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## The Influence of Training and Development on Organizational Commitment of Academicians in Pakistan

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### ABSTRACT

*It is recognized globally that training and development not only enhances the abilities, knowledge and skills of the staff member but it also changes their attitudes and behaviors. Such change in their attitudes and behaviors makes them committed with their respective organizations. This research work inquired association of training & development along with its dimensions with organizational commitment. We used Smart-PLS to make analysis of the data which were gathered from 320 academic staff of seven public sector universities of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), Pakistan. The results of this work found a significant influence of training & development and its dimensions on organizational commitment of academic staff. The results further suggested that training and development play crucial role in the enrichment of organizational commitment of academic staff. Committed academic staff not only stays longer with the universities but put more effort and perform better as compared to non-committed academic staff. We also concluded in this study that if the management of the universities intends to enhance the commitment of academic staff with the universities, they need to provide them maximum opportunities of training & development. We also discussed the theoretical and practical implications of the results.*

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### 1. Introduction

Training & development which provides skills, knowledge and abilities to employees are considered crucial for the performance, competitiveness and innovation of any organization (Urbancova, 2013). It is documented by several scholars that training & development is vital tool which helps develop skills, knowledge and abilities of employees in organization. Personnel capital is considered a prime source for gaining competitive advantage in every organization (Bashir & Long,

2015). Therefore, every year organizations spend billions of rupees on provision of training & development to their employees. In the year, 2013 organizations in United States (US) spent \$164.2 billion on provision of training & development to their employees (Staff, 2013, December 12).

Training & development is offered to employees because it is a learning process in a structured manner whether given by the HR training staff or management of the organization. Training & development is considered helpful in attaining the goals and objectives of organization as it provides skills, knowledge and abilities to employees (Bashir & Long, 2015). Training & development is a tool which not only improves the performance of employees but also change their attitude and behavior towards organizations. Such change in attitude and behavior of employees makes them committed with the respective organizations. Committed employees perform better and are less likely to quit organizations as compared to non-committed employees. Therefore, organizations should make every effort to retain committed employees because such commitment of employees helps reduce turnover costs associated with their recruitment, selection and training (Huang & Chen, 2013). Several studies have declared that training & development basically enhances the commitment of employees with the respective organizations (Bulut & Culha, 2010; Silva & Dias, 2016). Organizational commitment is labelled as psychological attachment of any employee with organization. Organizational commitment has been categorized as affective, normative and continuance commitment (Meyer & Allen, 1991). Affective commitment is termed as emotional attachment or identification of any employee with the organization (Allen & Meyer, 1990). Normative commitment is termed as obligation of an employee to remain with the organization (Allen & Meyer, 1990). While, continuance commitment is termed as cost of leaving an organization by employee (Allen & Meyer, 1990).

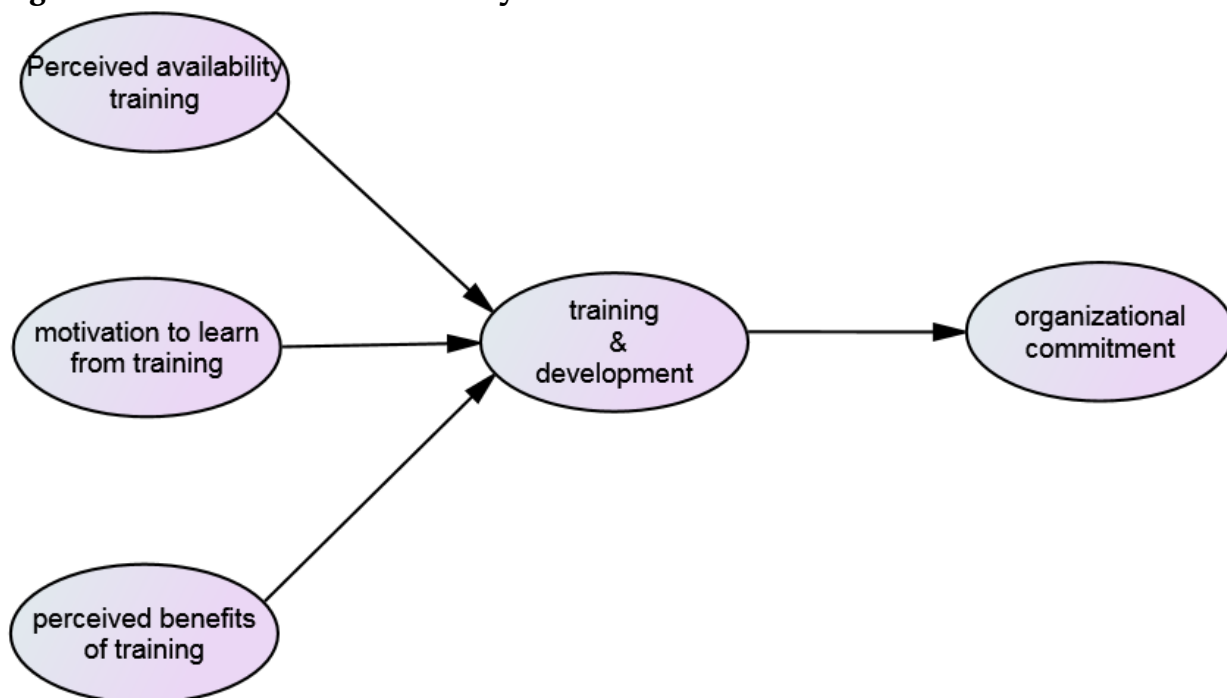
The commitment of academic staff with the respective universities is also essential for both the quality of higher education and success of universities. Therefore, educational leaders highly emphasize on the organizational commitment of academic staff as highly committed academic staff not only stay with the universities but also perform better as compared to not committed academic staff. Several studies have documented that training & development positively affect the enhancement of organizational commitment of employees in organizations (Al-Emadi & Marquardt, 2007; K. R. Bartlett, 2001; Bashir & Long, 2015; Jehanzeb, Rasheed, & Rasheed, 2013; Newman, Thanacoody, & Hui, 2011; Silva & Dias, 2016). Resultantly, committed employees are less intended for quitting their organizations and put more effort on behalf of their respective organizations. Despite, there exists a myriad of literature which reveals positive relationship of training & development with organizational commitment but majority of research work have considered employees in industrial organizational settings. Also these studies highlight that training & development is associated with employee's organizational commitment in west (Bashir & Long, 2015). The research is scant on the said subject in Asia, particularly in Pakistan. Though researchers have declared that influence of training & development on organizational commitment of employees differs due to culture both region and country wise (Bashir & Long, 2015). As the results of the studies conducted in west (Bartlett, 2001) gave different results regarding influence of training & development and its three dimensions on organizational commitment in comparison to studies conducted in China and Qatar (Al-Emadi & Marquardt, 2007; Newman et al., 2011). Therefore this study is aimed to investigate the influence of training & development on the organizational commitment of academicians of public sector universities in Pakistan, because research on this particular area is equal to naught.

