An Examination on the Professional Commitment of Engineering College Teachers

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Abstract: This study gives a bird's eye view about the professional commitment of teaching staff in self-financing Engineering colleges and expresses the dearth of education in recent trend and various factors responsible for it in the specific area. Analyzing the factors responsible for the dearth of committed staff and quality education under different dependent variable, (career pursuit commitment, multi-dimensional reward commitment, value commitment) the research analysis suggests the following means to bridge the gap. For a teaching staff, professional commitment involves commitment to profession, commitment to colleagues, commitment to students, commitment to employers etc. The study also, shows demographic representation to support the views presented. In simple terms professional commitment means loyalty towards one's profession. One imbibes it when one fulfils his responsibilities towards that concerned profession. It requires acquisition of the special knowledge that characterizes a particular profession and application of that knowledge to achieve certain ends. The university is regulated by certain norms. But all these norms are not adhered to, by many Institutions. To make things right, a common body could be formed consisting of representatives from all Institutions coming under its affiliation. This provides better job security, satisfaction, increases self-esteem and thereby contributes to improve the professional commitment of the staff working in self-financing engineering colleges.

Key words: Dearth, cross market, mender, protege value, adherence, cadre and conducive

INTRODUCTION

Professional Commitment (PC) can be generally defined as a career focus forum of work commitment and as one of the important factors determining people's work behaviour (Jauch *et al.*, 1978; Mowday *et al.*, 1974), PC is a topic attracting much attention from academics and managers. Professional community has characteristics different from an employing organization. A professional community is formed purely around the work itself but work is only a small part of the relationships in an organization and work has different meanings in a professional community and in an organization (Van Manen, 2002). In a professional community, people's assessments of work and career are cast in terms of their getting better at what they do (Blau *et al.*, 1985). Professionals usually see their profession as a permanent career instead of a stepping-stone to another occupation (Goode, 1957). But even working in an organization, professionals are probably oriented to cross organisational labour markets and have relatively short tenures in a particular organization (Salaman, 1974; Van Maanen and Barley, 1984). Also, the employment uncertainty associated with organizational changes, such as mergers, acquisitions, downsizing, restructuring have caused many employees not to take a particular organization as their permanent career. In an organization, the extension of professional activities and interests into non-work (leisure) time is an important matter in a professional community (Salaman, 1974; Van Maanen and Barley, 1984). Continuous commitment develops when an individual makes investments (Beijaad *et al.*, 2004; Bullough, 2005). Tendency to extension of work into leisure (Araya and Ferris, 1984; Mowday *et al.*, 1982).

AN ANALYSIS ON THE THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Commitment to the profession: As a member of this profession, the person is expected to uphold certain ethics and values to fulfil his commitment towards that profession. It is mandatory that he should strive in every way to encourage the physical and psychological development of the students so as to fulfil the society's expectations from the profession. By upholding the

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professional autonomy he should work hard to maintain the honour, dignity and ethics of the teaching profession and to foster unity and harmony. Accordingly, he should constantly endeavour to improve his/her self-development (Parker, 1973) and promote the highest possible image by fostering public understanding. A committed professional should exert every effort to provide a professional service, to raise professional standards and to promotes high quality education.

It is essential to establish and maintain effective channels of communication within the profession to ensure its healthy development. It is unethical to advertise or canvas for the purpose of promoting his/her own advantage or accept gratuities, gifts or favours that might impair professional judgment.

Commitment to students: The primary duty of a teacher is to help each student to the best of his ability to become a worthy and effective member of society. It is his/her personal responsibility to regard the moral, intellectual, physical, social and aesthetic development of the students (McKenzie, 1981). Steps should be taken to improve the learning environment and do his/her best to teach according to each student's personal circumstances and learning ability. In the course of his/her teaching, he shall give all students fair learning opportunities and seek to establish confidence and trust grounded on mutual respect between him/her and his/her students. He or she should not give room for any indifferent attitude and must show consistent justice and fair consideration in his/her relations with students at all times. This helps them understand and identify their own values and build up their self-esteem. Students should be encouraged to think independently and to form their own rational judgments based upon knowledge. A constructive assessment of the students motivates them to perform better and yield better results. He shall endeavour to nurture his/her students a thirst for high standards of accomplishment. It is his or her duty to foster them a sense of democracy and educate them to respect others. They should be promoted to respect other members of the profession and to achieve this end shall avoid unprofessional remarks about professional colleagues. The information about students should not be divulged unless disclosure serves a compelling professional purpose or is required by law. It is unethical to take advantage of his/her professional relationships with students for personal gain.

