PalArch's Journal of Archaeology of Egypt / Egyptology

THE EFFECTS OF JOB CRAFTING AND APPRECIATIVE LEADERSHIP ON WORKPLACE BELONGINGNESS THROUGH AFFECTIVE COMMITMENT

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ABSTRACT

Workplace belongingness has never been an easy task in exerting in the employees' minds. It entirely relies on the employees' perception which builds from the perceived organization's support and workplace relations. If employees perceive this support is negligible then the sense of low belongingness, disengagement and turnover intention formed in their minds. The main aim of the study is to measure the effect of job crafting, appreciative leadership on workplace belongingness, as well as the mediating effect of affective commitment. Adapted questionnaire by conducting the face validity with 5-point Likert scale was used; random sampling technique was used to obtain the responses from the 40 faculty members in private universities of Pakistan. The study used cross-sectional design. The findings show that appreciative leadership has a positive effect on workplace belongingness and affective commitment. However, job crafting has insignificant effect on workplace belongingness, although, positive effect on affective commitment. Affective commitment has significant mediating effect between appreciative leadership, job crafting and workplace belongingness. For future study, organizational justice can be used to promote the workplace belongingness.

INTRODUCTION

In the context of Pakistan, the structure in private universities of Pakistan is autonomous, and have been facing continuous changes (Zulfqar & Valcke, 2014). The changes such unnecessary authority is given to the registrars and the vice-chancellors (Sial, Jilani, Imran, & Zaheer, 2011), and poor governance of universities lack of accountability have also been prevailing in the higher-education institutes (Sial et al., 2011).

Likewise, lack of physical resources (Yusoff & Khan, 2013), lacking in management support (Danish & Usman, 2010), and also the issue of low autonomy has been occurred (Khan, Khan, & Imran, 2018; Yusoff, Khan, & Azam, 2013). When employees find such happenings unsupportive or unfavorable then the perception of low workplace belongingness comes in their mind, that consequently generates job dissatisfaction and negative behaviors that cause problem to the management in terms of turnover (DeWall, Baumeister, & Vohs, 2008).

At the workplace employees' belongingness is the predictor of psychological wellness for example employees' satisfaction (Borrott, Day, Sedgwick, & Levett-Jones, 2016; Josling, 2015; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2011). According to some studies psychological distress in terms of depersonalization, psychological demand, lack of self-fulfillment and emotional burnout can also be reduced through workplace belongingness (Coissard, Ndao, Gilibert, & Banovic, 2017). Workplace belongingness has also been observed as the predictor of increased engagement (Josling, 2015) and decreased turnover intentions (Jeswani, Dave, & Shankaracharya, 2012).

The teaching profession has also faced and still facing the issue of low belongingness at the workplace and this turned to be a main concern for the researchers, faculty members and management (Hiatt, Mc Letchie, Bagasra, Laufersweiler-Dwyer, & Mackinem, 2019). Belongingness at the workplace reduce turnover intentions (O'relilly & Robinson, 2009). In the context of Pakistan, the private sector universities administration has been facing the serious problem of turnover intention of their academic staff (Usman & Jangraiz, 2015). Work over load and in return higher disadvantages is the main reason of turnover intention in the private universities (Usman & Jangraiz, 2015).

A report of Booz (2018) shows the results below in Table 1.1 that the technology sector such as software has the most turnover rate in 2017 at 13.2%. Retail and consumer products have the turnover rate in 2017 at 13.0%, while media & entertainment have the turnover rate in 2017 at 11.4%, professional services have also the turnover rate in 2017 at 11.4%, and education sector has the turnover rate in 2017 at 11.2%. This report shows that turnover is prevailing among faculty members all over the world especially in private educational sector.

Table 1.1: Turnover Ratio

Sr#	Organization	Turnover Ratio
1	Software	13.20%
2	Retail and Consumer Products	13.00%
3	Media and Entertainment	11.40%
4	Professional Services	11.40%
5	Education Sector	11.20%
6	Financial service and Insurance	10.80%
7	Telecommunication	10.80%

Sources : Report of Booz (2018)

Furthermore, specifically in the context of Pakistan private sector universities, academic staff's disengagement is also another important issue that force them to quit from their jobs (Saleem & Qamar, 2017)**.** The feelings of being disengaged at the workplace arise from the low level of workplace belongingness (Josling, 2015). On the other hand, the higher level of belongingness at work lead towards the meaningful engagement among the employees (Chan, 2016).

