

## A Review of The Research on Dual Commitment

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**Abstract:** With the growth of the number of professional workers and the rise of atypical employment methods, people are increasingly aware of the importance of dual commitment. The concept definition of dual commitment, measurement dimension, relevant variables and its conclusion the prospect of future research are discussed on the basis of the existing research.

### 1. Overview

#### 1.1 The Theoretical Basis

Social exchange theory is a sociological and psychological theory that studies the social behavior in the interaction of two parties that implement a cost-benefit analysis to determine risks and benefits. British anthropologist James Fraser put forward the idea of exchange firstly in the book of “The Old Testament” at 1919. Social exchange theory explains that if the costs of the relationship are higher than the rewards, such as a lot of effort or money put into a relationship and not reciprocated, this could lead to issues.

Balance theory is a theory of attitude change proposed by Fritz Heider in the psychology. Thacker et al. (1986) applied balance theory into the field of economic management and focused on the commitment issues in the interaction of organizations, unions and employees. This paper holds the view that balance theory is an extension of exchange theory which mainly involves two parties such as employees and enterprises or employees and unions. Balance theory explains this from a high level believing the possibility of double commitment increases when the triangle relationship among three groups reaches a harmonious state.

#### 1.2 The Definition of Dual Commitment

Purcell (1954) first proposed the concept of dual commitment, and Purcell assumed that “workers' dual loyalty to companies and unions would be possible, common, but not universal”. Purcell believes that organizational commitment is not just to comply with the collective bargaining requirements of any organization, nor to fully meet all the requirements of the company or union. More precisely, the dual commitment is described as the collective belief in the coexistence of the company and the union. In the late 1940s and early 1950s, Purcell's assumptions were very attractive, as rapid unionization seemed to be detrimental to employee loyalty to the business.

Stagner (1954) defined that dual commitment in the field of international affairs and industrial relations from a broader socio-political perspective. “When people have a tendency to perceive work-related situations as a whole, people cannot separate the corporate roles and the trade union roles which accounting a dual commitment.” According to Magenau, Martin, and Peterson (1988), this interpretation means that if some conditions (such as high job satisfaction, good labor relations, etc.) are beneficial to the union of the firm and the union, it will lead to a dual commitment. Correspondingly, in those employees who are involved in a certain aspect of affairs, the phenomenon

of unilateral commitment is more common. They found that: the probability of a unilateral union commitment of union managers is much higher than that of ordinary members.

However, Barkin believes that some definitions are too simple to explain the employees' attitudes and behaviors to the company, and Kornhauser believes that dual commitment conveys a pleasant but unsustainable meaning of harmonious prevailing obscuring the basic difference of the objectives of the labor and management. From the above description, dual commitment may be the characteristics of the workers (those who are highly loyal to the company and the union), the relationship between the two variables (the attitude of the employees to the company and the union) or a context-dependent phenomenon, so the current researchers have not clearly defined dual commitment.

In addition, the above-mentioned scholars' targets of dual commitment are limited between enterprises and unions. However, some scholars have extended their targets to a wider field. For example, Tuma (1981) studied dual commitment of teachers to occupations and employee organizations and Vora (2007) studied dual commitment of multinational corporations' overseas branch managers to parent companies and subsidiaries. But at present, these scholars do not have a further definition of the dual commitment.

## **2. The Measurement Method**

### **2.1 Direct Measurement**

Direct measurement uses a single scale to directly measure dual commitment or use cross-terms of corporate commitment and union commitment to measure dual commitments. The application of direct measurement is based on the premise that dual commitments can exist as a separate structure.

When receiving the paper, we assume that the corresponding authors grant us the copyright to use the paper for the book or journal in question. Should authors use tables or figures from other Publications, they must ask the corresponding publishers to grant them the right to publish this material in their paper. Angle and Perry (1986) first measured the dual organizational commitments using their own five-scale scale. They took the employees of 22 independently operated city bus companies in the United States as a sample to study the correlativity among corporate commitment, union commitment and the dual commitment of the two organizations. The results point to a significant positive correlation between union commitment and corporate commitment, with a correlation coefficient of 0.30 ( $p < 0.001$ ), which also validates the view that dual organizational commitment exists. Measuring a dual commitment with a single scale can minimize potential bias. However, the adaptability of direct measurement method is limited by methodological problems, that is, the application premise of direct measurement method has not been unanimously recognized - the dual organization commitment has independent explanatory power (Liu Guangping, 2011).

### **2.2 Dimensional Method**

The dimensional approach primarily reflects the degree of correlation between dual commitments. Its main idea is to judge whether the dual organizational commitment exists by calculating the correlation coefficient between the corporate commitment and the union commitment. A dual organizational commitment is existing if there is a significant, positive correlation coefficient.

Most studies have found a positive correlation between the two variables, although a few studies have found a small negative correlation. Reed (1997), through a meta-analysis of 76 samples, found that the correlation coefficient was between -0.25 and +0.77, and the average corrected correlation coefficient was +0.42; Fuller & Hester (1998) found a correlation range of -0.26 to +0.72 from a meta-analysis of 22 samples; Snape & Chan (2000) obtained a correlation coefficient of 0.20 between union commitments and corporate commitments by analyzing 397 samples.

