PROFESSIONAL COMMITMENT: A STUDY OF IT PROFESSIONALS IN INDIA

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ABSTRACT

The present study is an empirical research pertaining to the growth of a new profession in the changing modern society. This study focuses on the commitment among the Information Technology professionals. In the light of its scope, it could be taken as a treatise in the field of Sociology of Professions which has emerged as a leading branch of sociological specialization. The Sociology of Professions is the study of the various professions on the one hand and its practitioners and their experiences on the other, in a given society. More fascinatingly, it is mainly concerned with the existing workforce in industrial and urban societies, including the emergence of new professions.The purpose of the present study is to ascertain the level of professional commitment and its determinant factors such as age, education, career and job satisfaction of the IT professionals in an Indian setting. The Geographical universe of the study comprises of 125 ITprofessionals in Bangalore city. The findings seem to suggest that age and education background factors have no say in determining they level of commitment. However, a statistically significant association between age at thinking of engineering profession and level of commitment among IT professionals was found.

Keywords: Commitment, Information Technology, Profession, Professionals & Work.

1.1 Introduction:

A Way of finding new things is the great path to success in this globalized era. The path of discovery in society means during something excellent, convenient or smarter that make a positive difference in terms of quality or productivity by introducing upcoming or proved technologies in this changing world. The technology which has already proved its mettle during the last two decades is none other than the information technology (IT). It has of course brought some radical changes in the lives of individuals, sub systems as well as organizations. At present online shopping, digitization and social networking are the best examples of change which are the outcomes of information technology. Now education, finance, health care, security, accurate planning, marketing, management, business, computing and modern communication cannot be achieved, conducted and performed with ease without opting help form IT. The practitioners of IT profession that is IT professionals play a significant role in discharging their duties in the above mentioned social and technical scenario. They need to exhibit lot of character and commitment in order to fulfil the needs of IT profession known for.

The present study is an empirical research pertaining to the growth of a new profession in the changing modern society. This study focuses on the commitment among the Information Technology professionals working in different Companies in the Bangalore city. In the light of its scope, it could be taken as a treatise in the field of Sociology of Professions which has emerged as a leading branch of sociological specialization. The Sociology of Professions is the study of the various professions on the one hand and its practitioners and their experiences on the other, in a given society. More fascinatingly, it is mainly concerned with the existing workforce in industrial and urban societies, including the emergence of new professions.Much has been said and lamented about the commitment of occupational members in sociological literature. But a very few studies have been conducted on the commitmentof professionals in India. Further, the study of commitmentamong the IT professionals is of considerable significance as they are the practitioners of IT profession with functional consequences for the technological advancement of society.

1.2 Review of Literature:

Becker and James (1956) point out that, more specifically individuals tend to develop different kinds of commitment to careers in different professional contexts. They report how physiologists, philosophers and mechanical engineers differ in the kinds of commitment they

develop toward (1) occupational title and associated ideology; (2) work tasks; (3) particular organizations or institutional positions; and (4) the significance of their position in the larger society. Kanter (1972) has provided a general characterization of commitment 1) instrumental commitment; 2) affective commitment; and 3) moral commitment. Omen (1978) has pointed out that, the commitment of a privileged professional group is essentially an instrumental commitment. Further, he found a close relationship between occupational role commitment and work-milieu.Chen and associates (2009)conducted a study to find out how the cross strait employees in Taiwan and Mainland China affect human resource management on organizational commitment and organizational citizenship behavior. They found that age significantly influences organizational commitment and selection and retention have significance for the value commitment and retention commitment.

