

The Effect of Job Satisfaction and Emotional Exhaustion on Affective Commitment of Emergency Services Employees

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Abstract

In this study, it is investigated to find out in what extent affective commitment is related to Emergency Services employees' job satisfaction and emotional exhaustion.

This study is conducted through a survey on 256 medical doctors and staff working in emergency services of public hospitals with a capacity of over 50 beds in Kocaeli Province. As means of data collection, Maslach Burnout Inventory Scale, Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire and Allen and Meyer's Affective Commitment Scale were applied. Pearson Correlation analysis was conducted to determine the relationship between emotional exhaustion and affective commitment and between job satisfaction and affective commitment. In this study, the impacts of job satisfaction and emotional exhaustion on affective commitment are evaluated by multiple regression model.

Results suggest that employees' perceptions of affective commitment is positively related to their perceptions of job satisfaction ($r = 0.539$, $p < 0.01$), while employees' perceptions of affective commitment is negatively related to their perceptions of emotional exhaustion ($r = -0.354$, $p < 0.01$).

In addition, according to the results of the multiple regression analysis job satisfaction and emotional exhaustion are significant determinants, predicting 62.8% of the variation in affective commitment ($F = 82.471$; $p = .000$ $\beta = .168$, $\beta = -.357$, respectively). Therefore, job satisfaction and emotional exhaustion have a strong effect on affective commitment.

Keywords: Job Satisfaction, Emotional Exhaustion, Affective Commitment, Emergency Services Employees

1. Introduction

Job satisfaction, emotional exhaustion and affective commitment are crucial factors to enhance individual and organizational performance. Concepts of job satisfaction, emotional exhaustion and affective commitment have been examined extensively in organizational behavior literature, however, relationships and effects of job satisfaction and emotional exhaustion on affective commitment have received scarce attention for Emergency Services employees.

Emergency services are units designed and equipped with necessary services for patients in life-threatening conditions in order to satisfy their existing needs and provide all necessary emergency services. The main purpose of the emergency service staff is to provide effective patient care services in a safe, adequate and timely manner. High burnout and job dissatisfaction of emergency service staff have negative effect on service providers, as well as care recipients. The satisfaction of employees in the workplace, their workload and emotional perceptions of their job play an important role in their effectiveness and efficiency at work.

Employees' job satisfaction level may influence various aspects of work such as efficiency, productivity, absenteeism, turnover rates, and intention to quit and also an employee's overall wellbeing (Maghradi, 1999). An employee experiencing high levels of stress may be unable to function effectively in his/her job (Nagar, 2012).

Emotional exhaustion does not emerge suddenly, but progressively as a result of long and stressful work and hence, occurs on individuals working in especially service area. Since working conditions in emergency services is intensive, stressful, emotionally and physically exhausting this affects job satisfaction, burnout and affective commitment of employees. Therefore, this study is conducted to determine the relationship between levels of job satisfaction, emotional exhaustion and affective commitment of emergency services employees.

This paper carries on with definitions of job satisfaction, emotional exhaustion and affective commitment. Relationships and effects within them will explain and determine the hypothesis in accordance with the literature. Finally, the paper concludes with the presentation and discussion of the results.

2.Literature Review

In this section, after being defined the concepts of job satisfaction, emotional exhaustion and affective commitment, theoretical studies analyzing the relationship among them and their effects will be presented. Relationships and effects within them will be explained and determine the hypothesis in accordance with the literature.

Job Satisfaction

Importance of job satisfaction has been emphasized in boosting the efficiency of employees in organizational activities and performance. Job satisfaction has been characterized as essential to organizational performance (Mathieu, 1991; Ostroff, 1992).

Job satisfaction defined as "An attitude that individuals have about their jobs". It results from their perception of their jobs and the degree to which there is a good fit between the individual and the organization. Job satisfaction is a personal attitude towards work and a positive emotional situation when employees reach their expectation on their work and careers (Ivancevich et al., 1997).

Emotional Exhaustion

Emotional exhaustion is the most important dimension of burnout (Rohland et al., 2004; Shirom and Ezrachi, 2003; Stremmel et al., 1993). Exhaustion is the fundamental stress component of burnout representing a feeling of energy loss and a sense of being completely drained out of emotional and physical strength (Nagar, 2012). Emotional exhaustion is characterised by feelings of emotional depletion, extreme tiredness, a lack of energy and a feeling of being drained of emotional resources to cope with continuing demands (Cordes and Dougherty, 1993; Maslach et al., 2001).

Affective Commitment

Affective commitment is one dimension of organizational commitment. It refers to the employees' emotional attachment to, identification with and involvement in the organization (Allen and Meyer, 1990). Affective commitment results in a situation where the employee wants to continue his or her association with the organization (Meyer and Allen, 1997).

