TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE DEFENCE ORGANIZATION: VALUES CONGRUENCE AND ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT

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Abstract. A profound transformation of modern culture in line with increasing individualism and self-interest have been observed in the last few decades. While competing for limited resources, public organizations have to tackle the issues of lower commitment and turnover of employees. A recent shift of Lithuania’s defence policy revealed the issues, related to the attraction and retention of qualified personnel. It appears that organizations have to fulfil the demand for loyal and committed personnel and to deal with increasing individualism and self-interest. Thus, the research aims to investigate if and how values congruence of defence organization is interrelated to intentions of personnel to continue and organizational commitment. Theoretical discussion, related to person and organization fit, values congruence and organizational commitment, let to develop a questionnaire. The analysis is grounded on the survey of personnel deployed in one unit of defence organization. The final sample comprised 56 respondents. The results confirm the assumption that higher affective commitment increases intentions to stay with organization. In addition, the conclusion that personnel demonstrate identification with organization can be made. Second, the study demonstrates that physical values congruence is positively interrelated with affective commitment. Hence, the sense of favourable social guarantees, benefits, appropriate work place and health consideretions influence individual’s identification with organization. The implications for top-level management lie in the possibility to monitor values congruence and subsequently, increase organizational commitment of staff.

Keywords: values congruence, person-organization fit, organizational commitment, defence organization.

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1. Introduction

Globalization, economic development and the diversity of mass-media appear to be the driving forces, impacting social changes of various countries. A longitudinal survey of European countries revealed a profound transformation of modern culture and confirmed the assumption that changes depend upon the stage of socio-economic development and historical factors (European values study 2018). The rise of individualism and self-interest undoubtedly influence organizations. Thus, organizations have to deal with the issues of lower commitment and turnover of employees. These issues appear to be profound in public organizations, which have to attract and retain professional labour force and thus have to compete for limited resources. The scholars set to investigate what factors contribute to the higher organizational commitment and subsequently lower turnover of workforce. A separate strand of literature aimed to focus on culture, norms and values of organization and a good match between the values of employees and the values of organization (Dwivedi et al. 2014). A lot of attention has been paid to public sector: healthcare organizations, local government, educational organizations and etc. (Shiptone
et al. 2016; Jin et al. 2018; Yousef, 2017), however investigations in defence organizations’ context are scant. A recent shift of Lithuania’s defence policy revealed the issues, related to the attraction and retention of qualified personnel. It appears that organizations have to fulfil the demand for loyal and committed personnel and to deal with increasing individualism and self-interest. Thus, the research aims to investigate if and how values congruence of defence organization is interrelated to intentions of personnel to continue and organizational commitment. The paper is structured as follows. First, the discussion on values congruence and organizational commitment is provided. The next section defines research sample, research methodology and data composition. The third section presents research findings. Finally, conclusions and recommendations are developed.

1. Literature review

1.1. Person and organisation fit

The increasing body of scientific studies emphasise the significance of person and organisation (PO) fit. The discussion is grounded on the widely accepted idea of person and work environment compatibility (Kristof-Brown et al. 2005). The scholars assert that in the late 1980s and early 1990s the investigations were focused on the following dimensions: goal congruence, value congruence, needs-structure fit and personality-climate fit (Verquer et al. 2003). The literature defines the main explanations of person and work environment fit, grounded on complementary and supplementary perspectives. While the first perspective assumes that fit prevails when the needs of organization are filled by the person or vice versa, the second perspective assumes that an individual and organization have similar characteristics (Anderson et al. 2008). Supplementary fit is seen as a multidimensional aspect, including person-job fit, person-supervisor fit, person-group fit and person-organization fit (Van Vianen et al., 2011). For instance, a person might demonstrate the good person-job and person-supervisor fit and poor person-group and person-organization fit. These issues have led to the increasing attention to values congruence and subsequently, to the increasing number of investigations in the area.