Commitment to colleagues: A Professional has to treat his/her colleagues with respect, without discrimination and be supportive to his colleagues in performing professional duties and responsibilities. One shall enhance his professional development by his sharing his ideas and information with his/her colleagues and also provide ample opportunities to express their opinions and suggestions. He should be conscientious and thereby promote harmonious relations and avoid misunderstanding between colleagues. As a higher authority in a professional circle one should adhere to the principles of justice and truth, when issuing a reference or testimonial for a colleague. It is unjust to intentionally embarrass or insult a colleague or undermine the student's confidence on him.

Commitment to employers: An employee should be conscious of his or her commitment towards the employer and the personal interest shall not dominate his/her principal duty of rendering service to the best of his ability. This would promote him to actively involve in the improvement of institutional policies (Tinto, 1975; Weidman *et al.*, 1989).

RESEARCH PROBLEM

The convocation address of the vice chancellor of the Anna University, Trichy on 01-04-2007 at Indian Engineering College, Vadakankulam prompted the researchers to do research on this topic. He pointed out the dearth of well qualified and experienced staff members in Engineering Colleges to be the reason for the deterioration in the standard of the engineering colleges. He further said that if a vacancy for a post in a standard engineering college arises, that leads to vacancies in many Engineering Colleges as a chain reaction. The researcher identifies the history of the problems by visiting and gathering materials with regard to the growth and downfall of the institutions. Many institutions are not concerned about the quality of the students. Even if they have got very poor marks, they will be admitted in the engineering colleges. This will reflect on the results of the students and it will spoil the reputation of the institution further the management is not bothered about giving good salary to the staff. As a result the institution will not be able to get well qualified and experienced staff members, which inturn will reflect on the standard of the students and image of the institution. Again, in many of the institutins the attrition rate of the teachers is higher, because they are very keen in moving to reputed institutions where they receive good package. On the other hand, such standard staff remain in an institution for many years and occupy higher position and they will be very keen in not allowing another knowledgeable junior staff who joins in the institution to continue his/her
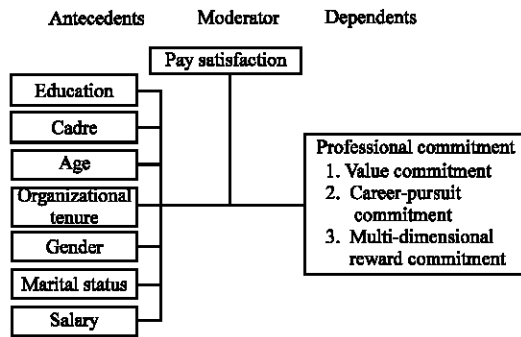
Fig. 1: Framework of study

service. Moreover, his/her full concentration will be in pleasing the management to fulfil his/her personal benefits when such a sub-standard person becomes the head of the department, he will try to recruit staff of such level to keep up his position.

In due course, each and every staff in that particular department will pave less professional commitment, which will have way for spoiling the reputation of the institution.

Best students opt for the most reputed institution because before they join in an institution they look for details with regard to the standard of the institution and the avenues of placement opportunities they get through that college. Also, institutions, which have weak morale will not get the opportunity of appointing dedicated and well experienced staff with high qualification. Hence, majority of the institution's staff members do not have professional commitment. They do not have job satisfaction and they are very keen in using the profession as a stepping stone for their own personal benefit and career advancement.

It is found out that most of the institutions do not adhere to the rules and regulations stipulated by Anna University. The norms of Anna University are given here for easy reference.

Background: Anna University was founded as a unitary type of University under the Anna University Act, 1978. This Act was amended in the year 2001 under the Anna University (Amendment) Act, 2001 converting the Anna University into an affiliating type of University in the State of Tamil Nadu, with jurisdiction over the entire State of Tamil Nadu, excluding the area under Annamalai Nagar.

Research frame work: The Fig. 1 shows the framework of the research by means of relating the antecedents, the moderator with the dependent variable in which the job security, satisfaction and professional commitment can be attained.

Hypothesis development

Demographic relationships with professional commitment

Hypotheses 1.1: A higher education level shows the stronger professional commitment.

