

EMPLOYEES' COMMITMENT AND GROWTH OF FAMILY BUSINESSES

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Abstract

Family businesses play a significant role in employment creation in Ghana and the services of family member and non-family member employees are normally required. The level of commitment of these employees has gained significant research attention over the years because of its positive impact on the growth and succession of the family businesses. The current study finds out the level of commitment of family member and non-family member employees and also determines whether significant relationship exist between commitment of family member and non-family member employees and the growth of the family businesses. A total of 150 family business employees selected from 18 family businesses in the Ashanti Region of Ghana participated in the study. Percentages, Pearson Product Moment Correlation Co-efficient and Regression were used to analyse the data. The results showed that, family member employees were highly committed to the business and that females employees were also found to be highly committed compared to their male counterpart. The results further showed that, the commitment of both family member and non-family member employees has a

positive significant correlation with growth of the family businesses. Regression analysis further confirmed a significant impact of commitment on growth of the family business. The study further suggests that management should take notice and maintain human resource practices which contribute to employees' commitment in order to maintain the growth and succession of family businesses.

Keywords: Employees commitment, Family Business, Family member Employees, Growth, Non-Family member Employees

INTRODUCTION

The commitment level and the role of non-family member employees in family business are now gaining significant attention recently by scholars in the field (Astrachan & Keyt, 2003; Barnett & Kellermans, 2006, Chua, Chrisman, & Sharma, 2003). However, scholars are still debating what makes family businesses unique and distinct from non-family business. As Chua et al put it “family businesses are characterised by long term orientation” and it plays a very critical role in employment creation (Tetteh 2008). Family businesses are focusing on the following three constructs, socio-emotional wealth, the essence of family business, and families (Berrone, Cruz, Gomez-Mejia, & Larraza-Kintana 2010) and researchers have proof that there is a strong relationship between the employees' commitment level and performance which translated to productivity and growth of firms (Muse, Rutherford, Oswald, & Raymond, 2005). The commitment level of the organization which constitutes the goals, visions and values together with the commitment of its workforce also plays a significant role in the firm's performance and growth (Porter, Steers, Mowday, & Boulian, 1994). Forkuoh et al (2012), also argued that, these commitments are often used as a tool to prolong the longevity of a firm, especially a family firm where the interest of family member employees are clearly geared towards succession. Again, societal values such as respect, love and togetherness also have positive impact on the growth and development of the firms (Forkuoh et al (2012). Memari et al (2013), in a study found a positive relationship between organizational commitment and employees' job performance and also argued that, employees who are committed tend to reduce absenteeism, lateness and other negative attitudes towards work.

There have been problems in managing employees of family businesses because management deals with two categories of employees. One of the biggest challenges family businesses face in terms of HRM, is effective management of non-family member employees, because family firms differ from other forms of businesses with certain peculiar characteristics such as paternalistic –autocratic rule, founder-centric cultures, lack of delegation, in-group-out-group perceptions of non-family employees' altruism and nepotism (Barnett and Kellermans 2006; Schein, 1983). These unique features tend to breed injustice among the two sets of

employees, affecting their commitment levels, performance and productivity (Barnett and Kellermanns 2006; Meyer, Stanley, Herscovitch, & Topolnytsky, 2002).

This study is interested in finding out the level of commitment of family employees as well as determining whether a relationship exists between commitment of family member and non-family member employees working in family businesses and the growth of the family businesses.

Objectives of the study

1. To explore the level of commitment of employees of family businesses on demographic variables such as gender, age, educational level.
2. To determine the commitment level of family member employees
3. To determine the commitment level of non-family member employees
4. To ascertain the relationship between the commitment of family member and non-family member employees and growth of family businesses
5. To determine the impact of organisational commitment on the growth of family businesses.
6. To provide constructive analysis, suggestions and recommendation to shareholders, CEOs, employees and other stakeholders of family businesses on the need to focus on organisational commitment as a tool for family businesses growth.

Research Questions

1. What is the commitment level of family business employees on demographic variables such as gender, age, educational level?
2. What is the commitment level of family member employees?
3. What is the commitment level of non-family member employees?