## **2. Relationship of training & development and its dimensions with organizational commitment, theoretical framework and hypotheses development**

Several studies have corroborated significant positive influence of training & development on

organizational commitment of employees (Ahmad & Bakar, 2003; Bulut & Culha, 2010; Silva & Dias, 2016). These researchers are of the view that with availability of training & development to employees in various organizations, it enhances their skills, knowledge and abilities which ultimately enhance the effectiveness of organizations. These employees take the impression that they have been taken care of and have been supported in terms of career and skills development. Such impression of value and care from employers lead to creation of psychological attachment of employees with the organization. Such psychological attachment will let them stay longer and perform better by putting more effort on behalf of respective organization. Social exchange theory can best explain the positive association of training & development with organizational commitment. According to Blau (1964) attitudes and behaviors of employees in the organizations are largely affected by the psychological contract which exists between the employer and employee. As this psychological contract is unwritten and both the parties have mutual expectations from each other which needs to be met. If employees expect training & development from their respective employers, in exchange employers expect longer stay and better performance from their employees. Only highly committed employees will stay longer and perform better. So association of training & development with organizational commitment is based on principle of reciprocity. Such principle of reciprocity also leads to employees' positive attitudes and behaviors which ultimately improve employees' performance. The same is true for relationship of training & development with organizational commitment of academicians. The association of training & development and its dimension with organizational commitment has been proposed in the research model shown in Figure 1.

**Figure 1 research model of the study**



Training & development is operationalized as perceived availability of training, motivation to learn from training and perceived benefits of training. Availability of training is defined as when organizations provide training and development opportunities to their employees. The association of availability of training with organizational commitment has been investigated by several studies. A study of McNeese-Smith and Nazarey (2001) conducted on nurses in the County Hospital of Los Angeles, USA, revealed that 40 percent nurses' organizational commitment is found associated with provision of training and learning opportunities to these nurses. In another similar study, Bartlett (2001) found same results regarding association of these two variables. Results regarding three components of organizational commitment were such that affective commitment was found in strong

association to training as compared to normative and continuance commitments. In similar vein, Barlett and Kang (2004) also performed research study on the nurses of hospitals in New Zealand and USA and compared their level of organizational commitment based on their access to training & development in these hospitals. Keeping in view the findings obtained from research conducted on two groups of nurses, a strong positive association was found between access to training and organizational commitment. Specifically, strong correlation was found between two components of organizational commitment i.e. affective and normative commitment and access to training. However, this study also found low level of organizational commitment in nurses of New Zealand in comparison to nurses in USA. A study conducted on local professionals in Malaysia revealed positive association of training with organizational commitment (Ahmad & Bakar, 2003). In this study five dimensions of training were examined in relation with three components of organizational commitment. Availability of training had significant and positive association with affective and normative commitment and non-significant association with continuance commitment. Another similar study carried out by Newman et al. (2011) on Chinese employed at multinational companies. Findings of this study documented significant and positive association of availability of training with continuance commitment and association with affective and normative commitment was found non-significant contrary to the findings of the other two similar studies (Bartlett, 2001; Bulut & Culha, 2010). Similarly, several other recent studies endorsed the positive association of training & development with employees' organizational commitment (Alhassan, 2011; Jehanzeb et al., 2013; Newman et al., 2011; Silva & Dias, 2016; Yang, Sanders, & Bumatay, 2012). However, the results of these studies revealed that strength of the relationships varied for association of these two variables but mostly strong relationship of affective commitment was found with availability of training as compared to normative and continuance commitment.

