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## The impact of individual consideration on organizational commitment, with the mediation of role clarification.

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### ABSTRACT:

**Introduction:** Organizational commitment is an important aspect for organizations in order to bring down their turnover rate. Especially, in case of IT industry, this conception has been laid with great emphasis. However, not much work has been conducted to study factors affecting organizational commitment in the IT industry of Pakistan

**Aim:** To assess the impact of individual consideration on organizational commitment, with the mediation of role clarification

**Methodology:** Survey method was used to analyze the relationship. A pre-designed questionnaire was distributed among 300 respondents from Netsol Company

**Results:** The results show that individual consideration significantly influences organizational commitment. This relationship is enhanced by the mediating effect of role clarification approach.

**Keywords:** Individual consideration, organizational commitment, role clarification.

### INTRODUCTION

The industry of Information Technology (IT) has gained high significance and progress all over the world. Despite this fact, many IT organizations have been tackling with the problem of ineffective human resource detainment. As a result of this issue, there have been tremendous turnover rates in the IT industry for many previous years. This perspective has been well established and acknowledged by the previous surveys and research works. It is found that highest turnover rates are present in IT industry of India, followed by that of China, Switzerland, U.S. and Canada (Chandna & Krishnan, 2009). Many IT professionals tend to change their field. This factor is most prominent among the employees having experience of one to five years. The high turnover rate can be a result of the fact that at this level of expertise, the employees are more likely to find other job opportunities. Resultantly, it has been noted that the employees working with lower skill levels have the highest turnover rate of about 25 to 30 percent (Swailes, 2004). Therefore, it is highly essential for the IT organizations to address this

problem in order to overcome the extensive turnover trend among the IT professionals.

It has been proposed by previous studies that employee turnover is highly affected by organizational commitment. According to Meyer and Allen's proposed model of organizational commitment, the affective commitment has the largest impact on turnover intentions and variations (Camilleri, 2002). However, each component of organizational commitment has highly negative correlation with turnover intentions.

In the present age of progress, the role of leaders has become extremely important. It is assumed that an effective leader can increase affiliation between employees and organization, thus enhancing organizational commitment among employees. Consequently, in the last two decades, many researchers have emphasized on transformational leadership (Ongori, 2007). The reason for this interest in transformational leadership has resulted from the ever growing competition between the organizations (Siders, George, & Dharwadkar, 2001). An effective leadership is compulsory for attaining better performance, satisfaction, loyalty, commitment, and contentment among the employees. Thus, the previous studies asserts that there exists an association between transformational leadership deeds and the after effects, at individual as well as organizational terms (Ongori, 2007).

In the present research work, the impact of individual consideration on organizational commitment of employees and their inclination towards the organization has been studied in the IT industry. Moreover, mediation of role clarification will be analyzed in order to assess the impact of this feature on the relation between individual consideration and organizational commitment.

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### Organizational commitment

The organizational commitment has widely grown as one of the important concepts of organizational psychology (Cohen, 2003). According to Meyer et al. (2002) various four major factors are responsible for influencing the



organizational commitment. The first factor includes demographic characteristics, such as, age, gender, education of the worker. The second category includes work experiences, whereas, the third category includes availability of alternatives. The last category includes individual differences. The most important aspects related to these factors are job control, job insecurity, career advancement, age, and job culture. Miller (2003) claims that organizational commitment is the degree to which an individual is eager to remain associated with an organization, on the basis of common interests.

Various factors are responsible for the essence of organizational commitment. The most important aspects are the employee perceptions about the organization and his/her past experiences while working for it. Both of these attribute work together to develop the sense of organizational commitment in the employee (Chen & Francesco, 2003). The other significant factors affecting the organizational commitment are job satisfaction, stress, authorization, security and organizational identity. The organizational commitment is illustrated in the efforts of an employee for his organization. Moreover, the feature of organizational commitment is supposed to bring about positive changes in the organizational behavior and job performance of the employee. On the other hand, the absence of organizational commitment manifests high turnover rates and reduced productivity for the organizations (Swales, 2004). Thus, organizational commitment can be assessed by the probability of the employee to get identified and involved with an organization (Arnold, 2005).

