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The interplay of bureaucratic, humanistic work environment, and organizational commitment

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ABSTRACT

The study delved into the intricate dynamics between bureaucratic and humanistic work environments and employees' organizational commitment. Extensive literature review was undertaken to elucidate these concepts. Employing a descriptive assessment coupled with correlational research design, the research focused on employees of the Divine Word College of Laoag. Validated questionnaires were utilized for data collection, while statistical tools such as weighted mean and Pearson r correlation were employed for analysis.

The findings revealed a predominance of bureaucratic over humanistic environment, with the organizational commitment of employees registering at a high level. However, correlation analysis unveiled no significant relationship between the work environment types and organizational commitment. Contrary to the initial hypothesis, the study suggests that the observed high organizational commitment might be influenced by unexplored factors beyond the scope of this research.

Therefore, it underscores the necessity of further investigations into variables such as psychological and organizational factors to comprehensively understand their impact on organizational commitment.

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Introduction

In today's increasingly competitive landscape, organizations face challenges driven by external dynamics and technological advancements. Staying competitive necessitates continual updates in technology and product/service offerings, underscoring the importance of human resource development. While possessing the requisite knowledge and skills is crucial, employees' commitment to their roles is equally vital for organizational success.

Understanding employees' commitment requires a comprehensive grasp of their work behavior within the organizational environment. A conducive workplace, fostering autonomy and creativity, can enhance employee performance and organizational outcomes, as indicated by previous studies (Pawirosumarto et al., 2017; Zheinjing et al., 2022). This study aims to investigate the impact of bureaucratic and humanistic work environments on employees' organizational commitment, providing valuable insights for management to enhance organizational performance.

Given the dearth of research in this area, this study seeks to fill the gap by providing empirical evidence to guide management decisions. Structured into sections covering introduction, literature review, research methodology, data analysis, and results discussion, this study endeavors to contribute to the understanding of organizational dynamics and employee commitment.

Literature review

The literature review serves to enrich the study by exploring and synthesizing existing scholarly works relevant to its concepts and theories. Through a comprehensive examination of literature, the study discusses and contextualizes its theoretical frameworks, providing a solid foundation for the research endeavor.

Theoretical and conceptual framework

Work Environment

Bureaucratic management shapes bureaucratic environment

Bureaucratic management, as conceptualized by Weber (1966), was initially devised as an efficient and rational approach to governance, emphasizing systematic processes and hierarchical structures to ensure order (Mulder, 2017). This organizational model, reliant on established rules and procedures (CeOpedia, 2019), aims to curb favoritism and maintain efficiency (Swedberg & Agewal, 2005). Over time, bureaucracy extended beyond government entities, permeating large private organizations as well (Howard, 2012), with its definition evolving to denote a rationalized organizational structure characterized by formalization and impersonal relations (Aron, 1994; Giddens, 1997, cited by Serpa & Ferreira, 2019).

Modern bureaucratic frameworks encompass hierarchical authority, rule adherence, division of labor, performance-based promotion, efficiency, and impersonality (Barnett & Finnemore, 2004; Reynolds, 2018). While bureaucratic management is lauded for its efficiency, it is not devoid of drawbacks. Criticisms include organizational bloat, decision-making friction, insularity, disempowerment of employees, risk aversion, inertia, and political maneuvering (Hammel & Zanini, 2017).

Such management practices cultivate a bureaucratic environment characterized by rigid adherence to rules, limited autonomy, and routine tasks (Langer et al., 2017; Wright & Davis, 2003). Employees often find themselves entangled in bureaucratic red tape, detracting from their ability to innovate and adapt (Bozeman & Feeney, 2011). Thus, while bureaucratic management offers structure and order, its

rigidity can stifle creativity and hinder organizational *responsiveness*.

Scientific management

Scientific management, pioneered by Frederick Winslow Taylor (1911), revolutionized workflow by advocating data-driven approaches to enhance economic efficiency and productivity (Mitcham, 2005). Taylor observed that workers often operated below their potential due to factors like fear of job loss and non-incentive wage systems (NetMBA, n.d.). To address this, he emphasized statistical analysis over rule-of-thumb (Von Brg, 2009) decision-making, aiming to minimize time and costs while maximizing output (Solomos, 2012).

Taylor's methodology, exemplified by the pig-iron case, involved time studies to precisely determine task duration and optimize efficiency (Wrege, 1991, cited by Solomos, 2012). Moreover, he introduced work standardization, linking wages and incentives to job complexity and output (Solomos, 2012). Embracing division of labor and work specialization, Taylor delineated clear roles for managers to scientifically define, allocate, and supervise tasks (Wrege, 1991).