Motivation to learn from training is defined as the desire to learn the content of training programs (Noe & Schmitt, 1986). Such desire to learn enhances and ensures employees presence and participation in training programs offered by organizations. It is also suggested that employees with less motivation or those who lack motivation at all are either fail to learn or master the content of training programs or less successful to apply the learnt skills in the jobs (Bashir & Long, 2015). Several studies have explored the influence of motivation to learn on organizational commitment and its three components (Ahmad & Bakar, 2003; Newman et al., 2011; Silva & Dias, 2016). Majority of these studies have found positive association of motivation to learn with organizational commitment along with its three components. One of these studies documented that two important components have critical role in the motivation to learn from training, one component generally measures the motivation of an individual employee to learn and second component specifically measures that how an individual is motivated to teach the learnt skills during training programs (Bartlett, 2001). Bartlett (2001) corroborated that motivation to learn from training was significantly positively related with affective and normative commitment while non-significant association was found with continuance commitment. Another similar study has argued that those employees who are motivated to learn in the start are predicated to exhibit high organizational commitment (Bulut & Culha, 2010). In similar vein, Ahmad and Bakar (2003) also corroborated significant positive relationship between motivation to learn and organizational commitment. Significant positive relationship was found between motivation to learn and affective and normative commitments while non-significant association was found with continuance commitment. However, Newman et al. (2011) found positive association of motivation to learn with continuance commitment and non-significant association with affective and normative commitment opposing the results of several other studies (Bartlett, 2001; Bulut & Culha, 2010) which found positive relationship among these variables. Several other studies also revealed significant positive association of motivation to learn with organizational commitment (Bashir & Long, 2015;

Jehanzeb et al., 2013; Silva & Dias, 2016).

Perceived benefits of training means positive results obtained as a result of participation in training & development programs (Yang et al., 2012). These positive results could be in form of personal related, job related or career related. These positive results could also be beneficial for the organizations in terms of employee retention and performance both individual and organizational. In the past, studies have been carried out on association of perceived benefits of training with organizational commitment. Findings of such studies have documented positive relationship between these two variables. Bartlett (2001) investigated perceived benefits of training along with its three types in relation with organizational commitment. Career related benefits had significant positive association with all three components of organizational commitment. Personal related benefits had significant positive association with affective and normative commitment and job related benefits had only significant association with normative commitment. Ahmad and Bakar (2003) also reported similar results of positive association of perceived benefits of training with all three components of organizational commitment among white color professionals of Malaysia.

Similarly, Al-Emadi and Marquardt (2007) also reported positive association of perceived benefits of training and three components of organizational commitment. Contrary to this, non-significant association was found of perceived benefits of training with organizational commitment of managers in Chinese multinational firms (Newman et al., 2011). However, several other recent studies found significant and positive association of perceived benefits with organizational commitment (Bashir & Long, 2015; Bulut & Culha, 2010; Riaz, Idrees, & Imran, 2013; Silva & Dias, 2016). Based on the above mentioned discussion and evidences mentioned in the literature, following hypotheses have been formulated in this study.

- H1: Training and development is significantly and positively associated with organizational commitment
- H2: Availability of training is significantly and positively related with organizational commitment.
- H3: Motivation to learn from training is significantly and positively associated with organizational commitment.
- H4: Perceived benefits of training are significantly and positively associated with organizational commitment.

### **3. Research design**

Survey based research design was used in the study. It is also categorized as correlational descriptive research design which identifies association between training and its three dimensions and organizational commitment. The target population for present study is academic staff of seven public sector universities of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), Pakistan. The total sample size for this study was 320 academic staff, which was selected from total population of 1921 academic staff employed at seven public sector universities of KP, Pakistan. Selection of 320 samples was based on Krejcie and Morgan (1970) method. Sampling in this study was done in two steps i.e. proportionate stratified random sampling and systematic random sampling. For the purpose to get maximum response the researcher distributed 450 questionnaires to the target population. Out of which 320 filled questionnaires were received back recording a response rate of 71 %. Out of total returned questionnaires, 306 were used for analysis and 14 survey questionnaires were dropped due to deficient data.

### **4. Data Analysis and Results**

Training & development was measured as second order formative construct having three

dimensions i.e. perceived availability of training, motivation to learn from training and perceived benefits of training measured as first order reflective constructs. Organizational commitment was treated as second order reflective construct. Its three components were treated as first order reflective constructs. SmartPLS 3.2.6 was used to analyze the data. The researcher analyzed the data of the current study in two stages. In the first stage, measurement model of the study was assessed determining its unidimensionality, reliability and validity using SmartPLS (Refer Figure 2). While, in second stage, structural model was assessed testing the hypotheses formulated in the study.

