



## **Operational employees' commitment and its impact on their job satisfaction**

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### **Abstract**

*The purpose of this study was to examine the commitment of operational employees and its impact on their job satisfaction in Sri Lankan Transport Board in Colombo Region by selecting two depots of Methotamulla and Angoda as well as Colombo regional office as the sample of the study. By employing proportionate stratified sampling method, 217 operational employees, which are 5% of the population, were represented as the respondents of the study to facilitate the data collection through a structured questionnaire. According to the findings of the correlation analysis and simple regression analysis there was a strong positive relationship between job satisfaction and affective commitment, a weak positive relationship between job satisfaction and continuance commitment and a moderate positive relationship between job satisfaction and normative commitment. The results of multiple regression analysis were shown that affective commitment had a significant strong positive impact on job satisfaction and continuance commitment had a significant weak positive impact on job satisfaction. But relating to the multiple regression analysis, normative commitment had not revealed a statistically significant relationship. Furthermore, the value of the R<sup>2</sup> indicated that 77% variance of job satisfaction was explained by independent variables of the study.*

**Keywords:** *Affective commitment, continuance commitment, job satisfaction, normative commitment.*

### **1. Introduction**

Employees are the most essential part of any organization because without contribution of the employees, organization cannot achieve their goals and objectives. Among the different objectives, profit maximization is the main objective of many organizations.

Without satisfying the employees, it is impossible to meet those objectives. Job satisfaction is more focused on the employees' response to the job or to specific characteristics of the job, such as pay, supervision, and working conditions. Gunadasa (2005) stated that 10,000 workers of Sri Lanka's state-owned Regional Transport Companies (RTC) launched a national strike on February 14 for salary increases. The dispute started on February 8, when thousands of employees at the Kalutara, Matugama, Horana, Panadura, Galle and Ambalangoda bus depots walked out. After the two days, nine other RTC launched a one-hour strike and picketing campaign near bus depots around the country. LankaNewspapers.com (9 January 2007) stated that some 39,000 Sri Lanka Transport Board employees launched an island-wide strike for demanding salary arrears and other outstanding allowances. The all island transport employees' union claimed that the authorities had paid little attention to the demands of the employees of Sri Lanka Transport Board. The employees were also demanding that allowances be added to the basic salary and those salaries and advances be paid on time; also employees were demanding re-establishing the Sri Lanka Transport Board in a proper manner. The Daily Mirror (17 March 2011) noted that on March 17 bus services on several routes that operates under Maho Sri Lanka Transport Board depot had been off the road from March 17 because employees at the depot staging a walkout protesting against long delays in monthly payments. In this situation more than 270 employees joined the trade union action (Daily News, 4 April 2013).

According to Mowday, Steers, and Porter, (1979) commitment is considered as one of the attitudes that directly affects the achievements of goal and values of the organization. Zehir, Muceldili, and Zehir (2012) stated that satisfaction and commitment are the most popular concepts in management fields. Both of the concepts are multidimensional and complex constructs and there is no agreement dimensions of concepts. When considering factors that affect employees' job satisfaction, researchers (Jahufer, 2015; Kabaka, Sen, Gocera, Kucuksoylemezb, & Tuncer, 2014; Ismail & Velnampy, 2013; Gull & Zaidi, 2012) did not identify the same factors. Jahufer (2015) identified good salary package, good supervision, work environment and chances to prospect in the future are the factors that affect the employee job satisfaction. However, Kabaka, Sen, Gocera, Kucuksoylemezb, and Tuncer (2014) identified salaries, promotions, and structural properties of a job, management styles and colleagues are the factors that affect the employee job satisfaction. Ismail and Velnampy (2013) stated that factors contributing to employee satisfaction included treating employees with respect, providing regular employee recognition, empowering employees, providing employee perks and company activities, and positive management within a success framework of goals, measurements, and expectations. Gull and Zaidi (2012) identified benefits, promotional opportunities, supervision, coworkers, working condition and the work itself as the factors relating to employee job satisfaction. However, there was no consistency among the researchers about the factors influencing the employee job satisfaction.

