

Organisational commitment and turnover intentions: evidence from Nigerian paramilitary organisation

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Keywords

Organisational commitment, affective commitment, continuance, commitment, normative commitment, turnover intentions, and paramilitary organisation.

Abstract

This study explores the empirical link between different dimensions of organizational commitment and turnover intentions on Nigeria paramilitary organisation. A literature review of organizational commitment and employee turnover provides the basis for the research hypotheses. Four research hypotheses were formulated and tested at 95% and 99% confidence level. The study adopted a survey research design. A self-administered questionnaire was used, involving 144 respondents from selected paramilitary organisation in Akure, Nigeria to collect data and testing the existing theory. Data collected were analysed using both descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. In contrary to theory, the study revealed a weak positive relationship between organizational commitment dimensions (affective, continuance and normative) and turnover intentions. The relationships are statistically significant expect the one between turnover intention and normative commitment which is statistically insignificant. The study concluded that the commitment of an employee to organisational goals, missions, and values is not enough to predict his/her stay in the organisation. There are other variables apart from organisational commitment that are predictor of employees' intentions to quit. Thus, organisations should look beyond forces in their internal environment, when considering reduction in employee's turnover intentions and the actual employee's turnover.

1. Introduction

It is widely acknowledged that, identifying and dealing with antecedents of turnover intentions is an effective way of reducing actual turnover. One of the antecedent factors of turnover and turnover intentions is believed to be organisational commitment (Tumwesigye, 2010). The concept of employee's commitment has received increased attention in the past. According to Steers (1977), research literature is paying increasing attention to the concept of commitment as managers and organisational analysts are continually seeking ways of increasing employees' retention and performance. Interest in organisational commitment has therefore been stimulated largely because evidence in the research literature has it that, commitment reduces turnover and increases performance (Angel & Perry, 1981). In this 21st century, the success of any organisation be it formal or informal; relies on the ability to manage the organisation's talent and human capital that are committed to reaching the goal.

Organizations whose members were strongly committed would have both high participation and high production (Angle & Perry, 1981). Such organizations will therefore expect to show relatively low levels of absenteeism, tardiness, voluntary turnover, and high levels of operating efficiency. Committed employees on the other hand are more likely to remain with the organization, exert extra effort on behalf of the organization, and put forth effort toward attaining organizational goals (Mowday, Steers, & Porter, 1979).

The primary responsibility of security agents is to defend the territory and protect the lives and properties of both citizens and non citizens within a country. However, the persistent

operation of insurgents in the Nigeria's territory in the past three years in spite of the presence of the Nigeria security forces has become worrisome. Faloye, *et al* (2013) observed that the Nigeria's sovereignty is being threatened by the activities of various insurgencies. According to them, the activities of these insurgencies have endangered the work of security agents in the country generally and particularly the Nigeria Military and Police. These security agents are the primary target of these insurgents. The Nigeria security agents have exposed to both physical and mental stress, frustration, and emotional challenges by these insurgencies.

The ability of the security agents to curtail or checkmate the insurgents is in doubt with the country's acceptance of the foreign request to assist in winning the war against insurgency and the recent trial of some military personnel for mutiny. Series of attacks and harassment have been carrying out by these insurgents in the northern part of Nigeria without much resistance from the security forces. For instance, military barracks and police stations were invaded by the insurgents. Besides, over two hundred (200) secondary school girls in the northeast Nigeria have been abducted by the insurgents. This has received global condemnation and has led to series of protests tagged "#Bring Back Our Girls" in both home and abroad. Surprisingly, the Nigeria security agents who claimed to have information on the locations of these abducted girls are yet to locate them talk less of rescue them for over six months now.

