



## TENURE AS A MODERATOR BETWEEN AFFECTIVE COMMITMENT AND PROACTIVELY

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### ABSTRACT

**Purpose:** *This study tested the moderation of tenure between affective commitment and proactive work behavior in Karachi, Pakistan.*

**Methodology/Sampling:** *The method of gathering the data was primary research. The respondents were managers from pharmaceutical, banking, education and textile sector. The respondents were managers working as permanent employees in middle level or senior level management positions. The sample selection technique was non probability based in which non-restricted sampling type was used. The sample size comprised of 1000 respondents, 250 from each sector but data from 697 respondents was usable in the analysis.*

**Findings:** *The results showed that as the career progresses from trial stage towards stabilization and ultimately towards maintenance stage, employees are more emotionally committed with their organization and are keenly involved in proactive work behaviors.*

**Practical Implications:** *This study has inculcated the theoretical assumption that committed employees are creative and innovative and tend to demonstrate much more profound behaviors of proactivity than non-committed ones.*

**Keywords:** tenure, affective commitment, proactive work behavior

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

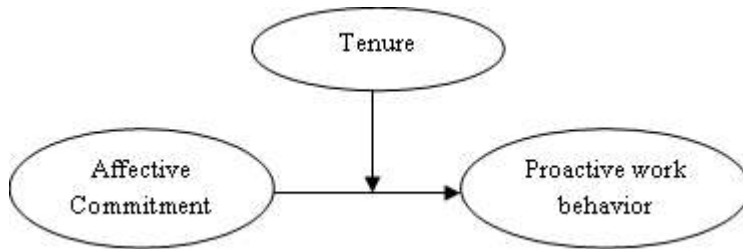
The traditional view of individual performance needs to be reconsidered due to the continuous changes in firms, markets, products, and processes (Ilgen & Pulakos, 1999). There is a constant requirement by organizations to implement effective mechanisms to ensure such active and initiating behaviors to increase performance and profitability for all its stakeholders. Proactivity thus must become a norm. If employees feel less committed to their organization, they disengage from discretionary behaviors. Non-Proactive behavior is the consequence of such lack of commitment. Besides tenure plays a major role in influencing commitment and proactive behaviors of employees. Tenure helps shape employees' attitudes toward their jobs so one can say that as number of years in an organization increases along with an upward trend in his/her career progress then it will affect their attitudes and behaviours on the job (Rogers, Clow and Kash, 1994).

In this study, tenure has been taken as a moderator between affective commitment and proactive work behaviours i.e. whether affective commitment increases or decreases employees' tendency to engage in proactive behaviour with the passage of time or not. Hence, this research analyses whether tenure moderates or strengthens this direct relationship or not.

## 1.1 Hypotheses

H1: Tenure moderates the relationship between affective commitment and proactive behavior.

Figure 1: Hypothesized Model



## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 Proactive Work Behavior

In the present day, researchers favor the actively participating employee. Scholars and practitioners now view individuals as active representatives of an organization who have the ability to act proactively to bring positive changes not only in them, but also in their organizational setting (Grant & Ashford, 2008). Proactive behaviors involve taking initiative and changing or creating new situations for improvements (Fritz &

Grant & Ashford, 2008).

In light of the increasing popularity of proactive work behaviours, there has been substantial development in this area. Variety of concepts explaining proactivity has emerged which include proactive personality (Crant, 1995); personal initiative and taking charge (Morrison and Phelps, 1999) and general proactive behavior presented by Parker, Williams, and Turner (2006) and Grant and Ashford (2008). A latest advancement in the integrative research of proactive behaviors has been put forward by Parker and Collins (2010). They suggested that proactive work behavior is a latent variable which includes taking charge, individual innovation, problem prevention and voice that constitute proactive work behavior. This research has taken the work of Parker and Collins (2010) and taken proactive work behavior as a second-order factor. Taking charge refers to bringing about functional change in the organization which effects how tasks are accomplished (Morrison & Phelps, 1999; Parker & Collins, 2010). Voice is related with communication regarding the problems that impacts one's work along with looking for information regarding such problems (Van Dyne & LePine, 1998; Parker & Collins, 2010). Individual innovation emphasizes on uniqueness. It comes about once an employee identifies new chances; develop new concepts, and implements them (Scott & Bruce, 1994; Parker & Collins, 2010). Lastly, problem prevention strives to ascertain the underlying source of problems, and focuses on managing the reoccurrence of obstacles in the work.

## **2.2 Affective Commitment**

The foundation of affective commitment comes from organizational commitment. Organizational commitment is defined in terms of how strongly an employee identifies himself with and involves with organization. Allen & Meyer (1990) defined organizational commitment in terms of a three component model. In their model, the three underlying constructs of organizational commitment were distinguished as affective, normative and continuance. The emotional attachment towards the organization as a result of the alignment between the organizational and personal values and aims is known as affective commitment. Affective commitment has the strongest positive relationship with employee well-being. Affective commitment is a psychological condition which may lead to decreased mental efforts and competence and increased employee turnover (Meyer, Stanley, Herscovitch, Topolnysky, 2002).