### **1.1 Problem statement**

In order to improve the employee productivity, the managers have to identify the factors influencing employee job satisfaction. Although many researchers have identified the different factors influencing job satisfaction, three researchers (Odoch & Nangoli, 2014; Inanc & Ozdilek, 2015; Almansour, 2012) have highlighted the impact of commitment of the employees on job satisfaction. And also, there are no studies done on commitment and job satisfaction in RTB in Sri Lanka. It is found that there has not been any systematic research in transport industry in Sri Lanka in order to explore the impact of employee commitment and job satisfaction. Hence, studying of these constructs is vital for the success of the transport industry in Sri Lanka and fills the gap in the empirical knowledge relating to commitment and job satisfaction of the employees in Sri Lankan transport industry.

### **1.2 Objective of the study**

To examine the impact of operational employee commitment (affective commitment, continuance commitment and normative commitment) on their job satisfaction in Sri Lankan Transport Board in Colombo Region.

## **2. Literature review**

Employees are the backbone of every organization. Without employees, no work can be done efficiently. Therefore, employee satisfaction is very important in any organization irrespective of the size. It plays a significant role in defining organizational success. Employees will be more satisfied if they get what they anticipated. Jayarathna (2014) stated that job satisfaction is one of the most important attitudes of the employees of an organization. When employees are satisfied with their job, they will perform better and therefore organization will gain competitive edge. It is known that people usually spend more time of their life at work since job is one of the most important parts of their life. Therefore, job satisfaction decides the happiness level of the employees. However, it is a challenge to the organizations to satisfy their different types of employees. Therefore, an understanding of the factors affecting job satisfaction is essential in improving employees' performance and productivity (Suki & Suki, 2011). Job satisfaction can be explained as multidimensional psychological responses to one's job. These responses consist with cognitive (evaluative) and affective (emotional) components. The multidimensional responses can be identified as good/bad, positive/negative scales. Those may be quantified using assessment techniques. Those techniques assess evaluations of features or characteristics of the job, emotional responses to events that occur on the job, and it depends on how one defines attitudes, behavioral dispositions, intentions, and enacted behaviors (Judge, Hulin, & Dalal, 2009). Job satisfaction is the feelings or state of mind regarding the nature of employee work. Job satisfaction can be influenced by a variety of factors; those factors can be identified as the quality of employee's relationship with supervisor, the quality of the physical environment in which

employee executes work, degree of the fulfillment of worker's work (Nawab & Bhatti, 2011). Job satisfaction is an important indicator of how employees feel about jobs and also it is a predictor of work behaviors, such as organizational citizenship, absenteeism, and turnover. Furthermore, job satisfaction can partially mediate the relationship of personality variables and deviant work behaviors (Ciarnien, Kumpikait, & Vienazindien, 2010). Jahufer (2015) identified job satisfaction as a bi-dimensional concept consisting of intrinsic and extrinsic satisfaction dimensions. Intrinsic sources of satisfaction depend on the individual characteristics of the person. Extrinsic sources of satisfaction are situational and depend on the environment. Both extrinsic and intrinsic job facets should be represented, as equally as possible, in a composite measure of overall job satisfaction. Job satisfaction is difficult to measure and is dependent on a number of factors. Management needs to reduce the level of dissatisfaction and control workplace conflicts through common objectives like career development, training, appropriate rewards and improvements in the quality of working life.

Employee commitment is important because high level of positive employee commitment lead to several favorable organizational outcomes such as motivate workforce, high productivity and high profitability ratio (Ahmad et al., 2014) and, negative commitment lead to a number of unfavorable organizational outcomes such as high rate of absenteeism, high turnover rate and grievances (Tarigan & Ariani., 2015). Therefore, employee commitment is an essential indicator to each and every organization. Amma, Thaliyan and Muthulakshmi (2014) stated that employee commitment is a desirable condition and it has been extensively discussed in the research literature. Organization recognizes that committed employees play a critical role in achieving sustainable success and competitive advantage. Committed employee is the one who is optimistic, highly focused on work, enthusiastic and willing to go an extra mile to contribute to sustainable organizational success. Shahid and Azhar (2013), Dixit and Bhati (2012), Dost, Ahmed, Shafi, and Shaheen (2011) identified the value of employee commitment. Dost, Ahmed, Shafi, and Shaheen (2011) stated that employee commitment always plays a very important role in improving the organizational performance. Employee commitment can be enhanced through employee involvement in assessment construction and providing employees a chance for better attending the whole process of the organization. Dixit and Bhati (2012) stated that employee commitment is important because high levels of commitment lead to several favorable organizational outcomes and it reflects the level of which employees identify organization goal and objectives and how committed to its goals. Lee and Chen (2013) considered employee commitment and job attitude as one of the most important elements in human resource management, and employee commitment is mostly related to work values, work motivation, and work involvement.