Despite abundance of evidence that commitment reduces turnover and enhances performance (Bothma & Roodt, 2013; Du Plooy & Roodt, 2010; Byrne, 2005; Jaros, 1997; Jaros, Jermier, Koehler & Sincich, 1993), the relationship that co-exist between organisational commitment dimensions and turnover intentions in developing countries particularly, Nigeria has not been sufficiently focused. Therefore, the level of commitment and intentions to quit jobs by the Nigeria security agents in this era of insurgency need to be explored, hence, this study. The remaining part of the paper is structured thus. First, the literature on organisational commitment and turnover intentions is reviewed and hypotheses are formulated. Next, the research methodology employed to carry out the empirical work is discussed. More so, the analysis is also presented and discussed, followed by the implications these hold for practice and policymaking.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Dimension of Organisational Commitment

According to Mowday *et al*, (1982) "commitment" has been used to describe such diverse phenomena as the relative strength of an individual's identification with and involvement in a particular organization. Also, Brickman (1987) attempted to define the concept of organizational commitment as 'a force that stabilizes individual under circumstances where the individual would otherwise be tempted to change that behaviour'. Another laudable definition is given by O' Reilly and Chatman, (1986), the duo defined the concept of organizational commitment as "the psychological attachment felt by the person for the organization; it will reflect the degree to which the individual internalizes or adopts characteristics or perspectives of the organization".

Two popular studies have been advance in literature as regards to the classification of organizational commitment. These are O'Reilly and Chatman (1986) and Meyer and Allen's three component model (1991). O'Reilly and Chatman (1986) as discussed in Meyer and Hercovitch (2001) developed their multidimensional framework based on the assumption that commitment represents an attitude toward the organization, and that there are various mechanisms through which attitudes can develop. Based on Kelman's (1958) work on attitude and behavioural change, O'Reilly and Chatman argued that commitment takes on three forms namely compliance, identification, and internalization. According to them, compliance occurs when attitudes and corresponding behaviours are adopted in order to gain specific rewards.

Identification occurs when an individual accepts influence to establish or maintain a satisfying relationship. While internalization occurs when influence is accepted because the attitudes and behaviours one is being encouraged to adopt are congruent with existing values. O'Reilly and Chatman (1986) also stressed out that, employee's psychological attachments can reflect varying combinations of these three psychological foundations.

However, further studies indicated difficulty in distinguishing between identification and internalization (O'Reilly *et al.*, 1991; Vandenberg *et al.*, 1994). The measure tended to correlate highly with one another and showed similar patterns of correlation with measures of other variables. O'Reilly and Chatman then decided to combine these two namely; identification and internalization, and called it normative commitment. Compliance is clearly distinguishable from identification and internalization. It differs not only in terms of the basis for acceptance of influence, but also in its relation to turnover. O'Reilly and Chatman (1986) found compliance to correlate positively, rather than negatively with turnover.

The biggest contribution to the organizational commitment literature was made by Meyer and Allen (Allen and Meyer, 1990; Meyer and Allen, 1984, 1991), with over fifteen studies published from 1984. The duo developed their three component model from an identification of common themes in the conceptualization of commitment from existing literature. Common to all conceptualization they argued, was the belief that commitment binds an individual to an organization and thereby reduces the likelihood of turnover. The key difference is in the mindsets presumed to characterize the commitment. The mindsets reflected three distinguishable themes: (i) Affective attachment to the organization, labeled affective commitment. (ii) Perceived cost of living, labeled continuance commitment. (iii) Obligation to remain at the organization, labeled normative commitment.

Some disagreements exist about whether affective and normative commitments are truly distinguishable or it is continuance commitment is a unidimensional construct. Dunham *et al.*, (1994) using confirmatory factor analyses, demonstrated that there is high correlation between affective and normative commitment. The dimensionality of continuance commitment is mixed up with some studies (Dunham *et al.*, 1994; Ko *et al.*, 1997) reporting evidence of unidimensionality and others finding evidence for the two separate distinct factors, one reflecting perceived sacrifices associated with leaving, and the other a recognition of the lack of alternative employment opportunities (McGee and Ford, 1987). Meyer and Allen (1991) argued that Affective, Continuance and Normative commitment are component of organizational commitment, rather than types, because the employee-employer relationship reflects varying degrees of all three. The multidimensional framework, or conceptualization, does not seem to be incompatible. Meyer and Allen's three component model of commitment has undergone the most extensive empirical evaluation to date hence it was adopted in this study.