It appears that PO fit is interrelated with culture, norms and values of organization and thus, PO fit considers a good match between the own values of employees and the values of organization (Van Vianen et al. 2011). Notably, both values of individuals and organizations are stable characteristics, which can be compared and the relationships with various work characteristics can be investigated. PO fit is significant for both employees and organizations due to work satisfaction, organizational commitment, turnover intentions and performance (Alniacik et al. 2013). For instance, the studies confirmed the interrelations of PO fit and higher teacher satisfaction rates (Ellis et al. 2017), PO fit and nurse faculty’s organizational commitment to the academic organization (Gutierrez et al. 2012). Meanwhile, the relationships of PO fit and performance is less obvious. While meta-analysis carried out by Hoffman and Woehr (2006) revealed that PO fit is related to the task performance, the investigations in the high education context did not support this assumption (Jin et al. 2018). Considering the influence on attitudes and behaviour of individuals, PO fit appears to be vital in job applicants’ organizational choices and hiring decisions (Van Vianen et al., 2011). The applicants usually seek for organizations with similar values, remain with organizations and make the decisions to leave if values are incompatible. To conclude, individual values are able to be compared with the broader context in order to establish PO fit (Van Vianen et al., 2011). Hence, values congruence and organizational commitment requires more comprehensive investigation.

1.2. Values congruence and organizational commitment

Organizational commitment has attracted various scholars, working in organizational behaviour domain, and a number of researches has steadily increased in the past few decades. The focus on development and consequences of commitment extended both theory and research. Meanwhile, the studies, focused on some other issues, included organizational commitment as a separate variable. Thus, the opinion that “organizational commitment has begun to rival job satisfaction” has started predominate in scientific literature (Meyer et al. 1993). Though different directions of research can be traced, it appears that organizational commitment is complex and multidimensional construct. The interpretations of definition include commitment to employment, profession, career and etc. However, the concept, suggested by Mayer and Allen (1991), refers to the employees’ feel-
ings of obligation to stay with organization. The concept integrates three forms, i.e. affective, normative and continuance commitment. Notably, affective commitment refers to “identification with, involvement in, and emotional attachment to the organization, in the sense that employees with strong affective commitment remain with the organization because they want to do so” (Yousef 2017). Meanwhile, continuance commitment is interrelated to the costs of leaving organization and thus, employees remain with organization because they need to. Finally, normative commitment refers to a sense of obligation to organization (Meyer et al. 1993). While three dimensions of commitment are supposed to be important, affective commitment gained a separate attention as efficient measurement of organizational commitment. The scholars refer to affective commitment as “the relative strength of an individual’s identification with and involvement in a particular organization” (Shipton et al. 2016). Thus, the studies confirm interrelationships of affective commitment and various outcomes, such as quit intention, levels of stress and citizenship behaviour (Ertas 2015; Shipton et al. 2016). Notably, employees with higher affective commitment in comparison to employees with higher continuance and normative commitment demonstrate higher initiative, motivation and input into organization’s performance.

Organizational commitment matters since public organizations across developed countries are experiencing retention problems due to competitive job market and shortage of professional skills (Korsakienė et al. 2015, Shipton et al. 2016, Korsakienė et al. 2017, Stankeviciene et al. 2017). These issues have led the scholars to investigate what factors contribute to the higher organizational commitment. A stream of studies documented that organizational culture plays an important role in the area of organizational commitment. Namely, the following factors are assumed to be significant for commitment of employees: teamwork, trust, procedural justice, distributive justice, organizational support, and etc. The study performed by Dwivedi et al. (2014) disclosed that organizational commitment is sensitive to proaction, confrontation, trust, authenticity, experimentation, and collaboration. Meanwhile, some scholars assert that organizational subculture matters more to commitment than organizational culture (Lok and Crawford 1999). Thus, the above presented discussion leads to the conclusion that a good match between person’s and organization’s values and norms let to overcome retention issues of organizations.

