DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 398 481 CG 027 188

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TITLE Predictors of Organizational Commitment and Job Satisfaction among State Agency Rehabilitation Counselors: Maryland.
PUB DATE Mar 95
NOTE 17p.; For national results, see CG 027 177. For studies at the state level, see CG 027 178-204.
PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143) -- Tests/Evaluation Instruments (160)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Counselor Qualifications; *Counselors; *Employee Attitudes; Employment Patterns; Job Performance; *Job Satisfaction; Occupational Surveys; *Personnel Data; Quality of Working Life; *Rehabilitation Counseling; Work Attitudes; Work Environment
IDENTIFIERS *Maryland; Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire

ABSTRACT

The job satisfaction and organizational commitment of rehabilitation counselors working in the public rehabilitation agencies in Maryland are the focus of this study. Participants were 69 rehabilitation counselor survey respondents. A total of 130 surveys were mailed. Job satisfaction was measured using the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire. The three components of organizational commitment (affective, normative, and continuance) were examined using the Organizational Commitment Scales. Potential predictor variables examined were: (1) years of service; (2) age; (3) education level; (4) Certified Rehabilitation Counselor (CRC) status; (5) conscientiousness; (6) initiative; (7) cooperation; and (8) attendance/punctuality. Results indicate that conscientiousness is an important predictor of emotional and normative attachment of counselors toward the agencies for which they work. Years employed as a counselor was a significant negative predictor of job satisfaction. In the national sample, work behaviors appeared to be most important to rehabilitation counselors' job satisfaction, affective commitment, and normative commitment. While conscientiousness was most predictive of Maryland counselors' affective and normative commitment, work behaviors did not relate to job satisfaction. This made Maryland unique among all the states. Because both affective and normative commitment have been linked to higher levels of productivity, Maryland's public rehabilitation agencies are encouraged to develop ways of rewarding those conscientious behaviors which are most predictive of affective and normative commitment. Contains two appendices: (1) Job Satisfaction Items and (2) Organizational Commitment Items. (JBJ)

PREDICTORS OF ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT AND JOB SATISFACTION AMONG STATE AGENCY REHABILITATION COUNSELORS: MARYLAND

by

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March, 1995

PREDICTORS OF ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT AND JOB SATISFACTION AMONG STATE AGENCY REHABILITATION COUNSELORS: MARYLAND

This study examined the job satisfaction and organizational commitment of rehabilitation counselors working in the public (state/federal) rehabilitation agency in Maryland. The following is a summary of the results of the study.

Demographic Information

Sixty-nine (69) of 130 surveys were returned. The following demographic questions were asked:

1. How long had the counselors worked with the agency?
2. How old were the respondents?
3. Did the respondents have masters or bachelor's degrees?
4. Were the counselors Certified Rehabilitation Counselors?

The counselors ranged in years worked as a counselor in Maryland from 2 months to 30 years, with a mean of 8.74 years. They ranged in age from 24 to 63 years with a mean age of 43.29 ($n = 67$) and a standard deviation of 10.31. Forty-two (42) of the counselors had master's degrees or higher while twenty-five (25) reported having bachelor's degrees. Two (2) counselors did not indicate educational attainment. Seven (7) counselors indicated that they were Certified Rehabilitation Counselors while fifty-eight (58) said they were not. Four (4) counselors did not indicate certification status.

I. JOB SATISFACTION

Job satisfaction was measured using the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire developed by Weiss, Dawis, England, & Lofquist, (1967). The Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire job satisfaction has been used extensively as a measure of overall job satisfaction. Cook, Hepworth, Wall, & Warr (1982) describe the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire as a sound measure of overall job satisfaction.

The Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire uses a 5-point Likert scale with the following values:

1 = Very dissatisfied
2 = Dissatisfied
3 = I cannot decide whether I am satisfied or not
4 = Satisfied
5 = Very satisfied

A copy of the items can be found in Appendix A. Upon the completion of data collection, two items were deleted from the instrument: (a) being able to do things that do not go against my wishes, and (b) the chance to tell people what to do. Item a was deleted because the majority of respondents felt it was too ambiguously worded. Item b was deleted because the overwhelming majority of respondents indicated that their jobs did not provide opportunities for supervision and that, when working with clients, it was not part of their responsibilities/philosophy to "tell others what to do." With the deletion of these items, possible scores could range from 18-90. Using Cronbach's Alpha, a new reliability coefficient was calculated. Reliability was found to be .87. Possible scores could range from 18-90. The range of scores from Maryland's job satisfaction surveys ($\bar{n}$ = 63) were from 40-87 with a mean of 65.09 and a standard deviation of 10.93. This compares with a mean of 66.86 and a standard deviation of 10.90 for the national sample.

Data Analysis

The following question guided analysis of the data:

Can the job satisfaction of Maryland's rehabilitation counselors be predicted by any of the following variables: (a) years of service, (b) age, (c) education level, (d) CRC status, (e) conscientiousness, (f) initiative, (g) cooperation, and (h) attendance/punctuality.

Work behaviors to be included in the analysis were determined in the following fashion. The participants were given a list of 15 work behaviors and were asked to respond to each work behavior using a Likert scale ranging from 1 = "Strongly Disagree" to 5 = "Strongly Agree." The responses were then subjected to a factor analysis with a varimax rotation to identify work behavior groupings. Only those behaviors with a factor loading of .60 or higher were included in each group. Work behavior grouping were as follows:

Conscientiousness

I pay attention to details at work
I do my work thoroughly and completely
I have a concern for quality

Initiative

I am willing to volunteer for tasks
I give personal time to the agency
I show enthusiasm about my work
I am willing to take on extra responsibility

Cooperation

I share knowledge and information with others
I offer work suggestions to others

Attendance/Punctuality

I am late for work
I am absent for work

Correlations among the independent variables of the study can be found in Table 1.

Table 1.

Correlations: Independent Variables

	Age	CRC	Educat	Conscie	Initiative	Coopera	Att/Pun	Years
Age	1.00	.04	.36**	.03	-.11	.04	-.21	.72**
CRC	.04	1.00	.16	-.11	.19	.19	.14	.15
Education	.36**	.16	1.00	.05	.06	.19	.02	.26*
Conscientious	.03	-.11	.05	1.00	.14	-.14	-.12	-.03
Initiative	-.11	.19	.06	.14	1.00	.28*	.00	.01
Cooperation	.04	.19	.19	-.14	.28*	1.00	.19	.21
Att/Punctuality	-.21	.14	.02	-.12	.00	.19	1.00	-.14
Years	.72**	.15	.26*	-.03	.01	.21	-.14	1.00

In the present study, several significant (but not substantial) correlations were found:

a) As age increased, educational levels decreased;
b) As years employed increased, educational level increased;
c) As initiative increased, so did cooperation

One correlation of substantial magnitude was found: As age increased, years employed increased. The reader is cautioned that, in the interpretation of the following analyses, in those situations where either age or years employed are significant, it may not be possible to determine whether age or years employed explain the relationships found.

The research question was answered through stepwise multiple regression analysis. The results of this analysis can be found in Table 2.

Table 2.

Predictors of Job Satisfaction

Variable	B	SEB	Beta	T	p
Years	-.426	.147	-.362	-2.88	.01*

*p < .05

Years employed as a counselor in Maryland was a significant negative predictor of job satisfaction. As years employed as a counselor increased, job satisfaction decreased. Because of multicollinearity, age may also be a factor in decreased job satisfaction.

II. ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT

Organizational commitment refers to the dedication that employees feel toward the organization for which they work. It has been defined as "the strength of an individual's identification with and involvement in a particular organization" (Porter, Steers, Mowday, & Boulian, 1974, p. 604). It also has been related to the energy that employees expend on behalf of the organizations for which they work.