2.2 Turnover Intentions

Turnover intention is a measurement of whether organization's employees plan to leave their positions or the organization plans to remove employees from their positions. Turnover intention can either be voluntary or involuntary. Voluntary turnover is a situation whereby an employee chooses to leave the organisation of his own volition, either to escape negative experiences in the working environment or to pursue better opportunities that are more rewarding, in terms of career growth or financially (Tumwesigye, 2010). The cost associated with employee turnover to an organisation has been split into direct and indirect costs. Direct costs include the recruitment and selection costs and costs associated with training of new staff while indirect costs of turnover include reduction in morale among remaining staff, work overload, and loss of social capital (Staw, 1980; Dess and Shaw, 2001)

Literature shows that employee retention in organisations is a pressing people issue thus, many authors (Bothma and Roodt, 2013, 2012; Du Plooy and Roodt, 2010; Greyling and Stanz, 2010; Griffeth, Horn, and Gaertner, 2000; Kotzé and Roodt, 2005) have written extensively on it. Employee turnover has a significant subject for many researchers and academics because of its negative results as turnover (Cotton & Tuttle, 1986; Mowday *et al.*, 1982). Unlike actual turnover, turnover intent is not explicit. Intentions are a statement about a specific behavior of interest (Berndt, 1981). Bester (2012) observed that turnover intention is seldom precisely defined in reported studies. According to him, this practice is probably attributable to the assumption that people perceive the term to be self-explanatory. Many researchers (Horn, Griffeth & Salario, 1984; Mobley, 1982; Mowday, Steers, & Porter, 1979; Steers, 1977) cited in (Bothma and Roodt, 2013) viewed turnover intention as the final step in the decision-making process before a person actually leaves a workplace.

Turnover intent is defined as the reflection of “the probability that an individual will change his or her job within a certain time period” (Sousa-Poza and Henneberger, 2002; Sousa-Poza, 2007) and is an immediate precursor to actual turnover. Also Lacity, Lyer and Rudramuniyaiah (2008) defined turnover intention as ‘... the extent to which an employee plans to leave the organisation’. The relationship between turnover intent and actual turnover has been widely examined in literature (for example, Mobley, 1977; Hom and Griffeth, 1991). Actual turnover and turnover intention have been measured separately; however, actual turnover is expected to increase as the intention increases. The results of the different studies (Byrne, 2005; Hendrix, Robbins, Miller & Summers, 1998; Steensma, Van Breukelen & Sturm, 2004) provide support for the high significance of turnover intention in investigating the individual’s turnover behavior. Turnover intention captures the individual’s perception and evaluation of job alternatives (Mobley *et al.*, 1979). It has been argued by several scholars (Jaros *et al.*, 1993; Muliawan *et al.*, 2009; Tett & Meyer, 1993) that turnover intention can be used as a valid proxy for actual labour turnover in general.

2.3 Organisational Commitment and Turnover Intentions

Many research conducted in developed and developing countries have established a significant association between organisational commitment and turnover intention (Ferris and Aranya, 1983; Hom, Katerberg, and Hulin, 1979; Mowday, Steers, and Porter, 1979; Steers 1977; Stumpf and Hartman, 1984; Wiener and Vardi, 1980). Research has indicated that, there is a significant relationship between organisational commitment and turnover. For instance, Ferris and Aranya, (1983) research suggested a significant positive correlation between intent to leave and job commitment, with commitment falling as employees decided to leave. The relationship between organisational commitment and turnover is affected by several cognition and behavioural intents, such such as thoughts of quitting and intent to search for alternative employment (Tett and Meyer, 1993). According to Tett and Meyer (1993) various aspects of the work environment may instigate withdrawal cognitions (i.e., thoughts of leaving, intent to search, intent to quit) and decision processes that may be linked to the employee’s likelihood of turnover.

