

Retention of Employees in Ceramic Sanitary Ware Factories in India: Role of Work Life Balance, Career Development and Supervisor Support

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Abstract –The study examines the role of work life balance, career development and supervisor support on organization commitment over employees of unattended, ceramic sanitary ware factories in India. It also verifies the influence of organization commitment on retention and its mediating role. Findings reveal that organization commitment influences retention and all the above factors enhance it. Moreover, organization commitment partially mediates the relationship between proposed factors and retention. It also found that organization's career development provision alone is not enough and need to be modified according to the employer's expectation. Managerial implications and suggestions for future research were discussed.

Keywords – Work life balance; Career development; Supervisor support, Organization commitment; Employee retention.

1. Introduction

In today's ever increasing competition, attracting and retaining good employees have become a challenging task faced by manufacturing organizations. The high cost involved in recruitment and selection and possibilities for organization's prolonged survival have also highlighted the importance of retaining committed employees. Worldwide, employee turnover rates over the next

five years are predicted to rise to 23.4% and the number of global departures in 2018 is expected to be 192 million [8]. Further surveys predicted highest turnover rate of 26% in India [19], placing India in the eye of employee turnover storm [24]. The bulk number of H₁-B visa holders (1,54,726) in the USA, a visa aimed at skilled category in the year 2008 reveals the large number of skilled professionals migration aiming greener pastures [13]. This plight of skilled work-force affects the "make in India" scheme and slows down its success. It also creates turbulence in production and affects manufacturing industry's growth. Further, the demand for skilled work force can create the possibilities of employee's poaching and in the coming years the companies will go to "war for talent" [6].


As highlighted by [8], the best insurance against attrition is not to hope for lack of opportunities outside, but to build strong internal conditions which act like a glue to employees. One of the characteristics of the skilled workers is high level of mobility and they are constantly seeking opportunities for self-development [7]. Many factors influence employees to change their jobs and there is a need to understand what factors are that motivate the retention of the skilled workers. Previous researches indicated that employees' intention quit was associated with lack of commitment [16] where as the intention to quit can be significantly reduced by commitment to organization [32]. Moreover while analysing the effects of the organization commitment, several studies support the idea that organization commitment motivates the intention to stay [37] and that intention to stay is a reliable predictor of actual staying behaviour [17]. Further, there are sufficient evidences in the literature that OC is positively related to retention [16].

Hence it would be argued that OC plays a vital role and if employee's organization commitment level is highly significant, probability of their continuation will be high. Thus researches focus their attention to find out all possible ways to

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motivate employee's attachment towards their working place [23].

The researcher [35] suggested two specific ways to increase employee's commitment, they are (1) increasing the perception of organizational membership (2) demonstrating the employees that they are valued by the organization.

The current human resource practices found that Work life balance (WLB), Career development (CD) and Supervisor support (SS) are the variables most relevant to increase commitment towards organization since these factors demonstrate either organizational care and support for employees or a sense of belonging and a positive feeling of identification.

This paper tries to fill in the gap in the literature by examining the impact of WLB, CD and SS over Organization commitment (OC) among employees of ceramic sanitary ware factories in India, the sector which is unattended, as well as to predict the effects of OC on retention. It also investigates whether OC mediates the effects of these factors on retention.

1.1. Research motivation

Ceramic is a diverse industry and contains several categories of products including sanitary ware. The ceramic industry in India came into existence about a century ago and has matured over time to form an industry base. Over the years, the industry has been modernised through new innovations in product profile, quality and design, to emerge as a modern world-class industry ready to take global competition. The ceramic products are produced both in organized as well as unorganized sector and over the last two decades the technical ceramic segment has recorded an impressive growth. The Indian ceramic industry ranks at 8th position in the world and produces around 2.5% of the global output. The industry provides employment to 5.50 lakhs of people of whom 50000 are directly employed. During 2008, India was the 24th largest trading nation in the world and Asia Pacific holds a significant market share in ceramic sanitary market. Asia –Pacific is thus expected to maintain its dominance in the global market owing to the steady growth in China, India and Thailand. The ceramic sanitary ware market is estimated to be valued around 4.27 billion USD in 2014 and is projected to reach 46 billion USD in 2019 [9],[10].

