

Factors Explaining Affective Organizational Commitment among Nepalese Nursing Faculty: A Cross-sectional Study

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Abstract

Having an emotional attachment to an organization is a valuable asset for the quality input of nursing faculty in educating and facilitating the development of a qualified and competent nursing workforce. Nepalese universities are facing challenges in the retention of experienced and efficient faculty. However, evidence is scarce regarding the affective organizational commitment that might facilitate the retention of employees in the organization. To address this gap in the evidence, this study aimed to identify the factors explaining Affective Organizational Commitment (AOC) among the Nepalese nursing faculty. A cross-sectional path analytical study was conducted among 186 randomly selected nursing faculties. Data were collected through the questionnaire method using valid and reliable instruments. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyze the data. The findings show the significant direct and Positive Effect of Perceived Faculty Development Opportunity (PFDOP) and Job Satisfaction (JS) on AOC; and the significant indirect and positive effects of perceived organizational support [POS] and PFDOP on AOC via JS. The model confirms a better fit with the empirical data that explained 40% of variance by PFDOP, POS, and JS on AOC. Job satisfaction and PFDOP are the significant factors explaining AOC among the Nepalese nursing faculty. The finding suggests that job satisfaction and perceived faculty development opportunity should be promoted to enhance the effective organizational commitment among the Nepalese nursing faculty.

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1. Introduction

Committed human workforces are critical for increasing work efficiency and productivity, as well as fulfilling organizational goals by ensuring stability and decreasing costly turnover of employees [1]. Among the three attributes of organizational commitment; (1) affective commitment, (2) normative commitment, and (3) continuance commitment [1], affective organizational commitment is the most crucial and vital component of commitment to the organization [2]. Affective organizational commitment [AOC] refers to an employee's perception of their emotional connection to an organization [3] that inspires them to stay in the organization [3][4]. Employees who are emotionally attached to the organization understand the organization's objectives [4][5], feel respected and have a sense of belonging, and are satisfied [5]. Furthermore, employees with a high level of affective commitment might be regular at their work with a high level of productivity, spend extra effort, and be helpful [3]. Additionally, the highly committed employee can advocate for the organization [3], and save organizational expenses [4]. Likewise, determinants of the success of educational reform and achievement of educational organizational vision and goals are directly related to the commitment of faculty [6]. Thus, AOC is important to every organization in the global and Nepalese context.

Academic staff can play a variety of roles and accept various responsibilities in academic institutions. Academic staff participates within the input-process-output circle of academic organizations [7]. Furthermore, 'Input' is the student, 'Process' is the teacher and 'Output' is qualified work as a citizen which is given to the society by shaping a student and fulfilling societal needs with the significant contribution and genuine commitment of the teacher [7]. Faculty can play a crucial role in molding, refining, and modifying intellectual capacity; addressing the value, and sharing knowledge for the better future of their students [8]. Therefore, the turnover of experienced faculty may have negative effects on the organization and other faculty members. One of the negative effects is that the organization would spend a great deal of money on advertising for vacant posts and it would take a lot of time for existing faculty to recruit, select, and train newcomers. Another effect is that experienced faculty will leave the organization with research and teaching experience as well as practical skills. Thus, these effects add to the workload of existing academics [9].

In terms of nursing faculty, they can put in their best effort to advance nursing science and education through their scholarly publications and research, and teaching [10]. However, they are leaving the profession because of pay, workload, role ambiguity, and unfamiliarity which may create shortages of well-qualified and experienced faculty [10]. Nursing faculty is emotionally tied to the organization. For example, over two-fifths of nursing educators in Egypt reported having AOC [11] compared to 68 percent of nursing faculty in India [7]. Furthermore, AOC enhances the job performance of academics [12]. AOC might be influenced by different personal and organization-related factors. Therefore, an assessment of the motivational factors of the faculty for assuming assigned roles is most important to reduce faculty turnover, and shortages [10]. Donald et al. [8] found that satisfaction with the job had a mediating effect on the relationship between perceived organizational support and AOC among academic staff at higher education institutions. Likewise, other evidence showed a significant positive association between job satisfaction and AOC in a cross-national study of employees in the United States [13], library and information professionals in Nigeria [14], primary school teachers in Ethiopia [15], and Libya [16], an oil refining Company in Iran [17] and company managers in Indonesia [18]. A favourable relationship between job satisfaction

and organizational commitment was also revealed among employees representing eight companies in Serbia, Eastern Europe [19], and the nursing faculty of Nepal [20].