Research Hypothesis

H₁: There is a positive significant relationship between commitment of family member employees of family businesses and growth of family businesses

H₂: There is a positive significant relationship between commitment of non-family member employees of family businesses and growth of family businesses

H₃: Commitment of employees of family businesses has positive impact on growth of family businesses

LITERATURE REVIEW

Organisational commitment has been regarded as one of the important instruments that aid employees' performance. The success of an organization does not only based on motivation, high pay or training but also how employees are committed to the organization. According to Meye & Herscovitch (2001), commitment at workplace can take various forms and arguably have the potential to influence organizational effectiveness and employees' well-being. The organizational commitment of employees working in family business is very importance to the survival and succession of the business (Vallejo 2008). Normally, there are two sets of employees who work in family business, the family member and the non-family member employees.

Defining Organisational Commitment

Commitment comes into being when a person by making a side bet, links extraneous interests with a consistent link of activity (Becker, 1960). Oliver (1990) defines commitment as one's inclination to act in a given way toward a particular commitment target. Commitment is an obliging force which requires that the person honour the commitment even in the face of fluctuating attitudes and whims (Brown 1996). Scholl, (1981), defines commitment as a stabilizing force, that force acts to maintain behavioural direction when expectancy/equity conditions are not met and do not function.

Organisational commitment has also been defined as a psychological attachment of a person to the organization. Commitment is the relative strength of an individual's identification with and involvement in a particular organization (Mowday et al. 1979). Organisational commitment is a bond or linking of the individual to the organization (Mathieu &Zajac 1990). Organisational commitment can be defined generally as a psychological link between the employee and his or her organization that makes it less likely that the employee will voluntarily leave the organization (Allen & Meyer 1996). Organisational commitment over the years have been defined and measured in many ways (Meyer & Allen 1991, Mowday et al 1982). The lack of consensus in the definition of organisational commitment contributed greatly to its treatment as a multidimensional construct (Meye & Allen 1996). Authors such as (Becker 1960) viewed commitment as the common element linking different forms of commitment within multidimensional models. Meyer & Herscovitch (2001), Brown, (1996), Oliver (1990), Scholl (1981) believe that commitment has a core essence that distinguishes it from other constructs. All the definitions of commitment in general made reference to the fact that commitment (a) stabilizing or obliging force, that (b) gives directions to behavior (restricts, freedom, binds the person to a course of action) (Meyer & Herscovitch 2001)

Dimensions of Organisational Commitment

Many theorists have begun to consider commitment as a multidimensional construct (Meyer & Herscovitch 2001). According to Meyer & Herscovitch, (2001) there appears to be a consensus that, commitment is a binding force and the force is experienced as a mindset (i.e. a frame of mind or psychological state that compels an individual toward a course of action). According to the researchers, arguably, what differentiates the various dimensions (forms components) of commitment in these multidimensional conceptualities is the nature of the underlying mindset.

O'Reilly & Chatman, (1986) argued that commitment takes three distinct dimensions. Thus, the basis for one's psychological attachment to an organization may be predicated on three independent foundations: (a) compliance or instrumental involvement for specific, extrinsic rewards; (b) identification or involvement based on a desire for affiliation; and (c) internalization or involvement predicated on congruence between individual and organizational values. These differences may represent separate dimensions of commitment (O'Reilly & Chatman 1986).

Angle & Perry (1981), distinguished between two forms of commitment: value commitment and commitment to stay in the organization. The dimensions of organizational commitment can be distinguished between affective, continuance, and moral commitment. Jaros et al (1993). Penley& Gould (1988) developed a multidimensional framework and distinguished between three forms of commitment: moral, calculative and alienative commitment. Organisational commitment has two dimensions which are continuance commitment (desire to remain) and value commitment (willingness to exert effort) (Mayer & Schoorman 1992). Finally, Meyer & Allen (1991) developed their three-component model based on the observation that there were both similarities and differences in existing unidimensional conceptualizations of organizational commitment. Common to all, they argued was the belief that binds an individual to an organization that reduces the likelihood of turnover. The key difference is mind-set presumed to characterize the commitment: these mind-sets reflected three distinguishable themes: Affective, Continuance and Normative commitment (Meyer & Herscovitch 2001). According to this perspective, the psychological linkage between employees and their organizations can take three quite distinct forms each of which is given a distinguishing label (Allen & Meyer 1996). Affective commitment refers to identification with, involvement in, and emotional attachment to the organization (Allen & Meyer 1996). Continuance commitment refers to commitment based on the employee's recognition of the costs associated with leaving the organisation (Allen & Meyer 1996). Finally, normative commitment refers to commitment based on a sense of obligation to the organization (Allen & Meyer, 1996). Allen & Meyer developed their three models based on the unidimensions of other scholars this paper will focus on the dimensions of Allen and Meyer (1991).