The quarterly survey in Indian manufacturing industries in 2014, predicted a strong growth in ceramic sector (over 10%) in April-June 2014-15 [15]. Also, increasing population in the developing nations and the increasing standard of living of the people accelerated the growth. Due to this, the

requirement of work force is increased and on the contrary, India suffers highest turnover rate (26%)[19]. Further the 'Swachh Bharat' scheme of the government of India increased the requirements of sanitary ware products, thereby enhancing the need of work force. In addition, the expected investment of nearly \$ 1 trillion for the development of infrastructure in forthcoming years would create a huge demand for labour- totally 14% of employment in the organized sector- and raising turn over in these activities [8]. Moreover, the plight of skilled category of work force in search of greener pastures [13] also makes the situation worse and there is an immediate need to ascertain the factors which would prevent the turnover to the maximum extent in the ceramic sanitary ware industries.

2. Literature review

2.1. Work life balance and organization commitment

One of the measures of enhancing organization commitment highlighted by several studies is the work schedule flexibility which demonstrates organizational care and support for employees. Flexible working practices help staff to strike a balance between paid work and personal life, can lead to improved recruitment and retention, reduction of absenteeism and an improved staff commitment and productivity [22]. On the other hand, the conflict between work and life is likely to lead towards depression and exhibit lesser commitment towards their organization. Flexible work schedules are likely to reduce role conflicts and personal stress, enhance work attitudes [20] and have positive effects on job satisfaction. This leads to employee's perception of organization care on them and employees will reciprocate in terms of organization commitment. Usage of work life benefits can reduce conflicts between family and work which improves attachments towards organization. Work life programmes have the potential to significantly improve employee morale, reduce absenteeism, and retain organizational knowledge, particularly during difficult economic times. Also, the work life programmes offer a win-win situation for employers and employees [21]. Availability of two common work life balances, dependent care assistance and flexible schedules, increases the perception of organization support and consequently influences organization attachment [1]. Provision of work-life benefits including flexible policies is positively related to employee's commitment [12],[22]. Thus organization which provides employee friendly work schedules and policies creates a good sense of trust

among employees that the organization cares for them and this will become a major factor having considerable effect on employee's commitment towards the organization. Hence we propose the hypothesis as follows:

H₁– work life balance will be positively related to organization commitment.

2.2. Career development and organization commitment

When opportunities for skill development are readily available in an organization, employees will perceive that the organization is committed to their personal development; such positive perception improves their commitment towards their organization [14]. The availability of career plans for development binds employees into a psychological contract with the organization and make them committed to their organization [30]. The opportunities for learning which lead to growth also had positive relationship on organization commitment [27]. Numerous researches supported the availability of opportunities to grow in the career are important for developing organization commitment of employees. [12],[14]. From the above literature, it is ascertained that CD is an important variable related to organization commitment. Therefore the proposed hypothesis is:

H₂ career development will be positively related to organization commitment.

2.3. SS and organization commitment

Monitoring workloads and supervisor subordinate relationship by management may not only reduce stress but also increase job satisfaction and commitment to organization [16]. Trust in supervisor has an important role to play in promoting organization commitment [33]. Employees who perceived high support from supervisor expressed stronger feelings of affiliation and loyalty to the organization as perceived support related to supervisors evaluation, the relationship with supervisor plays an important role between employee and organization [14]. Further support from supervisor has a positive effect on organization commitment of employees [12], [16].

The above literature reveals that SS is the most closely related variable to the organization commitment of employees. Therefore the proposed hypothesis is:

H₃- SS will be positively related to OC.

