

Company Satisfaction, Company Commitment and Work Involvement : An Empirical Examination of Blue Collar Satisfaction, engagement et participation

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Article abstract

This study investigates the relationships among Company satisfaction, company commitment and work involvement for a sample of blue-collar workers drawn from packaging, power distribution and manufacturing industries in Canada. Guttman scaling, factor analysis and correlational analysis are the statistical techniques employed to analyze the data. The results confirm the hypothesized positive relationship among the three attitudes.

Company Satisfaction, Company Commitment and Work Involvement

An Empirical Examination of Blue Collar Workers

Vishwanath BABA
and
Muhammad JAMAL

This study investigates the relationships among company satisfaction, company commitment and work involvement for a sample of blue-collar workers drawn from packaging, power distribution and manufacturing industries in Canada. Guttman scaling, factor analysis and correlational analysis are the statistical techniques employed to analyze the data. The results confirms the hypothesized positive relationship among the three attitudes.

The study of work has been claimed to be of major importance in understanding human behaviour. Since a person spends more time working than in any other activity during his waking hours, it is reasonable that his work and the work related environment would mold many of his attitudes in life: This in turn may affect his social behaviour and hence the human society. So work as an area of investigation deserves merit.

The existing literature in organizational behaviour concerns itself to a large extent with the problems of managerial attitudes and behaviour concerns itself to a large extent with the problems of managerial attitudes and behaviour. An examination of the leading journals of organizational behaviour over the past five years revealed a large number of studies of white-collar samples. This observation coupled

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with growing concern about the blue-collar workers (28) spurred an interest in examining blue-collar worker attitudes. There is a dearth of studies in the literature focussing on the Canadian blue-collar worker. Since previous researchers have documented attitudinal differences between Canadian and American samples at the managerial level (12, 18, 20, 30) it was considered necessary to investigate whether similar differences exist at the blue-collar level in Canada.

It has been argued that satisfaction with the company commitment to the company and involvement with work are variables of considerable importance in the study of work attitudes (14, 26) and may show different characteristics between blue and white-collar workers (7). The existing equivocality as regards the nature of the above variables prompted the researchers to examine their dimensionality. It was also decided to investigate the relationships among the above attitude variables as well as their demographic correlates at the blue-collar level.

Lodahl and Kejner (14) suggested that company commitment might be related to work involvement since the company set the norms for what was good work. The worker depended upon these «well meaning but arbitrary» judgments about his work, and needed to identify himself with the company in order to validate himself. This was said to motivate the work-involved person to be committed to his company. Grusky (5) indicated that commitment to the company was related to company satisfaction. It stands to reason that a person who is satisfied with his company is likely to develop positive feelings towards the company which may lead to long term loyalty and commitment to it. This argument was further strengthened by Buchanan's (2) observations that organizational identification, job involvement and organizational loyalty were related to each other. Schwyhart and Smith (26) found company satisfaction and work involvement to be positively related. Perhaps it is true that attitudes towards the job are related to attitudes towards the company providing the job. But these results were obtained from middle managers. Since Lodahl and Kejner (14) observed that work involvement exhibited different characteristics for different groups, the need exists to validate the previously observed relationships for a blue-collar sample.

For the purposes of this study company satisfaction was defined as the degree to which a worker derives satisfaction from and identifies with the company in which he is employed (17). Company commitment was defined in terms of desire to put in extra work and concern

for the welfare of the company (10). Work involvement was defined as psychological identification with work (14).

It was hypothesized that company satisfaction (CS), company commitment (CC) and work involvement (WI) would be positively related to each other.

Previous researchers observed demographic variables such as age, sex, education, marital status, income and experience to be variously related to the work attitudes examined here (14, 7, 26, 27) but no specific pattern of relationship emerged. It may be that the above work attitudes exhibit different characteristics for different work groups. Hence it was also decided to isolate demographic variables important for future investigations.

METHOD

The respondents were 377 blue-collar production workers from six organizations in Vancouver, British Columbia, 68% of whom were male. The Companies represented a variety of industries (packaging, power generation & distribution and manufacturing).

The instruments were part of a larger questionnaire used in a study of blue-collar workers. Since the authors found the original organizational commitment questionnaire (21) to be of multidimensional nature, an attempt is made here to develop unidimensional instruments for the constructs to be studied here. It was felt that the items in the organizational commitment questionnaire of Porter & Smith (21), the job involvement instrument of Lodahl & Kejner (14) and the company satisfaction scale of Schwyhart & Smith (26) would form a relevant universe of content for the constructs in question. Company satisfaction was measured by a 4-item scale shown below:

- 1) This company really inspires the very best in me in the way of job performance.
- 2) I find my goals and this company's are very similar.
- 3) I would keep working for this company even if I were offered more money to work somewhere else.
- 4) I would accept almost any type of job assignment in order to keep working for this company.

