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**RESEARCH ARTICLE**

**BUILDING SUSTAINABLE EDUCATION FUTURES FOR THE SOUTHERN AFRICAN SUB-CONTINENT**

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**ABSTRACT**

An assessment of effects of gender on affective organizational commitment of teachers in Zimbabwe. In Zimbabwe there has been an outcry on poor performance of students at all levels. It has been noted that yearly students' O level percentage pass rate has declined up to 19.5 % in 2011 to 18.4% in 2012. This has raised concern amongst the stakeholders. Previously low performance has been attributed to inadequacy of resources and poor remuneration. In 2009 the Ministry of Education Art Sports and Culture introduced incentives to lure the teachers so that they help the majority of people in the country until the employer had adequate funds to cushion teachers' salaries. In 2010 - 2011 primary schools were given books and sports kits by the UNICEF under the ETF programme and secondary schools in 2012. However this has not made a positive impact on pupil performance. Most of the blame has been put on teachers' affective commitment to their work. Considering that the majority of teachers are females, the main question is whether gender is related to affective organizational commitment of teachers' performance in Zimbabwe? Employee affective commitment is important because high levels of it leads to several favorable organizational outcomes. This is a descriptive survey where data will be collected from stratified random sampled teachers using questionnaires and interviews.

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**INTRODUCTION**

According to Elizur and Kieslowski, (2001), one of the most popular demographic variables studied in the work value or behavioral construct is gender. With respect to the study of gender, as a topic in organizational commitment literature, it has been approached from both the gender-model and the job-model (Aven, Parker, & McIvor, 1993). The gender approach to the study of women and organizational commitment was described as one where the basic belief was that, From the gender-model established that women accept family roles as a chief source of their identity and fulfillment, leading to a different orientation to work for men, for whom work is paramount. In contrast, proponents of the job-model view indicated that there were no differences in the work attitudes of women and men, and that work attitudes of both sexes developed in similar ways (Loscocco, 1990). It is known that men and women have different behavioral tendencies. Past studies have shown the existence of some difference in organizational commitment between men and women (Hartmann, 2000; Marsden, Kullberg and Cook, 1993; Mason, 1995; Wireman, 1990; Mathieu and Zajac, 1990; Savery and Syme 1996). These studies do indicate some gender differences of organizational commitment for various reasons. Although there are studies which indicates otherwise (Russ and McNeill, 1995) leading to believe that there are no gender

differences in organizational commitment. Gender is also found to act as a moderator in the study of organizational commitment (Mellor *et al.*, 1994). In the study by Leisure and Kieslowski, (2001) results do confirm that gender is a moderating factor in determining affective organizational commitment.

Aven, Parker, and McIvor (1993) in their meta-analysis studies of the relationship between gender and organizational commitment identified both positive and negative correlations during their research process. These overall results negated the argument that there are gender differences with respect to organizational commitment. Aven, Parker, and McIvor (1993) concluded that similar commitment can be won from both males and females when organizations treat all employees fairly. (Mathieu & Zajac, 1990) in another meta-analytic study of 7420, reported a correlation that indicated stronger advantage for female employees with respect to organizational commitment. Aranya, Kashmir, and Valence (1986) conducted a gender effect study to test the commitment level of women in a male dominated profession of Canadian Chartered Accountants. In this study, the female Accountants demonstrated less organizational commitment than their male counterparts. The Pearson Correlation between organizational commitment and gender was -, 13. Arana, Kashmir, and Valence went on to analyze their own research. First they reported that the male accountants in their study were older than the female accountants. Also the males tended to rank higher in the organizational hierarchy than the females. However, when the study's results were analyzed by co

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varying age and organizational level, male accountants still ranked higher than females with respect to organizational commitment. Kush man (1992) used the job-model research approach in a study involving urban elementary and middle schoolteachers. In the job-model approach, one assumes that gender is not a determinant of commitment. Results indicated that gender was not a factor that influenced organizational commitment. There was no statistically significant relationship between sex and organizational commitment for subjects in the 63 schools of the sample for this study Research suggest that gender is not a determinant of commitment. Job-model research indicated that men and women are similar with respect to organizational commitment. Research conducted by Hawkins (1998) conclude that gender did not enter the stepwise multiple regression equation as a factor that explains any of the variation in affective organizational commitment. A study conducted in Malaysia in terms of gender, this study had a fair proportionate of male (53.28%) and female (46.72%) respondents. As such, in the context of knowledge workers, it would be interesting to understand if there are any gender differences in affective organizational commitment. For the purpose of this study, gender was used as a moderating factor. Affective organizational commitment impact positively and negatively on teacher performance leading to quality education Motivated by contradictions of studies undertaken elsewhere and none in Zimbabwe the study aimed at establishing whether Zimbabwean teachers affective organizational commitment and their performance is being affected by gender.

nature of the study. The questions for the survey questionnaire were adapted from the works of several past researchers who have done in depth study on the subject matter. The survey contained three sections; the first section, requested Biodata of the respondents. Section B contained 30 questions on the factors identified to influence a teachers' affective organisational commitment in random order. Section C, contained questions which described the respondents level of perception of their organizational commitment. Section B and C utilized the 5-point Likert Scale, an interval scale, which required the respondents to indicate their levels of agreement and disagreement by placing an "X" or a tick at the appropriate number in the corresponding boxes. The strength of agreement or disagreement could be reflected in the score assigned. The 5-point Likert scale used was as follows: 1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Neutral, 4=Agree and 5=Strongly Agree. Finally, and were.

