

Research Review and Prospect of Affective Commitment

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Abstract: As a core part of organizational commitment, affective commitment has drawn more and more attention from scholars and practitioners. Under the cultural background of “emphasis on affection” in China, it is more meaningful to explore the employees’ affective commitment. This paper introduces the concept of affective commitment, summarizes the antecedent variables that affect affective commitment, explains employees’ behavior and attitude that are affected by affective commitment, and finally makes a prospect of the study on affective commitment in the future.

1. Introduction

How to retain employees has always been a key issue for the company. In the era of knowledge economy, the competition of enterprises is the competition of talents, and the unstable state of employees will cause enterprises to suffer severe blows. Employees with a tendency to leave their jobs may be in a state of uncertainty in their organizations, and their personal industry and work efficiency are greatly reduced. Therefore, for the organization, how to target the special cultural background of China and integrate the unique Chinese thinking patterns and values, from the perspective of employees and organizational affective commitment, create a series of “sticky” factors within the organization to create an organization a sticky network that raises employees’ level of affective commitment to the organization, and thus has a higher sense of belonging and attachment to the company, is a realistic research point.

By reading and sorting out relevant literatures on affective commitment at home and abroad, this article reviews previous studies, summarizes and discusses the formation mechanism and consequences of affective commitment, and provides theoretical support for guiding organizations in implementing affective commitment management.

2. Concept and Measurement of Affective Commitment

2.1 Concept of Affective Commitment

Organizational commitment is an affirmative attitude or psychological tendency of employees to the organization. There are two typical understandings of the concept definition of organizational

commitment, namely the concept of Porter and the concept of Meyer and Allen. Porter defines organizational commitment as the overall degree of employee recognition and participation in the organization. In this definition, organizational commitment is considered to consist of multiple parts, but it is only a single dimensional structure of “affective dependence.” Meyer & Allen proposes to divide the organizational commitment into three dimensions, namely, continuous commitment, normative commitment and affective commitment. Continuance refers to the motivation of employees to stay in the organization considering the cost of leaving the company, that is, the utilitarian results of staying in or leaving the organization. Normative means that employees are bound by the general social behavior and consider whether the leaving behavior is consistent with the individual's self-concept or not; and Affective Commitment refers to an employee's affective dependence on organizational identity and participation, and clearly represents the employee's attitude towards the organization, reflects the employee's affective attachment to the organization.

In fact, Porter's organizational commitment and Meyer & Allen's affective commitment are basically overlapping. Meyer & Allen pointed out that in the three components of organizational commitment, affective commitment is at the core. At the same time, in previous studies, affective commitment has received more attention than continuance commitment and normative commitment. It is a more relevant form of commitment to outcome variables because affective commitment is the most direct and important output of employees. At the same time, it also best reflects the relationship between employees and organizations[1].

2.2 Measurement of Affective Commitment

Affective commitment is a core part of organizational commitment. Its measurement is also developed mainly from the scale of organizational commitment and can be traced back to the RT-S scale. The scale was compiled by Ritzier & Trice and subsequently revised by Hrebiniak & Alutto, the HA-S scale. After an in-depth study, the scale of affective commitment has become more mature. One of the most authoritative is the scale of affective commitment developed by Meyer & Allen in 1993. This scale includes six items (see Table 1). At present, this scale has been recognized by a large number of scholars and has been used repeatedly in empirical research. Its good reliability and validity have been proved. It is worth mentioning that Chinese scholars Ling conducted several pre-tests through open interviews and project collections with employees of Chinese companies in a cultural background with Chinese characteristics, proposed the five-factor model, and developed the “China Employees Organizational Commitment Scale”, a total of 25 items, of which the affective commitment section consists of 5 items (see Table 1).