While Taylor's principles revolutionized organizational management, critiques emerged. Deming (1991) highlighted Taylor's focus on quantity over quality, advocating for customer-centricity and job enlargement. Additionally, Drury (1918) criticized Taylor for reducing workers to automatons and proposed more fulfilling work structures.

In summary, Taylor's scientific management profoundly influenced modern organizational practices, though criticisms underscore the need for a balance between efficiency and human-centered approaches.

Humanistic management creates humanistic environment

Humanistic management emerged in the early 20th century as a response to the dominance of bureaucratic and scientific management theories, which prioritized productivity and profit over the well-being of individuals within organizations (Mele, 2016). In contrast to mechanistic approaches, humanistic management places a greater emphasis on the human element of organizations, considering people's needs and values as central to effective management (Mele, 2016). While scientific management, pioneered by Taylor, viewed management as a science, proponents of humanistic management, such as Maslow, Rogers, Moustakas, Follett, and Mayo, saw it as more of an art, focusing on human-centered approaches rather than strict procedures and scientific methods (Lilienthal, 1967).

The roots of humanistic management can be traced back to a call by Pope Leo XIII in the late 19th century to respect the dignity of human beings in economic activities (Leo XIII, 1891, cited by Mele, 2016, Thompson, 2019; Wright, 2002; Kerstein, 2019). This call reinforced the idea of humanizing the business world and moving away from viewing individuals solely as economic resources. While bureaucratic and scientific management prioritize rules, processes, and efficiency, humanistic management prioritizes the needs and values of individuals within the organization (Adaui, 2013).

Key figures in humanistic management, including Drucker, argued that management should focus on understanding and addressing the needs of employees, recognizing that they are essential to achieving organizational objectives (Drucker, 1990). Unlike bureaucratic and scientific management, which often treat profit as the goal, humanistic management sees profit to improve the welfare of individuals within the organization (Mele, 2016).

Central to humanistic management is the idea that motivated and satisfied employees are essential for achieving productivity and organizational goals (Swart, 1973). This approach places people above economic objectives, emphasizing respect for human dignity and the promotion of well-being (Von Kimakowitz et al., 2011). It calls for a shift in focus from viewing individuals as mere means to an end to treating them as subjects with dignity (Humanistic Management Center, 2018).

Practicing humanistic management creates an environment characterized by respect for human dignity and prioritization of people over economic objectives (Von Kimakowitz et al., 2011). This approach recognizes the importance of considering human needs, values, desires, and emotions in management practices (Humanistic Management Center, 2018). By embracing humanistic principles, organizations can create a more supportive and fulfilling work environment for their employees (Langer et al., 2017).

Organizational commitment

Organizational commitment encompasses various dimensions, including psychological attachment and identification with the organization, as well as the dedication of time and energy to its goals (Leonard, 2009; Ajayi & Muraina, 2016; Ceylan, 2020). Scholars like Meyer and Allen (1991) and Porter et al. (1974) emphasize the psychological aspect, defining it as a state influencing the decision to stay or leave an organization. This aligns with the view of Idris and Manganaro (2017), who see it as psychological identification with the workplace. Greenberg and Baron (2008) further stress the importance of employees' identification and commitment to the organization.

Rousseau (1995) argues that organizational commitment arises from a psychological contract between individuals and organizations, comprising relational and transactional dimensions. The relational contract involves emotional ties and loyalty based on expectations of reward, while the transactional contract is driven by economic exchange.

Research by Fischer and Mansell (2009), Mathieu and Zajac (1990), Meyer et al. (2002), and Solinger et al. (2008) consistently demonstrates the impact of organizational commitment on factors like job satisfaction, job involvement, and employee turnover. High organizational commitment correlates with lower turnover rates, reduced absenteeism, and increased organizational citizenship behavior, contributing to overall employee well-being (Angle & Perry, 1981; Mathieu & Zajac, 1990; Meyer et al., 2002; Solinger et al., 2008).

Dimensions of organizational commitment: Affective, continuance and normative commitment.

Organizational commitment, as understood by scholars, encompasses multiple dimensions, including attitudes, behaviors, and motivations (Morrow, 1993). Attitude towards the organization reflects emotional attachment, identification, and loyalty (Meyer et al., 1990), often manifested through active participation and job involvement (Reicher, 1985; O'Reilly, 1989). Miller and Lee (2001) note that this bond is evident in employees' acceptance of organizational goals and their willingness to exert effort.