According to the Gallup (2017), only 15% of employees in service sectors of Pakistan are engaged, 68% not engaged and 16% are actively disengaged which are shown in Table 1.2. Pakistan is on top regarding disengagement in comparison with Sri Lanka and India.

Table1.2: Employees Engagement in Service Sectors

Country	Engaged	Not Engaged	Actively Disengaged
Pakistan	15%	68%	16%
Sri Lanka	14%	62%	24%
India	9%	60%	31%

Source: (Gallup, 2017)

Hence belongingness at workplace is the predictor of decreased employee disengagement (Josling, 2015) and decreased turnover intention (O'relilly & Robinson, 2009). Therefore in order to ensure the higher level of workplace belongingness this study is aimed to determine the effect of appreciative leadership and job crafting on workplace belongingness with the mediating effect of affective commitment among the academic staff of private universities of Pakistan.

LITERATURE REVIEW
The main purpose of the study is to examine the effect of appreciative leadership, job crafting on workplace belongingness with the mediating effect of affective commitment.

Workplace Belongingness

The basic human need is to have the sense of belonging and this sense is also the main source of motivation for the individual (Maslow, 1954). Baumeister and Leary (1995) described that need to be belong as a "strong desire to form and maintain meaningful interpersonal attachments. According to the Hagerty, Lynch-Sauer, Patusky, Bouwsema, and Collier (1992) when employees get involved in the environment or in the system then sense create the feelings of being engaged that make them realized that they have become very important part of this system or environment. Hagerty et al. (1992) further stated that the sense of belongingness can be injected in the employee's mind through mutual collaboration. The concept of belongingness at workplace has its own

distinction comparing the similar concepts like job satisfaction, loyalty and trust level of the job, basically workplace belongingness is the predictor of such happenings at the workplace (Jena & Pradhan, 2018). Researchers Jena and Pradhan (2018) belongingness at work is the positive experiences in the form of interpersonal engagement just to be the part of the entire system. One more definition of sense of belongingness is to what extent employees feels that they are supported, respected, included and accepted by the management in the organizational setting (Cockshaw & Shochet, 2010).

Likewise, Derrick, Gabriel, and Hugenberg (2009) specified that belongingness cannot be attained through just personal association, but other important aspects also play very important role in developing the sense of belongingness such as a child's blanket that used for safety and the feelings of child can develop the sense of belongingness. Following the other statement is given by Baumeister and Leary (1995) that sense of belongingness prevails when the non-intimate associations occurs like political/occupational motivations

Job Crafting

Wrzesniewski and Dutton (2001) stated that job crafting means employees alter their job demands and by doing so they make their job enjoyable that is linked with their interest, passion and capabilities/demand. Job crafting is also explained by Tims, Bakker, and Derks (2013) as "a specific type of proactive work behavior that employees engage in adjusting their jobs to their needs, skills, and preferences" (p. 428). Likewise, job crafting is like autonomy that employees enjoy by modifying their jobs and resources in order to get more engaged and satisfied with their work (Tims, Bakker, & Derks, 2015). One more definition of job crafting is all about modification to adjust competencies, relationships to make the task more interesting and meaningful to improve self-worth (Slemp & Vella-Brodrick, 2013).

Belongingness theory says that when employees develop a meaningfulness connection through using the cognitive process, then the sense of belongingness prevails in their minds (Baumeister & Leary, 1995. Moreover, hypothesis of the belongingness suggest that with the help of cognitive thought process the belongingness and interpersonal relations mounted (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). Hence job crafting is quite useful in the workplace setting as it provides support, ensure rewarding interactions and cultivate belongingness and meaning at the place of the work (Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Berg, Grant, & Johnson, 2010).