Lin (2007) suggested that organizational commitment is the depiction of a worker's behavior towards his organization and colleagues. With an increase in organizational commitment, the level of motivation in a worker is also increased, along with better relationship formation with the co-workers. On the other hand, Cohen (2007) emphasized on the motivational force responsible for developing organizational commitment. Moreover, he stressed that affective commitment is the most accountable form of commitment.

According to Glazer and Kruse (2008), 'organizational commitment' can be regarded as an employee's aspiration to remaining associated with an organization. Moreover, it reflects the dedication of employees to make utmost efforts for the progress of the organization. It is found that employees who proceed in their career within an organization may have higher levels of organizational commitment as compared to those

who joined it in later period. On the other hand, downsizing organizations are expected to suffer lack of trust and organizational commitment among the employees (Chi, Yeh, & Yu, 2008).

Maurer and Lippstreu (2008) elaborated that the organizations deploying developmental opportunities may indulge employees in negative commitment. The reason for this lies in the thought of exerting additional efforts by an individual. In 2009, Somers studied organizational commitment in terms of turnover rates, job behaviour, work stress and absenteeism. The results of this study indicated that higher performance rates and lowest psychological problems are associated with affective-normative commitment (Somers, 2009). According to Joo and Lim (2009), organizational commitment involves an employee's willingness to defend all types of criticisms. For an individual, organizational commitment plays a role as a motivational source, whereas, for an organization, it may signify employees' association towards the organization.

Colquitt et al. (2010) suggested the ways to construct normative commitment among employees of an organization. This can be accomplished by building a feeling of obligation towards the organization and secondly by becoming a generous organization. Colquitt et al. pointed out that charitable activities, trainings and professional development programmes can provoke feelings of pledge among the employees. On the other hand, the same drift can indulge the individuals in the sentiments of gratification towards the organization. However, it is also observed that limitation of opportunities out of the organization can also make employees more committed.

In 2011, Aydin et al defined organizational commitment as a combination of plea to continue with an organization, contribute towards the well-being of it and devotion towards its success (Aydin, Sarier, & Uysal, 2011). In the same year, Iqbal et al. studied relation of different factors with the organizational commitment. These factors included age, gender, marital status, level of education, length of service, and leadership styles. The most extensively studied factor among these is the leadership styles (Iqbal, Kokash, & Al-Oun, 2011).

### **Organizational Commitment and different leadership styles**

An important factor that impacts the organizational commitment of employees is the leadership style. Different researchers have worked



on linking the various types of leadership styles with the sentiment of commitment among individuals. However, all these works have proved that whatever the type of leadership style may be, it has a definite positive association with the increase of organizational commitment. In 2000, Yousef conducted an extensive research on 50 main organizations in United Arab Emirates. The study showed that the employees that are supervised by consultative and participative leaders tend to perform better and more committed to their respective organizations (Yousef, 2000).

A study conducted by Lok and Crawford (2004) proved that the type of leadership style is highly associated with the extent of organizational commitment. This research included the managers of various organizations from Hong Kong and Australia.

In 2008, Dale and Fox encompassed a manufacturing corporation of Midwest to study link between organizational commitment and leadership styles. The results showed that the leadership styles related to initiation of structure and consideration were significant antecedents of organizational commitment (Dale & Fox, 2008).

Yiing and Ahmad (2009) proved that leadership behaviors are associated with the organizational commitment. The study involved various Malaysian employees from different career backgrounds. The most significant leadership behaviors that increased organizational commitment were observed to be supportive, directive and participative.

### **Transformational leadership and organizational commitment**

Leaders play an important role in the progress of an organization. An effective leader may morally encourage employees of an organization, which increases their job performance and satisfaction. Leaders may help employees to achieve job objectives through different strategies. Consequently, it is proposed that an effective leadership can boost up organizational commitment (Yiing & Ahmad, 2009). There are two main types of leadership styles, namely transformational leadership and transactional leadership. It has been noticed in previous studies that transformational leadership has great influence on the organizational commitment of an employee (Chi, et al., 2008; Ismail, et al., 2011).

The transformational leadership can be regarded as a style that brings about revolutionary change in an organization by promoting

commitment among employees (Sullivan & Decker, 2001). It aims at restructuring individual's goals and ambitions and make them align with those of an organization. It elevates the level of leaders into moral agents.