Similarly, a link between perceived organizational support and AOC among faculty in China [21], employees of stone milling companies in Indonesia [22], and employees of bank and educational institutions in South Asia [23] were evident. Likewise, perceived organizational support had a relationship with organizational commitment among Nepalese nurses [24]. Furthermore, perceived organizational support was linked to job satisfaction among Nepalese nursing faculty [25], and hotel industry personnel in Nepal [26]. Supervisory support for development and opportunities were predictors of AOC among nurses at a Finnish university hospital [27]. Likewise, perceived opportunities for research were also associated with organizational commitment [28]. Professional development opportunities and job satisfaction had a significant positive relationship among professional staff in the USA [29], the teaching faculty of different universities in India [30], and the nursing faculty of Nepal [25]. On the other hand, a qualitative study by Ojha [31] showed that higher education institutions in Nepal are facing challenges in facilitating stability, preventing turnover, and retaining experienced, qualified, and efficient faculty because of personal bias and nepotism, and lack of systematic policies and practices of the government and universities, facilities, and benefits, professional development, and organizational support for the research culture and publication. Additionally, lack of opportunity for growth, communication gaps between higher authority and subordinates, lack of benefit packages, recognition and clarity in responsibilities, rules, and policies, performance appraisal, and slower decision-making are the reasons for the turnover of employees in Nepalese organizations [32]. Likewise, the environment in the workplace, opportunity for growth and development, job security, and compensation management were the factors associated with the retention of Nepalese employees [33]. However, evidence is scarce regarding the factors that have contributed to promoting AOC among the Nepalese nursing faculty.

Job satisfaction, perceived faculty development opportunity, and organizational support might also facilitate effective organizational commitment and prevent costly turnover among the Nepalese nursing faculty. According to existing published printed and online literature, affective organizational commitment among nursing faculty as well as its determinants is an under-researched issue both globally and in Nepal. Additionally, none of the prior studies developed and tested the path model of affective organizational commitment among nursing faculty. In addition, prior studies mainly focused on examining the direct relationship between variables. Thus, this study fulfills this gap in the literature by examining the direct and indirect relationships between the variables and providing insight into processes through which AOC could be nurtured. Thus, the hypothesized path model of affective organizational commitment of Nepalese nursing faculty was developed by using a model of organizational commitment among academics [8] and the findings of prior studies. As a result, this study aimed to determine the factors explaining affective organizational commitment among Nepalese nursing faculty to fill this information gap, and advance knowledge in nursing education that might be beneficial for developing strategies to enhance the affective organizational commitment of the nursing faculty. The other aim of this study was to classify the level of perceived faculty development opportunities, job satisfaction, perceived organizational support, and affective organizational commitment. The first hypothesis was to determine the fitness of the proposed path model with the data among Nepalese nursing faculty at various universities. The other hypotheses of this study were: (2) job satisfaction, perceived organizational support, and perceived faculty development opportunities have direct and positive effects on affective organizational commitment, and (3) perceived

organizational support and perceived faculty development opportunities have indirect and positive effects on affective organizational commitment via job satisfaction. The structure of this paper consists of an abstract, introduction, methods (i.e., research design and settings, sample size and sampling, instrumentation, ethical considerations, data collection, and analysis), results, discussion, strengths and limitations, and conclusion and implications.

2. Methods

Research Design and Settings. This study adopted a cross-sectional path analytical study design. This study is cross-sectional because of the collection of data at one point in time. Path analysis is a form of multiple regression statistical analysis [34] that examines the direct and indirect effects of variables [35] and can answer questions regarding the relationships between exogenous and endogenous variables [36]. It also analyzes the paths or lines in a model that represents the influence of one variable on another [37] and can estimate both the magnitude and direction of causal connections between variables [34][35]. Thus, a cross-sectional path analytical research design could fulfill the aim of this study to develop and test the causal model of affective organizational commitment among Nepalese nursing faculty by examining the relationships between exogenous variables (perceived organizational support and perceived faculty development opportunities) and endogenous variables (job satisfaction and affective organizational commitment). The study population was all the nursing faculty (i.e., 279) of 18 out of 24 nursing institutions affiliated with different universities, i.e., (1) University A ($N = 151$), (2) University B ($N = 82$), (3) University C ($N = 27$), (4) University D ($N = 10$), and (5) University E ($N = 9$) of Kathmandu valley, Nepal. Three nursing institutions were excluded from the pretesting of the research instruments. On the other hand, the administrative authority of three nursing institutions declined participation in this study.