Hypotheses 1.2: Pay satisfaction influences the relationship between education levels and professional commitment.

Hypotheses 2.1: A higher position displays stronger professional commitment.

Hypotheses 2.2: Pay satisfaction influences the relationship between hierarchical levels and professional commitment.

Hypotheses 3.1: Married individuals tend to demonstrate greater professional commitment.

Hypotheses 3.2: Pay satisfaction influences the relationship between marital status and professional commitment.

Hypotheses 4.1: The more income an individual receives the higher is his/her professional commitment.

Hypotheses 4.2: Pay satisfaction influences the relationship between salary level and professional commitment.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

- Type of research: Descriptive study
- Samples size: 150
- Population size: 881
- Sample proposition: 17.03%
- Number of units: 13
- Data sources: Primary data and secondary data
- Study area: Kanyakumari district, Zone X of Anna University Tirunelveli
- Sample design: Judgment proportional random sampling
- Statistical tools: Karl Pearson, correlation, multiple correlation, One Way Anova, charts, factor analysis
- Study period: April 2007 to March 2008
- Scaling technique: Likert's 5 point attitude scaling

This study designed the following items as indicators of each of the three kinds of commitment:

Career Pursuit Commitment (CPC): There are certain important aspects that influences as well as improves an individual's commitment towards the organization he works for. Primarily he should be motivated to consider his profession as his permanent career. The professional should have the liberty to contribute his leisure time continuously to improve and update his professional knowledge, create a reputation in the area of his interest and there by improve his career prospects. Proper acknowledgement and recognition should be given based on his performance appraisal. Internal politics and groupism spoils the conducive atmosphere to work freely. A training and development program organized by the institution proves to hone the skills of the professionals. When a professional attains professional gains he wouldn't deter to put a great deal of effort beyond that normally expected.

Value commitment: An employee's value has relatively limited scope, if they exist in a particular organization for long period as his retainment is perceived to be due to lack of opportunities elsewhere. An employee's commitment increases when his self worth becomes more. There are certain factors that influence his self worth and self-esteem. He uses other members of the same profession as his primary reference group to maintain mender-protégé relation. He is given the autonomy to take care of the matters that comes under his purview. The Commitment seems to be so strong that other matters become insignificant to him. Thus, working in such a supportive and nurturing environment stimulates him to feel committed to his organization and profession. Lower values of the organization demonstrated by certain unsatisfied people shall not influence his mind. For such Professionals the values that he adheres to and the professional values are similar. His commitment towards the organization he works for would be directly proportional to his self-esteem.

Multi-dimensional reward commitment: Multi-dimensional reward is another major factor that influences the commitment of an employee. It is an indisputable fact that every employee expects a reward or recognition from his employer. Every professional normally prefers a place where their performance is assessed and rewarded accordingly. This would provoke a person to accept extension of work whenever feasible. He would even go to the extent of sacrificing his leisure time to serve his Organization. In spite, of having a flair for the profession, he is likely to agitate if his pay package is different from the norms he actually deserves to enjoy. When the professional extends his work tenure for a long period of time, he does not confine his expectations only to monetary benefits, but yearns for non-monetary benefits too.

The 30 items were the major part of the questionnaire used in a major study of the professional's value and beliefs tempting the professional commitment of teaching staff of self finance engineering colleges. These were measured with a scale from 1 = highly disagree to 5 = highly agree. And required a respondent to choose between two logically-opposite statements on a five-point scale to show the extent to which teachers agreed with the statements.

Research instrument: Based on the thorough literature review an appropriate research instrument was designed. To test the effect of the variables identified from that review (the independent variable) on the professional commitment of the respondent (dependent variable). Among the question on professional commitment, the questionnaire asked for respondents age, gender, family status, qualification, character, experience, take home package, cadre, department etc.

Research method: The survey of professional commitment was carried out during the period Jun-Aug, 2007. The purpose of the survey was to examine the extent of PC of these teacher and to identify the independent variables (age, gender, family status, qualification, character, experience, take home package, cadre, department etc.), were related to their professional commitment.

Details of the questionnaire are provided and discussed above. Subsequently the questionnaire was directly issued to 200 teachers of Kanyakumari district of different department in different college of the area surveyed and got response from 150 teachers and that was considered as the sample for this study.