## **2.3 Affective commitment and Proactive Work Behavior**

Recently, literature on affective commitment has shed light on the relationship between Affective Commitment and proactive behavior. Some proclaim that most variability in proactive behavior is attributable to affective commitment (Den Hartog & Belschak, 2007), while others recommend affective commitment is linked to generalized compliance rather than proactive behavior (Parker et al., 2006). Discretionary work behavior of employees is enhanced with increased affective commitment. Committed employees think of their organizations success as their own and want to stay with the organization therefore they put in extra effort a pre-condition of exerting

committed and thus proactive behavior will spread from initial employees to other numerous employees (Spsychala, 2010). Parker (2000) proposes that as a consequence of affective commitment, employees may put in extra effort in their work; either inactive or proactive way.

## **2.4 Tenure**

Tenure is taken as the moderating variable in the model between affective commitment and proactive work behavior. Making reference to Super's (1957) career-stage model, these researchers proposed that a) employees in the early stage of their career are keen to identify their interests and capabilities, achieve a sense of mastery, and gain acceptance; b) employees in the middle career stage are keen to advance and grow professionally; and c) later-career-stage employees are keen to find challenging work assignments and more generally assume responsibility for mentoring others. Therefore tenure is taken in terms of three stages in this study, the "trial" stage (less than two years tenure), the "stabilisation" stage (two to ten years tenure and the "maintenance" stage (more than ten years) (Aryee et al., 1994).

Vandenberg and Self, (1993); and Ostroff and Kozlowski, (1993), Beck and Wilson (2000) proposed that the trial stage may last for a year, as affective commitment decreased after one year. These researchers also found that affective commitment decreased in the stabilization stage.

While English, Morrison & Chalon, (2010) indicated in their study that affective commitment was greater in the later tenure.

The present research uses the three tenure categories namely: early, middle and later tenure where early tenure comprises of lesser than a year; middle or intermediate tenure consisted of one to nine years and later or advanced tenure involves greater than nine years.

## **2.4 Tenure as a Moderator between Affective Commitment and Proactive Work Behavior**

There are two perspectives related to the effect of tenure on individual's behaviors and attitudes. The first perspective (Alutto & Hrebiniak, 1975; Stevens, Janice, & Harrison, 1978; Staw & Ross, 1980) proposes that longer tenure is positively related to behaviors and attitudes. Employees who have worked for longer in the organization accept authority, policies and values (Schmidt & Posner, 1983). Also, employees with long tenure were less inclined to search for better jobs in the market; they were highly motivated, and committed and showed greater participation in the organization and required job security (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002).

On the other hand, the second perspective opposed to the aforementioned arguments indicate that rather shorter tenure employees are positive, passionate and accepting, about their work surroundings. The short tenure employees display high

Bhargava, 2013).

According to some researchers affective commitment strengthens with tenure, while other researchers have concluded differently. For example (Morrow and McElroy, 1987; Gaertner and Nollen, 1989; Rhoades and Eisenberger, 2001) found that tenure is positively associated to affective commitment, while Lok and Crawford, (2001) showed that they are negatively related. Furthermore, Gellatly, (1995); Konovsky and Cropanzano, (1991); Reichers, (1986); and Bateman and Strasser, (1984) found no relationship between tenure and affective commitment.

### **3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The method of gathering the data was primary research. The questionnaire used pre-developed questions taken from past studies. The respondents were managers from national and multinational organizations from pharmaceutical, banking, education and textile sector. The respondents were managers working as permanent employees in middle level or senior level management positions because it proactive behaviors would be more apparent in them as they typically possess adequate autonomy to involve in such behaviors. The sample selection technique was non probability based in which non-restricted sampling type was used. The population is unidentified as there would be thousands of managers in each sector. The sample size comprised of 1000 respondents, 250 from each sector. 214 questionnaires were usable from banking sector, 170 were usable from education sector, 173 respondents correctly filled from pharmaceutical sector and 140 returned the complete questionnaire from textile sector. Data from 697 respondents was used in analysis for all the variables and sub variables

#### **3.1 Measures**

Proactive work behavior was assessed using Parker et al., (2010) four measures namely; Taking charge, Voice, Individual innovation, and Problem prevention. Affective commitment construct was assessed through six questions which were established by Meyer, Allen and Smith (1993). All the measures used Likert scale which ranged from point 1 to 5, where, "1" labelled as Strongly Disagree to "5" labelled as Strongly Agree. In this study tenure was operationalized using three stages; early stage comprises of less than one year; middle stage having 1 to 9 years; and later stage having more than 9 years (English, Morrison & Chalon, 2010). The question was asked from respondents as to select one option from these three to express their current tenure with the organization.