**4.1 Measurement model reliability and validity**

The reliability of measurement model was established as the composite reliability (CR) for all the constructs was above the recommended value of 0.70 (refer Table1). Validity of measurement model was determined using both convergent validity and discriminant validity. Convergent validity was determined using both the composite reliability (CR) and average variance extracted (AVE) recommended values. The measurement model of the current study had sufficient convergent validity because both CR and AVE values for all the constructs of measurement model were above the recommended values of 0.70 and 0.50 respectively (refer Table 1).

**Table 1 Measurement model’s reliability and convergent validity**

Constructs	Cronbach's Alpha	Rho_A	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
MTL	0.905	0.911	0.921	0.517
OC	0.937	0.941	0.945	0.503
PAT	0.768	0.773	0.844	0.520
PBT	0.917	0.924	0.929	0.507
TrgDev	0.873	0.875	0.923	0.799

Measurement model’s discriminant validity was determined using two types i.e. Fornell and Larcker criterion and Heterotrait-Monotrait ratio of correlations (HTMT). According to Fornell and Larcker (1981) criterion, sufficient discriminant validity was established for measurement model because square root of AVE at the diagonal of correlation matrix was found above than the squared inter construct correlation (SIC) of each construct at the off diagonal of correlation matrix (refer Table 2).

**Table 2 discriminant validity of measurement model Fornell & Larcker criterion**

	MTL	OC	PAT_	PBT	TrgDev
MTL	0.719				
OC	0.573	0.71			
PAT	0.668	0.57	0.721		
PBT	0.654	0.536	0.651	0.712	
TrgDev	0.679	0.623	0.681	0.691	0.894

Note: Sq. root of AVE is represented at diagonal while inter construct correlations are represented at off diagonal of correlation matrix

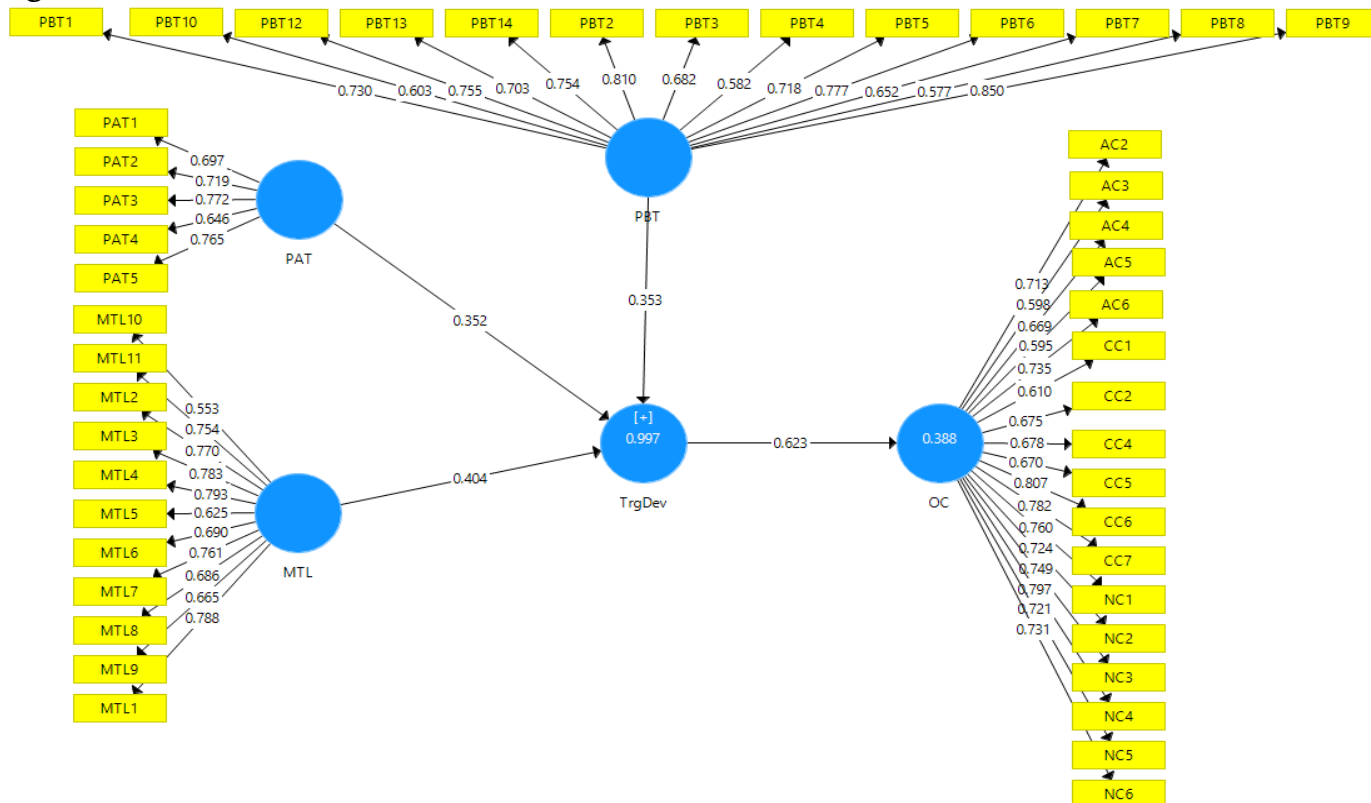
According to HTMT criterion sufficient discriminant validity was established for the measurement model because all the HTMT values of the constructs were found below 0.90 (Henseler, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2015). Based on both the criteria of Fornell and Larcker (1981) and HTMT, sufficient discriminant validity was established for the measurement model of the current study (refer Table 3).