Statistical methods: The data was analysed using Karl Person's Correlation, multiple Correlation for finding the relation ship between the variable and ANOVA one way analysis at 95% for testing the significance level among variables.

RESULTS

Anova Table 1 for identifying the significance difference between the dependent variables $H_0 = M_1 = M_2 = M_3$. On the N observation, frequency value if it is less than table value the H_0 tested is to be accepted (that is to test the accuracy in 95% significance levels of goodness of fit).

As the calculated value is less than the table value Table 2 null hypothesis is accepted. So, the result implies

Table 1: Colleges for engineering education, students and teachers in Kanyakumari district

Name of institution	No. institute	Teachers
Nooral Islam College of Engineering Kumarakoil	1	221
St.Xavier's College of Engineering, Chunkankadai	1	89
Jayamatha Engineering College, Aralvoimozhi	1	68
Narayanaguru College of Engineering and Technology Manjalumoodu	1	46
Udaya School of Engineering Vellamodi	1	64
C.S.I. Institute of Technology Thovalai	1	87
Sun Engineering College, Erachakulam	1	104
Vins Christian College of Engineering, Chunkankadai	1	65
KNSK College of Engineering	1	16
Lord Jeganath College of Engineering	1	23
Ponjesly College of Engineering	1	52
James College of Technology	1	16
Marthandum College of Engineering	1	30
Total	13	881

Source: Respective staff of the department

Table 2: Anova table

Source of Variation (SV)	Degrees of Freedom (DF)	Sum of Squares (SS)	Mean Sum of Square (MSS)	'F'-Calculated value	'F'-Table value
Treatment	3-1 = 2	732.98	366.49	-13.73	F @ (2.27)3.36
Error	30-3 = 27	-720.73	-26.69		
Total	30-1 = 29	12.25			

Fig. 2: Relationship between the depended variables vs education
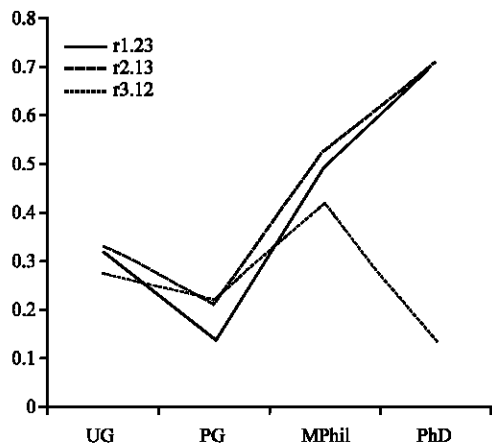

Fig. 3: Relationship between the depended variables vs cadre

that 3 variables are equally important in studying the professional commitment of the teaching staff in engineering colleges.

Analysis and interpretation: 1-Career Pursuit Commitment, 2-Value Commitment, 3-Multi-Dimensional Reward Commitment.

Hypotheses 1.1: The sample was divided in to 4 groups that are as per their qualification. The Fig. 2 shows increase in education leads to increased commitment.

Hypotheses 1.2: r3.12 studies that the pay satisfaction influences the relationship between education levels and professional commitment.
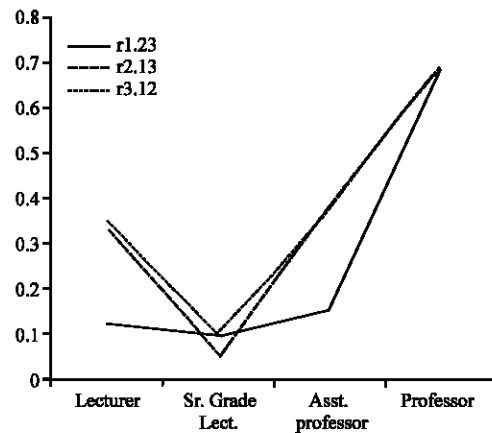
Hypotheses 2.1: A higher position displays stronger professional commitment. The sample was divided in to four groups that is as per their cadre, the Fig. 3 shows increased in cadre leads to increased commitment.

Hypotheses 2.2: r3.12 studies that the Pay satisfaction influences the relationship between hierarchical levels and professional commitment.