Scholars have proposed various multidimensional models of organizational commitment. Meyer and Allen (1997) identified three dimensions: affective, continuance, and normative commitment. Affective commitment reflects emotional attachment, motivating employees to exert effort for the organization (Johnson & Chang, 2006; Becker et al., 1996). Continuance commitment arises from a cost-benefit analysis, where employees weigh the advantages of staying against the perceived losses of leaving (Allen & Meyer, 1990; Meyer & Allen, 1984). Normative commitment stems from a sense of moral and legal obligation (Muhammad et al., 2021).

O'Reilly and Chatman (1986) proposed compliance, identification, and internalization as dimensions of commitment. Compliance relates to extrinsic rewards, akin to continuance commitment (Meyer & Allen, 1997). Identification and internalization capture affective commitment, reflecting emotional attachment and valuing organizational goals.

Similarly, Wechsler and Balfour (1996) identified identification, affiliation, and exchange as dimensions. Identification and affiliation align with affective commitment, while exchange mirrors continuance commitment (Meyer & Allen, 1997).

These dimensions overlap, with Meyer and Allen's (1997) model encompassing elements proposed by O'Reilly and Chatman (1986) and Wechsler and Balfour (1996). Thus, this paper adopts Meyer and Allen's framework for investigating affective, continuance, and normative commitment.

Hypothesis

Management style and work environment are crucial determinants of employees' work behavior and organizational performance (Pawirosumarto et al., 2017; Zhejing et al., 2022). Building on this understanding, the current study posits that both bureaucratic and humanistic work environments exert influence on employees' organizational commitment.

Scope and delimitation of the study

The study's focus is restricted to examining the relationship between two specific work environments, namely bureaucratic and humanistic, and three dimensions of organizational commitment: affective, continuance, and normative commitment. The research population comprises individuals affiliated with the Divine Word College of Laoag.

Research methodology

The study adopts a quantitative approach, employing a descriptive assessment and correlational research design. The research is conducted at the Divine Word College of Laoag, focusing on its employees.

Data collection is carried out through questionnaires, with statistical analysis utilizing both descriptive and inferential statistics, specifically weighted mean and Pearson correlation coefficient (Pearson r). Prior to data collection, the researcher sought permission from the President of the college to distribute the questionnaires, which were facilitated by employees' representatives. Ethical considerations were taken into account, and given the absence of sensitive human issues, ethical review was waived.

The following ranges of values with their descriptive interpretation will be used:

<i>Statistical Range</i>	<i>Descriptive Interpretation</i>
4.21-5.00	Strongly Agree/Very High
3.41-4.20	Agree/High
2.61-3.40	Somewhat Agree/Moderate
1.81-2.60	Disagree/Low
1.00-1.80	Strongly Disagree/Very Low

Data presentation and analysis

This section presents data based on the statement of the problems.

Problem 1: What is the work environment of the institution in terms of

1.1. Bureaucratic environment

1.2. Humanistic environment

Table 1. The work environment of Divine Word College of Laoag (n=121)

Work environment	Weighted mean	Descriptive interpretation
A. Bureaucratic Environment		
1. Employees here do the same job, in the same way, every day	3.68	A/H
2. Employees are not allowed to do things on their own	3.98	A/H
3. There can be little action taken here until a supervisor approves a decision	3.79	A/H
4. Even small matters have to be referred to someone higher up for a final answer	3.69	A/H
5. In general, a person who wants to make his own decisions would be quickly discouraged in this agency	3.55	A/H
6. There are so many rules and policies to be followed	3.78	A/H
7. Decisions are always delayed because they have to go through several processes and procedures	3.72	A/H
8. Lower-level managers are not free to make decisions	3.86	A/H
9. People are afraid to violate the policies because it means punishment	3.59	A/H
Composite Mean	3.74	A/H
B. Humanistic Environment		
1. When making decisions, the management always considers the effect of the decision on the employees	3.26	SWA/M
2. The management puts the employees first before the work	3.22	SWA/M
3. The management considers the ideas of employees when making decisions	3.21	SWA/M
4. The management always tries their best to serve the needs of employees	3.17	SWA/M
5. The management listens to the employees when they employees counter problems in their work.	3.14	SWA/M

6. The management respects and treats the employees as human beings with dignity	3.14	SWA/M
7. The management recognizes the good efforts of the employees to help the institution	3.14	SWA/M
8. There is an open communication between employees and management	3.02	SWA/M
Composite Mean	3.16	SWA/M
OVERALL MEAN	3.45	

Source: Source: Salkind, (2010) and Langer, et al. (2019).