Sample Size and Sampling. The calculated sample size was 152 based on the following formula: Sample size (n) = $[(z^2pq) + ME^2] / [ME^2 + z^2pq / N]$ [38], where, $p = 68\%$ [7], $q = 1 - p$ (i.e., 32%), $Z = 1.96$ for 95% confidence level, Margin of error (ME) = 5%, and Population Size ($N = 279$). Then, 10% additional samples ($n = 15$) of the calculated samples were also added (i.e., $N = 167$). The final sample size was 209 with an estimated power of 80%. A proportionate stratified random sampling technique was employed for selecting samples. First of all, the total population of the nursing faculty of the different nursing institutions was divided into 5 strata based on their affiliation with five different universities. After this stratification, the stratum sample size was determined by using a sampling fraction ($n/N: 209/279 = 0.75$). Then, a simple random sampling technique was employed to select the required samples from each stratum (i.e., University A [$n = 113$], University B [$n = 61$], University C [$n = 20$], University D [$n = 8$], and University E [$n = 7$]). The inclusion criteria of this study were nursing faculty having at least six months of full-time teaching experience in a bachelor-level or above program. The sampling frame of this study excluded nursing faculty with administrative positions, visiting professors, and nursing faculty on long leave.

Instrumentation. Five instruments were used for the collection of data. *Socio-demographic and other personal information.* This part consisted of 15 questions related to age, marital status, higher education in nursing and other disciplines, current position, type of appointment, tenure in current position and institution, the nursing profession, etc.

Perceived Faculty Development Opportunity (PFDOP) Scale. The PFDOP scale is a researcher-developed 15 items Likert scale with a 5-point Likert response from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). The content validity of the PFDOP was established by consulting three experts: two experienced nursing faculty, and one nursing faculty holding an

administrative position. An example of an item is: “My campus has a system of job orientation for the new employees.”

Job Satisfaction Survey (JSS) [39]. The JSS consists of 36 items with 6-point Likert responses from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (6) and was used to measure job satisfaction. An example of an item is: I feel I am being paid a fair amount for the work I do.”

Survey of Perceived Organizational Support (SPOS) [40]. The SPOS consists of 8 items with a 7-point Likert response from strongly disagree (0) to strongly agree (6) and was used to measure perceived organizational support. An example of an item is: "The campus cares about my well-being."

Affective Organizational Commitment (AOC) Scale [41]. The AOC scale comprises six items with a 7-point Likert response from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (7) and was used to measure affective organizational commitment. Gautam [42] has already validated the AOC scale among employees of different organizations in Nepal. An example of an item of the instrument: “This campus has a great deal of personal meaning for me.”

The PFDOP, POS, JSS, and AOC scales had negatively worded statements. Thus, the responses to these statements were reversed before analysis. The AOC, JSS, and POS have already been translated into Nepalese language and have been used among Nepalese nurses by Timalsina et al. [24]. Forward and backward translations of the PFDOP scale were done in this study. Then, the pretesting of these Nepalese versions of the instruments was performed among 22 nursing faculty of three different nursing institutions in Kathmandu valley. The samples of pretesting were excluded from the actual study. The reliability coefficients of the instruments used in the current study were: PFDOP ($\alpha = .72$), AOC ($\alpha = .70$), JSS ($\alpha = .85$), and POS ($\alpha = .81$).

Ethical Considerations. Written permission was obtained to use the AOC, JSS, and SPOS via email from the respective authors. Ethical approval was obtained from the Nepal Health Research Council (Registration Number 246/2016). Written administrative approval from the different nursing institutions was taken by the principal author before collecting data. The rights of respondents were protected by maintaining anonymity, confidentiality, and privacy, and written informed consent was obtained by using the informed consent form.

Data Collection. By applying all the ethical procedures, the enumerators (RT, NR, and AC), and the members of the research team collected data from January to March 2017 via a questionnaire method. The self-administered structured questionnaires were given to all the randomly selected 209 samples by face-to-face contact. Most of the respondents filled in the questionnaires immediately in their faculty room or separate places in clinical sites after receiving them. However, some respondents took around 3 days to return the questionnaires with their valued responses because of their busy schedules. So, the enumerators again visited the respective institutions of each respondent to collect the completed questionnaires. All the respondents mentioned the time is taken (approximately 45 minutes) to complete the questionnaires.