1.3. Investigations of values in defence organizations’ context

Globalization, economic development and the diversity of mass-media appear to be the driving forces, impacting social changes. Meanwhile, system-level changes contribute to the changes of individual-level values, beliefs and behaviours. Thus, the rise of individualism and self-interest are well documented in scientific literature. European values study revealed cultural and social changes of different European countries, what led to the conclusion that changes depend upon the stage of socio-economic development and historical factors (European values study 2018). A close look at the values in Lithuanian society revealed the significance of various work-related facets, such as wages, possibility to demonstrate initiative, interesting job and etc. However, the increasing importance of wages demonstrate that changes of values are sensitive to economic and political context (Žiliukaitė et al, 2016). Finally, broader context and observed changes influence performance of organizations.

The investigations of person-organization fit in defence organizations’ context were less developed. Meanwhile, a number of studies were conducted aiming to investigate the attitudes of individualism and self-fulfilment and their impact on Western armed forces (Johansen et al. 2014). The research conducted by Moskos (1977) assumed military service as occupational work or “just another job”. Notably, monetary rewards, well-organized work hours and family have become the priorities and thus, contribute to the self-interest values. Meanwhile, Battistelli (1997) expanded the theory of Moskos (1977) by arguing that individualism is a result of occupation and postmodernism. Thus, a stream of studies aimed to investigate how individualism and self-fulfilment impacted military identity. For instance, the research carried out by Johanssen et al. (2014) confirmed that individualism negatively predicted organizational commitment of Norwegian military academy cadets. The research conducted by Yu (2015) investigated values of military cadets in Taiwan and disclosed that socially competent type of individuals best satisfies the value demands of the military. The studies carried out in Lithuania confirmed the assumption that Lithuanian armed forces demonstrate both facets: postmodern and modern (Novagrockienė 2005). For instance, monetary rewards were indicated as the motive to join international mis-
sions (Miniotaitė, 2012, p.177). While investigations focused on the changes of military identity, organizational identity and broader social context (Kazlauskaite-Markelienė 2016), person-organization fit and organizational commitment were almost neglected factors.

2. Methods

2.1. Sample and data collection

The data was collected through the survey carried out in the selected military unit of Lithuanian Armed forces. The survey investigated values congruence and interrelationships with organisational commitment. The questionnaire was elaborated and personnel of the selected unit were questioned in 2016. Considering the structure of Lithuanian Armed forces and allocation of various units in different territory of Lithuania, the decision to investigate one unit was made. The convenience sampling technique, i.e. snowball method was applied. Notably, snowball method requires to start investigation from a small group of accessible subjects (Soriano 2013). The small group is used for the purpose to recruit others who meet the required criteria. The selection of snowball method was grounded on the following advantages: 1) the selection of initial group can lead to a more representative sample; 2) the method is useful when the issues to find the participants appear (Soriano 2013). Thus, targeting chiefs of staff resulted in appropriate number of returned questionnaires.

In total, 56 respondents completed the survey. About 70.9% of the respondents were male. In terms of age, about 38.2% were 26-30 years old and 41.8% were 36-45 years old. Chiefs of staff comprised 20% and specialists 80%. In terms of employment, about 29.1% of the respondents had less than 2 years job tenure, about 27.3% of the respondents had 3-10 years tenure, about 21.8% of the respondents had 11-19 and more than 20 years job tenure. In terms of education, about 78.2% of the respondents had higher education.