2.4. Organization commitment and Retention

According to [25] Organization commitment is a multidimensional concept embracing an employee's desire to remain in an organization, willingness to exert on its behalf, and belief in and acceptance of the values and goals of the organization. When an organization seeks to foster a philosophy of commitment, employee's likelihood of seeking other jobs lowered [3]. Several studies conformed that commitment to organization is positively related to retention [16],[26] and lack of commitment influences intention to quit [16]. The above findings gives evidence that organization commitment is an important factor for employee retention and the hypothesis is as follows:

H₄: OC will be positively related to retention.

2.5. Mediating role by organization commitment

Simultaneous effects on retention of employees by various factors and OC have been done by many researchers. According to study [14], since supervisors are considered to be representatives of organization, perceived supervisor support leads to perceived organization support and likely to increase organization commitment and thereby reduce switching over, because individuals tend to respond positively to management's support. Several studies have found that OC mediates the relationship between antecedents of OC with employee retention [32]. Given that proposed factors are related to OC and OC related to retention, it is possible that OC mediates the relationship between proposed factors and retention. Hence the last hypothesis is as follows

H₅: OC will mediate the relationship between proposed factors and retention.

3. Methodology

3.1. Sample and procedures

The participants of the survey were employees of ceramic sanitary ware factories in India. Given the difficulty to obtain permission to distribute questionnaire from authorities, the researchers managed the distribution to five ceramic sanitary ware factories, located in different places, each of them having more than 150 employees after giving assurance of anonymity. Employees of production, marketing, finance and HR were utilised for this survey.

Each factory was provided 120-130 questionnaire forms with a brief note indicating the purpose of the research. The distribution and collection of forms were conducted by the researchers themselves with the help of few HR department staffs. Totally 550

questionnaire were distributed to employees and 416 usable questionnaire were received back representing a response rate of 75%, the selection of the respondents was based on the simple random sampling. Around 81% of the respondents were of 25-45 age group and 73% of them possess post graduate and professional qualification while 57% of the respondents falls under 5-15 years of experience. Regarding designation, middle level managers were dominating in the industry and majority of them belong to production department.

3.2. Measurement

The independent variables proposed in the study are WLB, CD and SS and the outcome variables are OC and employee retention. Totally 36 questions exists in the questionnaire besides questions related to personnel details.

Work life balance was measured utilizing 5 items adopted from [4] and [31]. This factor's reliability coefficient ($\alpha=0,766$) exhibits good level of support to the items adopted. Example items are "I am satisfied with the way company policies are put into practice" and "This organization supports and values the integration of employee's work and family lives".

Career development was measured using 7 items adopted from [11] and [12]. The reliability coefficient (α) of the items is 0.740 which is above the acceptance level of 0.700 and provides support to the items. Example items are "There are enough career opportunities for me in this organization" and "An employee's career development is important to this organization"

Supervisor support was measured using 5 questions adopted from [11] and [12]. The reliability coefficient (α) for the items is 0.785 provides good level of consistency. Example items are "My supervisor often lets me know how well he thinks I am performing the job" and "In this organization there is trust between employees and their supervisors".

Organization commitment items were adopted from [25] that consist of 9 items. The reliability coefficient for the items ($\alpha = 0.837$) gives good level of support to the items. Examples items are "for me this is the best of all possible organizations for which to work" and "I find that my values and the organization's values are very similar".

Finally, employee retention was measured using 10 items adopted from [28] and [38]. The reliability coefficient for the items is 0.902 which gives good level of support to the items. Example items are "I like the way my firm does the business and what it stands for" and "Enjoying my job". Respondents were asked to respond the questionnaire on a likert-

scale range from 1- 5, 1 = strongly disagree and 5 = strongly agree. Statistical package for the social sciences (SPSS) has been employed for analysing the data's collected.

Responses to the 36 items measuring independent variables were submitted to a principal component factor analysis. Kaiser-meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling was 0.92, which is more than 0.60 [5] indicates sufficient inter correlations and Bartlett's test of sphericity was significant ($X^2 =7744$, $p < 0.01$).

Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) provides five factor solutions. The total extracted variance is 61% inter correlations ranged from 0.13 to 0.60. Also, EFA for all the factors has been done individually and extracted variances are 51,55 ,63,60 and 61 for work life balance, career development, supervisor support, organization commitment and employee retention respectively.

To verify common method bias, Harman's one factor test was conducted using EFA. We examined the unrotated factor solution consisting of all 36 items of five proposed variables (work life balance, career development and supervisor support, organization commitment and employee retention) rated by the respondents and found that no single factor accounted for the majority of the variance $35 < 50$ [34]. Hence common method bias was not a concern in this study.

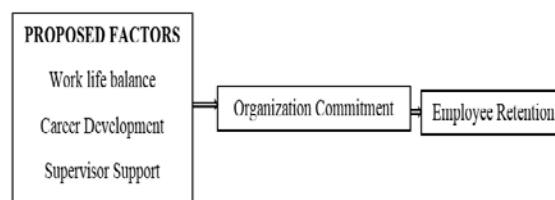


Figure 1. Proposed theoretical framework

Figure 1. illustrates that the model used for the present study was created based on the literature reviews.

4. Results

Table 1. represents mean standard deviation, Cronbach's alpha and correlation matrix of the proposed factors. The alpha coefficient varies from 0.766 to 0.902 and concurs with minimum acceptable value of 0.700 [29]. There is correlation among all the variables and ranges from 0.528 to 0.747. Further, all the proposed factors are significantly related to OC and retention.

To determine the relationship between proposed factors and OC, all the factors regressed simultaneously and the results are tabulated in Table 2. As shown in Table 2., the proposed factors

exhibits significant amount of variance in OC ($R^2 = 0.637, p=0.000$). The proposed factors WLB, CD and SS were significant predictors of OC and provides support to the hypothesis H_1, H_2, H_3 . The strongest predictor is CD ($\beta = 0.360$) and the weakest is SS ($\beta = 0.259$).

The regression analysis (Table 3.) shows that OC had significant variance ($R^2 = 0.411, p = 0.000$) in retention and positively related with it, hence provides support to the hypothesis H_4 .

To determine the relationship between proposed factors and employee retention, all the factors regressed simultaneously and the proposed factors exhibit significant amount of variance in employee retention ($p = 0.000, R^2 = 0.565$). Of the three factors, WLB ($p = 0.000$) and SS ($p = 0.000$) are significant predictors of employee retention and the only insignificant predictor of retention is career Development ($p = 0.105$).

To determine the mediating effect of OC on the relationship between proposed factors and employee retention, hierarchical regression analysis was performed and displayed in Table 4. According to [5], to establish mediation, the following conditions must hold: 1. the independent variables (proposed factors) must be related to the mediator (OC) 2.

The mediator (OC) must be related to dependent variable (employee retention) 3. Both independent variables (proposed factors) and mediator (OC) must be correlated with dependent variable (employee retention). If the significant relationship between independent variables (proposed variables) and dependent variable is reduced to non-significant after introducing mediator (OC), then it is considered full mediation. However, if the effect size of the independent variable is reduced after inclusion of mediator then it is considered to be partial mediator. From Table 4., it is found that significant relationship derived for the two factors, WLB and SS (model A) is not changed to non-significant but the effect size is reduced WLB ($p = 0.000, \beta = 0.219$), SS ($p = 0.000, \beta = 0.453$) after inclusion of mediator variable OC (model B) indicates that OC has partial mediation effects.