Data Analysis. Although data were collected from 209 samples with field editing of the questionnaire with each respondent, 12 respondents did not return the questionnaire even after follow-up. Thus, the researcher was able to receive 197 completely filled-in questionnaires that reflected a 94.3% valid response. The Epi Data software was used for double data entry, data validation, and cleaning. The SPSS software version 16 (SPSS Inc., Chicago, Ill., USA), and Confirm IBM SPSS Analysis of Moment of Structures [AMOS] version 21 software (AMOS Development Corporation, USA) were used for analyzing the data.

No missing data were found in 197 samples as per the request for respondents to complete each item in the questionnaires. Eleven samples meeting the criteria of multivariate influential

outliers through Cook’s distance were deleted in the final data analysis. The final 186 (89%) samples were then analyzed after achieving all the assumptions of regression and path analyses. These assumptions were: (1) No missing data, removed 11 multivariate influential outliers as revealed by Cook’s Distance, (2) linearity based on bivariate scatter plots, (3) no multicollinearity (i.e., Tolerance: .31 to .56, VIF = 1.79 to 3.20), (4) homoscedasticity, (5) no autocorrelation (Durbin Watson Test: 1.79), (6) scores of all four variables were an interval level of measurement, (7) development of a recursive model, (8) used reliable and valid instruments for minimizing the measurement errors, (9) variables were selected in the model based on empirical findings and the path model of AOC by Donald et al. [7] for minimizing specification error, and (10) used over-identified model.

Following this, the strength and direction of the relationship of three explanatory variables, (i.e., perceived faculty development opportunity, perceived organizational support, and job satisfaction) with AOC was analyzed via path analysis. Then, an assessment of goodness of fit via model estimation with Generalized Least Squares (GLS), and model fit with Absolute Fit Indices [AFI] and Incremental Fit Indices [IFI] (see [Table 5]) were done. Next, the researchers interpreted the findings of the path analysis. In addition, the significance of indirect and total effects of the faculty development opportunity and perceived organizational support on AOC via a mediator (job satisfaction variable) with 1000 bootstrapping resamples was examined with a 95% bias-corrected confidence interval. Significance was considered for each test at a 5% level of significance ($p \leq .05$).

3. Results

This study intended to identify the factors explaining AOC among nursing faculty. Thus, this part is divided into 4 parts.

3.1. Socio-demographic and tenure-related characteristics of respondents

[Table 1] shows that the respondents nearly equally belonged to the exploration to maintenance stage of the age category with a mean of age 38.2 years ($SD = 8.4$). The majority of respondents were married (87.1%), had master's degree holders in nursing education (54.8%), and lecturer (48.4%), and had a permanent type of job appointment (46.8%). The highest proportion of respondents was in the exploration or trial stage in tenure in the current position (75.8%), current institution (62.9%), and an establishment or settling downstage in tenure in the nursing profession (74.2%) shown in [Table 1].

Table 1. Socio-demographic and tenure related characteristics of respondents N = 186

Variables	Frequency	Percent
Age in Years		
Up to 30 (Exploration or Trial Stages)	55	29.6
31-35 (Establishment or Settling Downstage)	47	25.3
36-40 (Advancement Stage)	45	24.1
Above 40 (Maintenance Stage)	39	21.0
Minimum-Maximum Age in Years	24-73	
Mean age in years, <i>SD</i>	36.2, 8.4	
Marital Status		
Married	162	87.1
Unmarried	24	12.9
Education in Nursing		
Bachelor in Nursing	84	45.2
Masters in Nursing	102	54.8

Current Position		
Assistant Instructor to Assistant Lecture	73	39.2
Lecturer	90	48.4
Assistant Professor	13	7.0
Associate Professor	8	4.3
Professor	2	1.1
Type of Appointment		
Temporary	42	22.6
Permanent	87	46.8
Contract	57	30.6
Tenure in Position in Years		
< 5 (Exploration or Trial Stages)	141	75.8
5-8 (Establishment or Settling Downstage)	34	18.3
≥9 (Maintenance Stage)	11	5.9
Tenure in Nursing Profession in Years		
5-8 (Establishment or Settling Downstage)	15	8.1
≥9 (Maintenance Stage)	33	17.7
5-8 (Establishment or Settling Downstage)	138	74.2
Tenure in Current Institution in Years		
< 5 (Exploration or Trial Stages)	117	62.9
5-8 (Establishment or Settling Downstage)	40	21.5
≥9 (Maintenance Stage)	29	15.6

Note. a: Categorization of age and tenure (work experience) based on Cohen [43]

3.2. Descriptive analysis of study variables

Table 2. Descriptive analysis of perceived faculty development opportunity, job satisfaction, perceived organizational support, affective organizational commitment