Table 1 The Measurement Scale of Affective Commitment

Scale	Authors	Items
ACS	Meyer&Allen	I am very willing to stay in the current corporate I feel that this company's problem is my problem affectively, I feel like I belong to this corporate I think I am a member of this corporate family This corporate is significant to me personally In general, I am very loyal to the current corporate
Chinese employees' affective commitment scale	Ling Wenxuan Zhang Zhican Fang Liluo	Even if the company's efficiency is poor, I will not leave Deep feelings for the corporate Willing to make any contribution Willing to contribute all Willing to contribute free time

3. Factors Affecting Affective Commitment

3.1 Fairness and Satisfaction

Porter believes that job satisfaction is one of the leading causes of organizational commitment. Allen & Meyer's research shows that age, seniority, satisfaction with promotion, satisfaction with wages are highly relevant with continuance commitment, and work commitment, job satisfaction, satisfaction with supervisors, satisfaction with colleagues, career commitments is related with affective commitment. Scholars such as Wang and others have shown that both the sense of fairness and the attribution of responsibility affect the employee's affective commitment response[2]. When employees perceive an organization with low interpersonal fairness or information fairness, and feel that the organization is responsible for it, the level of its affective commitment to the organization will be low, and vice versa.

3.2 Organizational Identity

The relationship between affective commitment and organizational identity has always been one of the hot issues in the area of organizational identity research. Organizational identities are antecedent to organizational commitment. For example, Bergami & Bagozzi's research confirms the predictive effect of organizational identity on affective commitment[3]. Organizational identities not only have a direct impact on affective commitment, but also have an indirect effect on objective volunteer behavior, subjective volunteer behavior, and economic donation behavior through affective commitment. In addition, individual organizational identities can not only predict their affective commitment, but also can mediate the influence of different sources of organizational prestige perception on affective commitment.

3.3 Organization Support

The material and spiritual support that the organization provides to employees has a positive influence on the working attitude represented by employees, such as affective commitments. From the perspective of social exchange theory, perception of organizational support through the encouragement of materials and spirit can increase employees' expectations of hard work results, and exert the positive influence of the principle of reciprocity on employees' work attitude[4]. From the perspective of psychological needs, it can be perceived that organizational support can satisfy the need for respect and recognition of employees. In a comprehensive sense, perceiving organizational support can shorten the psychological distance between individuals and organizations, increase the individual's level of belonging and psychological attachment to the organization, and promote individual self-identity and involvement in making positive feedback to organizations.

3.4 Value Fit and Ability Fit

Value fit refers to the consistency of the organization's value model and employee's individual value model. Specifically, higher value fit means that employees and organizations have established links with common values and target systems[5]. Employees are willing to use the organization's rules and terms to constrain themselves. They are willing to accept the organization's tasks. These are Meyer and Allen's description of the highly affective commitment. The better the employee fits the job requirements (knowledge, skills, and abilities involved in the job), the more likely they feel that they have established professional and personal contact with the organization. Therefore, a higher ability to fit improves employee's affective commitment.

Person-Value Fit (abbreviated as PV Fit) is an important aspect of Person-Organization Fit (abbreviated as PO Fit) and refers to the degree of fit between organizational members and the organization's own values or consistency[6]. Fan and others explored the influence mechanism of new-generation employees' human-organizational value fit on affective commitment[7]. The empirical results show that the fit of people-organization values in the "self-enhancement" and "change openness" dimensions has a positive predictive effect on affective commitment.

3.5 Leading Members Exchange Relationship

Affective commitment is closely related to LMX. When LMX quality is high, leaders show more personal support and affective incentives for employees. According to the theory of social exchange, employees who feel the support and motivation of the leader will report to the leader with a positive attitude and hard work. Through this kind of positive interaction, employees' sense of identity and belonging to the organization will increase, resulting in a higher affective commitment. The positive role of LMX in employee affective commitment has been supported by a large amount of empirical research. Basu and Green's research shows that people in the circle have gained more trust and support from leaders, formed higher affective commitments, and can actively think for the organization in their work[8]. The meta-analysis results show that the correlation coefficient between organizational commitments including affective commitment and LMX is 0.35 ($p < 0.01$). Zhong finds that LMX is significantly positively related to employee's affective commitment and can explain affective commitment to a variance of 5.6%[9].