### Data collection Methods

The survey questionnaires were hand delivered as well as emailed to respondents.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

An analysis was done on the demographic characteristics of the respondents Table 1 above reveals gender and age range of the respondents. In terms of gender, this study had an equal

**Biodata**  
**Gender and age range of respondents**

Sex	No	Age range		Age range		Age range		Age range		Total %
		%	%	%	%	%	%			
		20-30yrs	31-40yrs	41-50yrs	51-65yrs					
Females	45	20	15	7	3	44.4	33.3	15.6	6.7	100
Males	45	18	16	4	7	40.0	35.5	9	15.5	100
Total	90	38	31	11	10	42.3	34.4	12.2	11.1	100

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

The descriptive survey design was used in order to establish whether gender has an effect on teachers' affective organizational commitment in Zimbabwe. The population of this study comprised 298 qualified primary teachers and 10 school heads. As such, the sampling method used for this research was non-probability judgment sampling where the subjects for the survey were limited to teachers in ten primary schools of Bindura Urban District. Since this study was on teachers only, special efforts were made to locate teachers from schools and approached to participate in this survey. Judgment sampling method was employed when the research required the subjects to be selected on the base of their expertise or who are in the best position to provide the required information as alluded by (Sekaran, 2003). Purposive sampling was used to select heads of schools The study sample consisted of 45 female teachers and 45 male teachers 3 female heads and 3 male heads. The questionnaire was used to.

### Research Instrument

The research instrument used for this study was a four-page self-administered questionnaire, to collect data from both teachers and school heads. The questionnaire included a separate cover letter to introduce to the participant about the

proportionate of male and female respondents. It was established that 42.3% of the teachers ranged between 20-30 years, 34.4% ranged between 31-40 years, 12.2% ranged between 41-50 years and 11.1% were above 51 to retiring age. This indicates that a majority of the respondents who participated in this survey were of middle age and not very young. All the teachers were qualified and had underwent a four year teacher training. However based on the age group of the respondents, it is clear that all of them have been in the organization for considerable number of years and were in the D salary grade. With regards to professional qualification of the respondents, all 90 (100%) possessed at least a diploma or certificate in education. This does indicate that the respondents are equipped with the right level of education for the job function that they are employed for. This is reflected in their current job position held in their organization. A majority (75%) of them are in the senior teacher grade level, (20%) are in administrative/managerial positions and only (5%) are still in the teacher grade. Since 5 O levels was a requisite for entry into teachers training college their level of education was also a pertinent requirement, it looks like the respondents for this study fulfill this expectation where all of them are holders of some form of certification which qualifies them in their own respective schools. With regards to the respondents' personal monthly income they range from US300.00 to US500.00. which

is the D grade As for the number of years in the current organization, it is important to note that, the majority 85% of respondents have been with their present school at least for a year so as to ensure that they are fairly familiar about their school and are able to respond constructively towards the survey questions. As such, the results displayed shows that the majority of them, 68.73%, have been at their present schools for more than 5 years. This may also indicate that there is low staff turnover in Bindura Urban schools. However, it is also interesting to note that the majority of the respondents were of middle age and had not upgraded themselves to enhance their professional growth. All the men in the study indicated that teaching was not their first preferred occupation and regarded it as a stepping stone to pursue other carriers. On issues of dedication to their work, results established that all teachers irrespective of gender were teaching for the sake of being employed, given choice they would leave the teaching profession. Asked on why they joined the teaching field, it was surprising that most 90 % of women joined the education sector as a way to earn a living and teaching was not their first choice of preference of employment. On the issue of convenience all 100% female teachers agreed that it was the most convenient profession in terms of policies especially the maternity leave policy. They also highlighted it for being user-friendly and accommodative in terms of transfers whenever they wanted to join their spouse who would have been transferred in instances of promotion. Sixty percent of the women were indifferent on their promotions. They indicated that their husbands were not being given fair treatment as compared to themselves.

Questionnaires conducted to school heads indicated that women had a motherly love to children /students. However all the heads one hundred percent (100%) concurred that they had problems with women since absenteeism was common. Reasons for absenting from work were numerous ranging from attending to family matters like visiting their husbands ,settling bills, attending to sick children attending to ill in-laws and family members, who were bed ridden and were now home based care patients. However heads had of the view that some teachers abandoned their core duties to manage their informal employment like Flea markets and going to neighboring countries to do informal trading. Heads of schools thought this had an impact on pupil performance. On performance of male teachers, all school heads agreed that some sixty percent of male teachers deliver their work vey well. However they experienced problems of drunkenness and unpreparedness from some of them although the policy stress on scheming and planning of work before hand . This is a concern amongst the majority of heads of schools in the district. However data collected revealed that during staff meetings the issue of code of conduct was always on the agenda. Asked on teachers performance during proliferation of extra tuition, heads of schools concern was that problems they experienced were very minimal from both sexes. On reasons contributing to poor performance of teachers research established that both males and females had various reasons unlike affecting their level of commitment, to contributing to poor performance of students and imparting on quality of education.

This concurs with findings established by Hartmann, 2000; Boles *et al.*, 2007; Mathieu and Zajac, 1990); Russ and McNeill (1995) (Blacker, 1995) Karachi (2003) which indicated that the relationship of gender and affective commitment emanated from various reasons ranging from what people do and what they are capable to do and not based on who they are or their gender.

### Conclusion

The research established that gender had no impact on commitment of teachers, reasons contributing to affective commitment were different yet impacted negatively on quality of education in the district. Finally it can be concluded that the relationship of the various factors and affective commitment level among teachers is not affected by the employee's gender.

### Recommendations

- The results of this research no doubt have several implications to theory and implications to practice. These implications do provide some indications to researchers and show the organizations and practitioners the salient factors that influence affective organizational commitment among teachers.
- This study recommends that The Civil service commission need to ensure that they understand and manage teachers as they are the key catalyst which ensure success during these competitive times.
- There is need for teacher education programme to revisit their recruitment and selection policy for training teachers.

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