Hypotheses 3.1: Married individuals tend to demonstrate greater professional commitment. The sample was divided in to 2 groups that is as per their marital status, the Fig. 4 shows married status leads to increased commitment.
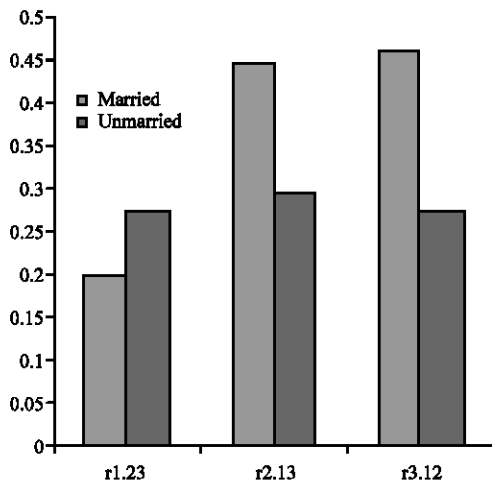
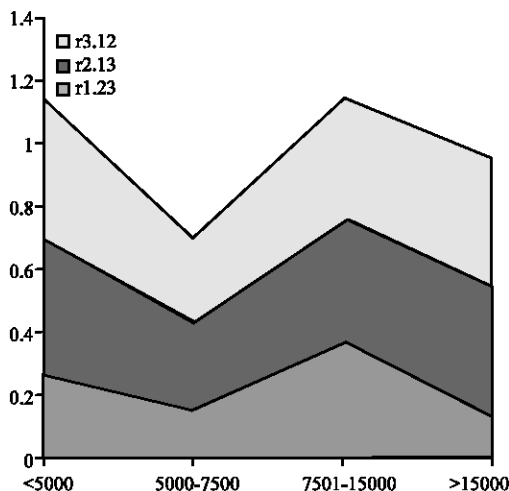Fig. 4: Relationships between the depended variables vs
marital status

Fig. 5: Relationship between the depended variables vs
salary

Hypotheses 3.2: r3.12 studies that the pay satisfaction
influences the relationship between marital status and
professional commitment.

Hypotheses 4.1: The more income an individual receives,
the higher professional commitment. The sample was
divided into 4 groups that is as per their package status,
the Fig. 5 shows higher package leads to increased
commitment.

Hypotheses 4.2: r3.12 studies that the pay satisfaction
influences the relationship between salary level and
professional commitment.

DISCUSSION

It is clearly evident, that if an institution adheres to
the rules and regulations of Anna University, from its
inception stage onwards, the institution will thrive and
would be the guiding light and source of inspiration for
the staff which in turn would lead them to work in the
institution with professional commitment.

**Factors prove detrimental to the growth of any
institution:** More than 43% of the teaching staff receive
less than Rs. 8000 which is the basic pay fixed by AICTE.
This tends to mitigate their commitment as they would
work with the feeling that they are underpaid. There are a
selective few, who are satisfied with what they receive.
The persons who have less than one year of experience
are satisfied as it is their maiden experience. Regarding
the persons in the Professor cadre and persons with a
doctoral degree, are well paid and they have less
workload. They are comfortable, though they are
entrusted with many responsibilities because their subor-
dinates fulfil their task, thus facilitating them to owe it's
credit. Nearly, 39% of the staff working unmarried. This
creates room for floating of teaching staff and mitigates
the chances of retainment of them. Finally, it affects the
students and thereby earns a bad name to the Institution.

A committee should be appointed by the university
having equal number of representatives of university
authorities and elected members of private engineering
colleges, which should be headed by the vice chancellor.
This committee should take care of all activities regarding
planning, organizing, training, coordinating and
controlling the matters related to staff.

Seminar, Workshop, Refresher and other
developmental courses could be organized by the
standard fixed by the committee. This would prove way
for the career development of the staff working in the
respective Institutions. It is to be formed with the
participation of all teachers, this would promote them to
compare their standard with the staff in the university.
In order to stop the attrition rate the university should
make it mandatory to follow a set of binding rules for
recruitment, selection, appointments, remuneration and
other administrative aspects which would be commonly
applicable to all colleges. Every year the committee
members should peruse the performance appraisal
and take relevant action for the increment and
promotion of the staff working under the University. Each
and every committee should have a representative from all
the colleges functioning under its affiliation to represent
their views.

Professional commitment thus, involves many
factors. In addition to his professional responsibility and
professional virtues a pe rson feels fully committed only

when he research in a conducive environment. This conducive environment is created by the management in terms of salary, scope for career pursuits, incentives, multi-dimensional rewards, recognition and acknowledgement and self-esteem.

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