It is a well-known fact that professionals tend to develop their professional exposure by exchanging among different work organizations (Niederman et.al., 2007; Rong and Grover, 2009). Rong and Grover (2009) have maintained that, IT profession would have better future in their career if they were innovative and skillful in certain IT domain.Commitment is viewed as a major variable in the measurement of positive employee relations in the organizations. It also plays a significant role in analyzing quality of services in IT profession (McCabe &Garavan, 2008). Wolf &Hoerst (2007) have maintained that there is a strong association between commitment to a profession and job satisfaction. High committed IT professionals are more responsible for discharging their services (Brooks &Swailes, 2002). The professional commitment construct is important because it contributes to our understanding of how people develop make sense of, and integrate their multiple work related commitments, including those that go beyond IT boundaries (Lee et.al., 2000).

1.3 Scope of the study:
Much has been discussed and lamented pertaining to professional commitment; however, little has been investigated toward the IT profession. Given an understanding regarding the increasing influence and significance of professionals in modern society, this study aims to probe into the intricate realities pertaining to the impact of such variables as age, education and career on professional commitment of IT professionals. Accordingly, the present study examines the impact of an IT professional's level of commitment on the level of satisfaction. Thus, the present study investigates and analyzes empirically the intricate realities related to IT profession in general and IT professionals in particular in Bangalore city. In doing so, it focuses on the commitment of the IT professionals in the context of professional

phenomenon. It is assumed that those IT professionals who take to this profession are individuals with their own background and achievements towards various components that constitute their professional milieu. It is fascinating to measure level of commitment and associated factors among them.

1.4 Objective of the study:

In view of the scope of the study the main objectivesof the present investigation are:

i)   To measure the level of professional commitment among IT professionals.

ii)   To ascertain the association between such variables as age, education and career and the level of professional commitment.

iii)   To know the impact of commitment on satisfaction.

1.5 Methodology of the Study:

The present study seeks to probe into the intricate realities pertaining to IT (Information Technology) professionals in an Indian setting. The findings of the present study are primarily based on the relevant data gathered through the introduction of an interview schedule in Bangalore city. The instrument was so designed as to gather the relevant data from the respondents. The instrument has been pre-tested in a pilot study in order to enhance its validity and reliability. Thus, in order to qualitatively assess the validity of the present research, the investigator has decided to make use of appropriate research techniques. The present study is based on the sample size of 125 IT professionals in Bangalore City. These IT professionals belong to different industry type as IT, ITES and BPO. The job profile of these professionals ranges from Individual contributor to Senior Level management.

1.6 Results and Discussion:

Commitment symbolizes a complex form of human behavior resulting from the interplay of several forces such as human, organizational and social. The professional commitment differs individually from one person to another depending upon the differences in the interest, aptitude and professional socialization. However, taking all these factors into account, the professional commitment is studied among IT professionals.

Table–1: Commitment and Age

Commitment	Age of the Respondents			Total	Chi Square Value
	Young	**Moderate**	**Old**		
Low	23 (33.3)	14 (38.8)	04 (21.6)	41 (32.8)	1.204
High	46 (66.7)	24 (66.6)	14 (78.4)	84 (67.2)	
Total	**69 (100.0)**	**38 (100.0)**	**18 (100.0)**	**125 (100.0)**	

Degree of Freedom:2

It may be observed from the data presented in the table-1 that, the level of commitment increases with the age of the IT engineers indicating to a positive association between the age and level of professional commitment. The proportion of those with high commitment is as low as 67 (66.7) percent among the younger IT professionals whereas, the corresponding proportion is comparatively as high as 78 (78.4) percent among those in the elder age group. Further, it is heartening to note that one-third (66.7 percent) of the IT engineers in the young age category exhibit a high level of commitment. It may, thus be assumed that, as one spends more years as an IT professional, the commitment one has for the profession gets reinforced. However, calculated chi-square value (1.204) is less than the table value at 0.05 probability level of significance for 2 degrees of freedom. Therefore, it could be concluded that there is no significant association between age of the respondents and their level of commitment to the profession.