These items were modifications of items in the Company Satisfaction Scale of Schwyhart and Smith (26) and the Porter Organizational Commitment Scale (21). Company commitment was measured by the following four items:

- 5) I don't mind putting in extra time if the Company needs me to.
- 6) I am willing to work extra hard at my job in order to help this company be successful.
- 7) I really care about the fate of the company.
- 8) It bothers me very much to be absent from work.

Two of the above items (5 & 7) were drawn from Porter's Commitment Scale and modified to be meaningful to the blue-collar sample. The other two were developed by the authors. The work involvement scale consists of the following items:

- 9) In my free time I most like to talk about work.
- 10) I prefer work over everything else I do.
- 11) Work is my major interest.
- 12) I believe that work is more important than anything else.

These items were developed by the authors though influenced largely by the Lodahl and Kejner (14) job involvement scale. The responses for the above items were obtained through a 3-point scale varying from Agree to Disagree. The items were appropriately reversed such that in the final analysis high scores indicated high CS, CC and WI.

Information was also gathered on demographic variables such as age, education, sex, marital status, income and experience.

A total of 550 production workers were contacted initially. With one follow up, 377 (68%) usable questionnaires were returned. As mentioned earlier, the above scales were part of a larger questionnaire and hence had to be short in order to ensure a reasonable response rate (29).

Since the nature of the constructs of CS, CC and WI were rather equivocal in the literature a Guttman Scalogram analysis using the Cornell technique was performed for the above three scales with cut off at 2. The Scales were found to be unidimensional with the following scale properties.

Company satisfaction

Scale items in increasing order of strength: 2, 3, 1, 4

Coefficient of reproducibility: .90

Minimal Marginal reproducibility: .59

Company Commitment

Scale items in increasing order of strength: 7, 5, 8, 6

Coefficient of reproducibility: .92

Minimal Marginal reproducibility: .81

Work involvement

Scale items in increasing order of strength: 11, 10, 12, 9

Coefficient of reproducibility: .93

Minimal Marginal reproducibility: .71

The above observations were further strengthened by the internal consistency reliability coefficients obtained for the above scales. The alpha reliabilities of the CS, CC and WI scales were found to be .75, and .75 and .70 respectively (3).

RESULTS

The results established the internal consistency of the CS, CC and WI scales. It has been suggested that increasing the number of scale points to five or seven would yield higher internal consistency reliabilities (13). So the coefficient alphas obtained would have improved, had a five or seven point scale been used. The construct validities for CS, CC and WI were determined by randomly splitting the sample into two sets and factor analyzing each set. The Wrigley-Neuhaus Coefficients of Congruence¹ (6) for the three constructs CS, CC and WI were .86, .89 and .98 respectively, indicating high construct validity.

Table 1
Inter Item Correlations of CS, CC & WI Scales

Items	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1	1.00											
2	.44	1.00										
3	.37	.40	1.00									
4	.47	.46	.45	1.00								
5	.31	.37	.33	.34	1.00							
6	.43	.42	.36	.40	.51	1.00						
7	.39	.38	.37	.35	.37	.53	1.00					
8	.33	.26	.24	.35	.38	.43	.37	1.00				
9	.24	.16	.20	.14	.14	.20	.14	.15	1.00			
10	.29	.22	.24	.14	.12	.15	.15	.10	.37	1.00		
11	.20	.21	.17	.15	.21	.26	.14	.18	.34	.40	1.00	
12	.22	.18	.14	.13	.13	.20	.12	.16	.38	.38	.50	1.00

¹ This coefficient is often used to study the agreement between factors among two sets of Data or their factorial Similarity. In effect it could be useful in validating the construct represented by the factors.

The inter item correlation matrix shown in Table 1 reveals the complex relationship among the various items in the three scales and indicates possible relatedness between the three scales. Factor analysis of the correlation matrix was considered necessary in order to assess the psychometric meaningfulness of the three scales. The observed relationships among the items called for an oblique rotation if the data were to be factor analyzed (25). The correlation matrix was tested for its appropriateness for factor analysis. The overall measure of sampling adequacy using the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin index was found to be .989 (4). This indicated a very high degree of appropriateness for factor analysis.² Catell's Scree Test suggested a three-factor solution (25).

