



EXAMINING THE INFLUENCE OF PROFESSIONAL IDENTIFICATION ON ORGANIZATIONAL IDENTIFICATION

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ABSTRACT

The study attempts to investigate the influence of professional identification on organizational identification. The study is based upon the responses obtained from 260 permanent teachers of Jammu University only excluding other employees and employees of other universities. The data were collected through questionnaire based on both primary and secondary data. This study also based on pilot survey for generalization of items which are based on 64 respondents. The results reveal that professional identification has significant influence on organizational identification.

KEYWORDS :

INTRODUCTION

Social Identity Theory maintains that individuals classify themselves into various social groups, including gender, religious affiliation, organizational, and professional memberships (Tajfel & Turner, 1985; Dutton et al., 1994). Accordingly, professionals will likely to identify with both their profession and their organization. An individual decides to become a professional long before he or she joins a particular organization, so professional identification can be expected to develop before organizational identification. These professionals often keep their certification and affiliation, even when they leave their practice. In this regard, Aranya et al. (1981) argued that professional affiliation is both separate from and precedes the development of an affiliation with a particular organization.

Identification refers to the perception of oneness with or belongingness to a particular human group, such as a specific organization of profession (Ashforth & Mael, 1989). Researchers have found that a desire for quality (rather than profits) is associated with professional identification. Organizations tend to be concerned with efficiency and profitability, whereas professionals care mainly about providing the highest quality service, almost regardless of the cost or revenue consideration. The ability of the firm to facilitate the individual's professional expectations and strengthen a professional identity will increase an individual's organizational identification (Aranya et al., 1981; Norris & Niebuhr, 1984; Meixner & Bline, 1989).

Professional identity is the extent to which individuals not only define themselves in terms of the work they do but also the typical characteristics they assign to others who do the same work (Mael & Ashforth, 1992; Maanen & Barley, 1984) and is defined as "the relatively stable and durable collection of attributes, beliefs, values, motives, and experiences in term of which people define themselves in a professional role" (Ibarra, 1999, pp. 764-765, citing Schein 1978). Professional identification includes distinctive characteristics such as bodily attributes, abilities, and psychological traits and a social identity encompassing salient group classifications (Ashforth & Mael, 1989) and is defined as a "psychological attachment that occurs when members adopt the defining characteristics of the organization as defining characteristics of themselves" (Dutton et al., 1994).

Again identity is not a fixed characteristic of a person, but a relational phenomenon. Identity development occurs in an inter-subjective field and can be best characterized as an enduring process, a process of interpreting oneself as a certain kind of person and being familiar as such in a given context (Ashforth & Mael, 1989). Organizational identification is a particular form of social identification where the individuals define themselves in terms of their membership in a particular organization (Mael & Ashforth, 1995). For every individual the concept of identification is different, however, in broader sense, identification implies degree of

belongingness, loyalty, or shared characteristics. Different individuals identify with their work organization differently. If the individuals identify strongly with their organization, then the attributes they use to define the organization, define them also (Dutton et al., 1994). Organizational identification is assumed to be the degree of the individual's broad personal identification with the organization (Lee, 1971). It is concerned with the perception of oneness with the organization (Ashforth & Mael, 1989). Miller et al. (2000) defined organizational identification as whether or not an employee believes he is part of an organization's mission, ideas, standards and goals, and takes organizational welfare as prime while taking decisions.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Mael & Ashforth (1992) operationalized the conceptualization of organization identification and provide a partial test of the associated model of antecedents and consequences. The model was applied to the alumni of a religious college. The study hypothesized that the identification of alumni with their alma mater is related to organizational antecedents; the identification of alumni with their alma mater is related to organizational consequences. The sample was drawn from all male college in the north-eastern United States. Approximately 700 alumni were randomly selected from a total alumni body of approximately 2000. Questionnaires were mailed and a follow up postcard was mailed one month later. A total of 297 usable questionnaires were received, resulting into 42% response rate. Identification was measured by a six-item scale in a sample of employed business and psychology; and managers from a variety of organizations and hierarchical levels. Five-item scale was utilized in two samples of Army Squad members and in two samples of squad leaders, perceived organizational distinctiveness and satisfaction with the alma mater's contribution fulfillment of student objectives were measured by a fifteen-item scale, perceived organizational prestige and intra-organizational competition were assessed by an eight-item scale, perceived inter-organizational competition and sentimentality were measured by a seven-item scale. It was found that three of the four hypothesized organizational antecedents and four of six individual antecedents were significantly correlated with organizational identification. Collectively, the antecedents accounted for 35% of the variance in organizational identification. Finally, the results suggest that organizational identification at least partially mediates the impact of the antecedents on the outcomes.