Appreciative Leadership

Showing appreciative attitude is a good sign of supportive leadership. Though the concept of 'appreciative leadership' has seen more in the literature of popular management than in scientific publications, but scholars from the field of leadership shown concerns about the praise and recognition at the workplace as appreciative behaviors (Apostel, Syrek, & Antoni, 2018), such behaviors give employees respect and dignity (Eckloff & van Quaquebeke,

2008), ensure constructive feedback on their performances to increase their productivity (London, 2003), social support (Stajkovic & Luthans, 2003) and also psychological support (Constable & Russell, 1986)

Appreciative leadership can be defined as the leadership supportive behaviors in terms of giving praise on their achievements, skills and appreciating their determinations and efforts (Stocker, Jacobshagen, Krings, Pfister, & Semmer, 2014). Moreover, researchers Stocker, Jacobshagen, Semmer, and Annen (2010) explained appreciative leadership gives compliments when employees done a good job, recognize the efforts and welcome one's help so on. Based on the belongingness theory, employees emotional attachment, belongingness and identification can be increased when they receive appreciation from their supervisors (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). Therefore, in accordance with the appreciative theory, leadership is very useful tool in enhancing the belongingness at work.

Affective Commitment

The concept of affective commitment is referred to the employee's emotional attachment, involvement and identification for the job and the organization (Meyer & Allen, 1991). This illustrate that instead of having some economic rationale, employees like to stay in the firm because of their own sake (Meyer & Allen, 1984). Employees when get emotionally attached with the firm then they show affective commitment, then they experience belongingness at work and perceive themselves as a part of the organization. Generally, there are three distinctive constructs namely, normative, continuance and affective commitment.

Based on the suggestions of belongingness theory individuals make their interpersonal relations and tasks significant through cognitive processes (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). Likewise, according to the belongingness theory people are dpendent on their cognitive thought process in developing attachments to enhance the sense of belongingness (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). The feelings of attachment and belongingnessa are likely to genertae when people strive for crafting to create meaningful relation and tasks with the help of cognitive process (Dash & Vohra, 2019). On the same note, when employees practice crafting to make their interpersonal relationship meaningful then they are anticipated to experience the emotional attachment and feelings of belongingness both for the job or for the organization (Dash & Vohra, 2019).

Belongingness theory further explained, supervisors behaviors towards appreciating the employees effort and achievement is linked with the need of being emotionally attached and belonged (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). Moreover, in accordance with the belongingness theory, appreciation by the leaders enhances employee's affective commitment that leads to the increased sense of belongingness. Likewise, sense of commitments prevails in employees mind when they receive appreciation and recognition on their task accomplishment (Peter, Peter, & Catapan, 2015).

Hypothesis

H1: There is a positive effect of affective commitment on workplace belongingness

H2: There is a positive effect of appreciative leadership on affective commitment

H3: There is a positive effect of job crafting on affective commitment

H5: There is a mediating effect of affective commitment between appreciative leadership and workplace belongingness

H6: There is a mediating effect of affective commitment between job crafting and workplace belongingness

Research Methodology

The current study is quantitative with a cross-sectional approach. Data were collected from the private universities of Pakistan. This study uses the faculty members of private universities as a population for many reasons. In private universities, faculty members have more turnover intention rather than faculty members of public universities (Nawaz, 2016). In the current study 40 faculty members of private universities were used as a sample size. Simple random sampling technique was used to collect the data

Measurement

Face validity has been conducted of each scale by two experts of University Utara Malaysia; one is from the public universities of Pakistan and Two experts from the private universities of Pakistan. The scale of workplace belongingness was developed with 12 items by (Jena & Pradhan, 2018). The scale of job crafting was developed with 15 items by (Slemp & Vella-Brodrick, 2013). The scale of appreciative leadership was developed with 3 items by (Rafferty & Griffin, 2004). The scale of affective commitment was developed with 8 items by (Meyer & Allen, 1997).

Data Analyses

Majorly, the analysis of this study is based on two parts. First part is comprised of measurement model assessment. Second part is comprised of structural model assessment in which hypotheses were tested. Moreover, R-Squared (R2) value, effect size (f2) and quality of model is also addressed in this part.