Variables	Actual Scale Scores	Range	Mean	Obtained Scores				
				SD	Skewness	z-score of Skewness	Kurtosis	z-score of Kurtosis
Perceived Faculty Development Opportunity	15-75	21-66	48.73	7.91	-.15, .18	-.83	-.08, .36	-.22
Job Satisfaction	36-216	86-206	138.44	23.47	.42, .18	2.33	.03, .36	.08
Perceived Organizational Support	0-48	0-48	25.59	9.60	.08, .18	.44	.16, .36	.44
Affective Organizational Commitment	6-42	18-42	32.67	5.44	-.41, .18	2.28	-.25, .36	-.69

[Table 2] reveals that the variables i.e., perceived faculty development opportunity, job satisfaction, perceived organizational support, and AOC has achieved assumptions of normal distribution of data based on absolute z-value (i.e., < 3.29) of absolute skewness, and absolute Kurtosis < 7 following the suggestion of [37].

Table 3. Level of perceived faculty development opportunity, job satisfaction, perceived organizational support, and affective organizational commitment N = 186

Variables	Frequency	Percent
Perceived Faculty Development Opportunity		
Unfavorable Perception (scores between 15 and 44)	71	38.2
Neutral Perception (scores 45)	7	3.8
Favorable Perception (scores between 46 and 75)	108	58.1
Job Satisfaction		
Dissatisfaction (mean scores ≤ 3)	18	9.7
Ambivalence (mean scores between 3 and 4)	103	55.4
Satisfaction (mean Scores > 4)	65	34.9
Perceived Organizational Support		
Low (the scores with 1 standard deviation below the mean)	100	53.8
High (the scores with 1 standard deviation above the mean)	86	46.2
Affective Organizational Commitment		
Low (mean value 1.00-3.00)	3	1.6
Moderate (mean value 3.01-5.00)	55	29.6
High (mean value 5.01: 7.00)	128	68.8

Note. Categorization of perceived faculty development opportunity as suggested by Kothari and Garg [45], Job Satisfaction based on Spector [39], perceived organization support based on Eder and Eisenberger [46], AOC based on Lee et al. [47].

[Table 3] shows that the highest proportion of respondents had a favorable perception of faculty development opportunity (58.1%), were ambivalent, i.e., neither satisfied nor dissatisfied (55.4%), had a low level of perceived organizational support (53.8%), and a high level of AOC (68.8%).

3.3. Correlations between explanatory variables and affective organizational commitment

Table 4. Correlation of perceived faculty development opportunity, perceived organizational support, and job satisfaction with affective organizational commitment N = 186

Variables	1	2	3	4
Perceived Faculty Development Opportunity	1.00			
Job Satisfaction	.65**	1.00		
Perceived Organizational Support	.61**	.81**	1.00	
Affective Organizational Commitment	.53**	.60**	.48**	1.00

Note. **: Correlation significant at the .01 level (2-tailed).

The finding reveals a statistically significant positive relationship between perceived faculty development opportunity, job satisfaction, and perceived organizational support, with AOC. The correlation among the explanatory variables lies between .48 and .81 shown in [Table 4].

3.4. Model of and factors explaining the affective organizational commitment

Table 5. Model fit statistics of the model of affective organizational commitment [AOC]

Model Fit Statistics	Modified Model a	Reference Criteria of Goodness of Fit Value
Absolute Fit Indices		
Chi-Square	.562 (p = .453)	> .05 [48]
Normed Chi-Square (χ^2 : df ratio)	.562/1 = .562	3:1 [48]
GFI	.998	> 0.90 [48]
AGFI	.985	\geq 0.90 [49]
SRMR	.008	\leq .05 [50]
RMSEA [95% CI], PCLOSE	.000 [.000, .175], .549	< .05 to .08 [50]
Incremental Fit Indices		
CFI	1.000	>.95 [superior fit] [48]
NFI	.994	>.95 [superior fit] [48]
NNFI [TLI]	1.032	.9 or .95 [48]

Note. ^a: After deleting a highly non-significant path of perceived organizational support to AOC. GFI: Goodness of Fit Index. AGFI: Adjusted Goodness of fit index. RMR: Root Mean Square Residual. SRMR: Standardized Root Mean Square Residual. RMSEA: Root Mean Square Error of Approximation. CFI: Comparative Fit Index. NFI: Normed Fit Index. NNFI: Non-Normed Fit Index. TLI: Tucker-Lewis Fit Index.