Russo (1998) examined organizational and professional identification among professional employees and investigated the relationships between identifications, autonomy and job satisfaction. The population under study was 281 editorial employees of a major metropolitan newspaper. These methods were used viz., questionnaire, individual interviews and observation. Questionnaires were completed by 170 editorial professionals, representing 63% of the total population. Organizational and professional identification were measured by

two matched-item subsets of the organizational identification questionnaire (OIQ; Cheney, 1982). Seven-point Likert-type scale was used. Audiotape interviews were conducted with 58 newsroom professionals. Tapes were transcribed using word-for-word transcription, producing nearly 1000 double-spaced pages. Observation focused on understanding how news was assigned, monitored and edited; how newsroom members give and receive feedback; what stories they created and repeated about their social environment; and how used language to refer to their work, the newspaper product, and the organization. It was found that identification with the profession of journalism is significantly higher than the respondents' employing newspaper. There is statistically significant positive correlation between organizational and professional identification, a finding consistent with Wallace's (1993) meta-analytical results. 68% of the respondents reported that they always or almost always had the ability to select the stories they covered. Thus, autonomy is positively and significantly correlated with organizational identification and professional identification. 12% of the journalists reported themselves very satisfied. However another 41% reported being somewhat satisfied. Job satisfaction was fairly high and professional identification. Job satisfaction was significantly correlated with autonomy in line with other research findings.

Bamber&lyer (2002) examined auditors' sense of professional identity. The study hypothesized that auditors' professional identification is positively associated with organizational identification and organizational-professional conflict (OPC); auditors' organizational identification is negatively associated with their OPC and their turnover intentions; auditors' OPC is positively and tenure is negatively associated with their turnover intention; construed professional image, job autonomy and perceived effectiveness of the firm's audit process are positively associated with auditors' professional identification; job autonomy and perceived effectiveness of the firm's audit process are negatively associated with their OPC; and autonomy, perceived effectiveness of the firm's audit process and auditors' tenure are positively associated with organizational identification. Questionnaires are sent to a random sample of 1250 CPAs employed in Big 5 firms. A total of 257 responses were received, representing 22.8% response rate. Multivariate analysis of variance was conducted as respondents had shown to resemble non respondents. No response bias was detected. Organizational identification measured a five-item scale, adapted from Mael&Ashforth (1992). Two-step structural equation was also used as advocated by Anderson & Gerbing (1988). Using data covariance matrix as input, the study performed a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) on all the measures to verify the factor structure of the items. The hypothesized structural model was tested using Lisrel 8.3 (Joreskog&Sorbom, 1999). It was found that professional identification has a significantly positive influence on organizational identification and non-significant influence on OPC; organizational identification has a significant negative influence on both OPC and turnover intentions; OPC has a significant positive and tenure has significant negative association with the turnover intention; construed professional image and job autonomy are significantly, and perceived effectiveness of the firm's audit process is not significantly associated with auditors' professional identification; both job autonomy and perceived effectiveness of the firm's audit process is significantly but negatively associated with OPC; and both job autonomy and perceived effectiveness of the firm's audit process have significant positive and tenure does not have significant positive relation with organizational identification.