Organisational commitment has been found to be positively correlated with job performance (Suliman & Illse 2000; Solinger, Olffen & Roe 2008; McDonald & Makin 1999; Cohen 1999; Spector 2008). There is a positive relationship between organisational commitment and employees' job performance (Memari, Mahdieh & Marnani 2013). Employees with high level of organisational commitment, psychologically view themselves as owners of the organization. As Mowday, Porter, & Steers, (1982) put it "organizational commitment is a person's dedication, involvement towards organizational goals, belief and values and commitment is positively related to such desirable outcome as job satisfaction, job involvement and growth". Again, research has shown that family member employees' commitment is positively related to the profitability and survival of the family businesses (Vallejo 2009) and reduce employees' turnover, enhance profit and firm performance (Sharma & Irving 2005)

On the other side of the coin, surprisingly, previous research suggested that organizational commitment is largely unrelated to job performance (Mathieu & Zajac, 1990) and the link between commitment and performance is largely nonexistent (Mowday et al 1982).

METHODOLOGY

Design

This research was descriptive correlation survey. The researchers selected employees from 18 Family Medium and Small Size Enterprises in the Ashanti Region of Ghana.

Sample and instrument

A sample of 150 family-member employees and non-family member employees were randomly selected for the research. Questionnaire was used to gather the data for the study. The researchers adopted Commitment Scale developed by Allen and Meyer (1991) to measure employees' commitment in terms of Affective, Normative and Continuance commitment. The internal consistency of the original scale has been estimated using coefficient alpha. The median reliabilities, across both versions of the ACS, CCS, and NCS are .85, .79, and .73 respectively, and with very few exceptions all reliability estimates exceed .70 (Allen & Meyer 1996).

Questionnaires were developed from growth indicators of SMEs such as increase in sales revenue, increase in customer base, more branches established, increase of dividends to shareholders etc. The reliabilities of the instruments were tested and the results are presented as in Table 1.

Table 1: a. Reliability Statistics of Commitment Scale

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.975	24

Table 1a shows the Cronbach's Alpha of the commitment scale used for this study. The internal consistency showed Cronbach's Alpha of 0.975 for 24 items.

Table 2: b. Reliability Statistics Growth Scale

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.876	18

Table 1 b shows the Cronbach's Alpha of the growth scale used for this study. The internal consistency showed Cronbach's Alpha of 0.876 for 18 items.

Above reliability analysis shows that, the items used are highly reliable. It indicates that the researchers can depend on these items for the analysis of the research and decision can be derived from the result that will be obtained from the analysis

Statistical tools

The researchers used Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS version 22.0) to analyze the data. Statistical tools used to analysed the data were percentages, Pearson Correlation Co-efficient and Regression. The percentages were used to analyze the demographic information and the level of commitment of respondents. The correlation was computed to find out the relationship between employee's commitment and growth of the family business and regression was used to find out the extent to which variability in the dependent variable is explained by the independent variable in the model.

ANALYSIS & FINDINGS

Table 2: Gender of the Respondents

Respondents	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
Males	91	60.7
Females	59	39.3
Total	150	100

Table 2 shows gender of the respondents and out of 150 samples 91 (60.7%) were males and 59 representing 39.3% were females.

Table 3: Age Brackets of the Respondents

Respondents	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
Up to 30	74	49.3
Above 30	76	50.7
Total	150	100

Table 3 represents the Age of the respondents out of a sample of 150, 74 (49.3%) were falls within the up to 30 age brackets and 76 (50.7%) falls within the above 30 category.

Table 4: Educational Level of the Respondents

Respondents	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
Below First Degree	110	73.3
From First Degree	40	26.7
Total	150	100

Table 4 shows the educational level of respondents 110 (73.3%) out of a sample of 150 have certificates below first degree and 40 (26.7%) have first degree and above.

Table 5: Employee Type: Family and Non-Family Member Employees

Respondents	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
Family Member Employee	85	56.7
Non-Family Member Employee	65	43.3
Total	150	100

Table 5 shows the employee type of respondents in respects to whether family member or non-family member employee. Out of a total of 150 respondents, 85 (56.7%) were family member employees and 65 (43.3%) were non-family member employees. Which shows that majority of the employees were family member employees.

