

**PROFESSIONAL INTEREST, JOB SATISFACTION AND STAFF
COMMITMENT OF ETHIOPIAN HIGHER EDUCATION
INSTITUTIONS: EVIDENCE FROM SOME SELECTED
UNIVERSITIES**

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Abstract

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Organizational commitment is determinant of many organization behaviors including, but not limited to, absenteeism, turnover, and job withdrawal intentions. Committed staff will be more productive and more loyal. Professional interest and job satisfaction are believed to have positive effect on organizational commitment. A random sample of four hundred twenty-three academic staff is taken from three Universities to assess the professional interest, job satisfaction and affective commitment of the universities' academic staffs. The result showed the professors are found to have high professional interest and have high intrinsic job satisfaction. However, the academic staffs are found to have very low extrinsic job satisfaction. There is no sufficient evidence if the academic staff has affective commitment. Moreover, intrinsic and extrinsic job satisfaction are found to be predictors of affective organizational commitments. Both intrinsic and extrinsic job satisfaction mediated the effect of professional interest on affective commitment. Hence, it is concluded that academic staffs of Ethiopian higher education Institutions have high professional interest, though they are not satisfied with the maintenance factors.

1. Introduction

Committed staff is the source of competitive advantage for organizations (Jassim&Jaber 1998). Without committed employees, organizations cannot achieve their goals (Angle and Perry, 1981). Organization commitment is formed by interplay of different factors including the organization, the employees and the job employees do in organizations (Steers, 1977).

Ethiopian Higher Education Institutions are undergoing expansions in number of universities, number of programs, and level of study (Saint, 2004; Tessema, 2009). Moreover, there are packages of reform programs aimed at improving graduate ratios through student focused learning, engagement in problem solving researches, and community engagement (Mehari, 2016).

However, Ethiopian universities suffer from staff shortage (Girmaw, 2014; Ashcroft, 2010; and Deuren et. al, 2016) and continuous exodus of academic staffs (Hundera, 2014; Haiku et al., 2013). Among other things there are high staff turnover (Ibrahim, Rahel&Gemechu, 2017; Hailu et. al, 2013), lack of commitment, lack of motivation, and moonlighting among the staff. Most universities are trying to fix these problems by getting their staffs sign binding contracts to serve them for one or two years in return for a year of education opportunity. These types of contracts could keep the staff in the university against their will; but cannot win their heart to be committed and stay with the universities. So, they are like walking wounds; physically present but feel hurt and dreaming to join other institutions. It is more important to make the staff willing to stay with the organization by designing different techniques that positively influence the staff to remain with the universities.

This study tries to assess organizational commitment of university professors and the effects of professional interest and job satisfaction on affective organizational commitment.

2. Theoretical background

2.1. Professional Interest

Education is basic to development of nations that it cannot be left to people without interest in teaching profession (Okon & Archibong 2015). Professional interest was an issue of interest among researchers for long time now. Teachers' professional interest was originally theorized as

a passion (Brophy & Good, 1986; Mastin, 1963); which refers to the individual characters such as the extent of desire, interest and inclination that individuals typically experience in their professional undertakings (Kunter et al., 2008).

Teachers' interest and satisfaction are crucial factors that significantly and positively affect student motivation, learning and achievement (Long & Hoy, 2006). Large numbers of teachers leave the teaching profession in the first three to five years after their first job offer (Scheopner, 2010).

2.2. Job satisfaction

Managers are interested in job satisfaction for quite some time now. Job satisfaction is most widely researched job attitude. There is no generally agreed upon definition for job satisfaction. Job satisfaction is an evaluative statement about one's job or occupation (Saari & Judge 2004). Ivancevich (1976) defined job satisfaction as a positive feeling resulting from evaluation of one's job. It is believed that satisfied workers will be more effective, productive (Moynihan et al. 2000), healthy, less absent, and committed to the organization.

2.3. Organization commitment

Organizational commitment has been an issue of interest for management researchers for decades. Organization commitment is defined differently by different researchers. Steers(1977), defined organizational commitment as the strength of individual's identification with, and involvement in particular organization. Salancik & Pfeffer (1977), on the other hand, defined organizational commitment as adherence to norms, values and expectations to an object.