Hypothesis and Objective of the study

Present study makes an effort to unearth the impact of professional identification on organizational identification.

Hyp 1: Professional identification has a significant influence on organizational identification.

Obj 1: To study the impact of professional identification on organizational identification.

Need of the study

The present study is an outcome of the review of related literature pertaining to professional identification and organizational identification. Previous studies have examined professional identification and organizational identification; and the impact of professional identification on organizational identification.

Mael&Ashforth (1992) operationalize the conceptualization of organizational identification and provide a partial test of the associated model of antecedents and consequences. Russo (1998) investigated the relationship of autonomy and job satisfaction to journalists' professional identification and compared the relationship of autonomy and job satisfaction to their organizational identification. Bamber&lyer (2002) examined auditors' sense of professional identity; they gave a comprehensive model of the relation between auditors' professional and organizational identities, including their potential conflict along with the antecedents and consequences of auditors' professional and organizational identification.

Loi et al., (2004) studied the effect of professional identification on several job attitudes (i.e., job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and career satisfaction). There is a need to examine the professional identification and organizational identification.

Collection of data

Both primary and secondary sources have been considered appropriate for collecting necessary information pertaining to present research work. Primary data, being firsthand information, were gathered from the teachers through self-modified and well-structured questionnaires. Secondary information from books, journal and internet was also used to substantial primary data.

Generation of scale items

The present study indicates that a thorough review of literature is done by taking two dimensions viz.; professional identification (dependent variable) and organizational identification (dependent variable) and the different items covering almost all the aspects of the study like discussion with experts, suggestions from respondents and review of pertinent literature. In order to gain the active involvement of respondents, face-to-face interviews were conducted while filling the instrument. The dimensions of the instrument are as under:-

- a) Professional identification: It is dependent variable comprised of nine items, four were taken from Lui et al's (2003) items of professionalism and remaining five items were adapted from Mael&Ashforth (1992).
- b) Organizational identification: It is dependent variable, consisted of ten items. Eight items were borrowed from a 12-item index patterned after Brown (1969) and two from Mael&Ashforth (1992).

Data collection forms

The required information pertaining to professional identification and organizational identification was gathered from permanent teachers through self-modified questionnaire. Pilot survey was conducted in August, 2011. Data were gathered from 60 permanent teachers of Jammu University. Some statements were modified to ensure the best fit with the situation in the organization being studied and a final questionnaire were settled of 60 items out of which 30 items relates to professional identification and remaining 30 items to organizational identification. All the items were framed on 5 point likert scale ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree.

Findings of the study

The validity and reliability of the constructs have been checked

through the confirmatory factor analysis and it has been determined that condition of standardized regression weights is fulfilled and; the conditions of composite reliability, cronbach alpha and discriminant validity have been satisfied for the constructs. The result reveals that professional identification has significant influence on organizational identification.

SEM provides significant 'p' value (0.005) of relationship between professional identification and organizational identification. The SEM result shows that teachers have reported higher identification with the profession of teaching than with their organization. Our results indicate that the organization should fortify teachers' professional identity, which in turn all strengthen their organizational identification. Russo (1998) also revealed significant positive correlation between organizational and professional identification. Further, Bamber & Iyer (2002) found significant and positive influence of professional identification on organizational identification.

Limitations and future implications

1. The generalizability of the findings is limited on account of study area.
2. The study was limited to teachers only, in future other employees can also be involved for better study.
3. Non-availability of sufficient literature on the topic might have led to the exclusion of some dimensions.
4. The study talks about only professional identification and organizational identification individually. Thus, further study can examine the factors which influence both professional and organizational identification.

Conclusion

This study is based on data collected from 260 respondents of Jammu University teachers by the way of filling of questionnaire by taking two dimensions viz., professional identification and organizational identification. The findings of the study indicates that professional identification has significant influence on organizational identification. In future, data will also be collected from employees of other university teachers prevailing in the J&K and other employees of university for having comprehensive results about these two dimensions.

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