The eigenvalues obtained for the three factors were 4.24, 1.74 and 0.97 respectively. The eigenvalue for the third factor (0.97) clearly indicated the inappropriateness of applying the «eigenvalue-one» criterion in this case. Rummel (25) observed that «disregarding such a factor by applying an across-the-board cutoff risks missing important factors». Hence a three-factor solution was considered appropriate. The data were factor analyzed using the direct oblimin criterion of rotation to obtain a terminal solution yielding three factors. The three factors explained 58% of the common variance. The first factor contained scale items 1, 2, 3 and 4. These items seemed to tap attitudes relating to contentment, goal congruence, etc. with the company and was labeled Company Satisfaction. The second factor contained scale items 5, 6, 7 and 8, showing a certain amount of loyalty to the company, concern with its success, etc. This factor was called Company Commitment. The last factor containing scale items 9, 10, 11 and 12 seemed to indicate attachment and psychological identification with work. This was named Work Involvement. Thus the factor analysis established the existence of the three separate constructs empirically. The factor loadings are shown in Table 2.

Table 2
Factor Analysis of CS, CC & WI Scales

<i>Factor 1-Company Satisfaction</i>	<i>Factor Loadings</i>			<i>Coefficient of congruence</i>
	<i>N=377</i>	<i>N=194</i>	<i>N=183</i>	
1. This company really inspires the very best in me in the way of job performance.	.73	.69	.71	

² Kaiser's (1974) present calibration of the index is as follows:

In the .90s — marvelous
 In the .80s — meritorious
 In the .70s — middling

In the .60s — mediocre
 In the .50s — miserable
 In the .40s — unacceptable

2. I find my goals and this company's are very similar.	.73	.53	.80	
				.86
3. I would keep working for this company even if I were offered more money to work somewhere else.	.76	.77	.74	
4. I would accept almost any type of job assignment in order to keep working for this company.	.77	.75	.81	
<i>Factor 2-Company Commitment</i>				
5. I don't mind putting in extra time if the company needs me to.	.79	.78	.84	
6. I am willing to work extra hard at my job in order to help this company be successful.	.78	.78	.73	
				.89
7. I really care about the fate of the company.	.75	.78	.74	
8. It bothers me very much to be absent from work.	.71	.63	.75	
<i>Factor 3-Work Involvement</i>				
9. In my free time I most like to talk about work.	.69	.75	.60	
10. I prefer work over everything else I do.	.71	.74	.69	
				.98
11. Work is my major interest.	.77	.75	.78	
12. I believe that work is more important than anything else.	.78	.78	.78	

Table 3 shows the Pearson product moment correlation between CS, CC and WI. All the r 's were statistically significant at less than the .0001 level. This confirmed the hypothesized relationship among these variables for blue-collar workers.

TABLE 3
Correlation Between CS, CC & WI Scales^{1,2}

	<i>Company Satisfaction</i>	<i>Company Commitment</i>	<i>Work Involvement</i>
Company satisfaction	(.75)		
Company commitment	.46	(.75)	
Work involvement	.28	.20	(.70)

¹ All correlations are significant at $< .0001$ level.

² The diagonal elements in parenthesis indicate Cronbach alpha coefficients of reliability.

TABLE 4

Demographic Correlates of CS, CC & WI

<i>Demographic Variables</i>	<i>Company Satisfaction</i>	<i>Company Commitment</i>	<i>Work Involvement</i>
Age	.02	.13**	.20**
Sex	.06	-.06	.15**
Education	-.07	-.03	-.11*
Marital Status	.18*	-.11	.09
Income	-.06	.07	.02
Experience	.09	.24***	.09

* <.05

** <.01

*** <.0001

Table 4 shows the correlational relationship between the demographic variables such as age, sex, education, marital status, income and experience and CS, CC and WI. Appropriate measures of association were computed bearing in mind the nature of the variables. Age was positively related to both CC and WI but not to CS. Sex was related to WI but not to CS and CC. Education showed significant negative association with WI, but with CS and CC the relationships were not significant. Marital status was related to CS but did not yield any significant results with CC and WI. Income did not seem to be related to any of the above three. Experience was positively related to CC while with CS and WI it failed to yield any significant relationship.

DISCUSSION

The study supported the hypothesis that CS, CC and WI were positively related to each other among Canadian blue-collar workers. Yet the obtained unidimensionality of the CS, CC and WI scales assert that the above attitudes are somewhat distinct from each other. In other words, according to this study the worker who was involved in his work was likely to be satisfied with his company and would be committed to its welfare. This suggested that attitudes towards the job were likely to be related to attitudes toward the company that provided the job (26). The results rejected the notion that work attachment or involvement was incompatible with company commitment (23, 1). These results could perhaps be explained in the light of Osgood and Tannenbaum's Congruity Theory of Attitude Change (19). The congruity theory of attitudes asserts that attitudes tend towards maximum simplicity

and consistency especially among people of lesser cognitive complexity. Given the lower educational qualifications of our blue-collar respondents, they might well be receptive to the congruity principle. The present results are consistent with the above theory as the positive relations between attitudes towards the job and the Company could be explained as an attempt to move towards a congruity of attitudes which is again a manifestation of the tendency toward simplicity (8).