Cohen (2007,) suggested timing of commitment and bases of commitment as two dimensions of commitment. The timing of commitment distinguishes between commitment propensity, which develops before entering into the organization and organizational commitment, which develops after entering into the organization. The second dimension, the bases of commitment, makes a distinction between commitment based on instrumental considerations and commitment based on psychological

attachment. Employee commitment is logically inseparable from organization commitment. Components of organizational commitment; affective, continuance and normative, identified by Meyer & Allen (1991) used subsequent researches done by Lee & Chen (2013); Dixit & Bhati (2012); Meyer, Stanley & Parfyonova (2012); Khan, Rehman, & Akram (2012); Bhatti & Qureshi (2007); Collier & Esteban (2007), were used as the dimensions of this study in order to explore the employee commitment.

Affective Commitment - Meyer and Allen (1991) identified affective commitment as employee's emotional attachment to the identification with, and involvement in the current organization. When employees have strong affective commitment then employees are continuing employment with the organization, because employees want to do so. According to Rashid, Sambasivan and Johari (2003), affective commitment describes the extent of emotional attachment of a person to the organization. And also, this attachment could be due to one's role in relation to the organizational goals and values, or to the organization for its own benefits. Lumley, Coetzee, Tladinyane, and Ferreira (2011) explained employees have an affective commitment, where individuals remain with an organization because employee wants to it and employees are familiar with the organization and its values. Inanc and Ozdilek (2015); Odoch and Nangoli (2014); Anis, Rehman, Rehman, Khan, and Humayoun (2011) studied the relationship between employee commitment and job satisfaction. Tarigan and Ariani (2015) found that affective commitment has a positive impact on job satisfaction. Sezgin and Agar (2012) examined a positive and significant relationship between affective commitment and job satisfaction. Bilgin and Demirer (2012) have found that affective commitment has positive effects on employees' job satisfaction. Hence, these research evidence prove that there is a positive relationship between affective commitment and employee job satisfaction. Therefore, it supported to formulate a hypothesis as follows;

H<sub>1</sub>: Operational employees' affective commitment positively influences on their job satisfaction.

Continuance Commitment - Lumley, Coetzee, Tladinyane, and Ferreira (2011) noted that employees with continuance commitment remain with a specific organization. Employees can earn money as a result of the time they spent in the organization. But here, employees do not want it. This is different from affective commitment. According to Meyer and Allen (1991), continuance commitment refers as an awareness of the cost associated with leaving the organization. Employees whose primary link with the organization is based on continuance commitment, because employees need to do so. According to Kashefi et al., (2013), continuance commitment was about costs and benefits which are related to remaining in or leaving organization. This continuance commitment suggested a kind of calculation which is referred to as rational commitment and expresses that quitting organization will have excessive costs for employees (Meyer & Allen, 1991). Adekola (2012) found a significant positive linear relationship between job satisfaction and employee commitment. Tarigan and Ariani (2015) found that continuance commitment has positive impact on job satisfaction. Hence these research evidences prove that there

is positive relationship between continuance commitment and employee job satisfaction. Therefore, it supported to formulate a hypothesis as follows.

H<sub>2</sub>: Operational employees' continuance commitment positively influences on their job satisfaction.

**Normative Commitment** - Normative commitment describes a feeling of obligation to continue employment. Employees with the high level of normative commitment feel that ought to remain with the organization (Meyer & Allen, 1991). The normative commitment seen as a result of receipt of benefits, which encourages a feeling that one should reciprocate, and acceptance of the terms of a psychological contract (Dixit & Bhati, 2012). The normative commitment mentions employees' feelings of obligation to remain with the organization. This type of commitment will be influenced by an employee's experiences both prior to cultural socialization and following organizational socialization entry into the organization (Rashid, Sambasivan, & Johari, 2003). Normative commitment refers employees' obligation to remain in organization. Therefore, employees will remain in organization until employees believe that remaining in organization is suitable and accurate based on employees' opinion (Kashefi et al., 2013).