Meyer & Allen (1991) conceptualized organizational commitment as having three dimensions: (a) affective, (b) normative, and (c) continuance. Affective commitment refers to the emotional attachment that an individual has for the organization in which he or she works. Normative commitment refers to the individual's attachment to an organization because of values relating to loyalty. Continuance commitment refers, primarily, to an individual's attachment to the organization for which he or she works because the costs of leaving the organization would be too high. Workers operating from an affective model of commitment expend energy on behalf of the organization because they *want* to. Workers operating from a normative model of commitment expend energy on behalf of the organization because the believe they *should*. Persons in the continuance model expend energy on behalf of their organizations because they feel they *have* to.

This study examined the affective, normative, and continuance commitment of rehabilitation counselors working for Maryland's public rehabilitation agency. The following questions guided the research:

1. **What are the affective, normative, and continuance commitment levels of Maryland's rehabilitation counselors?**

2. **Can Maryland's state agency rehabilitation counselors' affective,normative, and continuation commitment be predicted using the following variables: (a) age, (b) years working as a counselor with the agency, (c) CRC status, (d) education, (e) conscientiousness, (f) initiative, (g) cooperation, and (h) attendance/punctuality?**

Question 1

For each area of commitment, scores on this instrument can range from 8-56. The following scores were obtained:

Affective Commitment	Mean = 33.50	SD = 7.17	n = 69
Normative Commitment	Mean = 31.40	SD = 6.94	n = 66
Continuance Commitment	Mean = 37.23	SD = 8.43	n = 67

Maryland's public rehabilitation counselors' highest level of organizational commitment was continuance (have to) commitment. This was followed, respectively, by affective and normative commitment. In the national sample, the state agency counselors greatest level of commitment was continuance. These were followed by affective and normative commitment.

Question 2

Stepwise multiple regression analysis was used to investigate demographic and behavioral correlates of affective, normative, and continuance commitment. Demographic variables were age, CRC status, educational level, and years employed as a counselor with the state agency. Behavioral variables were conscientiousness, initiative, cooperation, and attendance/punctuality. Table 3 presents the results of the analysis for affective commitment.

Table 3.

Multiple Regression: Affective Commitment

Variable	B	SEB	Beta	T	p
Conscientiousness	4.219	.900	.520	4.68	.00**

**p < .01

Conscientiousness was the only significant predictor of affective commitment, accounting for 27% of the variance associated with affective commitment. As Maryland's rehabilitation counselors' conscientiousness increased, so did their emotional attachment to the organization.

Table 4 illustrates stepwise multiple regression analysis for normative commitment.

Table 4.

Multiple Regression: Normative Commitment

Variable	B	SEB	Beta	T	p
Conscientiousness	2.618	1.058	.313	2.47	.01*

*p < .05

Conscientiousness was the only significant predictor of normative commitment, accounting for 9% of the total variance. As levels of conscientiousness increased, so did normative commitment.

Table 5 illustrated stepwise multiple regression analysis for continuance commitment.

Table 5.

Predictors of Continuance Commitment

Variable	B	SEB	Beta	T	p
Initiative	2.02	.747	.338	2.71	.00*

**p < .01

Initiative was predictive of continuance commitment, accounting for 11% of the variance. As reported initiative increased, so did continuance (have to) commitment.

DISCUSSION

Job satisfaction and organizational commitment among public-rehabilitation counselors may ultimately be reflected in the quality of services provided to persons with disabilities. Public

(state/federal) agencies employing rehabilitation counselors should pay attention to those variables which are predictive of both job satisfaction and organizational commitment.

In the national sample, work behaviors appeared to be most important to rehabilitation counselors' job satisfaction, affective commitment, and normative commitment. While conscientiousness was most predictive of Maryland counselors' affective and normative commitment, work behaviors did not relate to job satisfaction. This made Maryland unique among all the states. Years employed was the only significant correlate of job satisfaction, with older counselor being less satisfied. This was also a finding of the national study.