The test results of *AFI* and *IFI* for the model fit of the modified model show that the model was well-fitted with the empirical data with two significant and one non-significant path (see [Figure 1]). The model fit indicators are: $\chi^2 = .562$ [$p = .453$], χ^2 : $df = .562/1$ (.562), Goodness of Fit Index (*GFI*) = .998, Adjusted Goodness of fit index (*AGFI*) = .985, Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (*RMSEA*) = .000 [.000, .175], Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (*SRMR*) = .008, Comparative Fit Index (*CFI*) = 1.000, Normed Fit Index (*NFI*) = .994, and Non-Normed Fit Index (*NNFI*) = 1.032 (see [Table 5]).

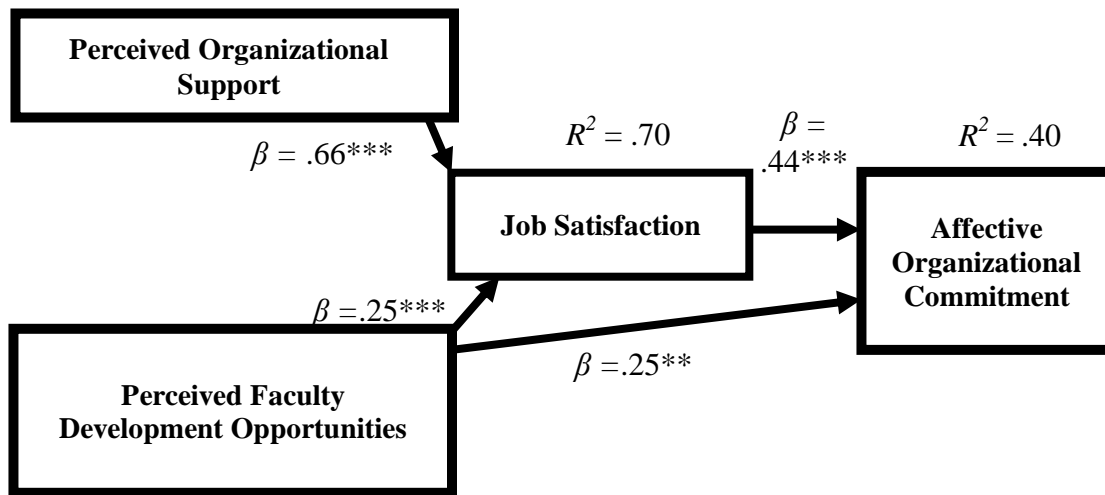


Figure 1. Path model of affective organizational commitment of Nepalese nursing faculty

Note. A highly non-significant path (perceived organizational support) to AOC was deleted from the model.

Table 6. Direct, indirect, and total effects of the path model of affective organizational commitment (AOC)

Paths				Direct effects			Indirect effects			Total effects		
	Estimate	SE	CR	β	<i>p</i>	95% bias-corrected bootstrap CI	β	<i>P</i>	95% bias-corrected bootstrap CI	β	<i>p</i>	95% bias-corrected bootstrap CI
JS → AOC	.10	.02	5.83	.44	.002**	[.31, .57]	-	-	-	-	-	-
PFDOP → AOC	.17	.05	3.24	.25	.002**	[.10, .38]	-	-	-	-	-	-
PFDOP → JS	.74	.15	4.87	.25	.002**	[.14, .37]	-	-	-	-	-	-
POS → JS	1.61	.13	12.84	.66	.003**	[.55, .75]	-	-	-	-	-	-
POS → JS → AOC				-	-	-	.29	.002**	[.19, .39]	.29	.002**	[.19, .39]
PFDOP → JS → AOC				-	-	-	.11	.001**	[.06, .18]	.36	.002**	[.22, .48]

Note. JS: Job Satisfaction. PFDOP: Perceived Faculty Development Opportunity. SE: Standard Error. CR: Critical Ratio. POS: Perceived Organizational Support. CI: Confidence Interval. →: indicates relationship.