### **2.3 Taxonomic Method**

Gordon & Ladd (1990) argued that there are two units of analysis for individual commitments, namely individual units and organizational units. The study of individual units mainly uses taxonomic approach. The basic idea of the taxonomic approach is to classify it into four categories

based on the individual levels of the individual commitments of the individual employees, Take the double commitment of the company and the union as an example: unilateral corporate commitment (employees unilaterally commit to the company), unilateral union commitment (employee unilaterally commit to the union), dual commitment (employee highly commit to both the company and the union) and dual no commitment (employees have low commitment to the company and low commitment to the union).

However, this method is not without its shortcomings. Gordon & Ladd (1990) pointed out that according to the median division, the same person may be divided into different organizational commitment types in different studies, and the sample specificity problem caused by the median division makes no meaningful comparison between different samples.

## **2.4 Parallel Models Method**

None of the above three methods can identify which factors can be unilaterally committed and which factors can jointly predict a dual commitment. Thus, Fukami&Larson (1984) developed a new measurement method, the Parallel Models Approach, which involves regression analysis of union commitments and corporate commitments in the same set of explanatory variables to identify common determinants of corporate commitment and union commitment. Bemmels (1995) argued that these common factors are the antecedent variables of the double organizational commitments.

## **3. Antecedent Variables**

First, Chinese scholars Wu Jinhong and Hu Enhua (2016) studied the influence of the union-enterprise relationship model on employee dual organization commitment. On the basis of organizational evolution theory, the analysis points out that there are three widespread relation modes: conflicts between Chinese unions and enterprises, unions completely follow the enterprise and the united and cooperative mode. After 100 computer simulation cycles, they concluded that unions and enterprises have the highest degree of dual commitment under the united and cooperative mode.

Angle&Perry's research proves that there is a significant positive correlation between labor relations and dual organizational commitments ( $a = 0.32$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), affirming that labor relations are an antecedent variable of dual organizational commitment. Thacker & Rosen (1986) and Magenau, Martin & Peterson (1988) have shown that if some conditions (such as a harmonious labor relations atmosphere, high job satisfaction, etc.) are beneficial to the cooperation between enterprises and unions, it will lead to dual organizational commitment. Johnson & Patterson (1999) used Hunter's meta-analysis to study the level of commitment of 2,2012 union members in seven countries, and found that the level of rapport in the labor relations relationship is related to the commitment of the two organizations.

Scholars have already found other antecedent variables. Fullagar & Barling (1991) used Canadian trade union members as a sample of research to measure the causes and effects of the four types of commitments from three aspects: demographic variables, firm-related variables, and union-related variables. The results of the study show that only union participation is a common antecedent variable of corporate commitment and union commitment. Lee (2005) through the comparative analysis of the status of China's dual organization commitments and the commitment of Korean dual organizations, in addition to verifying the view that the dual organization commitment exists, it also confirms that the dual organization commitment in the Chinese context has an antecedent variable of job satisfaction. Chan & Snape (2002) conducted an empirical study of employees of a Hong Kong bus company, and the results showed that promotion opportunities are an antecedent variable of the commitment of the two organizations. Chole (2018) surveyed all union workers (more than 2,300) in the Canadian subsidiary of the Montreal Aerospace Multinational Corporation to study how leadership styles of management and union representatives can help to create a labor-management environment that is conducive to workers and affects double commitments. The results show that the direct leadership style (transformation and laissez-faire) has a significant impact on the labor and capital climate.

#### 4. Outcome Variables of Dual Commitment

Through the combing of the literature, there are two main outcome variables involved in the current research: organizational citizenship behavior and turnover rate.

Gordon & Ladd constructed a conceptual model of the dual commitment antecedent and outcome variables, suggesting that employees' corporate commitment, union commitment, and dual commitment have a significant impact on employee organizational citizenship behavior. Through empirical research, Bemmels analyzed the relationship between corporate commitment, union commitment, dual commitment and employee behavior, and found that dual commitment play an intermediary role between corporate commitment and organizational citizenship behavior and between union commitment and organizational citizenship behavior.

Derry & Iverson used 305 subsidiaries of the International Bank in Australia as a sample of research, arguing that dual commitments are directly proportional to productivity, quality of service and absenteeism. Employees with a double commitment demonstrate high productivity, quality of service and low turnover. Kim & Rowley (2006) used Korean companies as a sample of empirical research and found a significant negative correlation between turnover and dual commitment. By investigating 2,568 employees from the Korean electronics industry, Sean et al. (2012) found that employees can commit to unions and enterprises, and that double-committed employees have much lower willingness to leave.

#### 5. Conclusion

It is not difficult to see from the above research review that the current research on dual commitment at home and abroad focuses on the double commitment between trade unions and enterprises. In recent years, although scholars have studied other forms of double commitment, the relevant theoretical systems are still lacking. In addition, most of the research is on the cross-sectional level, and there are few longitudinal studies, which makes the dual commitment research further restricted. There is currently no standard measure for the definition of dual commitment and measurement methods, which will question the accuracy of the study. For example, in most dual commitment studies, corporate commitment and union commitment are measured on a same questionnaire, while common methodological differences may affect outcomes and reaction bias may expand the covariation between the two measurements observed indicating the existence of dual commitment.

Human-oriented connotation will be one of the trends in the future of research on dual commitments. Human-oriented research methods involve dual goals and multiple modes of thinking.

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