3.6 Leading Members Exchange Relationship

Commitment-based human resource management practices emphasize the long-term exchange relationship between employees and organizations. The purpose is to increase employees' commitment to the organization. Wang's research shows that committed human resource management practices have a direct and significant positive impact on affective commitment[10]. When the level of committed human resources practices is low, employees' multiple psychological needs must not be met. The sense of identity, trust, belonging, and self-esteem of employees for the organization is low. Under such circumstances, employees' affective commitment is low; on the contrary, when the level of committed human resources practices is relatively high, employees' strong feelings of employee identification, trust, belonging, and self-esteem can help employees meet their diverse psychological needs. At this time, employees' affective commitments are strengthened.

Supportive Human Resource Practice refers to a type of practice of "investing in employees and recognizing employee contributions". The important dependent variable for supporting human resource management practices is Perceived Organizational Support. Compared with similar research abroad, although supportive human resources management Practices vary in content, but they also have an indirect effect on affective commitment through perceived organizational support.

3.7 Idiosyncratic Deals

Idiosyncratic deals refer to the personal work arrangements that employees and employers reach through negotiation and can benefit both parties[11]. Special arrangements for the core employee's tasks and job responsibilities will not only facilitate job fit and position. Fit can also help improve employees' job satisfaction and affective commitments so that they can identify with and attach to their own organizations. The improvement of employee's affective commitment can further help companies retain the most valuable employees, fully demonstrate their benefits to the organization's

personality, skills and capabilities, enhance the competitiveness of enterprises, and achieve a win-win situation.

4. Influence of Affective Commitment

4.1 Turnover Intention

Turnover intention refers to the possibility that individuals change their work within a certain period of time. The negative impact of affective commitment on turnover intentions has been confirmed by numerous research institutes, and commitments are more predictive of job turnover than job satisfaction. Employees who have a high affective commitment to the organization are treated with a positive attitude and continue to work hard for the goals and interests of the organization. Under the influence of these positive work responses, the negative reactions of employees are naturally suppressed, and thus may reduce the intention to leave the company. Employees who affectively depend on the organization have a strong sense of identity, trust, and loyalty to the organization, and thus show a low intention to leave. On the contrary, employees with a lower affective commitment may actively seek new job opportunities have a higher intention to leave.

4.2 Organizational Citizenship

The employee's high affective commitment to the organization makes it consistent with the organization's interests and requires them to meet higher standards, thereby demonstrating favorable behaviors for the organization, such as organizational citizenship behavior. Mayer and Parfyonova define affective commitment as a value commitment, and point out that employees with a high commitment to values will spontaneously assist organizations in achieving their goals, as well as beyond job responsibilities and job requirements to achieve more organizational citizenship behavior[12]. In the mind of such employees, personal goals and organizational goals are consistent. In order to achieve the organizational goals, he will actively complete the spontaneous activities that exceed the requirements of the work, that is, organizational citizenship behavior. Conversely, if the employee's affective commitment is low, the affective bond between the employee and the organization will be undermined. In this case, the employee will often try to leave.

4.3 Deviant Behavior

Deviant behavior refers to the behavior of employees that violates the legitimate interests of the organization[14]. Contrary to the enthusiasm and constructiveness of organizational citizenship behavior, the individual employee's deviating behavior causes little harm, but pooling it can seriously affect the effectiveness of the entire organization. Zhou used 341 pairs of employee-coworker fit data as a sample and found that the overall organizational sense of fairness has a negative impact on organizational deviation behavior through the mediating role of organizational affective commitment.

5. Conclusion

Through the above review of affective commitments, it can be found that there have been several deficiencies in previous research on affective commitment. First of all, the study focuses more on antecedents of affective commitment. There is relatively little research on the results of affective commitment. In the future, it can increase the attention and research on the impact of affective commitment. Second, most of the previous studies have studied affective commitments as mediating

variables or regulatory variables. In the future, they may be considered as independent variables or the dependent variables are discussed. Third, there is a certain relationship between affective commitment and individual characteristics. Future studies can consider the impact of various individual characteristics on affective commitment.

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