**Table 3 Discriminant validity of measurement model HTMT Criterion**

	MTL	OC	PAT	PBT	TrgDev
MTL					
OC	0.614				
PAT	0.792	0.669			
PBT	0.894	0.571	0.762		
TrgDev	0.882	0.686	0.683	0.751	

Based on the overall statistics and psychometric evaluation of the model, it was strongly considered to interpret the structural estimates.

Figure 2 Measurement model with results



#### 4.2 Structural model estimation and analysis

SmartPLS is a non-parametric statistical technique which is suitable for analysis of slightly non-normal data as well. Bootstrapping procedure was employed to assess the significance and standard errors of different parameters estimates. Structural model was assessed for each direct relationship between constructs. For detailed results of structural models refer to Figures 3, 4 and 5. Path coefficients, t-statistics and p-values for all structural models are given in Table 4. All hypotheses formulated in the study were tested using structural models of the study. The hypotheses formulated in the study (H1, H2, H3, H4) were assessed based on path coefficient, t-statistics and p-values. Training and development was significantly associated with organizational commitment having path coefficient (beta coefficient) of 0.623 (refer Figure 2). In other words, one unit change in training & development will bring a change of 0.623 units or 62.3 % in organizational commitment of academic staff.

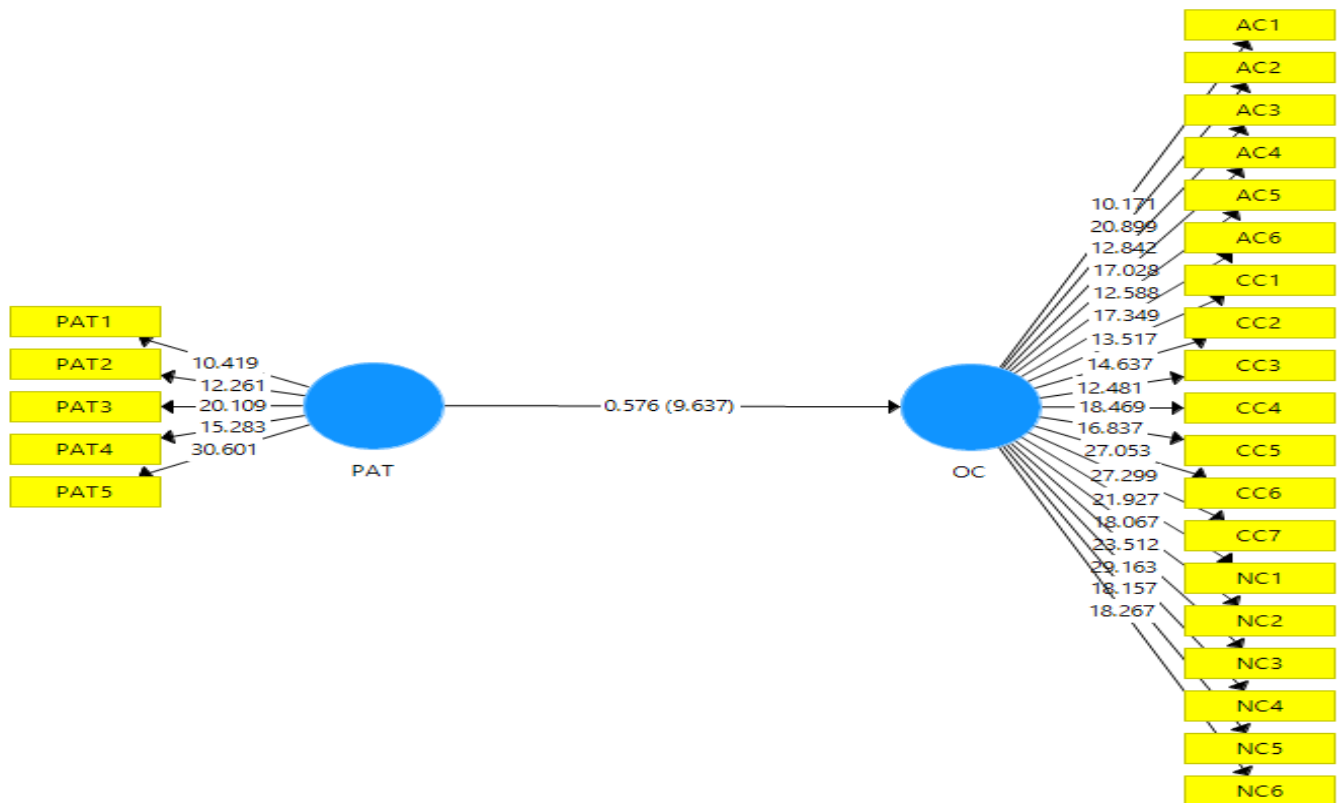
Similarly, training & development has significant positive effect on organizational commitment of academic staff with path coefficient of ( $\beta=0.623$ , t-statistic=11.074, p=0.000). Perceived availability of training has significant positive effect on organizational commitment of academic staff with path coefficient of ( $\beta=0.576$ , t-statistic=9.637, p=0.000). Motivation to learn from training has significant