State/federal rehabilitation agencies, including Maryland, wishing to enhance the affective commitment of its counselors are advised to consider ways to reward those behaviors which reflect conscientiousness, initiative, and cooperation. Offering rewards (e.g., in the form of positive verbal reinforcement or letters to the counselor from administrators) for correct and complete case documentation, attention to details, and evidence of quality case services might serve to enhance satisfaction and emotional commitment. While these behaviors will typically lead to successful case closures, attention focused exclusively on <u>outcome</u> (i.e, # of 26 closures) rather than <u>process</u> may leave counselors feeling disempowered and unappreciated and may, ultimately, result in decreased work performance.

The overall patterns of commitment in this study create some concern. As a group, the counselors operated primarily from the continuance component of commitment. While it is important for agencies to provide incentives through work benefits (i.e., insurance, retirement, etc.), counselors operating primarily from a continuance model may have less productivity than those operating primarily from an affective or normative perspective. Again, public rehabilitation agencies need to emphasize (and reward) those behaviors that positively relate to affective and normative commitment.

Interestingly, in Maryland's results, continuance commitment and initiative were significantly correlated. This was unique and unexplainable.

SUMMARY

The results of this study of the job satisfaction and organizational commitment of Maryland's public rehabilitation counselors indicate that conscientious is an important predictors of the emotional and normative attachment of its counselors toward the agency. Because both affective and normative commitment have been linked to higher levels of productivity, Maryland's public rehabilitation agency are encouraged to develop ways of rewarding those conscientious behaviors which are most predictive of affective commitment normative commitment.

APPENDIX A

JOB SATISFACTION ITEMS

On my present job, this is how I feel about:

1. Being able to keep busy all the time
2. The chance to work alone on the job
3. The chance to do different things from time to time
4. The chance to be "somebody" in the community
5. The way my boss handles his/her workers
6. The competence of my supervisor in making decisions
7. Being able to do things that do not go against my decisions*
8. The way my job provides for steady employment
9. the chance to do things for other people
10. The chance to tell people what to do*
11. The way company policies are put into practice
12. My pay and the amount of work I do
13. The chances for advancement on the job
14. The freedom to use my own judgement
15. The working conditions
16. The way my co-workers get along with each other
17. The praise I get for doing a good job
18. The feeling of accomplishment I get from the job

*Deleted from final analysis

APPENDIX B

ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT ITEMS

Affective Commitment

I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career with this agency

I enjoy discussing my agency with people outside of it

I really feel as if this agency's problems are my own

I think I could easily become as attached to another agency as I am to this one (Reversed)

I do not feel like "part of the family" at my agency (Reversed)

I do not feel "emotionally attached" to this agency (Reversed)

This agency has a great deal of personal meaning for me

I do not feel a strong sense of belonging to my agency (Reversed)

Normative Commitment

I think that people these days move from company to company too often

I do not believe that a person must always be loyal to his or her organization (Reversed)

Jumping from organization to organization does not seem at all unethical to me (Reversed)

One of the major reasons I continue to work for this agency is that I believe loyalty is important and therefore feel a sense of moral obligation to remain

If I got another offer for a better job elsewhere, I would not feel it was right to leave my agency

I was taught to believe in the value of remaining loyal to one organization

Things were better in the days when people stayed with one organization for most of their careers

I do not think that wanting to be a "company man" or "company woman" is sensible anymore (Reversed)

Continuance Commitment

I am not afraid of what might happen if I quit my job without having another one line up (Reversed)

It would be very hard for me to leave my agency right now, even if I wanted to

Too much in my life would be disrupted if I decided to leave my agency right now

It would not be too costly for me to leave my agency in the near future (Reversed)

Right now, staying with my agency is a matter of necessity as much as desire

I feel that I have too few options to consider leaving my agency

One of the few negative consequences of leaving this agency would be the scarcity of available alternatives

One of the major reasons why I continue to work for this agency is that leaving would require considerable personal sacrifice-another organization may not match the overall benefits here

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