Allen and Meyer (1987) conceptualized Organizational commitment as a three-dimension construct: affective commitment, normative commitment and continuance commitment. Affective commitment is driven by vision, mission and values of a company. Continuance commitment refers to employees' commitment that driven by side bet theory and detail gain and loss calculation. Normative commitment, on the other hand, refers to employees' commitment to remain with the organization due to social and moral reasons.

3. Methodology

3.1. Research question

The following research questions were addressed in this study:

- What is the level of professional interest of the professors of Ethiopian Higher education institution?
- What is the level of job satisfaction of academic staff of Ethiopian Higher Education intuitions?
- What is the level of affective commitment of academic staff of Ethiopian Higher Education intuitions?
- What is the relationship between professional interest, job satisfaction and affective commitment?
- What is the effect of demographics on professional interest, job satisfaction and affective commitment?

3.2. Research objectives

This study aimed at assessing professional interest, job satisfaction and organizational commitment of the academic staff of Ethiopian Higher education institutions. In specific terms, the objectives of this study include:

- To assess the level of professional interest among the academic staff of the selected higher education institutions
- To assess the level of job satisfaction and affective commitment among the selected higher education institutions
- To assess the relationship between professional interest, job satisfaction and affective commitment among the selected higher education institutions
- To assess if professional interest, job satisfaction and affective commitments of the different demographics are different.
- To examine the effect professional interest and job satisfaction on affective affective commitment.

3.3. Research Hypotheses

The following research hypotheses were tested in this research:

- There is strong professional interest in Ethiopian Higher Education Institutions
- There is high job satisfaction among the academic staffs of EHEIs
- There is high level of affective commitment among the academic staffs of EHEIs
- There is strong correlation among professional interest, job satisfaction and affective commitment
- Job satisfaction mediates the relationship professional interest and affective commitment.

3.4. Methods of data collection

This study adopts explanatory research design and uses ex post facto research design to assess the effects of professional interest, and job satisfaction on affective organization commitments of Ethiopian higher education institution. Primary data is collected from academic staffs of three universities. A random sample of 327 is taken from three selected Universities.

Professional interest is measured using seven items Likert scale type questions ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

Similarly, job satisfaction is operationalized in to intrinsic satisfaction and extrinsic satisfaction using 21 items of questions with Likert scale type where 1 means highly dissatisfied and 5 means highly satisfied originally. Likewise, intrinsic job satisfaction is measure using 9 Likert Scale type questions.

Affective organizational commitment in turn is conceptualized using Allen and Meyer's 8 items (Meyer & Allen, 1997). Likert scale type questions ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) are used.

Different statistical analyses are used to make inference about the academic staff of Ethiopian Higher education institutions. The t-test is used to check if the academic staffs believe that they have high professional interest, if they are satisfied with the various aspects of their job and if they are committed to the universities they are working for. The relationship among the different variables is assessed using correlation analysis and regression analysis is used to see the effect of the professional interest and job satisfaction on organizational commitment. Finally, structural

equation modeling is used to check if job satisfaction mediates the effect of professional interest on organizational commitment.

4. Results

4.1. Descriptive statistics and correlation among the study variables

The means, standard deviations and Pearson's correlation coefficients among the study variables are given in table 1. Table 1 shows that professional interest has a mean of 3.29 and standard deviation of 0.534. Extrinsic satisfaction has a mean of 2.72 and standard deviation of 0.801. Intrinsic satisfaction has a mean of 3.13 and standard deviation of 0.830; and Affective commitment has a mean of 2.99 and standard deviation of 0.596.

The table clearly shows that there is statistically significant relationship among affective commitment and the criterion variables studied. This study is harmony with previous researches. There are contradicting findings about the relationship between professional interest and job satisfaction. Wiggins and Moody (1981) found that there is significant correlation between interest congruence and job satisfaction; while Tranberg, Slane, and Ekeberg (1993) on the contrary argue that there is no significant correlation between professional interest and job satisfaction. Johnston, Parasuraman, Futrell and Black (1990) found that there is a positive relationship between job satisfaction and commitment.

