Employee Engagement, Job Satisfaction, Organizational Commitment on Productivity of Employees in Higher Education Setting

Dessa Blanca G. Gimeno., Cristine A. Geroy., Nenita I. Prado

Liceo de Cagayan University Cagayan de Oro City, Philippines

ABSTRACT

This study investigated the relationship among employee engagement, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and productivity among teaching and non-teaching personnel at two higher education institutions in Sindangan, Zamboanga del Norte, Philippines. Rooted in Social Exchange Theory, Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, Organizational Commitment Theory, and Human Capital Theory, the study employed a descriptive-correlational methodology, gathering data from participants from both institutions. The findings indicated elevated levels of engagement, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment, with organizational commitment identified as the principal predictor of employee productivity. Regression analysis revealed a substantial positive impact, particularly through affective commitment, while also uncovering negative associations between productivity and continuance commitment, as well as employee recognition. The results suggested that employees motivated by emotional alignment with organizational objectives demonstrated increased productivity, whereas transactional factors such as financial dependence or formal recognition might inadvertently reduce intrinsic motivation. The study emphasized the importance of fostering organizational commitment through supportive leadership, professional development, and equitable workplace policies to enhance institutional performance. Practical recommendations included prioritizing strategies that strengthen employees' emotional connection to organizational goals while addressing potential demotivators linked to transactional workplace dynamics.

Keywords: Employee Engagement, Job Satisfaction, Organizational Commitment, Employee Productivity, Higher Education Institution

INTRODUCTION

Employee productivity in higher education institutions (HEIs) significantly impacts educational quality and institutional success. As the final educational stage before professional careers, HEIs require engaged, satisfied, and committed employees to effectively prepare students for future challenges.

The Philippines currently hosts 1,977 higher education institutions. During the 2024 National Higher Education Day Summit, President Marcos acknowledged improvements in global university rankings while emphasizing that "much work is still to be done" regarding academic performance (Philippine Higher Education, 2024). This need for improvement aligns with Antoni's (2024) observation that college degrees no longer guarantee professional success, highlighting the growing disconnect between higher education and labor market demands.

Enhanced employee productivity directly translates to improved management, teaching, and research outcomes that determine an institution's ability to meet global standards. Recent research demonstrates strong connections between organizational culture, employee engagement, and productivity in educational settings (Reyes, 2023; Thompson et al., 2024). However, a significant research gap exists in understanding how engagement, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment specifically influence productivity within HEIs.

This study investigates these relationships among teaching and non-teaching personnel at Saint Joseph College and Philippine Advent College in Sindangan, Zamboanga del Norte. The research examines: (1) levels of employee engagement, (2) job satisfaction, (3) organizational commitment, (4) employee productivity, (5) relationships between these variables, and (6) which factors most significantly influence employee productivity.

By addressing these questions, this study aims to contribute to higher education management literature and provide practical recommendations for enhancing employee productivity in Philippine higher education institutions.

Framework

The theoretical framework of this study was anchored on four complementary theories that illuminated employee productivity dynamics in higher education institutions. Social Exchange Theory (Homans, 1958) viewed workplace relationships as reciprocal exchanges where individuals sought to maximize rewards, explaining how employee engagement stemmed from organizational support and recognition that provided socio-emotional benefits motivating commitment. Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory distinguished between motivation factors (achievement, recognition) that promoted satisfaction and hygiene factors (working conditions, policies) that prevented dissatisfaction, with research confirming both elements were essential for workplace functioning.

Organizational Commitment Theory examined psychological attachment through three types: affective (emotional attachment), continuance (perceived costs of leaving), and normative commitment (obligation to remain). Research demonstrated that organizational structure significantly impacted commitment (Qatawneh, 2014), while alignment between employee values and organizational culture reduced turnover intention (Pratama et al., 2022). Studies by Bashir and Long (2015) found that co-worker support and training availability positively influenced affective and normative commitment, with supportive environments improving emotional attachment among staff members.