Legend:

Range of Mean Values	Descriptive Interpretation
4.21 - 5.00	Strongly Agree/Very High
3.41 - 4.20	Agree/High
2.61 - 3.40	Somewhat Agree/Moderate
1.81 - 2.60	Disagree/Low
1.00 - 1.80	Strongly Disagree/Very Low

The table data indicates an overall mean rating of 3.45, reflecting an "agree/high" assessment of the combined bureaucratic and humanistic work environment. While both dimensions are perceived positively, the bureaucratic environment receives a higher mean rating of 3.74, indicating a dominant presence compared to the humanistic environment, rated at 3.16, signifying a moderate presence. Employees in the bureaucratic setting express feelings of limited autonomy and adherence to strict procedures, potentially hindering efficiency and motivation (Rosadi et al., 2022; Lesmana et al., 2022). Conversely, the humanistic environment demonstrates management's prioritization of employee well-being, albeit to a moderate extent, including consideration of employee needs and ideas in decision-making and fostering open communication (Daley, 1986). Mele (2016) advocates for a balanced approach, combining both management styles to foster creativity, autonomy, and organizational success.

Problem 2: What is the organizational commitment of the employees in terms of:

- 2.1. *Affective commitment*
- 2.2. *Continuance commitment*
- 2.3. *Normative commitment*

Table 2. Organizational commitment of employees of Divine Word College of Laoag (n=121)

ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT		Weighted mean	Descriptive interpretation
A. Affective Commitment			
1.	I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career in this organization	3.86	A/H
2.	I feel as if this organization's problems are my own	3.71	A/H
3.	I feel like 'part of my family at this organization	3.65	A/H
4.	I feel 'emotionally attached to this organization	3.70	A/H
5.	This organization has a great deal of personal meaning for me.	3.86	A/H
6.	I feel a strong sense of belonging to this organization	3.62	A/H
	Composite Mean	3.73	A/H
B. Continuance Commitment			

1.	It would be very hard for me to leave my job at this organization right now even if I wanted to	3.72	A/H
2.	Too much of my life would be disrupted if I left my organization	3.42	A/H
3.	Right now, staying with my job at this organization is a matter of necessity as much as desire	3.64	A/H
4.	I believe I have too few options to consider leaving this organization	3.58	A/H
5.	One of the few negative consequences of leaving my job at this organization would be the scarcity of available alternatives elsewhere.	3.50	A/H
6.	One of the major reasons I continue to work for this organization is that leaving would require considerable personal sacrifice	3.61	A/H
	Composite Mean	3.58	A/H
C. Normative Commitment			
1.	I must remain with my organization.	3.62	A/H
2.	Even if it were to my advantage, I do not feel it would be right to leave.	3.57	A/H
3.	I would feel guilty if I left this organization now	3.64	A/H
4.	This organization deserves my loyalty	3.78	A/H
5.	I would not leave my organization right now because of my sense of obligation to it	3.76	A/H
6.	I owe a great deal to this organization	3.84	A/H
	Composite Mean	3.70	A/H
OVERALL MEAN		3.67	A/H

Source: Meyer and Allen (1997).

The data from the table reveals that employees' overall organizational commitment, encompassing affective, continuance, and normative commitment, received an aggregate mean rating of 3.67, indicating an "agree/high" level of commitment. This rating reflects a high level of commitment across all three dimensions, as individually assessed.

Affective commitment is characterized by employees' strong emotional attachment to the institution, with a sense of belonging and fulfillment derived from their affiliation (Ardiansyah & Afandi, 2018; Sao et al., 2022). This emotional investment translates into enhanced performance and organizational citizenship behavior, as supported by prior research (Kumari & Afroz, 2013).

Continuance commitment relates to employees' perception of the difficulty in leaving the institution due to potential disruptions in their lives and limited alternative opportunities elsewhere (Kasogela, 2019). While continuance commitment is associated with job performance, it reflects a necessity rather than a choice to remain with the organization.

Normative commitment, on the other hand, stems from employees' feelings of obligation and loyalty to the institution, even when leaving might be advantageous (Igbomor & Ogbumar, 2024). However, research suggests that normative commitment may have adverse effects on performance and well-being, as employees may feel compelled to stay out of duty rather than genuine commitment (Vandenberghe et al., 2014).