Table 1: means, standard deviation and correlation among the variables

Variable	Mean	Standard deviation	Professional Interest	Extrinsic Job satisfaction	Intrinsic Job satisfaction	Affective commitment
Professional Interest	3.29	0.534	1.00			
Extrinsic Job satisfaction	2.72	0.801	0.221**	1.00		
Intrinsic Job satisfaction	3.13	0.830	0.257**	0.696**	1.00	
Affective commitment	2.99	0.596	0.117**	0.256**	0.261**	1.00

** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$

One sample t-test indicated the academic staff has high professional interest ($t=10.99$; $p=0.000$); and high intrinsic satisfaction ($t = 3.19$; $p\text{-value} = 0.002$). It however, revealed that there is no extrinsic satisfaction ($t= -7.31$; $p\text{-value}= 0.000$). When it comes to affective commitment, there is no sufficient evidence to conclude the presence of it among the academic staff of the studied universities ($t=-0.183$; $p\text{-value}= 0.855$).

4.2. Professional interest

An independent sample t-test indicated that there is no statistically significant difference in professional interest between male and female ($t= -1.68$, $P=0.091$); and between office holders and non-office holders ($t=0.823$, $P\text{-value}=0.407$).

There is statistically significant difference in professional interest of the academic staff among colleges ($F(6, 416) = 3.23$, $p=0.004$). Games-Howell post hoc multiple comparison indicates that there is significant difference in professional interest between academic staffs of natural and computational sciences and Law & governance (Mean difference= 0.23 ; $p\text{-value} = 0.027$); and between technology institute and law & governance (mean difference= 0.45 ; and $p\text{-value}= 0.003$).

There is no statistically significance difference in professional interest among the different marital status ($F=1.82$, $P=0.069$). There is no statistically significant difference in professional interest among the academic ranks ($F(6, 410) = 1.34$, $P=0.239$). There is no statistically significant difference in professional interest among educational qualification ($F(3, 413) = 2.2$, $p=0.088$).

4.3. Job satisfaction

Extrinsic job satisfaction and demographic variable

Different studies have shown that demographics in terms of age, education, tenure, and experience significantly influence job satisfaction. However, in this study an independent sample t-test indicates that there is no statistically significant difference between male and female ($t=0.813$; $p\text{-value}=0.414$); and office holders and non-office holders ($t= 0.585$; $P=0.559$) in their extrinsic job satisfaction. Though this finding is supported by some researchers (Azim et al.

2013; Eren 1999) it is not backed by others (Scott et al. 2005; Gebrekiros Hagos & Abrha 2015) who found relationship between job satisfaction and gender.

There is statistically significant difference in extrinsic job satisfaction among the academic staffs of the different colleges ($F(6,415) = 4.05, p = 0.001$). Tukey's post hoc multiple comparison shows that extrinsic satisfaction of college of business and economics and natural and computation sciences is statistically significantly different ($P\text{-value} = 0.001$); extrinsic satisfaction of the academic staff of Natural and Computational science and law and governance is different ($p\text{-value} = 0.033$). It, however, indicates that there is no difference in extrinsic satisfaction among the remaining pairs.

There is statistically significant difference among the different marital status in terms of extrinsic satisfaction ($F(2,406) = 3.35; p\text{-value} = 0.036$) which is not in harmony with Azim et al. (2013). Tukey's Post hoc multiple comparison indicates that there is statistically significant difference between single and married ($p\text{-value} = 0.032$). There is however, no difference between married and widowed ($p\text{-value} = 0.704$) and between single and widowed ($p\text{-value} = 0.898$).

There is no statistically significant difference in extrinsic job satisfaction among academic ranks ($F(6, 409) = 1.142, P = 0.337$). There is no statistically significant difference in extrinsic job satisfaction among educational qualifications ($F(3, 412) = 2.41; p = 0.067$). This finding is supported by Scott et al. (2005).

Intrinsic job satisfaction and demographic variables

An independent sample t-test indicates that intrinsic job satisfaction is not statistically significantly different for male and female ($t = -0.053; p\text{-value} = 0.958$); and for office holders and non-office holders ($t = 0.333; p\text{-value} = 0.739$).

There is statistically significant difference in intrinsic job satisfaction of the academic staff among the different colleges ($F(6,414) = 4.91, p = 0.000$). Tukey's post hoc multiple comparison indicated that the intrinsic satisfaction is statistically significantly different among the staffs of college of business and economics and natural and computational sciences ($P\text{-value} = 0.011$); between social science & humanities and Natural & computation sciences ($P\text{-value} = 0.000$);

between Social sciences & humanities and Technology institute (P-value=0.046). It showed no significance difference between the remaining colleges.