So it refers to "a positive affection toward the organization, reflected in a desire to see the organization succeed in its goals and a feeling of pride at being part of the organization" (Cohen, 2003). Employees with strong affective commitment keep working for the organization voluntarily and eagerly not only because they need the occupation, but because they want to work (Meyer et al., 1993). Affective commitment develops mainly from positive work experiences such as job satisfaction, value congruence and organizational fairness (Wasti, 2002).

Relationships and Effect among Job Satisfaction, Emotional Exhaustion and affective Commitment

High levels of job satisfaction are positively and causally linked with affective commitment. So researchers reveal that job satisfaction is a significant antecedent of affective commitment (Allen and Meyer, 1996; Iverson and Roy, 1994). It seems to be logical to expect that employees' levels of job satisfaction will affect their affective commitment (Michaels, 1994; Price and Mueller, 1981; Taunton et al., 1989; William and Haze, 1986).

Generally, studies that explored the relationship between organizational commitment and emotional exhaustion focused on the affective component only (Lee and Ashforth, 1996; Maslach et al., 2001; Taris et al., 2005). Indeed, as Meyer and Maltin suggested, affective commitment is associated with a strong belief that one is behaving in accord with one's intrinsic interests or values, which creates a sense of autonomy. The psychological state associated with affective commitment allows individuals to function with minimal expenditure of energy and without fearing a loss of resources, which should reduce the likelihood of emotional exhaustion (Meyer and Maltin, 2010).

A prior research has generally reported a negative relationship between affective commitment and emotional exhaustion (Babakus et al., 1999; Cole and Bedeian, 2007; Kalliath et al., 1998; Schmidt, 2007). Affective commitment refers to the emotional attachment of an employee to an organization (Meyer, 2010). Intuitive reasoning would suggest that emotional exhaustion, which is an affective response from people towards their working environment, would influence their emotional attachment to their organization. It was found that emotional exhaustion tends to erode organizational commitment (Lee and Ashforth, 1996).

Consequently, job satisfaction and emotional exhaustion are crucial factors to impact on affective commitment.

3. Methodology

The study aims to find out antecedents of affective commitment. The model used in this study (figure 1) proposes that job satisfaction and emotional exhaustion are related and both affect affective commitment. This study seeks to test the following hypotheses.

Hypothesis 1 There is a positive relationship between emergency services employees' perceptions of job satisfaction and affective commitment.

Hypothesis 2 There is a negative relationship between emergency services employees' perceptions of emotional exhaustion and affective commitment.

Hypothesis 3 There is an effect of job satisfaction and emotional exhaustion on affective commitment.

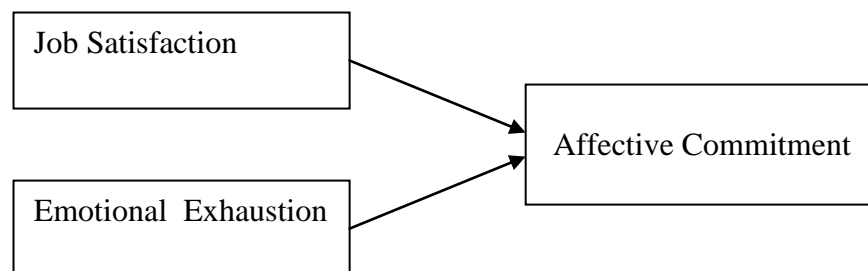


Figure 1 : Our proposed model on the relationship among job satisfaction, emotional exhaustion and affective commitment

To test these hypothesis, questionnaires were sent to all 586 employees (medical doctors and other health care personnel) in emergency services of 9 public hospitals (total 14) with a capacity of over 50+ beds in Kocaeli Province in Turkey.

The data obtained from this study were evaluated by using SPSS 18.0. 256 questionnaires were returned to the researchers representing a response rate of 43,68%. The gender distribution was 40.4% male and 59.6% female. 15.23% of the participants were medical doctors and 84.73% medical staff (e.g., nurses, technicians and medical secretaries). 56.1% of the participants were married and the mean age is 31.12 years. The average job tenure for the sample was 4.47 years. The demographic and job-context (job status and occupational) characteristics in our samples approximated the proportions observed in the overall in emergency services of public hospitals in Kocaeli.

Questionnaire contains the following three scales:

Job Satisfaction: twenty items from the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire scale were used to measure employees' job satisfaction in this study. The cronbach's alpha in this sample was 0.894.

Emotional Exhaustion: Nine items from the Maslach Burnout Inventory scale were used to measure emotional exhaustion. The scale's alpha reliability in this study is 0.865.