In summary, while affective and continuance commitment positively contribute to organizational success, normative commitment may not align with organizational objectives, potentially hindering performance.

Problem 3: Is there a relationship between a bureaucratic work environment and organizational

commitment?

The results of the test relationships between the bureaucratic work environment and organizational commitment of the employees of the institution in terms of affective commitment, continuance commitment, and normative commitment revealed that no significant relationships exist between the variables tested as shown by the obtained correlation coefficients which ranged from -.056 to -.106.

These results suggest that regardless of the bureaucratic work environment existing in the institution the affective commitment, continuance commitment, and normative commitment of the employees remain the same.

Table 3. Correlation coefficients obtained on the test of the relationship between bureaucratic work environment and organizational commitment of the employees at Divine Word College of Laoag (n= 121)

Organizational commitment		Bureaucratic environment
Affective Commitment	r	-.106
	(Sig. 2 - tailed)	.245
Continuance Commitment	r	-.056
	(Sig. 2-tailed)	.542
Normative Commitment	r	-.075
	(Sig. 2-tailed)	.414

* Significant at .05 level of significance (2-tailed)

Problem 4: Is there a relationship between a humanistic work environment and organizational commitment?

The correlation coefficients ranging from -.020 to -.119 on the test of relationships between the humanistic environment in the institution and employees' organizational commitment along affective, continuance and normative commitments indicate that these variables tested are not significantly related.

These findings denote that the institution's humanistic environment has nothing to do with the employees' organizational commitment along with affective, continuance, and normative commitments. The employees' organizational commitment remains the same regardless of the prevailing humanistic environment in the institution.

Table 4. Correlation coefficients obtained on the test of the relationship between humanistic work environment and organizational commitment of the employees at Divine Word College of Laoag (n= 121)

Organizational commitment		Humanistic environment
Affective Commitment	r	-.106

	(Sig. 2 - tailed)	.245
Continuance Commitment	r	-.056
	(Sig. 2-tailed)	.542
Normative Commitment	r	-.075
	(Sig. 2-tailed)	.414

* Significant at .05 level of significance (2-tailed)

Results and discussion

Based on the correlation analysis conducted, the findings indicate that the work environment, including both bureaucratic and humanistic aspects, doesn't significantly correlate with organizational commitment among employees at Divine Word College of Laoag. This suggests that altering bureaucratic practices or enhancing humanistic approaches within the institution may not directly influence the level of organizational commitment among employees.

The notion is supported by the mixed results found in previous studies. While Suzuki and Hur (2019) suggested that bureaucratic practices could lead to higher commitment, contrasting results were observed in the study by Idrus (2015), indicating lower commitment associated with high bureaucratic leadership. Such discrepancies highlight the complexity of the relationship between bureaucratic management and organizational commitment.

Given these inconsistent findings, it becomes imperative to explore alternative factors influencing organizational commitment. Psychological aspects like job satisfaction and well-being, as highlighted by Lee & Kim (2023) and Hendri (2019), could play a significant role. Additionally, enhancing job characteristics and fostering a positive social environment, as proposed by Dalkrani & Dimitriadis (2020), may also contribute to organizational commitment.

Moreover, while no prior studies were available on the effect of a humanistic environment on organizational commitment for comparison, it is recommended to continue investigating various aspects of the organizational environment to understand their impact on employee commitment fully.

The current findings further suggest that organizational commitment among employees at Divine Word College of Laoag may be influenced by factors beyond bureaucratic and humanistic management practices. Therefore, further research focusing on different psychological and environmental factors is warranted to develop a comprehensive understanding of organizational commitment dynamics.

Conclusion

The study explored the impact of distinct work environments—namely bureaucratic and humanistic—on organizational commitment. The results indicate that within the institution under scrutiny, the bureaucratic environment prevails over the humanistic one, suggesting a tendency towards bureaucracy rather than human-centered practices. Despite this, employees demonstrate a notable level of organizational commitment.

Interestingly, the study did not uncover a significant correlation between the specific work environments—bureaucratic and humanistic—and organizational commitment. This implies that the observed high level of organizational commitment among employees cannot be directly attributed to either the bureaucratic or humanistic aspects of the work environment.

Therefore, there is a need to delve into additional factors that could potentially influence employees' organizational commitment, beyond the dichotomy of bureaucratic versus humanistic environments.

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