Measurement Model Assessment

The first part to make data analysis in measurement model assessment (MMA) is factor loading, Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability (CR) and average variance extracted (AVE) (Henseler, Ringle, & Sinkovics, 2009). (Hair, Black,

Babin, Anderson, & Tatham, 1998) stated that the value of factor lodgings must be >0.5 and below 0.05 should be erased. The value of alpha > 0.9 is excellent, 0.8 is good and < 0.7 is acceptable". The CR must be >0.7 (George & Mallery, 2003). Furthermore, the value of convergent validity (CV), and AVE should also be equal or >0.5 that leads to the internal consistency. Additional, Fig. 1 demonstrates the values of the model MMA. Table 2 demonstrates the results of MMA. It shows that all the values are acceptable. Factor loading, Cronbach alpha and CR are also >0.7. The factor loading items which have less than 0.7 values were deleted. In addition, AVE is >0.5 that leads to convergent validity.
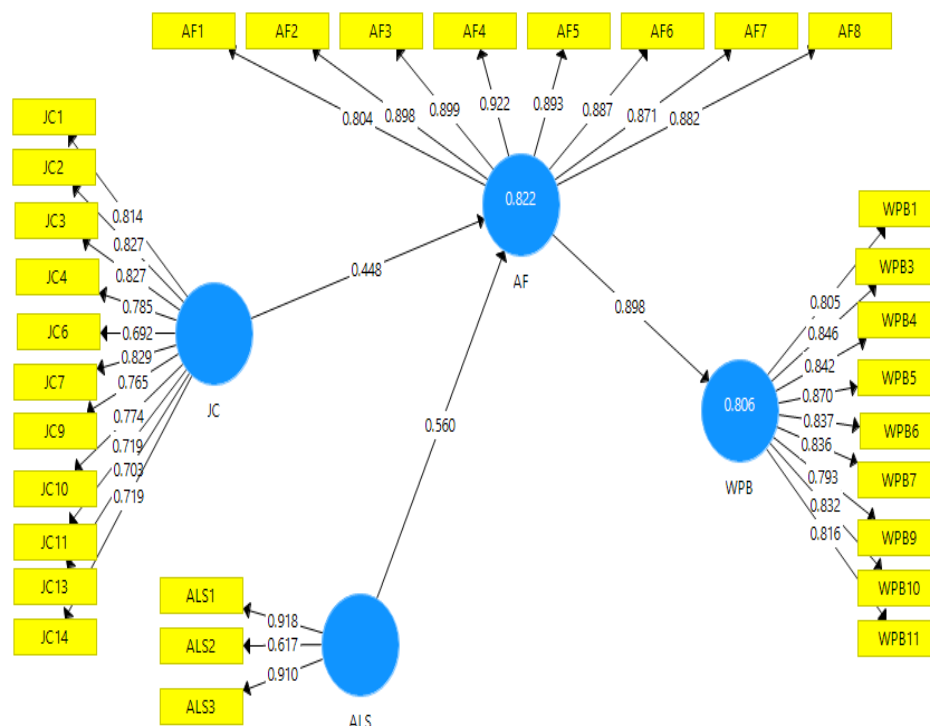

Figure 4.1: Measurement Model Assessment

Table 4.1: Cronbach's Alpha

Constructs	Cronbach's Alpha	rho_A	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)		
AC	0.959	0.96	0.966	0.779		
ALS	0.767	0.861	0.863	0.684		
JC	0.932	0.939	0.941	0.593		
WPB	0.945	0.952	0.953	0.69		

In addition, the validity of the constructs is measured through convergent validity (CV) and discriminant validity (DV). Results find shown in table 4.1 that the values of AVE for all the latent constructs are greater than 0.50 as stated by (Chin, 1998). Duarte and Raposo (2010) argued that discriminant

validity (DV) indicates that how much latent constructs is distinctive from others. The current study measures the discriminant validity (DV) through the method of Fornell and Larcker (1981) by taking the square root of Average Variance Extracted of all the latent constructs as shown in Table 4.2 with the bold value in the correlation matrix diagonal. The study results in Table 4.2 show that the square roots of Average Variance Extracted are greater.