Table–2: Commitment and Educational Achievements

Commitment	Educational Achievements			Total	Chi Square Value
	Low	**Moderate**	**High**		
Low	26 (31.7)	15 (38.5)	00 (0.0)	41 (32.8)	2.564
High	56 (68.3)	24 (61.5)	04 (100.0)	84 (67.2)	
Total	**82 (100.0)**	**39 (100.0)**	**04 (100.0)**	**125 (100.0)**	

Degree of Freedom: 2

It may be stated that, those who spend more years in higher education to equip themselves with better qualifications, skills and expertise tend to exhibit a higher level of

commitment. It could also be assumed that, commitment is a function of longer period of professionalization or socialization in an organizational environment. In other words the IT professionals with better knowledge and higher skills of technological profession, gained during a longer period of professionalization could be found associated with higher levels of commitment. Based on the above argument it may be stated that, longer the period of professionalization higher will be the level of commitment. However, the data seem to indicate that more than one-third (68.3 percent) of the IT professionals tend to exhibit high level of commitment with their lower levels of educational achievements. Thus, it is much against our logical expectation, that educational achievements have no say in determining the commitment of IT professionals as the calculated chi-square value (2.564) is less than the table value at 0.05 probability level of significance for 2 degrees of freedom. Therefore, it could be concluded that there is no significant association between educational achievements and their level of commitment to the profession.

Table-3: Commitment and Educational Grades

Commitment	Educational Grades		Total	Chi Square Value
	Low	High		
Low	10 (26.3)	31 (35.6)	41 (32.8)	
High	28 (73.7)	56 (64.4)	84 (67.2)	**1.041**
Total	**38 (100.0)**	**87 (100.0)**	**125 (100.0)**	

Degree of Freedom: 1

With regard to educational grades, the data presented in the table 3seem to indicate that, nearly three-fourths (73.7 percent) of the IT professionals with high educational grades exhibit high level of professional commitment. It may appear logical that, those who have entered IT technological service primarily on the basis of the merit and those who are endowed with regard to organizational presentation could be doing better in their professional activities. However, there is not much difference in the distribution of IT professionals with regard to the grades achieved in engineering career and their levels of commitment. Calculated chi-square value (1.041) is less than the table value at 0.05 probability level of significance for 1 degree of freedom. Therefore, it could be concluded that there is no significant association between educational grades and their level of commitment to the profession.

Further, it could be stated that, the more satisfied and committed professionals could play a positive role not only in the development of an organizational profession but also in the overall development of the nation. To have more committed employees in any profession, it is necessary to find that the profession provides greater opportunities for the growth and development of its employees. Similarly, professions generally, are attached with greater responsibilities and prestige, so as the IT profession in society.

Table-4: Age at Thinking of Engineering Profession and Commitment

Commitment	Age at Thinking of Engineering Profession			Total	Chi Square Value
	6-12 years	**13-18 years**	**After 18 years**		
Low	07 (35.0)	18 (23.1)	16 (59.2)	41 (32.8)	
High	13 (65.0)	60 (76.9)	11 (40.8)	84 (67.2)	**11.965**
Total	**20 (100.0)**	**78 (100.0)**	**27 (100.0)**	**125 (100.0)**	

Degree of Freedom: 2

It may be observed from the above table, that 65 percent of those who thought of a technical career for themselves at as early an age as 6 to 12 years display high level of commitment. Whereas, it is 41 (40.8 percent) in case of those who thought of a technical career at the age of 18 or later. The data reveal that, increasing age among the individuals reflect the changing scenario particularly thinking of engineering profession. It could be so because such aspirants nurture the idea or thought of engineering profession during the formative years of their life leading to unwavering commitment to such an aspiration. Calculated chi-square value (11.965) is higher than the table value at 0.01 probability level of significance for 2 degree of freedom. Therefore, it could be concluded that there is a significant association between age at thinking of engineering profession and their level of commitment to the work.