Table 6: The Commitment Level of Family Business Employees

Variable	Low	High	Total
	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)
Gender: Male:	34 (37.4)	57 (62.6)	91 (100)
Female:	14 (24.0)	45 (76.0)	59 (100)
Total	48 (32.0)	102 (68.0)	150 (100)
Age: Up to 30yrs	18 (24.3)	56 (75.7)	74 (100)
Above 30yrs	30 (39.5)	46 (60.5)	76 (100)
Total	48 (32.0)	102 (68.0)	150 (100)
Education Level: Below 1 st Degree	33 (30.0)	77 (70.0)	110 (100)
From 1 st Degree	15 (37.5)	25 (62.5)	40 (100)
Total	48 (32.0)	102 (68.0)	150 (100)
Employee Type: Family Member	23 (27)	62 (73.0)	85 (100)
Non-Family Member	26 (39.4)	39(60.6)	65 (100)
Total	49 (32.7)	101 (67.3)	150 (100)

Table 6 shows the level of commitment of the employees. Out of a total of 150 employees, 48 (32%) had low commitment and 102 (68%) were highly committed to their various organisations. The findings indicate that majority of the employees were highly committed to the family businesses. Out of a total of 91 males 34 (37.4%) had low commitment and 57 (62.6%) were highly committed. Female employees were 59 of which 14 (24%) had low commitment and 45 (76%) were highly committed. The employees who fall within the ages of up to 30 years category were 74 of which 18 (24.3%) recorded low commitment and 56 (75.7%) had high commitment level. There were 76 employees who were above 30 years out of these 30 (39.5%) had low commitment and 46 (60.5) were highly committed to their organisation. Employees with qualification below first degree were 110 out which 33 (30%) had low commitment and those with first degree and above were 40 out of which 15 (37%) had low commitment and 25 (62.5%) were highly committed. Family member employees were 85 and 65 Non-family member employees out of which 23 (27%) and 26 (39.4%) had low commitment respectively. Again, out of the total of 85 family member and 65 non-family member employees, 62 (73%) and 39 (60.6%) were highly committed respectively.

Table 7: Correlation between Commitment of Family Employees and Growth of family Business

Variables	Commitment	Family Member	Non-Family Member	Growth
Overall Commitment	1			
Family member		1		.936**
Non-family member			1	.862**
Growth	.883**	.936**	.862**	1

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Table 7 shows the correlation between commitment of family member employees, non-family member employees, overall commitment and Growth of family businesses. The results of the correlation shows a very strong positive relationship between the variables (Overall commitment, family member employees' commitment and non-family member employees' commitment) and the growth of family business.

There is a strong positive correlation between overall commitment and growth of family business ($r=.883$, $p< 0.01$). This means that, as commitment of employees' increases the growth of family businesses also increases. Again, there is a very strong positive relationship between commitment of family member employees and growth of the family business ($r=.936$, $p<0.01$). The results also indicated that non-family member employees' commitment is strongly correlated with the growth of the business ($r=.863$, $p<0.01$). The results of the correlation indicate that, high commitment level of both family member and non-family member employees increase the growth level of the family businesses.

Table 8 a: Regression Analysis – Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted Square	RStd. Error of the Estimate
1	.883 ^a	.779	.778	13.53435

a. Predictors: (Constant), Commitment of Family business Employees

Table 8a shows the summary of the regression model. It represents the empirical evidence of the relationship between the dependent variable (Growth of family businesses) and the independent variable (Organisational commitment). The model derived correlation coefficient of ($R=.883$) which shows a strong positive linear relationship between the organisational commitment and growth of family businesses for the model.

The R^2 which is the coefficient of determination of the model derived .779. This shows that, 77.9% of the total variability in the dependent variable is explained or predicted by the independent variable. This means that 77.9% of the impact or changes in the growth of family business are explained by the organisational commitment of the employees. The Adjusted R square also shows that 77.8% of the impact of growth of family business is explained by the model and 22.2% is outside the model. That is 22.2% may be due to other factors outside the commitment of family business employees.