2.2. Variables and measures

Value congruence. The literature suggests direct and indirect measurement of value congruence (Ryu 2015). Notably, direct measurement is applied, aiming to assess the subjective perception of value congruence. Thus, the respondents are asked to indicate how they perceive the presence of good fit. The example question is “To what degree do you feel your values ‘match’ or fit this organization?” This approach is grounded on the instrument developed by Cable and DeRue (2002). Meanwhile, indirect assessment aims to investigate individual preference and organizational actuality. The respondents are asked to answer to the following groups of questions: 1) the questions about individual preferences and 2) the questions about organisation’s actuality. For example, the respondents are asked to identify the degree to which employees’ involvement into decision making process is preferred by the respondents, followed by a question, investigating the degree to which the value of involvement into decision-making process is preferred by organisation. Considering prevailing investigations, this research is grounded on indirect measurement. The investigations carried out by various scholars applied the competing values framework (Cameron and Quinn, 2011), the organisation culture profile (O’Reilly et al. 1991), congruence of organisational culture and values’ taxonomy (McDonald and Gandz 1991). However, the developed instruments are more suitable for business organisations and are very extensive. Considering peculiarities of investigated organisation, the decision to rely on the instrument developed by Vveinhardt and Gulbovaitė (2016) was made. Thus, the questionnaire included social values (nine items), professional values (ten items), moral values (five items) and physical values (four items). The responses to the questions were given on a five-point scale ranging from (1) “strongly disagreed to (5) “strongly agreed”. Calculated Cronbach’s α for individual social, professional, moral and physical values are as follows: 0.736; 0.688; 0.733; 0.610. Meanwhile, calculated Cronbach’s α for organizational social, professional, moral and physical values are as follows: 0.868; 0.841; 0.775 and 0.768. Value congruence was calculated considering the approach, suggested by Amos and Weathington (2008), i.e. by subtracting the degree to which the respondents believed a value should exist from the degree to which they felt a value existed.

Organisational commitment. Following previous studies, organisational commitment was assessed by applying
Meyer, Allen and Smith (1993) affective, normative and continuance commitment scales. The scales demonstrated high validity in various studies. The responses to the questions were given on a five-point scale ranging from (1) “strongly disagreed” to (5) “strongly agreed”. Calculated Cronbach’s α for organizational commitment is equal to 0.863. Meanwhile, calculated Cronbach’s α for affective, normative and continuance commitment are as follows: 0.875; 0.825; 0.756.

Propensity to leave. The propensity to leave was assessed by three questions scale suggested by Jaiswal et al (2015). The example question is “I often think about leaving my organization”. Considering the fact that low regulating state pensions of military personnel, additional question was included: “I will probably serve my full term in military till the age of the state pension”. The responses to the questions were given on a five-point scale ranging from (1) “strongly disagreed” to (5) “strongly agreed”. Calculated Cronbach’s α =0.775.

Control variables. Control variables such as gender, age, job tenure, job position, rank category and education were included. First, gender was controlled because men are more inclined to remain in organisation (Schofield et al. 2018). Second, job position and rank category were controlled considering the fact that job promotion positively correlates with job satisfaction and subsequently, intentions to remain in organisation (Jaiswal et al. 2016). Third, job tenure was controlled because longer job tenure predicts the retention of personnel (Schofield et al. 2018).

2.3. Analytical approach

The reliability test was conducted by applying Cronbach’s alpha coefficient. The data disclosed internal consistency of applied scales. Notably, common method biases are likely due to the fact that the data for both the predictor and criterion variable are obtained from the same person and in the same measurement context. Thus, some techniques were applied. Firstly, grounded on the suggestions provided by Podsakoff et al. (2003), a psychological separation was applied. Hence, a cover story did not disclose the measurement of the propensity to leave (predictor variable) and interrelationships with the measurement of value congruence and organisational commitment. Secondly, Harman’s single factor test was applied. Thus, all variables were loaded into explanatory factor analysis and the unrotated factor solution was investigated. The explanatory factor analysis has led to eighteen factors and the most significant factor accounted 18.78% of the data variance. Finally, multiple regression analysis was conducted aiming to predict intentions to continue and organizational commitment.