Additional [36] tests were carried out to examine the mediating effect of OC on the relationship between the two factors WLB and SS with employee retention. The results support the mediation. (WLB, $Z = 7.86, p < 0.01$; SS, $Z = 6.88, p < 0.01$). To reinforce the evidence of mediating effect of OC, Aroian test [2] is also conducted and this also supports the mediation

(WLB, $Z = 7.84, p < 0.01$; SS, $Z = 6.86, p < 0.01$). Hence all the statistical tests supported OC as partially mediating the relationship between both WLB and SS with retention. Further significant effect of OC on employee retention is inferred ($\beta = 0.177, p = 0.004$) and provides partial support to the hypothesis H_5

Table 1. Mean, standard deviation and Cronbach's alpha & correlation of proposed factors

Factors	Mean	Cronbach's alpha	Standard Deviation	1	2	3	4	5
1. Work life balance	21.46	0.766	2.097	1.00				
2. Career Development	30.16	0.783	2.674	0.755**	1.00			
3. Supervisor Support	21.37	0.785	2.260	0.528**	0.649**	1.00		
4. Organization Commitment	38.67	0.837	3.609	0.700**	0.747**	0.646**	1.00	
5. Employee Retention	41.80	0.902	4.482	0.618**	0.618**	0.700**	0.643**	1.00

** $p < 0.01$

Table 2. Multilinear regression analysis of organization commitment on proposed factors [$n = 416$]

Factors	p	Standardized Beta	t	R	Adjusted R^2	F
Work life balance (WLB)	0.000**	0.291	6.445	0.800	0.637	244.066**
Career Development (CD)	0.000**	0.360	7.136			
Supervisor Support (SS)	0.000**	0.259	6.643			

** $p < 0.01$

Table 3. Regression Analysis of OC on Employee retention [n = 416]

Factors	p	Standardized Beta	t	R	Adjusted R ²	F
Organization Commitment	0.000**	0.643	17.062	0.643	0.411	291.126**

** p < 0.01

Table 4: Summary of hierarchical multiple regression analysis of employee retention on proposed factors [n = 416]

Model no	Factors	p	Standardized Beta	t	r	Adjusted R ²	f
A	Work life balance	0.000**	0.274	5.472	0.754	0.565	180.611
	Career development	0.105	0.090	1.625			
	Supervisor support	0.000**	0.499	11.693			
B	Work life balance	0.000**	0.219	4.354	0.761	0.575	141.474
	Career development	0.650	0.026	0.814			
	Supervisor support	0.000**	0.453	10.043			
	Organization commitment	0.004**	0.177	2.886			

*p < 0.05, **p < 0.01

5. Discussions

The purpose of this study was to check the impact of WLB, CD and SS over OC among employees of ceramic sanitary ware factories in India as well as to verify the effects of OC on retention. Further, it also investigates whether organization commitment mediates the effects of the above factors on retention.

The Multilinear regression proposing OC as dependent variable and the proposed factors as independent variables show that all the three factors are positively related to employee’s organization commitment.

Employees are influenced by career turbulence and volatile business environments and this will have reasonable impact on the factors influencing OC.

The result of the study indicates that proposed factors explained 63.7% of variance in OC. This signifies that all the proposed factors are influential and crucial and need to be given top priority. This variance 63.7% also indicates that OC is very essential as commitment leads to better performance of employees [3],[26] and their positive attitudes towards their organization is helpful to achieve the targets.

The findings that indicate CD as the strongest predictor of OC coincides with earlier findings of [12],[14]. It is obvious that every employee wants improvement in his career and the availability of opportunities for CD would be regarded by the employees such as that the organization values them and cares for the personal development and this will reflect in their attachment towards the organization. This highlights that the organizational support for CD is highly important for enhancing OC.

The next predominant factor positively related to OC is WLB and this coincides with previous findings of [12],[27]. Employees feel organization’s supportive WLB culture and friendly policies like flexible work timings are much needful for their successful handing of their life and to reduce work family conflicts. Workers who enjoy such facilities feel gratified and it will be reflected in terms of OC. This highlights the importance of organizational support towards WLB to achieve OC.

Support of the supervisor also emerged as a predominant factor positively related to OC and concurs with the previous findings [12],[16]. The support of supervisor effect employee’s emotional satisfaction with the job and also contributes to the appraisal of how the organization values them and takes care of them. Good relationship enhances the job satisfaction and increases organization’s care and this will be reciprocated by the employees in the form of OC. Also, employee’s perception of fair and equitable feedback and support from supervisors, provide a chance to make difference in job, exercise discretion and receive feedback on their performance. This increases their motivation level and general job satisfaction, thereby results in increased attachments towards organization. This emphasises the importance of organization’s support for good relationship between the supervisor and the subordinates to achieve OC.