Chen (2002) compared the impact of transformational and transactional leadership on the organizational commitment of workers at steel companies in Taiwan. The results showed that the constituents of transformational leadership such as idealized influence, individual consideration and inspirational motivation are more associated with organizational commitment than the components of transactional leadership. In 2004, Chen extended his previous work by studying the relation of transformational leadership with organizational commitment in manufacturing and service organizations in Taiwan (Chen L. Y., 2004).

In comparison between transformational and transactional leadership, the foremost have gained more importance. The explanation to this fact has been put forward by Lee (2005). He claims that transformational leadership has a positive influence for all dimensions of organizational commitment; however, the transactional leadership may not do the same. In the same year, Walumbwa et al worked with bank employees of Kenya and USA. He found that regardless of the cultural differences, the transformational leadership influences commitment among employees (Walumbwa, Orwa, Wang, & Lawler, 2005). McGuire and Kennerly (2006) found the relation of both leadership styles with organizational commitment for nurses and nurse managers of Midwest hospitals. It was found that components of transformational leadership are more linked with organizational commitment. In 2008, Limsila and Ogunlana proved that transformational leaders gain higher commitment from their followers as compared to the transactional leaders (Limsila & Ogunlana, 2008). In the same year, Erkutlu proved that transactional leadership negatively influences organizational commitment (Erkutlu, 2008). Same was found by Tremblay (2010) while working on the Canadian Forces personnel. The importance of transformational leadership was emphasized by Ismail et al (2011) with the claim that it is the best leadership style for promoting commitment among the individuals.

### **Individual consideration as an important factor of transformational leadership, affecting organizational commitment**

Individual consideration is a part of transformational leadership, which asserts that a leader should consider each employee separately.



Bass and Avolio (1994) referred to individual consideration as being the support of leaders towards the efforts of their followers. Through individual consideration, the mindset of employees can be diverted completely and commitment towards their job and organization can be increased (Yukl, 2002). The importance of individual consideration has been emphasized by previous research works (Sarros, Gray, & Densten, 2002). The most important aspects of individual consideration are developmental orientation and individualized attention. Individual consideration can be achieved through effective coordination between the leader and followers. The leader needs to give virtuous advises to followers about their careers (Pradeep & Prabhu, 2011). Moreover, he needs to observe, monitor and record progress of all his followers. He should be able to identify areas of improvement for each employee and encourage them towards filling such gaps. In order to assess an employee's performance, a leader may render different work activities (Dale & Fox, 2008). These activities help the leader to understand if additional mentoring is needed and in which direction it should be. He identifies differences among employees and notices the motivator factors for each employee. The individual consideration allows a leader to get closer to the employees and increase information sharing by considering individual as a single entity and not merely group members (Rafferty & Griffin, 2004). The employees are enabled to discuss their problems and leader finds solutions for them on the basis of his previous experiences. Hence, individual consideration is a means of support provision and self development for the employees, which helps in boosting up their career and career goals (Yukl, 2002).

An extensive amount of research work is present that lays emphasis on the component of individual consideration. Ohman (2000) studied the relation of individualized consideration with commitment among the nurses in Minnesota. The results showed that this form of transformational leadership is highly related to various types of commitment. In the same year, Corrigan et al proved that individualized consideration affirms to improve various leadership factors through training and development activities (Corrigan, Lickey, Champion, & Rashid, 2000).

Sarros, Gray and Densten (2002) claimed that individualized consideration is an extremely significant leadership behaviour that should be adopted in the workplaces. In the same year, Vandenberghe et al proved that individualized consideration can be envisioned as individual

support for the employees. The implication of individualized consideration compels the employees to work more efficiently with an increase in satisfaction towards the leader. Other beneficial aspects of applying individualized consideration included increased job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and staff retention (Vandenberghe, Stordeur, & D'hoore, 2002).

In 2003, Hetland and Sandal emphasized that individualized consideration influences organizational commitment by acknowledging the employee's needs and paying them more attention. Erkutlu (2008) proved that among the components of transformational leadership, individualized consideration has the highest influence with the job satisfaction and organizational commitment. In 2010, Lo et al. claimed that individualized consideration has the highest impact on continuance commitment.