The result showed that job satisfaction ($\beta = .44$, $p = .002$), and perceived faculty development opportunity ($\beta = .25$, $p = .002$) had significant direct and positive effects on AOC (see [Table 6] and [Figure 1]). In addition, there were significant indirect and positive effects of perceived faculty development opportunity ($\beta = .11$, $p = .001$), and perceived organizational support ($\beta = .29$, $p = .002$) on AOC through job satisfaction. In addition, there was a significant total effect of the paths from perceived organizational support to AOC ($\beta = .29$, $p = .002$), and perceived faculty development opportunity to AOC ($\beta = .36$, $p = .002$). Furthermore, the model demonstrated the significant mediating effects of job satisfaction between perceived organizational support and AOC and perceived faculty development opportunity and AOC by the bias-corrected 95% bootstrap confidence interval (see [Table 6] and [Figure 1]). Consequently, perceived faculty development opportunities, perceived organizational support, and job satisfaction explained 40% of the variance in AOC ($R^2 = .40$). Furthermore, perceived organizational support and perceived faculty development opportunities had a significant direct effect on job satisfaction. POS and PFDOP accounted for 70% of variances in AOC ($R^2 = .70$) [Figure 1]

To conclude the results section, the Nepalese nursing faculty had a high level of AOC, a favorable perception of faculty development opportunity, a low level of perceived organizational support, and were ambivalent, i.e., neither satisfied nor dissatisfied towards their job. Perceived faculty development opportunity and job satisfaction had a direct relationship with AOC, and perceived organizational support and perceived faculty development opportunity had an indirect relationship with AOC via job satisfaction.

4. Discussion

The findings reveal that the respondents nearly equally belonged to the exploration to maintenance stage of the age group. Likewise, the majority of respondents had a high level of affective commitment which is similar to the previous study conducted in Egypt among nursing faculty [51], and the faculty of educational institutions in Saudi Arabia [52] and India [7]. However, the findings of the current study were dissimilar from some previous studies

among nurse educators in Egypt [11] and academic employees of universities in Botswana [53] which revealed that the lowest proportion of respondents had a high level of AOC. These dissimilarities might be associated with the explanation by Ahmad [54] that a sense of obligation and commitment to the organization relies on job content and context. Moreover, the faculty of Nepalese universities are satisfied and committed because of their institutional recognition for their efficient and effective work by providing a high level of academic responsibilities and basic physical facilities [55]. Thus, job content and context, available opportunities, and facilities at universities might be varied across countries including the different levels of AOC in the diverse work environment.

Respondents having a high level of commitment in the current study is a very good indicator for the nursing institutions affiliated with different universities in Nepal. This is because AOC could reduce the turnover of the employees at a university as well as reduce the cost and time for vacancy announcement, recruitment, and training of new faculty at a university. Furthermore, employees with AOC would have regular attendance, decreased employee turnover, and increased productivity [56]. Since those committed faculty members and academics are necessary for faculty development, faculty who have a high level of commitment are then able to facilitate a revolution in teaching-learning and its sustainability [57]. Additionally, this study reveals the better-fitted model of AOC among the Nepalese nursing faculty that explains the significant direct and positive effect of perceived faculty development opportunity and job satisfaction on AOC. In addition, the significant indirect and positive effects of perceived faculty development opportunity and perceived organizational support on AOC via job satisfaction were also identified. The authors found that perceived organizational support and faculty development opportunities were the primary predictors of job satisfaction. In addition, job satisfaction was found to have a significant direct and positive effect on AOC. However, the better-fitted model of AOC with perceived organizational support and job satisfaction among academic staff of an educational institution of a South African University was found in a previous study [8]. So, the results of the current study in Nepal need to be replicated in a larger longitudinal study.

On the other hand, the path model of organizational commitment of non-nursing university faculty by Bam et al. [55] revealed that recognition of work, work environment, unionism, and pay and compensation explained 42% of the variance in organizational commitment. In a qualitative study in Thailand among university faculty, the themes that emerged were those such as the support and relationships among co-workers and supervisors, university support, relationship with students, management and systems, professional attachment, work environment and atmosphere, compensation and benefits, etc. as an antecedent of AOC [58]. The related factors explaining AOC in the current model are varied in a study conducted among non-nursing faculty in South Africa and Nepal. The possible explanations for the variation of findings could be due to the tool used, the inclusion of different explanatory variables, the study population, and the settings.

This study shows that job satisfaction had a significant direct and positive relationship with AOC which is similar to the previous studies in South Africa [8] and different countries among diverse groups of the sample population [13][14][15][16][17][18]. Sapkota et al. [59] also mentioned that job satisfaction facilitates the retention of faculty and the quality of education in nursing in Nepal. Similarly, the recent study by Juneja [60] mentioned that satisfied employees are happy, cope with and wish to stay at the organization even during emergencies, help their colleagues, create a positive work environment, concentrate on their efficient and effective performance with their intrinsic motive, and contribute more effectively. Additionally, the employees having job satisfaction adapt to and handle pressure

more efficiently, accept challenges happily, are more loyal, hardly think of leaving the organization, are more likely to be committed to their organization, and have dreamed of their organization at a new level [60]. Thus, all the above-mentioned explanations might explain well the positive effect of job satisfaction on the AOC of the respondents in this study.

