailed)
Group 1 Male	1255.000	-7.617	0.000
Group 2 Female			

H₀ 3. There is no significant difference in the Normative Commitment among male and female IT employees during COVID-19 pandemic.

It’s observed from the scores of Mann–Whitney U test in Table 6 that there are no significant differences found between male and female IT employees, Mann–Whitney U = 3401.700, z = -0.901, and p = 0.423 > 0.05. Thus, null hypothesis is accepted, indicating that there is no significant difference in the Normative Commitment among male and female IT employees during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Table 6 Mann-Whitney U test of Normative Commitment

Normative Commitment			
Comparing group	Mann–Whitney U	z	Asymp sig. (2- tailed)
Group 1 Male	3401.700	-0.901	0.423
Group 2 Female			

H₀ 4. There is no significant difference in the overall organizational Commitment among male and female IT employees during COVID-19 pandemic.

It’s observed from the scores of Mann–Whitney U test in Table 7 that there is a significant difference between male and female IT employees on overall organizational Commitment during COVID-19 pandemic, Mann–Whitney U = 2011.401, z = -5.302, and p = 0.000 < 0.05. Hence, Null hypothesis is rejected. Hence it can be inferred that there is a significant difference in the overall organizational Commitment among male and female IT employees during COVID-19 pandemic.

Table 7 Mann Whitney Test of Overall Organizational Commitment

Overall organizational Commitment			
Comparing group	Mann-Whitney U	z	Asymp sig. (2- tailed)
Group 1 Male	2011.401	-5.302	0.000
Group 2 Female			

6. Conclusion

The results of the current study provide a clear assessment related to the major objectives of the study. Here the researcher has conducted a comparison of organizational Commitment of IT employees on the basis of gender and also, the researcher attempted to determine level of Commitment of IT employees in relation to its three dimensions (Affective Commitment, Continuance Commitment, and Normative Commitment). The present study found no significant difference in Affective Commitment among male and female IT employees. In addition to that it was also found that the level of overall Affective Commitment is lower in both male and female IT employees. Furthermore, the scores show a significant difference in Continuance Commitment between the male and female subjects. The female IT employees showcase higher level of Continuance Commitment in comparison to its male counterparts. However, both groups showcase lower level of Continuance Commitment. The scores revealed no significant difference in the level of Normative Commitment based on the genders. Hence, both groups' level of Normative Commitment is lower with similar scores. It's important to note that significant difference has been observed in Overall Organizational Commitment between male and female IT employees. During the dire times of COVID-19 Pandemic, female group showcased higher levels of commitment than their male counterparts. However, during COVID-19, the level of Overall Organizational Commitment has been found low in both groups of female and male IT employees. It can be inferred from the above study that; further measures are necessary to increase the Overall Organizational Commitment of the IT employees as it results in efficient work performance as well as higher organization performance.

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