The conceptualization that each component of organization commitment influences the employee’s turnover intentions is a theoretical premise that unites the three-component of organizational commitment. Empirically, researchers, such as Whitener and Walz (1993) used structural equation modeling to explore the independent relationship between affective and continuance on intention to quit. The finding indicated that, affective had a significant negative impact on intention to quit; however, continuance commitment had no influence. Meyer, Allen and Smith (1993) performed regression analysis using the Allen and Meyer (1990) scales and

revealed that affective commitment had a strong negative effect on intent to leave the organization while normative commitment had a weaker but significant effect. Continuance commitment had no significant effect on intent to leave. Somers' (1995) study collaborated Meyer *et al.* (1989) findings. The point here is that many reviews report consistent negative correlations between affective and normative commitment, however, not for continuance commitment. Most of the correlations are stronger for affective commitment and turnover intention. Also Adenguga *et al.* (2013) indicate that there is a significant relationship between each dimension of organizational commitment and turnover intentions. They find affective commitment to be the most highly correlated with turnover intentions.

In general, empirical results suggest that organizational commitment has statistically significant, and negative relationships with withdrawal intentions, such as intent to quit (e.g., Jaros, 1997). Peters, Bhagat and O'Connor (1981) examined the independent and joint contributions of organizational commitment and job-facet satisfaction made on a person's intention to quit. They reported that organizational commitment had a significant and a relatively strong relationship to employees' intentions to quit.

3. Study Hypotheses

The study tested the following hypotheses:

- H₀: that organisational commitment has no significant relationship with turnover intention of employees in the Nigeria Paramilitary Organisation.
- H₀: that affective commitment has no significant relationship on the turnover intentions among paramilitary employees in Nigeria.
- H₀: that continuance commitment has no significant relationship with turnover intentions among employees in the Nigeria paramilitary.
- H₀: that normative commitment is not significantly related to the turnover intentions among paramilitary employees in Nigeria.

4. Methodology

This study employed survey design and it covered Akure command in Ondo state. Akure command consists of 13 divisions, among these divisions, five were purposively selected namely; division A, division B, Akure Area Commander office (former Police headquarters), Fanibi and the State Police Headquarters. Police stations in Akure command were chosen because all the departments in Nigerian police force are present in each of these stations. Besides, being in state capital, the stations were considered to be always busy and attend to most of the functions performed by the police nationwide. Thus, the study's findings could be generalized for the country's police force.

The study population consisted of the entire police officers in the various departments in the selected police stations. The Departments are A-department (general administration, personnel, discipline, and public relations), B-department (general duties, mobile police, traffic warden, armory, and bomb detecting unit), C-department (salary, store, tailoring unit, works and maintenance), D-department (investigation unit, intelligent unit), E-department (training and development, education), F-department (management services), G-department (computer unit) and medical department. Using stratified random sampling technique, 150 respondents were selected.

Questionnaire on intention to quit employed by Agboola and Jeremiah (2008) was adopted for the study. While Employee commitment was measured by the 15-item Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ), which has demonstrated good psychometric properties and has been used with a wide range of job categories (Mowday, Steers, and Porter,

1979). These questions were measured on a 5 point Likert's scale ranging from Strong agree (5), Agree(4), Neither Agree Nor Disagree(3), Disagree(2) and Strongly Disagree(1).

The questionnaire was administered on the selected respondents, also interviews were conducted and limited to the purposively selected officers such as those in categories of rank and files (constables, corporals and sergeants), inspectors and senior officers (Assistant Superintendent of Police, Deputy Superintendent of Police, Superintendent of Police and Commissioner Superintendent of Police). Both descriptive and inferential statistics were used in analyzing the data collected.