Table 4.2: Discriminat Validity

Constructs	AF	ALS	JC	WPB
AF	**0.883**			
ALS	0.835	**0.827**		
JC	0.791	0.612	**0.77**	
WPB	0.898	0.706	0.877	**0.831**

Structural Model Assessment

The second part of the data analysis in structural model assessment (SMA) of hypotheses both direct and indirect measurement. Direct hypotheses for accepting or rejecting were measured as shown in Table 4.3. All the relationships with t-value greater than 1.96 and P value is 0 less than 0.05 would be accepted. Thus, H1, H2 and H3 are accepted. However, H5 is rejected since t value is 1.457 less than 1.96 and P value is 0.146 greater than 0.05 in Table 4.3. The relationship of AC -> WPB with the β-value is 0.898. Thus, for one unit enhances in affective commitment, the workplace belongingness would be enhanced by 0.898 units. The relationship of ALS -> AC with the β-value is 0.560. Thus, for one unit increases in appreciative leadership, the affective commitment would be enhanced by 0.560 units. The relationship of JC -> AC with the β-value is 0.448s. Thus, for one unit increase in job crafting, the affective commitment would be enhanced by 0.448 units.

Table 4.3: Direct Relationship

Hypo thesis	Relation ship	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviatio n (STDEV)	T Statistic s (|O/STD EV|)	P Valu es	Deci sion
H1	AC -> WPB	0.898	0.9	0.016	54.705	0	Acce pted
H2	ALS -> AC	0.560	0.552	0.071	7.918	0	Acce pted
H3	JC -> AC	0.448	0.456	0.064	7.005	0	Acce pted

In the table 4.4, the results show that the mediating effect of affective commitment between appreciative leadership and workplace belongingness as

the t-value 8.223 greater than 1.96, p value 0.000 less than 0.05 and β value 0.503 is significant. Thus, H4 is accepted. Similarly, in the table 4.4, the results show that the mediating effect of affective commitment between Job crafting and workplace belongingness as the t-value 6.548 greater than 1.96, p value 0.000 less than 0.05 and β value 0.402 is significant. Thus, H5 is accepted in Table 4.4.

Table 4.4: Indirect Relationship

Hypothesis	Relationship	Original Sample (O)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (|O/STDEV|)	P Values	Decision
H4	ALS -> AC -> WPB	0.503	0.061	8.223	0	Accepted
H5	JC -> AC -> WPB	0.402	0.061	6.548	0	Accepted

In the end, the quality of model is measured through construct cross-validated redundancy called predictive relevance (Q2). Achieving a certain quality of model, the value of Q2 should be greater than 0 (Chin, 1998). The value of Q2 of affective commitment is 0.593 >0 and workplace belongingness is 0.501 >0 in Table 4.5.

Table 4.5: Predictive Relevance

Constructs	SSO	SSE	Q^2 (=1-SSE/SSO)	
AC	1,360.00	553.697	0.593	
ALS	510	510		
JC	1,870.00	1,870.00		
WPB	1,530.00	764.232	0.501	

DISCUSSIONS

The main purpose of the current study is to examine the effect of job crafting, appreciative leadership on workplace belongingness including mediating effect of affective commitment among faculty members in private universities of Pakistan. Workplace belongingness as the extent to which the individual feels personally accepted, respected, included and supported by others in the organizational environment. However, affective commitment is an employee' sentimental or emotional attachment, sense of relatedness and involvement in the organization. It is found that affective commitment has positive effect on workplace belongingness with t-value 54.705 > 1.96. β-value 0.898 and P value 0.000> 0.005 are found significant and positive direct effect of AC on WPB. The current finding is acknowledged the previous studies such as (Dávila & García, 2012; Waardenburg, 2016) that affective commitment in terms of emotional attachment enhances the workplace belongingness**.**

According to belongingness theory, being appreciated by the supervisors relates to the need of emotionally attachment and the sense of belongingness (Baumeister & Leary, 1995).