Human Capital Theory posited that workers' skills, education, and health possessed economic value, with research indicating positive performance outcomes from educational investment and employee wellbeing (Widarni & Bawono, 2022). Higher education institutions could increase productivity by investing in professional development opportunities that strengthened organizational commitment (Kryscynski et al., 2020). These four theories provided a comprehensive framework for understanding how employee engagement, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment influenced productivity in higher education institutions, offering insights for developing effective institutional strategies to enhance faculty engagement, satisfaction, and commitment.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study investigated the influence of employee engagement, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment on employee productivity within higher education institutions, specifically at Saint Joseph College and Philippine Advent College in Sindangan, Zamboanga del Norte. The study aimed to assess the levels of these variables among teaching and non-teaching personnel, determine significant relationships between employee productivity and these three factors, and identify which variables, singly or in combination, most significantly influenced employee productivity. Through this investigation, the research contributed valuable insights to higher education management literature and provided practical recommendations for enhancing employee productivity in Philippine higher education institutions, ultimately supporting improved educational quality and institutional performance.

METHODOLOGY

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Research Design

In examining how employee engagement, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment impacted the productivity of employees in a higher education institution, this study utilized a descriptive correlation and causal research design. The descriptive research design was employed to summarize and map the characteristics of the variables involved, providing a comprehensive understanding of each factor within the organization at the time of the study. As Ahire and Hanchate (2022) reiterated, the main aim was to predict the future by analyzing decades of data to provide the best evaluation regarding many real-time aspects, with descriptive analysis serving as the first major step to facilitate better knowledge of data distribution, identify outliers, and classify associated variables. The research also established correlational relationships between the identified variables and employee productivity, enabling the researcher to identify connections that could inform organizational strategies aimed at enhancing employee performance. Additionally, the causal research design explored the direct effects among these variables, allowing determination of how changes in engagement or satisfaction levels influenced productivity outcomes, as Thomas and Zubkov (2023) noted that causal studies focus on analyzing situations to explore and explain relationship patterns between variables.

Research Setting

The study was conducted in Philippine Advent College, Inc. and Saint Joseph College, Inc., the higher education institution situated in Sindangan, Zamboanga del Norte. The diversity between these two institutions, reflecting different religious affiliations, program offerings, institutional histories, and educational philosophies, provided a valuable setting for examining employee engagement, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and productivity within higher education contexts.

Participants of the Study and Sampling Procedure

The participants included both teaching and non-teaching personnel who had been employed for at least five months at these institutions. Using Slovin's formula, a sample size of 161 participants was determined from a population of 271 employees, with 118 from Philippine Advent College and 43 from St. Joseph College. Stratified random sampling was employed to ensure fair representation across all employee types, and participants were recruited with institutional consent through formal invitations containing information about the study's goals, benefits, and confidentiality guarantees, with all participants providing informed consent before participation.

Research Instruments

This study utilizes a structured questionnaire to examine key workplace factors influencing employees. The instrument is divided into four parts, each designed to assess a specific dimension using a Likert scale.

Part 1 is a researcher-developed questionnaire consisting of sixty items that evaluate employee engagement across four dimensions: work involvement, organizational support, personal development, and employee recognition.

Part 2 assesses job satisfaction and is adapted from Minioza et al.'s (2023) study, Assessment of Employees' Job Satisfaction and Retention Strategies of Private Basic Education Institutions. The original sixty items have been modified to align with the study's target population, measuring factors such as work environment, compensation and benefits, work-life balance, and job security.

Part 3 is based on Allen and Meyer et al.'s (1997) study, Commitment in the Workplace, and includes sixty items evaluating organizational commitment across four components: affective commitment, continuance commitment, normative commitment, and loyalty.

Part 4 is a researcher-developed questionnaire comprising fifteen items designed to measure employee productivity.

Each section employs a Likert scale to ensure consistency in data collection and analysis.

Data Gathering Procedure

The data gathering process commenced upon the approval of the research proposal by the panel. Formal request letters were sent to the administrators of identified higher education institutions in Sindangan, Zamboanga del Norte, outlining the study's objectives, methodology, and expected duration. Upon receiving institutional approval, the researcher distributed informed consent forms to eligible participants, ensuring they were fully informed about the study's purpose, voluntary participation, confidentiality measures, and the right to withdraw at any time. Signed consent forms were securely stored, after which the questionnaires were distributed, allowing participants sufficient time to complete them.

The study included full-time and part-time teaching and non-teaching personnel who had been employed for at least five months, ensuring they had adequate exposure to the institutional work environment. Employees with less than five months of tenure or those unwilling to provide informed consent were excluded. The estimated completion time for the questionnaire was 30 to 45 minutes, minimizing participant fatigue while ensuring comprehensive responses. Ethical considerations were strictly observed, with all personal information securely stored in password-protected digital files or locked physical storage, in compliance with data privacy regulations, such as the Data Privacy Act of 2012 in the Philippines.