#### **Role Clarification as an important factor of team building, affecting the organizational commitment**

The term 'team building' means the effort put forward by employees in order to intervene with the respective organization and bring about improvement in its productivity. Team building is, somewhat, a planned and systematic process which helps in enriching the cooperative hard work of the employees. This process is meant to achieve organizational goals and targets. There are various aspects of team building, which includes setting goals, problem solving, interpersonal relationships and role clarification (Bray and Brawley 2002). Role clarification can be defined as elucidation of employee's goals, ambitions and expected results. The leader is supposed to explain to the employees about the structure of organization and clarify them about their role in it. This elucidates the interdependence of all the employees in achieving team success (Rizzo et al., 1970). In 2006, role clarification was defined by Foote et al as an extent of work and role understanding by the employees (Foote et al 2006).

In various research works the importance of role clarification have been emphasized as a significant component of managerial effectiveness. Locke and Latham (1990) found that role clarification results in better individual and group performance. Consequently, the functioning of the workgroups may also be increased (Bray and Brawley 2002). In 2004, Hong, Nahm and Doll stated that leaders who adopt a better role clarification technique tends to receive better performance from their followers (Hong, Nahm



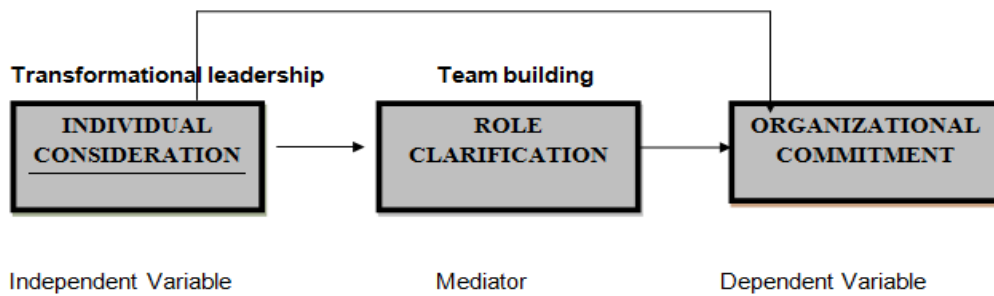
and Doll, 2004). Chun and Rainey (2005) found that role ambiguity can affect performance among the workers of public agencies, whereas, the same was found by Wright (2006) in the health care sector. Even the most competent individual show declined performance in the absence of role clarity (Yukl, 2010). Griffeth et al (2000); Jung (2012) and Jung (2011) found that absence of role clarity can result in negative staff retention.

From the above review of literature, it is clear that role clarification as a component of team building is highly essential. The relation of role clarification with organizational commitment has also been established by research works of Probst(2003),and Saks, Uggerslev, & Fassina (2007). The possible explanation for this relation has been put forward by Saks et al (2007). According to Saks et al. role clarification helps in defining the virtues, goals and expectations of an organization more clearly. This helps in boosting up the sense of comfort and competition among the

employees. Both these factors are essential initiators of organizational commitment (Meyer & Allen, 1991).Despite the extensive research done in the area of organizational commitment; no substantial work is present that addresses the impact of individualized consideration on the organizational commitment with the mediation of role clarification. Therefore, it becomes mandatory to study this relation in detail. The present work affirms to fulfil this gap of literature and research.

**Theoretical Model**

In the proposed model, the factor of individual consideration, which is a part of transformational leadership, is considered as an independent variable. The organizational commitment is regarded as a dependent variable. The variable of role clarification performs the mediating role, which is a part of team building, in associating dependent and independent variables. The theoretical model is shown in Figure 1.



**Figure 1: Theoretical Model**

**Hypothesis**

Hypothesis 1. Individual consideration has positively significant relation with organizational commitment(Ibrahim, et al., 2015;Alkahtani, 2015).

Hypothesis 2. Individual consideration has positively significant relation with role clarification approach(Schaufeli & Bakker, 2010).

Hypothesis 3. Role clarification approach has positively significant relation with organizational commitment(Bishop, et al., 2000; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2010).

Hypothesis 4.Individual consideration has positively significant relation with organizational commitment, with the mediation of role clarification approach (Bishop & Scott, 2000).