There is no statistically significant difference in intrinsic satisfaction among the academic staffs with different marital status ($F(2,405) = 1.21$; $p\text{-value} = 0.299$).

There is no statistically significant difference in intrinsic job satisfaction among academic ranks ($F(6, 408) = 0.727$; $P=0.628$). There is statistically significant difference in intrinsic job satisfaction among educational qualifications ($F(3, 411) = 2.40$, $p=0.067$).

4.4. Affective commitment and demographic variables

An independent sample t-test shows that affective commitment does not statistically significantly differ for male and female ($t=0.005$, $p=0.996$), and for office holders and non-office holders ($t = -1.68$, $p\text{-value} = 0.093$).

There is no statistically significant difference among the academic staff of the different colleges in affective commitment ($F(6,416) = 1.34$; $p\text{-value} = 0.239$). Analysis of variance shows no significant difference in affective commitment among the academic staff with different marital status ($F(2,407) = 2.69$; $p\text{-value}=0.069$).

Analysis of variance indicates that there no statistically significant difference in affective commitment among the different academic rank ($F(6, 408) = 0.759$, $P=0.602$). There is no statistically significant difference among the different educational qualifications ($F(3, 413) = 1.04$; $P\text{-value}=0.373$).

4.5. Effect of professional interest and job satisfaction on affective commitment

Table 2 shows that both intrinsic and extrinsic job satisfaction have statistically significant effect on affective commitment. It, however, shows that professional interest has no significant effect on affective commitment. Hence, it important to see the mediation effect of job satisfaction on the relationship between professional interest and affective commitment.

Table 2: Regression coefficients

Variable	B	Significance
Professional interest	0.053	0.329
Intrinsic satisfaction	0.102*	0.033
Extrinsic satisfaction	.0115*	0.019

*P<0.05

4.6. Mediation effect of Extrinsic job satisfaction on the relation between professional interest and Affective commitment

The effect analysis indicated that professional interest has no significant effect on affective commitment ($\beta=0.053$; P-value=0.329). This is unexpected and not in line with the existing theory and literature. Hence, mediation analysis was conducted to see if the effect of professional interest on affective commitment is mediated by extrinsic job satisfaction. As expected, the total effect was found to be significant ($\beta=0.117$; P-value=0.031). But the direct effect of the moderation model is insignificant ($\beta=0.063$; P-value = 0.197). However, the indirect effect of the model is to be statistically significant ($\beta=0.053$; P-value = 0.001). The Extrinsic satisfaction fully mediates the relationship between professional interest and affective commitment.

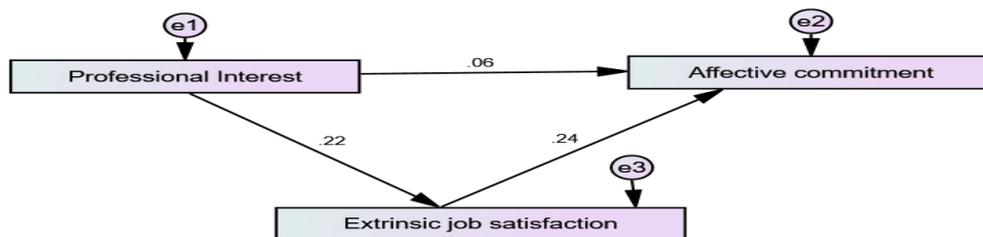


Figure 1: Mediation effect of extrinsic job satisfaction

Table 3: Regression coefficients for the mediation effect of extrinsic job satisfaction on the relationship between Professional interest and affective commitment

	Total effect		Direct effect		Indirect effect		of
	Standardized β	P-value of Standardized β	Standardized β	P-value of Standardized β	Standardized β	P-value of Standardized β	
Professional Interest \rightarrow Extrinsic satisfaction	0.221	0.002	0.221	0.002	0.000	-----	
Extrinsic satisfaction \rightarrow Affective commitment	0.242	0.003	0.242	0.003	0.000	-----	
Professional Interest \rightarrow affective commitment	0.117*	0.031	0.063	0.197	0.053	0.001**	

** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$

4.7. Mediation effect of intrinsic job satisfaction on the relation between professional interest and Affective commitment

Similar analysis was conducted to see if the effect of professional interest on affective commitment is mediated by intrinsic job satisfaction. As expected, the total effect was found to be significant ($\beta=0.117$; $P\text{-value}=0.036$). But the direct effect of the moderation model is insignificant ($\beta=0.054$; $P\text{-value} = 0.259$). However, the indirect effect of the model is found to be statistically significant ($\beta=0.063$; $P\text{-value} = 0.001$). Hence, it can be said that intrinsic satisfaction fully mediates the relationship between professional interest and affective commitment.