Odoch and Nangoli (2014) found a positive and significant relationship between employee commitment and job satisfaction. Ahmad, Iqbal, Javed, and Hamad (2014) found that a positive relationship exists between commitment and employee job satisfaction. Tarigan and Ariani (2015) found that normative commitment has a positive impact on job satisfaction. Inanc and Ozdilek (2015) stated that normative commitment influences on the job satisfaction in a positive way, although it is not statistically significant. Hence, these research evidence proving that there is a positive relationship between normative commitment and employee job satisfaction. Therefore, it supported to formulate a hypothesis as follows.

H<sub>3</sub>: Operational employees' normative commitment positively influences on their job satisfaction.

### **3. Research methodology**

#### **3.1 The research design**

The study, which is based on correlational type, is designed to explore the relationship between employee commitment (independent variable) and employee job satisfaction (dependent variable). The variables taken into consideration are not controlled or manipulated in this study. And also, this research was conducted in natural environment and no any influence for respondents. The unit of analysis is individual.

#### **3.2 Population and sample**

This study focused the employees who work in Sri Lanka Transport Board in Colombo Region. In Colombo region, there are twelve depots, one drivers teaching college and one

Regional office. All operational employees (4337) attached to the above depots are considered as the population of the study. Out of which, 217 employees were selected using proportionate stratified sampling as the sample. Four categorical employees are representing as operative level employees in transport board. To represent each categorical employee into the sample, 70 drivers, 74 conductors, 38 technical labors and 35 clericals and allied employees were selected.

### 3.3 Measures

The operational employees' job satisfaction was the dependent variable and their commitment was the independent variable of this study. These variables were measured using interval and ratio scales. The questionnaire was separated into five sections for demographic data, affective commitment, continuance commitment, normative commitment and job satisfaction. Four questions were included to get demographic information, 07, 07, 06 and 07 questions were included to get affective commitment, continuance commitment, normative commitment and job satisfaction data respectively. Five point Likert scale was used to measure each construct.

### 3.4 Validity and reliability

In order to establish the Content validity of this study, the items used to measure employee affective commitment by Jaros (2007) were adopted and continuance commitment, normative commitment used by Allen & Meyer (1990) were used. At the same time items used to measure employee job satisfaction by Ismail (2012) were also considered. In addition to that the content validity of a construct was ensured through pre-testing of the questionnaires. Each scale was evaluated for its reliability and multicollinearity.

Table 1  
Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) value

	VIF
Affective Commitment	1.63
Continuance Commitment	1.60
Normative Commitment	1.55
Job Satisfaction	1.62

Table 2  
Results of test re-test analysis

Variables	Test re-test value
Affective Commitment	0.982
Continuance Commitment	0.980
Normative Commitment	0.717
Job Satisfaction	0.947

Table 3  
Results of reliability analysis

Variables	No: of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Affective Commitment	7	0.875
Continuance Commitment	7	0.712
Normative Commitment	6	0.724
Job Satisfaction	7	0.777

It can be concluded that the instruments possess high test re-test reliability and the internal consistency reliability is satisfactory owing to the data represented in table 02 and 03.

### 3.5 Methods of data analysis

Data were analyzed using univariate, bivariate and multivariate analysis techniques and specially applied correlation coefficient and regression analysis to meet the study objective and hypotheses. SPSS data analyze package of 20<sup>th</sup> version was used to analyze the data. The results of the univariate, correlation and regression were presented in table 04, 05 and 06 respectively. According to the data given in table 04 affective commitments recorded the highest mean value when compared to the other variables.

Table 4  
Results of univariate analysis

Variables	Mean	Standard Deviation	Variance
Affective commitment	3.9931	0.62641	0.392
Continuance commitment	3.7212	0.61182	0.374
Normative commitment	3.9086	0.52243	0.273
Job satisfaction	3.8756	0.53357	0.285

Table 5  
Results of correlation analysis

Variables	Job Satisfaction	Affective Commitment	Continuance Commitment	Normative Commitment
Job Satisfaction	-			
Affective Commitment	.857**	-		
Continuance Commitment	.262*	.111	-	
Normative Commitment	.358**	.300**	.136	-

\*\*p < .01, \*p < .05



Table 6  
Results of regression analysis

variable	$\beta$	R <sup>2</sup>	P Value	F Value
Affective commitment	0.730	0.735	0.000	16.624
Continuance commitment	0.228	0.069	0.040	4.421
Normative commitment	0.365	0.128	0.004	8.798