The perceived faculty development opportunity had a significant direct and indirect positive effect on the AOC. This is consistent with the previous finding [27] regarding the supervisory support for the development and opportunities predicting AOC. In addition, developmental opportunity predicted organizational commitment among Turkish employees [61]. Professional developmental opportunities for faculty are central to improving satisfaction, engagement, and sense of belonging; facilitating retention, and enhancing teaching potential and students' outcomes and success [62]. Therefore, the explanation based on Condon et al. [62] might be the most plausible reason in this study which showed that increased developmental opportunities would create an AOC.

This study reveals the mediating relationship of job satisfaction between perceived organizational support and AOC which is identical to the findings of Donald et al. [8]. The social identity theory highlights that when people think that their organization appreciates and values their contribution, they feel respected, and satisfied, thus they might be emotionally attached to the organization [17]. Employees perceive support when they feel their work environment is more fulfilling, motivating, favorable, and fits with their values and aspirations. The perception of an employee might create satisfaction with their job and commitment to the organization [63].

5. Strengths and limitations of the study

Some of the strengths of this study are highlighted. Firstly, the path model was developed based on the evidence from previous studies. Perceived faculty development opportunity was also included in the model and highlighted as the significant variable for enhancing AOC which is a unique finding. Thus, it could add new knowledge to the literature on factors explaining AOC among nursing faculty. Secondly, the data were collected using valid and reliable measures among samples selected by a proportionate stratified probability sampling technique which can support the generalizability of the findings among the nursing faculty of Kathmandu, Nepal.

Since this is one of the first research studies to explain the factors that contribute to AOC among Nepalese nursing faculty, we should be aware of some limitations. These limitations were: self-reported measures via questionnaires using Likert items were used to measure all variables. Therefore, the possibility of social desirability and central tendency biases along with common method variance may be found in the obtained data. In addition, the path model of AOC was tested with a cross-sectional design. Therefore, the confidence in the direction of causality of selected factors and identification of other factors associated with AOC in the long term may be limited. Thus, future studies can be conducted using different types of data collection methods at different points in time. Another limitation is that this study only tested the relationship of three main variables with AOC which may not cover other factors associated with AOC such as organizational policy, the response to emails, perceived status, satisfaction with management, working habits of students, and sense of personal efficiency as highlighted by Nkhukhu-Orlando et al. [53]. Thus, this study recommends further study by including all these variables in the model of AOC. Although this study has some limitations, these limitations were outweighed by the strengths of this study based on design, sample size, sampling, data collection instruments, and data analysis as mentioned above.

6. Conclusion and implications

Affective Organizational Commitment [AOC] is the significant psychological attribute of nursing faculty that might prevent costly turnover, and absenteeism, in addition to promoting their organizational citizenship behavior. Thus, this study aimed to examine the factors explaining AOC among Nepalese nursing faculty working at different universities. This study concluded that the perceived faculty development opportunities and job satisfaction are the significant factors explaining AOC among the Nepalese nursing faculty. In addition, job satisfaction mediates the relationship between perceived faculty development opportunities and perceived organizational support with AOC among nursing faculty. Hence, this study recommends the policymaker and administrator of the nursing institution consider these factors explaining AOC and promote faculty development opportunities (e.g., job orientation for a new employee and new assignment, job rotation, assignment of a job according to specialty, refresher, and in-service training, promotional opportunity, positive support for career development goals, participation in conferences, etc.). Furthermore, it is essential to promote job satisfaction (pay, promotion, supervision, fringe benefits, contingent rewards, operating conditions, co-workers, the nature of work, communication, etc.), and provide organizational support. Thus, this could facilitate the AOC of nursing faculty towards their academic institutions which may result in increased job retention, improved quality of teaching, and improved learning outcomes for students.

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Declaration of conflict of interest

The authors declare that they have no competing interests (none).

Authors' contributions

All authors achieve the criteria of authorship and participated in (1) the conception of the original research idea and study design: RT, SKC, PS, NR, & AC; (2) data collection: RT, NR, & AC; (3) data analysis and synthesis: RT, SKC, PS, NR, & AC; (4) drafting, revising, and finalizing the manuscript: RT, SKC, PS, NR, & AC; and (5) acknowledge the responsibility for all the aspects of the work and the final manuscript: RT, SKC, PS, NR, & AC.

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