positive effect on organizational commitment of academic staff with path coefficient of ( $\beta=0.584$ , t-statistic=9.085,  $p=0.000$ ). Similarly, perceived benefits of training has significant positive effect on organizational commitment of academic staff with path coefficient of ( $\beta=0.552$ , t-statistic=8.325,  $p=0.000$ ). Thus, all four hypotheses formulated in the study (H1, H2, H3, H4) have been supported and validated by the empirical data of the study. Detailed results have been mentioned in the Table 4 and shown in Figures 3, 4 and 5 respectively.

**Table 4 Structural models estimates and hypotheses testing**

Hypotheses	Effect	path coefficient	T Statistics	P Values	Results
H1	TRGDEV -> OC	0.623	11.074	0.000	Supported
H2	PAT -> OC	0.576	9.637	0.000	Supported
H3	MTL -> OC	0.584	9.085	0.000	Supported
H4	PBT -> OC	0.552	8.325	0.000	Supported

**Figure 3 Structural model of perceived availability of training and organizational commitment**



**Figure 4 Structural model of motivation to learn from training and organizational commitment**



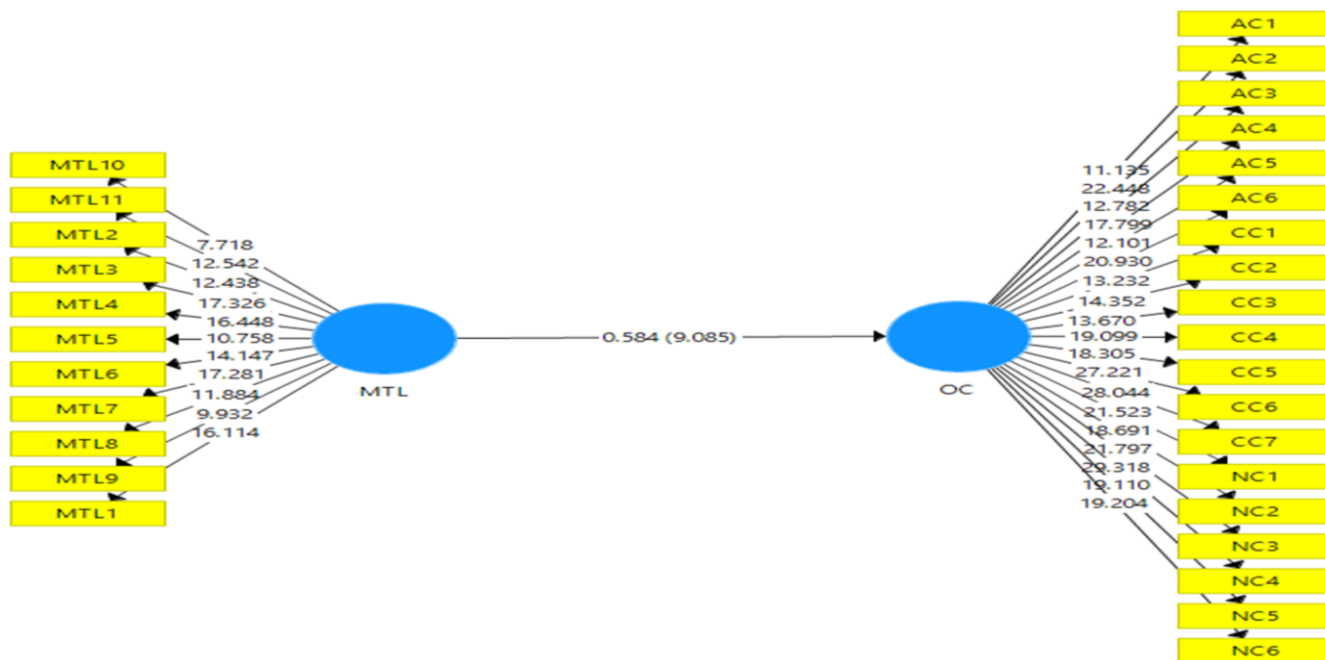
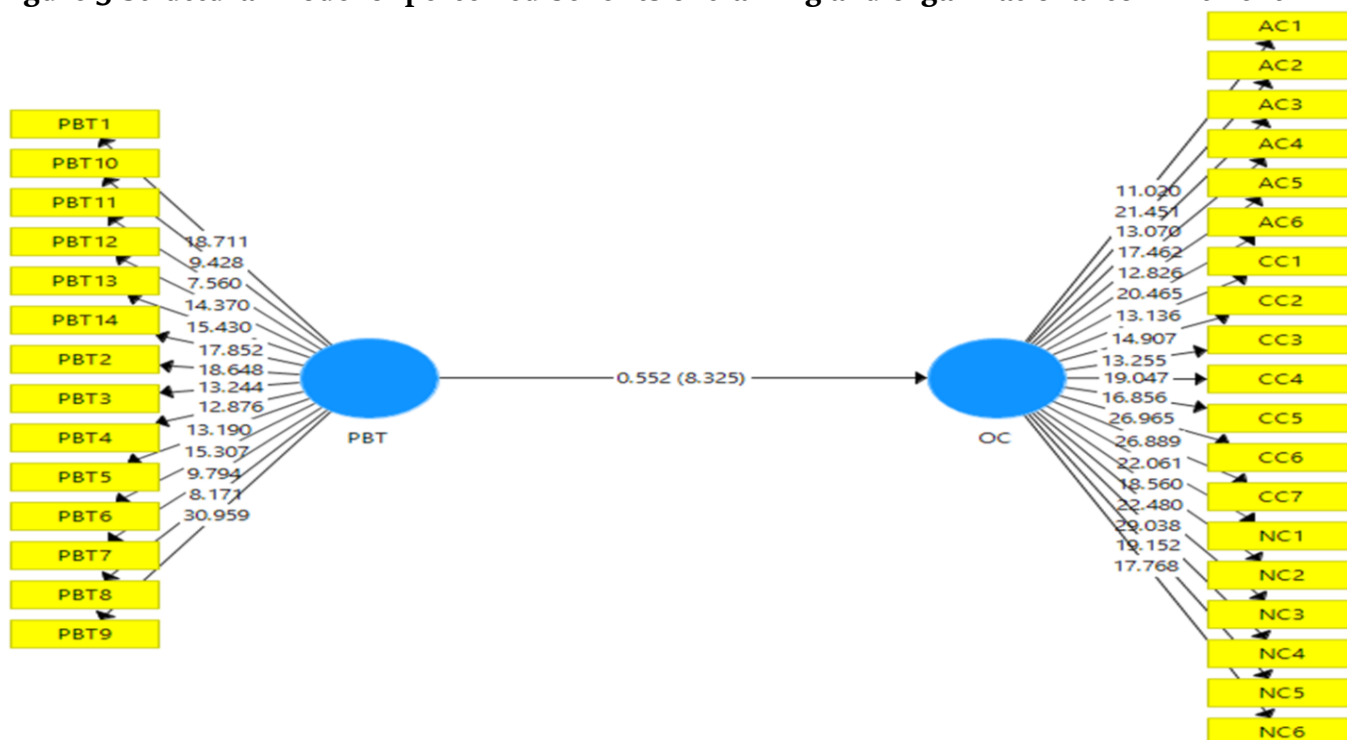