The results of the correlation coefficient between employee commitment and job satisfaction of operative level employees in Sri Lankan Transport Board are presented in Table 05. According to the results, the correlation between affective commitment and job satisfaction ( $r = .857$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), continuance commitment and job satisfaction ( $r = 0.262$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), normative commitment and job satisfaction ( $r = .358$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) were significant and positive. According to the analysis affective commitment recorded a strong positive relationship with job satisfaction but continuance and normative commitment reported a weak positive relationship with job satisfaction. The result of the regression analysis is presented in table 06. The relationship between Affective commitment and job satisfaction ( $\beta = .73$ ,  $p < .01$ ), Continuance commitment and job satisfaction ( $\beta = .22$ ,  $p < .05$ ), Normative commitment and job satisfaction ( $\beta = .36$ ,  $p < .01$ ) were significant and positive.

Table 7  
Model summary of the multiple regression analysis

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Std. Error of the			
			Square	Estimate	F	Sig.
1	.878 <sup>a</sup>	.771	.759	.26203	64.980	.000 <sup>a</sup>

According to the table 07 results, R<sup>2</sup> value can be identified as 0.771. It means model was strongly fitted to the data and 77% variance of job satisfaction was explained by those three independent variables (affective commitment, continuance commitment, normative commitment). Furthermore, F value was 64.980. It revealed that overall model was significant at 0.05, ( $p = 0.000$ ).

#### 4. Discussion

The major purpose of this study was to examine the employee commitment and its impact on operational employee job satisfaction in the Sri Lanka Transport Board in Colombo Region. When considering correlation analysis affective commitment and job satisfaction recorded a strong positive relationship and simple regression analysis, regression coefficient ( $\beta$ ) between affective commitment and job satisfaction were indicated that there was a strong positive relationship. According to the both analysis, the results were supported to the first hypothesis ( $H_1$ ) of the study. This result was consistent with previous research studies which were conducted by Tarigan & Ariani (2015), Sezgin & Agar

(2012) and Bilgin & Demirer (2012). The correlation between job satisfaction and continuance commitment shows that there was a weak positive relationship between these two variables. The unstandardized coefficients ( $\beta$ ) for continuance commitment significantly influence by job satisfaction and it had a significant weak positive impact on job satisfaction. According to the results of correlation analysis and simple regression analysis, second hypothesis ( $H_2$ ) is supported. This result is consistent with the previous research done by Adekola (2012) and Tarigan & Ariani (2015). The correlation coefficient for job satisfaction and normative commitment was expressed that there was a moderate positive relationship between these two variables. Relevant to the simple regression analysis, unstandardized coefficients (beta) for normative commitment indicated that there is a significant moderate positive impact on the job satisfaction. Therefore, those result supported to third hypothesis ( $H_3$ ) in the research. This result is consistent with the earlier study done by Tarigan & Ariani (2015).

## **5. Conclusion**

This study investigated the employee commitment and its impact on employee job satisfaction of the operational employees in Sri Lanka Transport Board. A significant strong positive relationship has been found between affective commitment and employee job satisfaction. And also, there is a significant weak positive relationship between the continuance commitment and job satisfaction. It is found that a significant moderate positive relationship between the normative commitment and job satisfaction. According to the findings all the hypotheses in the study were supported. This research also served as a guideline for all the researchers who are interested in studying this area. The findings of this study help to the organization in planning and developing the strategies to enhance the employee commitment. All organizations in the world expected high employee commitment. Therefore, the employers must give the full attention and emphasize the quality of job satisfaction among their employees.

## **6. Limitation and future research**

This study limited to three RTB depots in Colombo district, which might limit generalization to the results to all RTB depots. Another limitation is a limited sample size for each operational employee in RTB. Determining relative importance of the three different commitment factors for each operational employee group was not conducted because sample size for each operational employee group was somewhat too small. Tabacnick and Fidell (2001) suggested a general rule for selecting a sample size based on the number of variables:  $N \geq 50 + 8m$ , where 'm' is the number of independent variables. Thus, to make a reliable conclusion for the relative importance of commitment factors, the sample size of each operational employee group should be more than 82. Even though the sample size for the four categorical employees was less than required number, the conclusions and implications made from this group of sample could have a low power.

The outcomes of this research suggest a number of possible ways to improve. First, given that the management employees in this study were more significantly affected by commitment factors to job satisfaction. Second, further examination can be undertaken to assess the priority of commitment factors for each operational level group with a larger sample power. A large sample size will also allow testing, the relative importance of the commitment factors by education level, age, and the department.

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