In summary, HR managers need to extent their support to the factors WLB, CD and SS to improve employee’s commitment towards the organization.

Secondly, this analysis provides evidence that OC is positively related to employee’s retention and this result coincides with earlier findings [16],[26]. This indicates the need to increase employee’s OC for successful retention and this will provide guidelines

to the HR managers struggling in the turn over prone Indian environment.

Thirdly, MLR outcomes indicated that WLB and SS are significantly related to employee's retention and WLB emerged as the strongest predictor which coincides with previous findings [21], [22]. The next variable positively related to retention is SS which coincides with earlier finding [16]. The only variable which is insignificant predictor of retention is CD.

Able employees presume themselves that they are more marketable and their expectations are also high. The absence of an expected career benefit does dampen their desire to remain with the organization.

As explained earlier, higher growth of ceramic industry provides better career prospects for able employees and considerable number of respondents also possessing higher qualification (73%). This leads to their mobilization towards better opportunities which could be a possible reason for the findings. Another possible explanation for this finding is the tendency of Indian skilled work force to leave the country and work abroad [13].

One more possible explanation for the findings is the mismatching of organization's career development plans with employee's career plans. Finally, OC partially mediates the relationship of both WLB and SS with employee retention. In other way, WLB and SS are getting indirect effects on retention also through mediator variable, the OC.

6. Implications

At the practical level this research provides some recommendation for HR managers to reduce the likelihood of employees leaving the company. This provides the information about what to do to increase OC which is crucial for better performance and retention. This research indicates that organizational support for WLB, CD and SS, which increases OC, is essential.

Hence, HR managers should give more importance to the above factors in order to improve the understanding and good relationship with their employees. Since continuation of employees relies on the good relationship between organization and employees, managers need to interact with employees at regular intervals and demonstrate them that organization cares for their well-being, besides formulating the needed strategy giving importance to the above factors.

Based on the results which give evidence that career development is not helpful for retaining employees, managers are suggested to implement suitable strategies that can boost OC of the employees and also modify career development facilities according to the expectation of employees. Involvement of all organizational members and

assurance to the employees that there will not be any professional repercussion on the usage of such concessions and clear communication provides optimal efficiency in retention.

7. Limitations and future study

Like other studies this analysis also has some limitations. One of the primary limitations of this survey methodology is that the results depend upon the assumption that respondent of the organization know about their organization [18]. Requirement and demands of employees differ due to their culture, economy and region. This study was conducted in a particular country and also in a particular sector of manufacturing industry and hence the results cannot be generalized. One more limitation is that the analysis had been done on the basis of reports given by the respondents and there is the possibility for some bias towards their organization. Future research is suggested incorporating the other variables directly linked to the OC, for instance variables reinforcing the perception of organizational membership like socialism tactics, the organization emblem may be tried. Further, other variables like autonomy at work, job security, succession planning can also be tried and the effects of these variables over OC may be compared with these study findings. More specific results can be arrived by conducting researches in other manufacturing industries and also in different countries.

8. Conclusion

Although retention of employees has become hot topic in this career turbulent era, practically there is no empirical research carried out in the fast growing ceramic sector. This research fills the gap in the literature. The findings provide evidence that employee's commitment towards their organization increases their likelihood of continuation in ceramic sanitary ware industries in India. The study also illustrates that work life balance and career development and supervisor support are the influencing determinants highly relevant in predicting employee's organization commitment, in the most turn over prone Indian environment. The result also reveals that organization provisions for career development alone are not sufficient enough to retain them and this facilities need to be modified according to the expectation of the employees. Additionally, the result of the study gives evidence that organization commitment partially mediates the relationship between proposed factors and employee retention.

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