### **4. RESULTS**

Data on 22 items was collected and were named as Tak\_Char1, Tak\_Char2, Tak\_Char3, Voice1, Voice2, Voice3, Voice4, Ind\_Inn1, Ind\_Inn2, Ind\_Inn3, Pro\_Prev1, Pro\_Pre2, Pro\_Pre3, Aff\_Com1, Aff\_Com2, Aff\_Com3, Aff\_Com4, Aff\_Com5, Aff\_Com6, Gender, tenure, and Age in the SPSS data sheet. Table 1 represents the descriptive statistics and reliability estimates for proactive work behavior and affective

endogenous variables. Relationships among these variable were hypothesized as in Figure 1. The model is composed of affective commitment, proactive work behavior and tenure.

H1: Tenure moderates the relationship between affective commitment and proactive behavior.

For the assessment of this above stated hypothesis, preacher and Hayes 2011 process macro was run in SPSS 19 to calculate the moderated effect of tenure on proactive work behavior. Table 2 assesses the model and shows that, R square is 0.2773 which means that affective commitment explains 27.73% variation in proactive work behaviors.

The F, dfs and p values indicate that the model of tenure, affective commitment and the interaction of tenure and affective commitment significantly predicts proactive work behaviors,  $F(3, 693) = 88.6433$ , with p value  $<0.001$  the next Table no. 3 explains the coefficients (coeff), standard deviations (se), t values, p values, the lower limit 95% confidence interval (LLCI) and the upper limit 95% confidence interval (ULCI). The first place to look on this Table is at the p value for the interaction (int\_1), which shows that the interaction of tenure and affective commitment is statistically significant  $p < 0.05$  i.e.  $p = 0.0352$ , which means that the moderator is moderating the relationship between affective commitment and proactive work behavior and coefficient is 0.0853. Also the upper and lower bounds explain that there is no zero between them and it is positive i.e. LLCI = 0.0059 and ULCI = 0.1647. Further, affective commitment has a positive and direct relationship with proactive work behavior at  $p < 0.001$ , coefficient 0.3629 but there is no direct relationship of tenure and proactive work behavior as the p value = 0.3996  $> 0.05$ .

The last Table no. 4 explains the conditional effect of X on Y at the values of the moderator which is tenure. The values for the moderators are taken as the mean plus/minus one SD from mean. The first row shows when the tenure is -0.5571, the second row shows when tenure is at mean (zero, as we centered the variables around the mean), and the third row indicates when tenure is at 0.5571. when tenure is low  $b = 0.3154$ , 95% CI (0.2545, 0.3762),  $t = 10.1769$ ,  $p < 0.001$ . When the tenure is at mean then,  $b = 0.3629$ , 95% CI (0.3188, 0.4070),  $t = 16.1533$ ,  $p < 0.001$ . When the tenure is high,  $b = 0.4104$ , 95% CI (0.3464, 0.4744),  $t = 12.5838$ ,  $p < 0.001$ . All these values reflect that tenure moderates the relationship between affective commitment and proactive work behaviors.

## **5. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION**

The moderated model tested whether the tenure affects the relationship between affective commitment and proactive work behavior. It was found that as employees progress in their career in their respective organizations, their commitment tends to increase with time. Thus supervisors, managers and HR executives should give them a safe and sound working environment to nurture their capabilities and enhance their potential, train them for uncertain situations and new technology which will boost their morale, and increase their loyalty and commitment towards their companies. Managers must also attempt to provide effective HR policies and practices, transparent information

perspectives between employees and their supervisors with regard to proactive work behavior which may have implications for motivation, and performance evaluations as supervisors may reward this behavior.

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## APPENDIX

Table 1 Descriptive Statistics and Reliability Estimates

Variable	Mean	SD	Alpha
Proactive Work Behavior	3.977	0.8838	0.814
<i>Taking Charge</i>	4.1253	.8233	0.616
<i>Voice</i>	3.8153	.9367	0.571
<i>Individual Innovation</i>	4.0167	.8668	0.675
<i>Problem Prevention</i>	3.9493	.9084	0.558
Affective Commitment	3.9395	.9614	0.842

Table 2: Model Summary

R	R-sq	MSE	F	df1	df2	p
.5266	.2773	.1784	88.6433	3.0000	693.0000	.0000

Table 3: Model

	coeff	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
constant	3.9585	.0162	243.9483	.0000	3.9267	3.9904
Tenure	-0.0246	.0292	-.8429	.3996	-.0818	.0327
affec	.3629	.0225	16.1533	.0000	-.3188	.4070
int_1	.0853	.0404	2.1098	.0352	.0059	.1647

Table 4: Conditional effect of X on Y at values of the moderator(s):

Tenure	Effect	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
-0.5571	.3154	.0310	10.1769	.0000	.2545	.3762
0.0000	.3629	.0225	16.1533	.0000	.3188	.4070
0.5571	.4104	.0326	12.5838	.0000	.3464	.4744