**METHODOLOGY**

**Sample and sampling technique**

This research study used non probability convenience sampling. The sampling frame includes the IT industry employees of Netsol Company. This study consists of a sample size with 300 respondents. The sample size was selected on the basis of easy availability and of the potential respondents, along with the willingness of an employee to be treated as a respondent.

**Measurement development**

The pre-designed questionnaire consisted of three sections: organizational commitment, individual consideration and role clarification. The items of the questionnaire were adapted from previously conducted research works. A five point Likert scale will be used to evaluate responses, which range from (1) 'strongly disagree' to (5) 'strongly agree'.





### Research design

The present research study is quantitative in nature, which comprises of inferential and empirical studies to produce result by statistical techniques for identification of the effect and relationship of the variables.

### Data analysis

To evaluate the data, SPSS (Statistical packages for social sciences) was used. To acquire the results, descriptive technique was used along with statistical tests of regression, reliability and correlation.

### Validation of the measurement scale:

To examine the internal consistency and homogeneity of data items, Cronbach's coefficient alpha ( $\alpha$ ) was used. Moreover, it helped to evaluate the reliability and variability of the results.

## RESULTS

### Demographics

The demographics for the study are shown in the Table 1.

Table 1: Demographic analysis

Item	Frequency (N)	Percentage(%)
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	184	61.33
Female	116	38.66
<b>Level of Education</b>		
Bachelors	101	33.66
Masters	149	49.66
Above Masters	50	16.66
<b>Experience</b>		
Less than 5	47	15.66
5-10 years	132	44
10-15 years	78	26
Above 15 years	43	14.33
<b>Age</b>		
21-30 years	62	20.66
31-40 years	195	65
41-50 years	36	12
Above 50	7	2.33

Table 3:Correlations

Variables	Mean	S.D	1	2	3
Individual consideration	4.82	.621	1		
Role clarification	3.94	.723	<b>0.524*</b>	1	
Organizational commitment	4.75	.673	<b>0.426*</b>	<b>0.418*</b>	1

\* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

years		
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### Validity and reliability analysis

The Principal Components Factor Analysis (PCFA) was implemented to inspect data structure. For measuring individual consideration, 4 items were adopted from Ibrahim et al (2015). The Cronbach alpha for the variable was calculated to be 0.93. The 7 items to measure organizational commitment were derived from Ibrahim et al (2015), which gave Cronbach alpha value of 0.879. For measurement of role clarification, 6 items were adapted from Lau (2011). The Cronbach alpha was calculated to be 0.877. As all the values of Cronbach alpha are above 0.8, high degree of internal consistency exists in the responses. The total Cronbach alpha was found to be 0.896 as shown in Table 2, which reflects the high reliability of the selected constructs. (Field, 2009; Hair et al., 2010).

Table 2: Reliability analysis

Construct	Cronbach alpha
Individual consideration	0.93
Organizational commitment	0.879
Role clarification	0.877
<b>Total</b>	<b>0.896</b>

### Hypotheses testing

#### Correlation analysis

The correlation between the variables is depicted in the Table 3. It is evident that significant and positive correlations are present between all the variables: individual consideration, role clarification and organizational commitment. Individual consideration and role clarification had significant correlation ( $r = 0.524$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ); hence H1 is approved. The organizational commitment and individual consideration had significant correlation ( $r = 0.426$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ); hence, H2 is approved. The organizational commitment and role clarification had significant correlation ( $r = 0.418$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), hence H3 is approved.



**Regression Analysis:**

In order to test hypothesis H4, regression analysis has been used as shown in Table 4. According to this hypothesis, the impact of individual consideration on the organizational commitment increases with the mediation of role clarification.

The Table 4 (a) shows the impact of individual consideration on the organizational commitment and the Table 4 (b) shows the influence of role clarification and organizational commitment. The values of R square 0.182 and 0.169 depict the strong relation between the variables. This relation becomes more pronounced with the mediating effect of role clarification, as shown in Table 4 (c). As the estimated effect is 0.2634, which is greater than 0; the mediator has a significant effect on the relation of dependent and independent variables.