3. Results

First, the descriptive analysis was conducted. The data of descriptive analysis are provided in Table 1. The results let us reveal that intention to continue (KL) is positively associated with organisational commitment (OI) (r=0.601, p<0.01). A close look at the separate dimensions of organisational commitment revealed the significant positive correlation between intention to continue (KL) and affective commitment (EI) (r=0.558, p<0.01). Meanwhile, the significant positive correlations between intention to continue (KL) and normative commitment (NI) (r=0.397, p<0.01), between intention to continue (KL) and continuance commitment (TI) (r=0.310, p<0.05) are identified but at a lower level. In addition, the significant positive association between intention to continue (KL) and general value congruence (BVA) (r=0.284, p<0.05) was revealed. Notably, the significant positive correlations between intention to continue (KL) and moral values congruence (DVA) (r=0.446, p<0.01) and between intention to continue (KL) and physical values congruence (FVA) (r=0.405, p<0.01) are observed. Gender (LT) demonstrates negative and weak association with professional values congruence (PVA) (r=-0.327, p<0.05). Considering the fact, that the higher values were assigned to women, professional value congruence is tended to be higher for men. Notably, some gender differences were observed by other investigations focused on work values. For instance, the studies reported that men ranked influence, independence, responsibility and pay higher than women (Elizur 1994).
|                                   | M    | SD   | KL  | OI  | EI  | TI  | NI  | BVA | SVA | PVA | DVA | FVA | LT  | AM  | IŠ  | KL  | PA  |
|-----------------------------------|------|------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| **Intention to continue (KL)**    | 3.71 | 0.80 |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |
| **Organizational commitment (OI)**| 3.22 | 0.52 | .601** |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |
| **Affective commitment (EI)**     | 3.56 | 0.72 | .558** | .743** |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |
| **Continuance commitment (TI)**   | 2.95 | 0.74 | .310* | .622** | .122 |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |
| **Normative commitment (NI)**     | 3.16 | 0.62 | .397** | .768** | .546** | .258 |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |
| **General values congruence (BVA)**| -0.54 | 0.49 | .284* | .286* | .426** | .016 | .322* |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |
| **Social values congruence (SVA)**| -0.41 | 0.57 | .142 | .186 | .381** | -0.037 | .235 | .869** |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |
| **Professional values congruence (PVA)** | -0.57 | 0.54 | .160 | .175 | .256 | -0.015 | .233 | .902** | .685** |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |
| **Moral values congruence (DVA)** | -0.48 | 0.58 | .446** | .276* | .295* | .118 | .218 | .772** | .533** | .691** |     |     |     |     |     |     |
| **Physical values congruence (FVA)** | -0.79 | 0.77 | .405** | .425** | .524** | .099 | .458** | .745** | .549** | .563** | .550** |     |     |     |     |     |
| **Gender (LT)**                   | 1.29 | 0.46 | -0.22 | -0.176 | -0.152 | 0.047 | -0.124 | -0.206 | -0.143 | -0.327* | -0.150 | 0.004 |     |     |     |
| **Age (AM)**                      | 2.55 | 0.81 | -1.55 | -0.037 | 0.076 | 0.015 | -0.016 | -0.008 | 0.016 | -0.005 | -0.174 | 0.047 | 0.099 |     |     |
| **Education (IŠ)**                | 4.15 | 1.16 | -0.30 | 0.017 | 0.090 | 0.012 | -0.152 | -0.176 | -0.143 | -0.264 | -0.109 | -0.090 | 0.320* | -0.066 |     |     |
| **Rank category (KL)**            | 1.73 | 0.73 | -2.04 | -0.073 | 0.003 | -0.009 | -0.080 | -0.035 | -0.051 | 0.058 | -0.139 | -0.085 | -0.196 | 0.591** | 0.174 |     |     |
| **Job position (PA)**             | 1.80 | 0.40 | 0.082 | -0.093 | -0.082 | -1.24 | 0.026 | 0.037 | 0.011 | -0.037 | 0.148 | 0.074 | 0.120 | -0.292* | -0.237 | -0.545** |     |
| **Job tenure**                    | 2.36 | 1.13 | -1.21 | -0.007 | 0.126 | -0.041 | 0.071 | 0.106 | 0.071 | 0.139 | -0.136 | 0.183 | 0.034 | 0.728** | -0.048 | 0.716** | -0.407** |