Participation was entirely voluntary, with no monetary incentives provided. Institutional coordination ensured equal participation opportunities while minimizing disruptions to work operations. The findings were shared through summary reports and presentations to institutional administrators and interested participants in an aggregated format, safeguarding individual confidentiality. Upon completion of data collection, responses were coded, organized, and prepared for statistical analysis, ensuring accuracy and reliability in addressing the study's objectives.

Statistical Treatment and Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics were employed to analyze employee engagement across four dimensions: work involvement, organizational support, personal development, and employee recognition. Means and standard deviations were computed to summarize employee perceptions, with the mean representing the average score and the standard deviation indicating data dispersion (Hurley & Tenny, 2023). A low standard deviation suggested tightly clustered responses, while a high standard deviation indicated greater variability (Omda & Sargent, 2023). Similar statistical techniques were applied to assess job satisfaction, including work environment, compensation and benefits, and work-life balance. As Vetter (2017) noted, descriptive statistics facilitated the computation, organization, and meaningful presentation of research data.

Organizational commitment, measured through affective, continuance, and normative commitment, as well as employee productivity, was analyzed using the same descriptive statistical methods. To explore relationships among these variables, Pearson's correlation analysis was conducted, with coefficients ranging from -1 to +1 to indicate negative, neutral, or positive associations (Lazar et al., 2017). A significance threshold of .05 was applied to determine whether these correlations were statistically meaningful, providing insights into how engagement, satisfaction, and commitment influenced productivity.

To further investigate the impact of these factors, multiple regression analysis was conducted to identify the most significant predictors of employee productivity. This technique controlled for potential confounding variables, allowing for a clearer understanding of how organizational commitment, job satisfaction, and

employee engagement contributed to productivity (Beers, 2024). The findings from these analyses provided valuable guidance for organizations in developing strategies to enhance employee performance and overall workplace effectiveness.

Validity and Reliability

To ensure the validity of the questionnaire, a panel of three experts in the relevant field assessed both face and content validity. Face validity was determined by evaluating whether the items appeared to measure the intended constructs, while content validity ensured the relevance and representativeness of each item within the broader concepts being studied. Based on expert feedback, the questionnaires measuring work involvement, organizational support, employee recognition, work environment, compensation benefits, work-life balance, affective commitment, normative commitment, continuance commitment, and employee productivity received an "Accept" rating, confirming their validity for measuring the intended objectives.

A pilot test involving at least 30 participants, separate from the main study sample, was conducted to identify potential issues with item clarity, format, and structure. This preliminary testing provided insights into the questionnaire's performance, leading to necessary refinements before full-scale implementation. Reliability was assessed using Cronbach's alpha at a significance level of .05 via SPSS, ensuring internal consistency. All variables achieved Cronbach's alpha values above .90, indicating "Excellent" reliability. These results confirmed that the instrument was both valid and reliable for measuring the targeted constructs in the main study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The study's findings revealed high levels of employee engagement, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and productivity among the respondents. Work involvement had the highest mean score (M = 4.40, SD = 0.67), followed by organizational support (M = 4.17, SD = 0.78) and employee recognition (M = 4.13, SD = 0.88), indicating strong engagement. Similarly, job satisfaction was rated high, with work-life balance scoring highest (M = 4.07, SD = 0.85), followed by work environment (M = 3.96, SD = 0.93) and compensation and benefits (M = 3.93, SD = 0.95). Organizational commitment was also high, with normative commitment ranking highest (M = 4.15, SD = 0.81), followed by affective commitment (M = 4.00, SD = 0.84). Employees reported high productivity, particularly in improving work processes and motivation (both M = 4.03, SD = 0.87), though meeting deadlines received the lowest score (M = 3.51, SD = 0.91).

Correlation analysis demonstrated significant relationships between employee productivity and key organizational factors. Work involvement (r = .272), employee engagement (r = .250), and normative commitment (r = .283) had small but significant positive correlations (p < .05), while organizational support (r = .300) and work environment (r = .400) showed moderate positive correlations. Notably, continuance commitment (r = .690) and overall organizational commitment (r = .604) exhibited strong positive correlations with productivity. The overall correlation (r = .778) indicated a robust relationship between productivity and the independent variables, with an R² value of 0.605, signifying that 60.5% of productivity variability was explained by significant predictors.