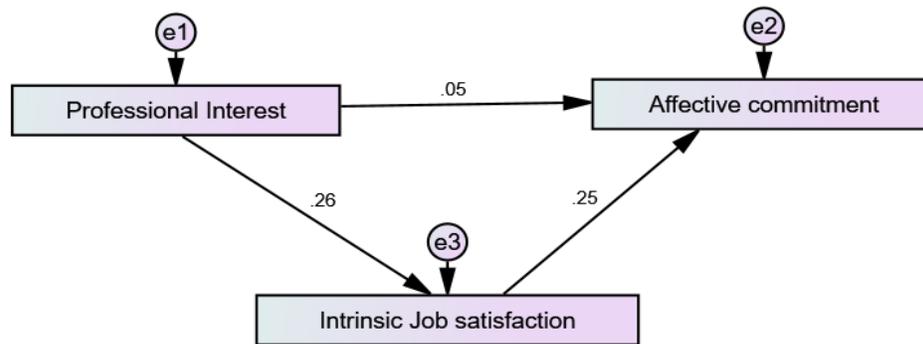


Figure 2: mediation effect of intrinsic job satisfaction

Table 4: Regression coefficients for the mediation effect of extrinsic job satisfaction on the relationship between Professional interest and affective commitment

	Total effect		Direct effect		Indirect effect	
	Standardized β	P-value of Standardized β	Standardized β	P-value of Standardized β	Standardized β	P-value of Standardized β
Professional Interest \rightarrow Extrinsic satisfaction	0.257	0.002	0.257	0.002	0.000	-----
Extrinsic satisfaction \rightarrow Affective commitment	0.247	0.003	0.247	0.003	0.000	-----
Professional Interest \rightarrow affective commitment	0.117*	0.036	0.054	0.259	0.063**	0.001

** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$

5. Conclusion

Staff of Ethiopian Higher education institutions have high professional interest and are highly satisfied with the intrinsic content of the job but they are dissatisfied with the hygienic factors studied. Though teaching is the basis of all other professions, it is not given that status in Ethiopia. There are many problems related to the teaching profession. Universities recruit the top performers of each and every batch but do not pay that much. In most cases they earn less than

what their graduates in other industries earn. There is no attractive working environment, no good relationships with management and no supportive policy as indicated by the survey.

When it comes to commitment, it is clearly indicated that there is no sufficient evidence to conclude that the academic staffs have affective commitment. Hence, there is no strong emotional bond between the universities and the academic staff. Hence, no goal commitment is reported among the academic staffs.

The academic staffs of the different colleges differed in their professional interest, extrinsic job satisfaction, and intrinsic job satisfaction. The academic staffs of the different marital status are different in their extrinsic job satisfaction.

Both intrinsic and extrinsic satisfaction have significant effect on affective organization commitment. Moreover, Professional interest affect affective organizational commitment indirectly through intrinsic and extrinsic job satisfaction. Hence, both extrinsic and intrinsic job satisfaction mediate the relationship between professional interest and affective commitment.

6. Recommendations

The ministry of education and the universities need to make different interventions to improve the professional interests, job satisfaction and organizational commitment of the academic staffs. Teaching profession must a respected, honored, and esteemed profession. To make teaching profession honored profession, government needs to improve the socioeconomic status of the teachers which is deteriorating in today's Ethiopia.

To improve the organizational commitment, the concerned authorities should work on satisfying the academic staffs. Moreover, the universities need to appeal to the hearts of their staff to earn the emotional attachment. They need to let the staff participate in matters that affect them; and show them concern.

Among other things, the management of the universities and the concerned bodies need to work on improving their relationships with the staff, designing attractive benefit packages, work conditions, and supervisions.

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