Figure 5 Structural Model of perceived benefits of training and organizational commitment



R-squared (R<sup>2</sup>) was used to assess the explanatory power of the research model. Training & development and organizational commitment have R<sup>2</sup> values of 0.997 and 0.388 respectively which fall in the range of substantially strong (Cohen, 2013). Overall the model exhibited satisfactory explanatory variance in the endogenous constructs (refer to Table 5). The effect size for each predictor construct was evaluated using f<sup>2</sup>. It basically reveals the increase in R<sup>2</sup> relative to the proportion of variance which is unexplained in the endogenous latent construct. The effect size for perceived availability of training, motivation to learn from training, perceived benefits of training was 0.738, 0.682 and 0.720 respectively. Training & development has effect size of 0.633 on organizational commitment. The values of all effect sizes fall in the substantially strong range (Cohen, 2013). The predictive capability of the model was evaluated employing Stone-Geisser Q<sup>2</sup> for endogenous constructs of the study. Both the endogenous constructs of the study (training & development and organizational commitment) have Q<sup>2</sup>

values of 0.684 and 0.205 respectively. Both the values of Q2 are above 0 indicating satisfactory predictive relevance (Hair, Sarstedt, Ringle, & Gudergan, 2017).

**Table 5 Coefficient of determination (R2), predictive relevance (Q2) and effect size (f2)**

Construct	R2	Q2	f2		
			OC	PBT	TRGDEV
OC	0.388	0.205			
MTL					0.682
PAT					0.738
PBT					0.720
TRGDEV	0.997	0.684	0.633		

Note: Stone-Geisser Q2 was calculated using blindfolding procedure in SmartPLS

**4.3 Discussion on Results of the Study and its Implications**

Results revealed significant positive influence of training & development and its dimensions on organizational commitment among the target population. Hence, it was concluded from the results of this study that training & development has significant positive effect on organizational commitment of academic staff validating hypothesis 1. The association between these two variables validates the social exchange theory. Reciprocity is the main principle of social exchange theory (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). Translating to this study, when universities provide training and development to their academic staffs, in exchange they display commitment towards their respective universities. When they have such opportunities of training and development from their universities, they consider themselves to be important and in exchange of such support and care they display commitment. When they become committed with their universities, they are less likely to quit and perform better for their respective universities.