The results indicated age to have a significant positive correlation with CC and WI but not with CS. The positive correlation between age and CC is in line with Hrebiniak and Alutto's argument (7) that age implied «the accrual of investments which can enhance the attractiveness of the employing system and increase commitment to it.» The positive relationship between age and work involvement obtained for the present sample supports the view that older workers tend to become more involved with their job. The higher involvement may be derived from the perception of a certain amount of permanence in their work (22). The absence of significant relationship between CS and age provoke one to speculate whether with increasing age, involvement with work and a certain amount of commitment to the company become important to one's self image no matter what one's satisfaction is with the company. It may be that as the worker gets older he realizes he might not get all he once expected from his company. In other words, he may not be satisfied in general with the company for which he works, but at the same time realize his own limitations and feel that he might not get a «better deal» if he moved to another company. Thus he might be committed to his present company for security reasons and involved in his work yet not completely satisfied with his company. We must urge however that caution be exercised in applying this type of reasoning until further supportive results are obtained in studies of Canadian blue-collar workers.

Sex showed significant positive correlation with WI but not with either CS or CC. This meant the female blue-collar workers showed greater involvement in their work. This finding contradicts previous research and could not be fitted into any existing theoretical framework. The absence of association of sex with both CS and CC negates the argument that there are differential costs for male and female attached to leaving an organization (7), at least at the blue-collar level. This perhaps is a sign of diminishing sex role differentiation in the modern society.

Education showed a significant negative correlation with WI but no significant relationships were found with both CS and CC. The

negative association between WI and education is in line with the findings of Ruh and White (24). Since the nature of blue-collar work does not meet the expectations of the more educated, it is natural for them to exhibit a lack of involvement in their work. The absence of significant association of education with CS and CC is not consistent with the notion that education lessens commitment to the organization and implies a cosmopolitan attitude (1). Perhaps the cosmopolitan-local value orientation is irrelevant at the blue-collar level and this may account for the results obtained.

Marital status yielded a significant positive correlation with CS indicating married individuals were more satisfied with the company as compared to single workers. This is perhaps due to the fact that the single respondents, by virtue of their unattached status and absence of family responsibilities, tended to value employment alternatives more favourably and attach less cost to a change of employers. These conclusions are consistent with those of a major study on the quality of life which also suggested that married people were in general more satisfied with life (9).

Income did not show any significant relationship with any of the work attitudes examined here. The implication is that the income a person makes does not have any impact on his CS, CC and WI. This could be explained in the light of reference group theory (15) which would predict attitudinal indifference to pay as long as it was consistent with one's reference group. In addition, with minimum wage laws and the impact of trade unions, the average blue-collar worker is adequately compensated at present and hence the marginal utility of the extra dollar is low and does not seem to affect his CS, CC or WI.

Experience on the job which was variously denoted in the literature as seniority, tenure, etc. was found to be positively associated with CC but not with either CS or WI. This finding supported the notion of company commitment as a «structural or accrual phenomenon dependent upon individual organizational transactions and the accumulation of investments over time» (7). The lack of association of experience with CS and WI was also supported by previous research findings (26, 16).

In conclusion it can be said that Canadian blue-collar workers in the present study perceive company satisfaction, company commitment and work involvement as related concepts. Yet it is shown that these concepts are attitudinally distinct from each other. Also these attitudes are differentially related to background variables such as age,

sex, education, marital status, pay and experience. Future research is called for to explore any interaction effects these variables might have in their relationship with the above work attitudes.

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Satisfaction, engagement et participation

On a soutenu que la satisfaction d'un salarié pour l'entreprise qui l'emploie, son engagement dans cette entreprise et sa participation au travail constituent des variables importantes dans l'étude des comportements au travail, variables qui peuvent indiquer des caractéristiques différentes entre les cols bleus et les cols blancs. À partir de là, il fut décidé de faire enquête, en ce qui a trait aux cols bleus, sur les rapports existants entre les trois variables précédentes et différents facteurs démographiques qui s'y rattachent.

Pour les fins de cette étude, on entend par satisfaction le degré de contentement qu'un travailleur retire d'une entreprise et la mesure dans laquelle il s'y identifie. L'engagement résulte du désir d'un employé de travailler plus fort et de montrer plus d'intérêt pour la réussite de l'entreprise. La participation consiste dans l'identification psychologique d'un salarié avec son travail.