5. Results and Discussion

Demographic Characteristics

The total number of respondents for this research was 144. 59.7% were males and 40.3% were female. The study showed that majority of the selected respondents is in the age bracket of 25-35 years (57%), while only 20.8% claimed to be between 40 years and above. The majority (70.8%) of the respondents is in the position of rank and file. While only 22.9% and 6.3% are in the rank of Inspector and Senior Officer respectively. Among the eight (8) departments, B-Department has the largest number of respondents (43.8%). Only 19.4% and 16.7% are in C-Department and D-Department respectively. Department F and G have the lowest respondents of 1.4%. In terms of educational qualification, it was discovered that 33.3% and 27.8% of the selected police officers were employed with secondary school certificates and National Diploma certificates respectively. 43.8% of the sampled respondents have put 10-14 years into service while 27.1% and 15.3% have 5-9 years and 15 and above years of experience, respectively.

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
I want to leave my current organisation should opportunity arise for me	144	2.44	1.433
Should opportunity present itself for me, I will still want to remain in my profession and organisation	144	3.72	1.233
I feel I am comfortable in my current job and profession	144	3.73	1.264
I have once thought of quitting my job and this profession	144	2.41	1.513
I can't quit my job and this profession	144	3.39	1.312
Valid N	144		

Table 1: Turnover Intentions

Table 1 showed the general feelings and attitude of the selected respondents towards their intentions to quit their job on a 5-point Likert scale. The analysis revealed that majority of

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Affective Commitment (AC)			
I am happy being a member of this organisation	144	3.95	1.124
Enjoying discussing my organisation with people	144	3.56	1.227
I feel like this organisation problems are my own	144	3.21	1.311
I think that I could be attached to another organisation as I am to this one	144	2.84	1.261
I do not feel like 'part of the family' at this organisation	144	2.15	.978
I do not emotionally attached to this organisation	144	2.45	1.211
This organisation has great meaning to me	144	3.47	1.240
I do not feel a Strong sense of belonging to my organisation	144	2.57	1.367
Continuance Commitment (CC)			
I worry about the loss of investment I have made in this organisation	144	2.53	1.295
If I wasn't member of this organisation, I would be sad because my life would be disrupted	144	2.71	1.332
I am loyal to this organisation because I have invested a lot in it, emotionally, socially, and economically	144	3.78	1.061
I often feel anxious about what I have to lose with this organisation	144	2.83	1.252
Sometimes I worry about what might happen to this organisation if I was no longer a member	144	3.08	1.269
I am dedicated to this organisation because I fear what I have to lose	144	3.35	1.260
Normative Commitment (NC)			
I feel that I owe this organisation quite a bit because of what it has done for me	144	3.95	1.105
My organisation deserves my loyalty because of its treatment towards me	144	3.67	1.097
I feel I would be letting my co-worker down if I wasn't a member of this organisation	144	2.76	1.384
I am loyal to this organisation because my values are largely its values	144	3.67	1.051
This organisation has a mission that I believe in and am committed to	144	4.00	.819
I feel it is "morally correct" to dedicate myself to this organisation	144	3.87	.998
Valid N (listwise)	144		

Table 2: Organisational Commitment Dimensions

the respondents has intention to remain in their job. This is shown by the high expressed feelings by the selected respondents for their jobs. For instance, comfortable in current job and still want to remain in the current job have Mean of 3.73 and 3.72 and Standard Deviation of 1.264 and 1.233 respectively. Other high expressed feeling is the desire not to quit present job (Mean = 3.39; SD = 1.312). The desire to leave current organisation and once thought of quitting current job have rates that below average with Mean of 2.44 and 2.41 and Standard Deviation of 1.433 and 1.513 respectively. These analyses show that despite the challenges that Nigeria paramilitary employees are facing, majority of them still have the desire to remain in their jobs.

Table 2 is split into 3 sections namely: affective commitment, continuance commitment, and normative commitment. The analysis in the first section revealed that almost all the selected respondents have affective commitment to their organisation. This is shown by the Mean and the Standard Deviation on a 5-point Likert scale in table 2 above. "I'm happy being a member of this organisation" has the highest rate of 3.95 Mean and 1.124 Standard Deviation. While "I do not feel like 'part of the family' at this organisation" has the lowest Mean and Standard Deviation of 2.15 and 0.978 respectively. The selected respondents' continuance commitment to their organisation is shown in the third section of the table. The rates expressed for continuance commitment were above average but low when compared with the rates expressed for affective commitment. The selected officers believed that emotionally, socially, and economically they have invested a lot in their organisation, thus, they are committed to it (Mean 3.78 and Standard Deviation 1.061). The third section of the table shows the normative commitment. On a 5-point