Affective commitment: Eight items from the affective commitment scale were used to measure affective commitment in this study. The cronbach's alpha in this sample was 0.912.

Each scale had satisfactory reliability with coefficient alpha above 0.70. All items of measures were modified to fit into seven-point Likert-scale format.

4. Results

A preliminary examination of the correlations indicates that affective commitment and most of its antecedents are significantly correlated. Table 1 show the means, standart deviations, Cronbach's alphas and Pearson correlations among the variables for this study, respectfully.

Our results reveal that the correlations between affective commitment and job satisfaction is 0.539. (significant at the 0.01 level). The results of our study depict that there is a positive relationship between the employees' perceptions of job satisfaction and affective commitment as suggested in Hypothesis 1. These findings are similar to results in organizational behavior literature. Job satisfaction was strongly correlated with affective commitment (Iverson and Roy, 1994). Emprical studies in different settings have provided evidence for a positive relationship between job satisfaction and affective commitment (Michaels, 1994; Price and Mueller, 1981; Taunton et al., 1989; William and Haze, 1986).

Table 1. The means, standard deviations, Cronbach's alphas and correlations among variables

Variables	Mean	Standart Deviation	1. (JS)	2. (EE)	3. (AC)
1. Job Satisfaction (JS)	3.944 7	1.09935	,894 ^a		
2. Emotional Exhaustion (EE)	3.957 9	1.46715	-,060	,865 ^a	
3. Affective Commitment(AC)	3.620 4	1.62339	,539* *	-,354**	,912 ^a

a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of the variable.

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Our results show that the correlation between affective commitment and emotional exhaustion is -0.354. As suggested in Hypothesis 2, there is a negative relationship between the employees' perceptions of emotional exhaustion and affective commitment. Employees' emotional exhaustion will reinforce employees' affective commitment to their organization. These findings are similar to results in organizational behavior literature. Past studies that found affective commitment to be negatively related to emotional exhaustion (e.g. Babakus et al., 1999; Cole and Bedeian, 2007; Kalliath et al., 1998; Schmidt, 2007).

Table 2. Regression Result

Independent Variables	Dependent Variable Affective Commitment	
	β	Sig.
Job Satisfaction	.168	.000
Emotional Exhaustion	-.357	.000
Model F	82.471	
Model R^2	.395	

The results of the regression analysis presented in Table 2 show that job satisfaction and emotional exhaustion are significant determinants, predicting 62.8% of the variation in affective commitment ($F = 82.471$; $p = .000$ $\beta = .168$, $\beta = -.357$, respectively). Thus, as suggested in Hypothesis 3, there is an effect of job satisfaction and emotional exhaustion on affective commitment. Perceptions of the employees' affective commitment depend on their perceptions of job satisfaction and emotional exhaustion. Therefore, job satisfaction and emotional exhaustion are primary antecedents of affective commitment.

5. Conclusions

Working conditions at emergency services are not only intense, but also stressful. Investigation of job satisfaction, emotional exhaustion and affective commitment, and the relationships among them are important research subjects in emergency services. Job satisfaction, emotional exhaustion and affective commitment are effective factors to enhance organizational performance. Increasing job satisfaction and decreasing emotional exhaustion of emergency services employees would enhance their affective commitment to their organizations. Employees with affective commitment demonstrate a willingness to exert considerable effort to serve the organization. The success of organizations is closely related to perceptions of employees' job satisfaction and emotional exhaustion and their affective commitment to the organization.

This study endeavors to make both a theoretical and practical contribution to existing literature. It enhances our understanding of antecedents of affective commitment of emergency services employees. In particular, this is the first study scrutinizing the relationship between the employees' perceptions of job satisfaction, emotional exhaustion and affective commitment at emergency services in public hospitals.

According to the findings of this study, perceptions of job satisfaction and emotional exhaustion play an imperative and antecedent role in the formation of affective commitment. Perceptions of the employees' affective commitment are a correlate of job satisfaction. Perceptions of the employees' emotional exhaustion has negative correlation with their perceptions of employees' affective commitment. In addition, there is a positive effect of job satisfaction and emotional exhaustion on affective commitment. It has been shown that higher levels of affective commitment were experienced only when employees had higher levels of perceived job satisfaction and lower levels of emotional exhaustion.

This study is limited to doctors and medical staff working in the emergency departments of public hospitals with a capacity of 50 or more beds in Kocaeli Province in Turkey. It cannot be generalized to all of the Kocaeli Province since other hospitals and public hospitals with a capacity of less than 50 beds are out of context of this study. Repetition of this study in a wider period will be more beneficial in terms of control and generalization of the results.

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