On a émis l'hypothèse que la satisfaction, l'engagement et la participation devaient exprimer une relation positive les uns par rapport aux autres. Des chercheurs avaient observé antérieurement que des variables démographiques, telles que l'âge, le sexe, la scolarité, l'état civil, le revenu et l'expérience étaient diversement reliés aux comportements examinés dans le présent article, mais qu'aucun rapport bien structuré n'était apparu. D'où il résulte que la deuxième hypothèse en était une de nature explorative par laquelle les chercheurs ont tenté d'isoler les variables démographiques importantes en vue de nouvelles observations.

Le groupe des répondants était formé de 377 cols bleus travaillant pour six sociétés de Vancouver en Colombie Britannique. Soixante-huit pour cent d'entre eux étaient des hommes. Les entreprises avaient été choisies dans plusieurs secteurs: abattoirs, centrales de production et de distribution d'électricité, diverses branches d'industrie. Les instruments étaient tirés d'un questionnaire extensif utilisé pour l'étude des cols bleus. Ils sont décrits d'une façon plus détaillée dans l'article précédent. Les réponses ont été obtenues au moyen d'une échelle à trois degrés variant d'accord à désaccord. Les sujets furent inversés de telle façon que, en dernière analyse, les comptes élevés indiquent des taux de satisfaction, d'engagement et de participation élevés. On a également recueilli des renseignements sur les variables démographiques: âge, scolarité, sexe, état civil, revenu et expérience.

Au départ, on avait contacté 550 employés de la production. Après un rappel, 377 réponses utilisables, soit soixante-huit pour cent, furent retournées.

Les données furent finales à trois facteurs. Les trois facteurs expliquaient cinquante-huit pour cent de la variance. Les questions de rapport au premier facteur mettaient l'accent sur des attitudes manifestant le contentement, la similitude de but, et on les désigna sous le nom de satisfaction d'appartenir à l'entreprise (Company satisfaction). Le deuxième facteur présentait les points se rapportant à une certaine loyauté envers l'entreprise, un certain intérêt pour sa réussite; ce facteur reçut la désignation d'engagement envers l'entreprise (Company Commitment). Le dernier facteur paraissait indiquer de l'attachement au travail, à une identification psychologique avec le travail, d'où son nom de participation au travail (Work Involvement). Donc, l'analyse des facteurs a établi l'existence de trois « charpentes » distinctes considérées au point de vue expérimental.

L'étude confirma l'hypothèse que satisfaction, engagement et participation sont interreliés chez les cols bleus canadiens. En d'autres mots, suivant cette étude, le travailleur qui participait à son travail était également satisfait de l'entreprise qui lui procurait un emploi. Les résultats rejettent l'idée que l'attachement au travail ou la participation était incompatible avec l'engagement envers l'entreprise. Il se peut que la nature du travail du col bleu explique ce rapport positif entre la satisfaction, l'engagement et la participation. Par ailleurs, les résultats ont montré que l'âge présentait un rapport de corrélation positif avec l'engagement et la participation mais non avec la satisfaction. Le sexe présentait un rapport de corrélation positif avec la participation mais non pas avec la satisfaction et l'engagement, ce qui démontre que les femmes s'identifiaient davantage avec leur travail que les hommes. La scolarité présentait un rapport de corrélatif négatif avec le degré de participation au travail, mais on ne décela aucun rapport significatif pour la satisfaction et l'engagement. L'état civil indiquait un rapport de corrélation positif avec la satisfaction, ce qui montre que les gens mariés sont davantage contents que les célibataires de faire partie de l'entreprise. Le revenu ne paraît pas avoir aucune signification particulière en regard du comportement au travail. Le revenu

d'une personne n'a en quelque sorte rien à voir avec la satisfaction, l'engagement et la participation. L'expérience au travail qu'on désignait généralement sous le nom d'ancienneté, de stabilité d'emploi, indiquait un rapport de corrélation positif avec l'engagement, mais non avec la satisfaction et la participation.

Pour conclure, on peut dire que les cols bleus canadiens perçoivent la satisfaction, l'engagement et la participation comme des concepts interreliés. Aussi, ces attitudes sont-elles diversement reliées aux variables de base telles que l'âge, le sexe, la scolarité, l'état civil, le salaire et l'expérience. De nouvelles enquêtes sont nécessaires pour connaître les effets que peuvent avoir ces diverses variables sur les trois attitudes précédentes.

COLLECTION RELATIONS DU TRAVAIL

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