Table-5: Conception of Non-Engineering Career and Commitment

Commitment	Conception of Non-Engineering Career			Total	Chi Square Value
	NA	**Medical**	**Civil Services**		
Low	17 (25.4)	10 (45.5)	14 (38.9)	41 (32.8)	
High	50 (74.6)	12 (54.5)	22 (61.1)	84 (67.2)	**3.881**
Total	**67 (100.0)**	**22 (100.0)**	**36 (100.0)**	**125 (100.0)**	

Coming to the conception of non-engineering career, it may be observed that the proportion of those with low commitment among IT professionals who never thought of any

other career for themselves is as low as 25 (25.4) percent as against corresponding proportion of 46 (45.5) percent among those who had thought of a medical career and 39 (38.9) percent among those who had aspired to be civil services. That is, those who never thought of any career for themselves other than engineering are more likely to be highly committed to the IT profession, and others owing to have divided due aspirations tend to lack in commitment to IT profession. However, calculated chi-square value (3.881) is less than the table value at 0.05 probability level of significance for 2 degrees of freedom. Therefore, it could be concluded that there is no significant association between conception of non-engineering career and their level of commitment to the profession.

Table-6: Job Satisfaction and Commitment

Commitment	Job Satisfaction		Total	Chi Square Value
	Low	High		
Low	18 (35.3)	23 (31.1)	41 (32.8)	
High	33 (64.7)	51 (68.9)	84 (67.2)	**0.234**
Total	**51 (100.0)**	**74 (100.0)**	**125 (100.0)**	

Degree of Freedom: 1

The data presented in the table 1.6 indicate that, those with high level of job satisfaction (68.3 percent) tend to exhibit high level of commitment and low level of job satisfaction (42.5 percent) tend to exhibit low level of commitment. It appears quite logical that, those who derive a higher degree of satisfaction or those for who work hard on a particular profession is a pleasant experience tend to develop a stronger orientation and commitment toward the profession as against those for whom work is drudgery or an inevitable inconvenience. However, calculated chi-square value (0.234) is less than the table value at 0.05 probability level of significance for 1 degree of freedom. Therefore, it could be concluded that there is no significant association between job satisfaction and their level of commitment to the profession.

1.7 Conclusion:

The professional commitment, the Indian IT professionals seem to be representing, by and large, a highly committed professional group. Findings of the study suggest that age has little or no say in determining the level of professional commitment among IT professionals. However, efforts need to be put in identifying the factors that could be hampering the reinforcement of professional commitment among IT professionals to increase the level of

commitment with which they practice their profession. It is found that, IT professionals with better knowledge and higher skills gained through a longer period of professionalization tend to exhibit more commitment to the profession. As such, it may be suggested that the quality of professional education, which equips the IT professionals with requisite skills, knowledge and inculcates among them the professional ethics, holds the key to the problem of commitment and therefore needs to be better geared to meet the demands of a highly committed IT personnel.

It is also noticed that, those who have nurtured an idea of IT professional career for themselves at an earlier age tend to be strongly committed to IT profession than those who land in it by chance or accident at later stage. Hence, a more rational approach to planning career, at an early age and a better preparation to pursue it would help the IT professionals to develop a closer identification with their profession resulting in stronger or higher levels of commitment. Professional commitment is known to be breeding the job satisfaction and job satisfaction in turn provides a conducive atmosphere for commitment. Hence, we have made a modest attempt, in the present study, to assess the level of professional commitment and job satisfaction of the IT professionals. The data suggest that, those with high level of job satisfaction (70.2 percent) tend to exhibit high level of commitment and low level of job satisfaction (40.9 percent) tend to exhibit low level of commitment. It appears quite logical that, those who derive a higher degree of satisfaction or those for whom work on a particular profession is a pleasant experience tend to develop a stronger orientation and commitment toward the profession as against those for whom work is drudgery or an inevitable inconvenience. Further, it could be stated that, the more satisfied and committed professionals could play a positive role not only in the development of an organizational profession but also in the overall development of the nation. To have more committed employees in any profession, it is necessary to find that the profession provides greater opportunities for the growth and development of its employees. Similarly, professions generally, are attached with greater responsibilities and prestige, so as the IT profession in society.

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