The faculty members who are emotionally attached with the workplace also feel belongingness to their universities. Moreover, appreciative leadership who acknowledges one's effort by giving rewards, appreciate one's help, and assign interesting tasks when one has done a good job. In the current study, the appreciative leadership has significant effect on affective commitment with t-value 7.918> 1.96. β value 0.560 and P value 0.000> 0.005 are found significant and positive direct effect of AL on AC. There is not found direct relationship between these two constructs. However, the finding is indirectly in line with the previous studies such as Nyakaro (2016) shown that recognition on work has positive affective on affective commitment.

According to the belongingness theory that the appreciation from supervisor enhances the feelings of affective commitment in terms of emotional attachment (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). The appreciated faculty members in terms of recognition and rewards feel emotionally attached with their universities. Further, job crafting is the process of employees redefining and reimagining their job designs and personal relationship in the meaningful ways. In the current study, job crafting has significant effect on affective commitment with t-value 7.005> 1.96. β value 0.448 and P value 0.000> 0.005 are found significant and positive direct effect of Job crafting on affective commitment. The finding is aligned with the previous studies such as (Li, 2015), though, the findings of (Qi, Li, & Zhang, 2014) shows that affective commitment has positive effect on job crafting. In the belongingness theory hypothesis suggests that people devote much of their cognitive thought process to interpersonal relationships and attachments (Baumeister & Leary, 1995.

Faculty members who craft their job build their emotional attachment with the universities. It is found that the mediating effect of affective commitment between appreciative leadership and workplace belongingness with t-value 8.223> 1.96, β value 0.503 and P value 0.000> 0.005 are found significant effect. There is no finding in the previous studies on this mediating relationship. According to belongingness theory, being appreciated by supervisors relates to the need of emotionally attached and the sense of belongingness (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). Faculty members who appreciated by their deans and top management are emotionally attached with the workplace and have the strong sense of belongingness. It is found that the mediating effect of affective commitment between job crafting and workplace belongingness with t-value 6.548> 1.96, β value 0.402 and P value 0.000> 0.005 are found significant effect. There is also no finding in the previous studies on this mediating relationship. When individuals craft their relation and work to making it meaningful and valuable by using the cognitive process, the feelings of emotional attachment and belongingness developed (Dash & Vohra, 2019). The faculty members craft their jobs this sense arouse their attachment toward the sense of belongingness at workplace.

CONCLUSION

The present study concluded that in the centralized firms where employee's turnover ratio and their disengagement level are high, so in the private sector universities faculty member get better and perform well when they are appreciated, rewarded and recognized by the top management like dean and Vice Chancellor. Appreciation by the management makes the employees emotionally attached with their jobs and workplace and moreover fosters the sense of belongingness as well. Following the same, employees experience emotional attachment through affective commitment as it plays very fundamental role in mounting the workplace belongingness of the employees. Moreover, academic staff via affective commitment by getting emotionally attached does involve themselves in job crafting that eventually lead towards the higher level of workplace belongingness.

Practical Implications

Instilling the sense of workplace belongingness is mind of academic staff is difficult task. The reason is centralized structure in the private universities of Pakistan and because of this faculty members are less autonomous. Further, they feel that they are being compelled to do their job. Due to this unfriendly work environment, high turnover intention and feelings of disengagement are likely to prevail among the academic staff members. In order to ensure higher level of engagement and low turnover intentions, management needs to take some necessary steps. Management should give employees the sense of autonomy to faculty members in terms of job crafting. Job crafting has been observed to increase workplace belongingness via affective commitment. Moreover, appreciation should be given to faculty members on their performance and achievements in the form of promotions and increasing increments. Such steps are essential for reducing turnover intentions and disengagement among the academic staff of the private sector universities of Pakistan.

Limitation and Future Study

This study has some limitation that can be addressed for the future research. First the sample size of this study is limited to only 2 provinces of Pakistan namely Punjab and Sindh and only covered the faculty members of private sector universities, in future across the Pakistan and from the public sector universities sample, can be taken. Workplace belongingness can be studied as a behavior so in future in order to get the in-depth analysis faculty members can be interviewed by the researcher. Organizational justice is the important predictor of enhancing workplace belongingness so in future it can predict the sense of belongingness at workplace

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