**Table 4 (a) Model Summary**

Model	R	R square	Adj sq R	Std error of estimation
1	0.427	0.182	0.184	0.39273

a. Predictors: (Constant), Z Score (employee\_commitment)

**Table 4 (b) Model Summary**

Model	R	R square	Adj sq R	Std error of estimation
1	0.412	0.169	0.167	0.27373

**Table 4 (c) Mediating effect**

Indirect effect and significance using normal distribution					
Value	s.e.	LL95CI	UL95CI	Z	Sig(two)
Sobe1	.2634	.06353	.1723	2.4374	.0004

Bootstrap results for indirect effect					
Mean	s.e.	LL95CI	UL95CI	LL99CI	UL99CI
Effect	.2127	.0523	.1525	.7363	.8737

- a. Predictors: (Constant), Zscore (self\_efficacy), Zscore (organizational\_commitment), Z score (role\_clarification)

**DISCUSSION**

The present study envisaged to explore the relation between individual consideration and organizational commitment, with the mediation of role clarification. According to the results, a positive relation exists between individual consideration and organizational commitment. This finding indicates that when a leader considers the sub-ordinates on an individual basis, they get more bound with their work and organization. Consequently, their work performance may increase and the turnover intention decrease. This implication is in accordance with the previous work of Ohman (2000), who affirmed that various aspects of transformational leadership including individualized consideration positively affect the organizational commitment. The same results were supported by the works of Sarros et al (2002), Hetland and Sandal (2003), Erkutlu (2008) and Lo et al. (2010).

The results show that individual consideration has positively significant relation with role clarification approach. Such a relation indicates that when a leader considers its sub-ordinates on an individual basis, he is able to clarify their role and duties in a better way. It can also be said that the followers are enabled to understand their responsibilities betterly. Not much work has been conducted on this perspective; however, Schaufeli & Bakker(2010) affirmed this relation in their study.

The approval of third hypothesis affirms that role clarification approach has positively significant relation with organizational commitment. A lot of research is present, which supports this relation. In 2000, Ohman proved this relation for the nurses in Minnesota. By comparing the components of transformational and transactional leadership, Chen (2002) affirmed that individual consideration increase organizational commitment. The same was proven by Chen (2004), in an extension of his previous work. Vandenberghe et al., (2002) have emphasized the positive impact of individual consideration on staff retention, job satisfaction and organizational commitment. The relation of individual consideration and organizational commitment has been supported by Hetland and Sandal (2003), McGuire and Kennerly (2006) and Erkutlu (2008). Lo et al (2010) declared that individualized





consideration has the highest impact on continuance commitment.

The hypothesis 4 assert that individual consideration has positively significant relation with organizational commitment, with the mediation of role clarification approach. The work of Wright and Davis (2003) affirms that absence of role clarity can result in exhaustion and increased turnover rate. Thus, by adding in the factor of role clarification, the individual consideration can have an additional affect on the organizational commitment.

### MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

The present research work is a contribution towards project management literature, which integrates leadership theory with team building model. The results have shown that team-building interventions are responsible for linking up transformational leadership with organizational commitment. This enhances the understanding towards augmentation of organizational commitment through transformational leadership and team-building.

Individual consideration, an aspect of transformational leadership, was found to be associated with organizational commitment, both with and without the mediating effect of role clarification, an aspect of team-building. Thus, the present research helps in understanding how the organizational commitment can be increased through application of individual consideration and role clarification. However, apart from role clarification many other factors may also increase

the impact of individual consideration on organizational commitment. Therefore, future research works can aim to uncover them.

A number of practical implications can be applied on the basis of this research work. An important aspect is that individual consideration can increase organizational commitment. Apart from this, the leaders can apply the strategy of role clarification to reduce the turnover rate (Klein et al., 2009). Another implication involves the application of transformational leadership through training for better commitment among the followers. This affirms that the development efforts for project leaders should focus on the application of team building techniques (Gundersen et al., 2012; Leonard and Lang, 2010).

### CONCLUSION

Organizational commitment is an important perspective considered by the organizations for their success. Through present study, it is affirmed that individual consideration has direct and indirect influence on the organizational commitment of employees. Moreover, the part of role clarification as a critical project success factor is depicted for acting as a mediator between individual consideration and organizational commitment. Hence, the organizations should promote aspects of individual consideration and role clarification among project managers. This would help in increasing organizational commitment among the employees, which in turn would help in attaining organizational goals.

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