Regression analysis identified organizational commitment (β = .891) as the strongest predictor of productivity, followed by continuance commitment (β = - .574), work environment (β = .327), employee recognition (β = - .270), and work involvement (β = .214). The probability value of 0.000 (F = 18.39) confirmed a statistically significant relationship between productivity and these predictors. These findings emphasize the importance of fostering organizational commitment and a supportive work environment while recognizing potential negative impacts of transactional factors such as continuance commitment and employee recognition on intrinsic motivation.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the comprehensive analysis of employee engagement, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and productivity in higher education institutions, the following conclusions were drawn:

Employee engagement analysis revealed that employees demonstrated a high level of engagement across all dimensions, with work involvement emerging as the strongest component compared to organizational support and employee recognition. This pattern implies that while employees connect strongly with their direct responsibilities, the organization has strategic opportunities to enhance overall engagement by strengthening support structures and recognition systems while maintaining the existing robust foundation of work involvement.

Regarding job satisfaction, employees demonstrated high levels of job satisfaction across all dimensions, with work-life balance emerging as the most appreciated aspect of their employment experience. This pattern implies that the organization has successfully cultivated policies that promote employee contentment, particularly in balancing professional and personal responsibilities, while maintaining strong performance in traditional satisfaction factors like work environment and compensation.

Organizational commitment assessment revealed high levels of organizational commitment across all dimensions. This pattern implies that employees' connection to the organization is primarily driven by a sense of moral obligation and loyalty rather than purely emotional attachment or practical considerations, suggesting the organization has successfully cultivated an ethical culture that fosters a deeply rooted sense of duty among its workforce.

With regard to productivity, employees demonstrated a high level of productivity. The results implies that the workforce excels in quality and innovation-oriented aspects of productivity more than strict schedule adherence, suggesting that productivity enhancement strategies should balance strengthening time management skills while preserving the existing high orientation toward continuous improvement and intrinsic motivation.

The correlation analysis established significant relationship between employee productivity and the three primary variables examined. This implies that these psychological constructs are important predictors of work performance, with organizational commitment emerging as the strongest predictor of productivity, displaying the most robust correlation highlighting the importance of fostering strong organizational bonds to enhance workplace performance.

Finally, multiple regression analysis determined that employees' productivity was significantly influenced by a combination of five key variables, with overall Organizational Commitment serving as the strongest positive predictor, followed by Work Environment and Work Involvement, while Continuance Commitment and Employee Recognition demonstrated unexpected negative influences when analyzed within the complete model. These findings imply that organizations who don't focus on fostering loyalty and engagement through strong organizational commitment and supportive work environments while reevaluating retention strategies tied to cost-based continuance commitment and refining recognition practices might ineffectively motivate employees without inadvertently hindering productivity.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings and conclusions of this study, the following recommendations are proposed to enhance employee productivity in higher education institutions. These recommendations aim to assist various stakeholders, including policymakers, administrators, and researchers, in developing targeted strategies to address the factors influencing employee productivity effectively.

Policy Makers and Lawmakers. May provides evidence-based guidance for developing educational labor policies that emphasize organizational commitment and supportive work environments while carefully regulating recognition systems.

Community Leaders and Advocates. May offers practical frameworks for advocating institutional practices that enhance productivity through values-based commitment rather than solely financial incentives.

Employees From Various Sectors. Might provide transferable insights about the relationship between commitment types and productivity that can inform career decisions and workplace engagement strategies.

Human Resource Professionals.

May offers actionable approaches for redesigning talent management systems to prioritize organizational mission alignment while reconsidering traditional recognition practices.

Educational Consultants and Trainers. May able to develop targeted interventions addressing specific productivity drivers, particularly emphasizing values-based commitment and work environment enhancement.

Colleges and Universities. May develops dual-focus strategy presents a comprehensive framework for enhancing institutional effectiveness by strengthening commitment while thoughtfully restructuring employee retention approaches.

Teachers and Non-teaching Staff. Might provide pathways to enhanced workplace experiences through values-based commitment development and more meaningful recognition systems.

Students. May enjoy the s result in higher quality educational experiences delivered by more productive and engaged institutional staff.

Future Researchers. May creates opportunities to further explore the unexpected negative relationships between continuance commitment, recognition, and productivity in educational settings.

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