Note. N=55. *p<0.05, **p<0.01. Gender coded as men, 1; women, 2; education measured from 1 (secondary education) to 5 (high university education); age measured from 1 (by 25 years age) to 4 (more than 46 years age); rank category measured from 1 (soldier) to 3 (officers), job position coded as having subordinates, 1; without subordinates, 2; tenure measured from 1 (less than 2 years) to 4 (more than 20 years); other variables on five-point scales.

Source: developed by author
Secondly, a multiple regression analysis was conducted aiming to predict intentions to continue. Self-reported intention to stay was dependent variable, while organisational commitment and general values congruence – independent variables. R square and adjusted R square are equal to 0.308 (p=0.000) what let us conclude that model explains 30.8% of data variations. However, general values congruence was statistically insignificant (β=0.215, t=1.078, p = 0.286) and thus, the decision to eliminate the variable from the model was made. The modified model explains 29.3% of data variance. R square and adjusted R square are equal to 0.293 (p=0.000). The linear regression model is as follows: Y(intention to stay) = 1.023 + 0.833 (organisational commitment) + e. Thus, the results demonstrate that higher organisational commitment increases intentions to continue. A close look at separate components of organisational commitment revealed that affective commitment increases intentions to stay. R square and adjusted R square are equal to 0.322 (p=0.000) what let us conclude that model explains 32.2% of data variations. The linear regression model is as follows: Y(intention to stay) = 1.459 + 0.623 (affective commitment) + e. The obtained results are in line with other investigations, demonstrating the strong relationship of affective commitment and intentions to continue (Alniacik et al. 2013). The scholars assume affective commitment as more effective measurement of organizational commitment what let us explain that affective commitment would lead to higher performance and subsequently higher probability to remain with organization.

Thirdly, a multiple regression analysis was made aiming to predict affective commitment. Notably, affective commitment was dependent variable, while social values, professional values, moral values and physical values congruence were independent variables. R square and adjusted R square are equal to 0.259 (p=0.000) what let us conclude that model explains 25.9% of data variations. However, social values congruence (β=0.288, t=1.317, p = 0.194), professional values congruence (β=-0.300, t=-1.106, p = 0.274) and moral values congruence (β=0.165, t=0.748, p = 0.458) were statistically insignificant and thus, the decision to eliminate these variables from the model was made. The modified model explains 21.9% of data variance. R square and adjusted R square are equal to 0.219 (p=0.000). The linear regression model is as follows: Y(affective commitment) = 3.906 + 0.437 (physical values congruence) + e. Thus, the results demonstrate that higher physical values congruence increases affective commitment.

Conclusions

The paper discloses interrelationships of values congruence, intentions of personnel to continue and organizational commitment in selected organization. First, the findings confirm the assumption that higher affective commitment increases intentions to stay with organization. In addition, the conclusion that personnel demonstrate identification with organization can be made.

Second, the study demonstrates that physical values congruence is positively interrelated with affective commitment. Hence, the sense of favourable social guarantees, benefits, appropriate work place and health considerations influence individual’s identification with organization. Meanwhile, the research did not disclose the relationships between normative commitment and continuance commitment. In addition, interrelationships between social values, professional values, moral values and affective commitment were not indicated. The findings have to be interpreted with caution due to study limitations. First, a limited number of personnel was questioned. Thus, future investigations have to involve more respondents and focus on few units. Second, the research focused on limited number of values and other values (e.g. spiritual, economic and etc.) could be investigate in the future. Third, the future studies could consider interrelationships of affective commitment and some other outcomes (e.g. citizenship behaviour and etc.). The implications for top-level management lie in the possibility to monitor values congruence and subsequently, increase organizational commitment of staff.

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