Likert scale, there were high rates expressed by the respondents for continuance commitment. For instance, “this organisation has a mission that I believe in” and “am committed to this

			OC	AC	CC	NC	TI
OC	Correlation Coefficient		1.000	.718**	.706**	.502**	.221**
	Sig. (2-tailed)			.000	.000	.000	.008
	N		144	144	144	144	144
AC	Correlation Coefficient		.718**	1.000	.266**	.152	.250**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000		.001	.068	.003
	N		144	144	144	144	144
Spearman's rho CC	Correlation Coefficient		.706**	.266**	1.000	.094	.213*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.001		.265	.010
	N		144	144	144	144	144
NC	Correlation Coefficient		.502**	.152	.094	1.000	.108
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.068	.265		.196
	N		144	144	144	144	144
TI	Correlation Coefficient		.221**	.250**	.213*	.108	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.008	.003	.010	.196	
	N		144	144	144	144	144

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

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 3: Correlations of Research Variables

organisation quite a bit” have 4.00 and 3.95 mean and 1.105 and 0.819 standard deviation respectively.

Table 3 revealed the correlation of the research variables. The result obtained indicates that there is a significant relationship between turnover intentions (TI) and organisational commitment (OC) on one hand and turnover intentions and each of the dimension of organizational commitment on other hand. The value of Spearman’s correlation coefficient for TI and OC (0.221) shows a weak positive relationship and the relationship is significant at the 99% level (2-tailed). There is also a very weak relationship between TI and each of the organisational dimensions (AC, CC, and NC). The value of Spearman Coefficient (r) for TI and AC is 0.250, for TI and CC is 0.213, and for TI and NC is 0.108. The relationship between TI and AC and TI and CC are significant at 99% and 95% level of confidence (2-tailed) respectively. However, the relationship between TI and NC is insignificant. These coefficient values are quite near to 0 and show very weak correlation. The interpretation of this is that the employees’ intentions to quit in the selected Nigeria organisation are not best explained by the level of their commitment to the organisation but rather by other unexplained variables that are not captured in the study. Moreso, two out of the three dimensions of organizational commitment namely; affective and continuance commitment, determined the turnover intention of officers in the Nigeria paramilitary organisation. This finding is in line with the result of Adenguga *et al*, (2013), Abdulkadir & Orkun (2009), Yovuz (2010), Ferris and Aranya, (1983).

The first and the second null hypotheses are rejected when the level of significance are seen at 99%, the ρ values (0.008 and 0.003) are less than 0.05 ($\rho < 0.05$). The third hypothesis is also rejected when the significance level is seen at 95% level of significance, here the ρ value is less than 0.05 ($\rho = 0.010 < 0.05$). Since the value of ρ (0.196) is greater than 0.05, thus, the last null hypothesis is accepted which says that the normative commitment is not significantly related to the turnover intentions among paramilitary employees in Nigeria.

6. Conclusion

Attempt is made to explore the relationship between organisational commitment and turnover intentions in Nigeria paramilitary organisation. In contrary to theory, a weak positive relationship is confirmed by the research between organizational commitment dimensions and turnover intentions of an employee. The analysis shows that the more employees are committed to their organisations the more they are intent to quit their jobs, which means that employees will decide to leave as commitment is falling. This shows that, the commitment of an employee to organisational goals, missions, and values is not enough to predict his/her stay in the organisation. There are other variables both within and outside organisations apart from organisational commitment that are predictor of employee intention to quit a job. The implication of this is that, the employees in spite of their commitment to their organizations, they are likely to leave for greener pastures. Hence, organizations particularly, Nigeria organisations and specifically, Nigeria paramilitary organisation should look beyond forces in their internal environment, when considering how to reduce employee's turnover intentions and the actual employee's turnover.

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