Perceived availability of training was found significantly and positively associated with organizational commitment validating hypothesis 2. It was further concluded from the results of this study that when academic staffs have the opportunities of training & development, not only employees’ knowledge, skills and abilities get improved as a result of such training & development but also their attitude and behavior get changed. As a result of such access to training and development, the academic staffs become emotionally attached with their respective universities and as a result organizational commitment of academic staffs is enhanced. The academic staffs identify themselves with the university, morally obligate to remain with the university and consider perceived cost of leaving the university as a result of access to training & development programs offered in the universities. Motivation to learn from training was also found significantly and positively related with organizational commitment validating hypothesis 3. It was concluded from the results of the study when academic staffs are motivated to learn from training, such motivation enhance their presence and participation in training & development programs which in turn increase their feelings of self-worth. Such aspects of motivation lead to increase academic staff’s organizational commitment. Perceived benefits of training was found significantly and positively related with organizational commitment validating hypothesis 4. It was further documented that benefits related with job, career and personal get obtained as result of access to training and development by academic staff. Such benefits of training & development are highlighted in terms of gain and loss to the academic staffs. One major benefit accrued as result of training & development programs is enhanced organizational commitment.

The findings of study further propose that when academic staffs are available with training and development, motivated to learn and gain benefits of training in the form of personal, career and job

related, organizational commitment of academic staffs is increased. The findings of the current study are in line with the findings of the previous studies validating that training & development along with its dimensions are positively related with organizational commitment (Ahmad & Barker, 2003; Bashir & Long, 2015; Bulut & Culha, 2010; Silva & Dias, 2016). The findings of current study add to the literature in the sense that relationship of training & development and its dimensions with organizational commitment in academic settings is not fully explored specific to the context of Pakistan. From financial aspects, the findings of this study are important if academic staffs are not committed with their respective universities; they would not stay longer and would not put more effort on behalf of their universities. The universities would need to incur cost in recruitment, selection and training and development of new employees. Anyhow if the academic staffs are committed, the universities not only save this recruitment and selection costs but also save the universities from tarnishing its image due to less committed academic staffs. Overall findings of present study concluded that training & development and its dimensions has got critical role in the improvement of academic staff's organizational commitment. Therefore, management of the universities should take every step for the enhancement of organizational commitment of academic staffs. One strategy used to enhance academic staff's organizational commitment is to provide them training & development by their respective universities.

This study established a link of theoretical and empirical research of training & development with organizational commitment among academic staff based on exchange and reciprocity mentioned in social exchange theory which is not often recognized in the current literature. Moreover, the findings of present study validate the importance of social exchange theory in explaining change in attitude and behavior of academic staff as a result of training & development practices. Despite, the existence of myriad of literature on training & development in relation with organizational commitment but majority of these studies have been carried out on employees in industrial organizational settings at one hand and on organizational commitment of employees in the west at other hand (Bashir & Long, 2015). Less research has been conducted on the said subject in the Asia especially in academic settings of Pakistan. Therefore, this study established an empirical link of training & development and its dimensions with organizational commitment among academic staffs.

The findings of present study concluded that training & development improves their knowledge, skills and abilities and changes their attitudes and behaviors which make them emotionally attached with organization thereby increase their organizational commitment. Credit of increase in organizational commitment goes to social exchange theory, whereas academic staff perceives availability of training & development as sign of care and trust and perceives their efforts are recognized by universities. In return academic staffs reciprocate more commitment towards universities due to emotional attachment created with the respective universities.

The findings of present study have also carried practical implications for the stake holders of higher education sector by understanding the influence of training & development on organizational commitment of academic staff. The hypotheses formulated on relationship of training & development and its dimensions with organizational commitment have been found significant and supported by the empirical data of the study. These findings have further elaborated the key role of training & development in the enhancement of organizational commitment among academic staff in Pakistan. It has carried a clear message for the management of the universities that if they have intended to increase the commitment of academic staffs, they would have needed to provide ample opportunities of training & development to them. The findings of present study have also given an insight to the policy makers of higher education sector about the availability of training & development which affect

organizational commitment of academic staff and in turn affect the effectiveness of universities as committed members stay longer and put more effort as compared to non-committed academic staff.

## **5. Conclusion, Limitations and Recommendations for Future Studies**

It was concluded that findings of current study were found almost similar to the findings obtained in the developed countries of the world. Though, it is not quite common due to the difference in culture both in developing and developed countries. Hence the findings of this study is both significantly and empirically important for the both the academia and policy makers of higher education sector. The study also carried certain limitations. Firstly, the data were collected only from academic staffs of universities and non-academic staffs were not included as respondents. So results of study could not be generalized to non-academic staffs. Secondly, data collection was carried out using one method of data collection i.e. survey questionnaires and using only one method of data collection hardly suffices absolute reality. Thirdly, this study reflects researcher's point of view which is not absolute reality. Fourthly, results were drawn on cross sectional data which were collected at one point of time. This study investigated the direct influence of training & development and its dimensions on organizational commitment of academic staffs. Future studies can incorporate other attitudinal and behavioral outcomes in such relationship. Future studies can be carried out employing potential mediator or moderator in such relationship. This study used cross sectional research design for analysis. Future studies can use longitudinal research design for analysis in order to increase its generalizability. This study was carried out using quantitative research design. Future studies can use triangulation method in order to increase both its validity and generalizability.

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