Table 8 a: Regression Analysis – ANOVA

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	95715.391	1	95715.391	522.525	.000 ^b
	Residual	27110.449	148	183.179		
	Total	122825.840	149			

a. Dependent Variable: Growth of Family Business

b. Predictors: (Constant), Commitment of Family Business Employees

Table 8b shows the ANOVA of the model. The model shows that, Commitment of family business employees is a significant predictor of growth of family business ($F(1, 148) = 522.525$, $p = .000$, $R^2 = .779$) therefore the null hypothesis is rejected in favour of the alternative hypothesis in the model. That is, the commitment of family business employees has positive impact on the growth of the family businesses. This means that there is some explanatory power in the model. In other words, the independent variable (Commitment of family business employees) helps to predict the dependent variable (growth of family business) in the model.

DISCUSSION

Generally, high commitment of employees is very important for every organization because of its positive relationship with job performance which is translated to firms' growth (Sharma & Irving 2005; Vallejo 2008). The first research question sought to explore the commitment level of family business employees on demographic variables. The results indicated that, majority of the employees were highly committed to working in the family business. Approximately, 68% of the employees were highly committed compared to 42% who had low commitment level. The results also indicated that female employees were highly committed compared to their male counterparts. Loscocco (1989) in a study found that, the relationship between authority and the related attitude of work commitment is positive for men but negative for women. Channar et al (2011), also attributed the low level of commitment among female employees to high level of discrimination at work place. The current research is not the case as women tend to be more committed in the family businesses. The difference of these findings may be due to the fact that women in Ghana see family businesses as a property and legacy for the whole family and show high affection in order to maintain the succession of the family firms. As Chua et al (1999), posit that, family firms are characterised by long term orientation. Forkuoh et al (2012), also put it "commitment are often used as a tool to prolong the longevity of a firm, especially in a family firm where the interest of family member employees is clearly geared towards succession". Again, geographical and cultural factors may also be attributed to this difference in the findings.

As Forkuoh et al (2012), confirmed in a study that, societal values such as respect, love and togetherness also have positive impact on the growth, development and succession of the firms. Employees who were 30 years and below were highly committed to the family business compared to employees who were above 30 years. Lorence (1987) finds that the way in which age, autonomy, and occupational status are associated with job involvement differ between men and women. In the current research there was also a difference in the level of commitment level regarding the ages of the employees.

The second and the third research question sought to determine the level of commitment of family and non-family member employees respectively. The results indicated that, family member employees were highly committed to the family business compared to non-family member employees. Approximately, 73% of family member employees had high commitment whereas 60.6% of non-family member employees were highly committed. Again, 27% of family member employees had low commitment compared 39.4% of non-family member employees who had low commitment.

The correlation analysis indicated strong positive correlation between commitment and the growth of the family business. This means that, as the level of commitment of employees' increases there is corresponding increase in the growth of the family business.

The result of the first hypothesis shows that, there is positive relationship between commitment of family member employees and growth of the business.

The second hypothesis which sought to find out the relationship between non-family member commitment and growth of family business was found to be positively significant. Commitment has been found to be related to job performance and consequently lead to the firm's growth. According to Porters, Steers, Mowday, & Boulian, (1974), the commitment level of the organization which constitutes the goals, visions and values together with the commitment of its workforce also plays a significant role in the firm's performance and growth. Forkuoh et al (2012), also found out that, these commitments are often used as a tool to prolong the longevity of a firm, especially in a family firm where the interest of family member employees are clearly geared towards succession. The findings of the current study confirms that high commitment level increase employees performance and lead to firms' growth. The study is in agreement with a research by Vallejo (2009) who showed that, family employees' commitment is positively related with profitability and survival of the family firms. Furthermore, Suliman & Illse (2000); Solinger, Olfen & Roe (2008), found out that, organizational commitment is positively correlated with job performance. A study conducted by Memari, Mahdih & Marnani (2013) also confirmed a positive relationship between organizational commitment and employees' job performance which leads to growth of the firms.

The third hypothesis which sought to find out the impact of commitment on the growth of the family business indicated a positive impact of the independent variable on the dependent variable. The linear regression shows that 77.9% of the total variability in the growth of family business is predicted by the commitment of the employees.

Generally, management maybe excited when the level of commitment of the employees is very high because of the impact it has on job performance which is translated in the growth of the businesses. Management should also be more concerned about other possible human resources practices which contribute to commitment of employees in order to maintain the above average returns to the family business. Human Resources Managers should take commitment of employees very serious and do everything possible to maintain high commitment in the workplace.

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