

ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT & ITS ANTECEDENTS: EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE FROM A DEVELOPING COUNTRY.

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ABSTRACT

Organizational commitment is a well researched construct in management literature. Past studies typically employed composite measures of organizational commitment. However, not many researchers have examined the individual relationships between the three dimensions of organizational commitment (affective, continuance, and normative) and some of its less researched antecedents (support from the supervisor, support from the coworkers, commitment to the profession, and perceived organizational support). In this study, I develop a conceptual model to empirically investigate these individual relationships. Data were gathered from three hospitals in Mexico to test the hypothesized model relationships. The results indicate that antecedents are related in different ways to various organizational commitment dimensions. The findings suggest that firms could influence employee behavior by focusing on different organizational commitment dimensions and their antecedents.

ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT

Organizational commitment is an attitude that influences employee behavior beneficial to the organization (Riketta, 2002). The study of commitment to the organization is important because organizational commitment can influence employees' creativity, innovativeness, adaptation, and reduces withdrawal behaviors such as lateness and turnover (Mathieu & Zajac, 1990; Clugston, 2000; Riketta, 2002). Given that organizational commitment harnesses employees' desires, needs, and obligations and thus helps channel their efforts toward the achievement of the organization's objectives, a better understanding of the factors that can help organizations to increase their workers levels of commitment is critical. This research builds on this theoretical and practical need for more research on the antecedents of organizational commitment.

Meyer and Allen (1990, 1996) indicate that organizational commitment is a psychological link between the employee and his/her organization that makes it less likely for the employee to voluntarily leave the organization. Their studies suggest that organizational commitment is a three dimensional construct comprising of affective, continuance, and normative dimensions. Affective committed employees experience affective feelings toward the organization and remain there because they want to do so. Continuance committed employees, on the other hand, feel either that they need the work or that the cost of leaving the job is so high that they have to stay with the organization. Normative committed employees experience a sense of culture or

work ethic that makes them to remain in organizations as they feel that they ought to do so (Meyer & Allen, 1990; 1996).

Although Meyer and Allen (1990, 1996) envisaged organizational commitment as a three dimensional construct, they indicate that the three dimensions can be related to each other in different ways. For example, studies suggest that the affective and continuance commitment dimensions may be inversely related to each other (Meyer, Stanley, Herscovitch & Topolnytsky, 2002). As affective feelings toward the organization increases, employees can begin to change their perceptions of lack of job alternatives; a situation that can increase their perception that they are in the organization because they want to and not because they have to (Meyer, et al., 2002). Brief (1998) attributes the above to a cognitive dissonance effect. *Ceteris paribus*, I will hold this argument as plausible and move forward with my conceptualization and analyses. Further, since normative commitment differs from affective and continuance commitment in that it does not reflect a need to associate with the organization's goals or missions (Clugston, 2000), I do not assume any relationship between normative commitment and affective and continuance commitment.

Past studies suggest that organizational commitment is a function of several workers' personal and job characteristics, group-leader relations, and other work-related attitudes (i.e. job satisfaction) and states of mind such as engagement and flow (Mathieu & Zajac, 1990; Clugston, 2000; Robinson & Perryman, 2004; Buhler, 2006; Saks, 2006). There is, however, ambiguity in literature on the precise nature and influence of many variables that impact organizational commitment (Robinson & Perriman, 2004). Steers (1997) suggests that many such variables are either organizational related or pertain to workers' personal factors. Mercado (2000) lends support to the above by indicating that an organization's general atmosphere and specific employee factors are keys to understanding organizational commitment. Her study suggests that while the organization's atmosphere is a function of organizational climate and organizational socialization, some of the more critical employee specific factors associated with organizational commitment are the employees' commitment to their profession and their perceived organizational support. This study focuses on the above factors as suggested by Mercado (2000).

A synthesis of the above discussion suggests that an exploration of organizational commitment and its antecedents have to take into account the distinct effects and nature of the different dimensions of organizational commitment. Past studies typically employed an aggregate measure of organizational commitment and not many researchers have examined the individual relationships between various antecedents and organizational commitment dimensions. Researchers such as Joiner and Bakalis (2006) have pointed out the need for research to explore the associations between the antecedents of organizational commitment and each of its three different dimensions. Mercado (2000) argues that given that past studies have produced conflicting results concerning some important antecedents of organizational commitment, such as support from the supervisor, support from the coworkers, and continuance commitment to the profession, more research should be conducted to clarify the relationship between these factors and the three dimensions of organizational commitment. In this study, heeding the call for more fine-grained analysis of the associations between organizational commitment and its suggested antecedents, I examine the individual relationships between the three dimensions of organizational commitment and some of its critical antecedents. I also follow Meyer et al.,

(2002) call for more cross cultural research on organizational commitment. I believe this study conducted in a developing country, namely Mexico, can contribute to better understand organizational commitment. Figure 1 shows this study's conceptual model.

The layout of the rest of the study is as follows. In the next section I discuss the antecedents of organizational commitment and present the hypotheses to be tested. I, then, test the model using a sample drawn from three hospitals in Mexico. The data collected were analyzed and evaluated using factor analyses and structural equation modeling. Lastly, I provide an overall summary and discuss the implications of the findings.

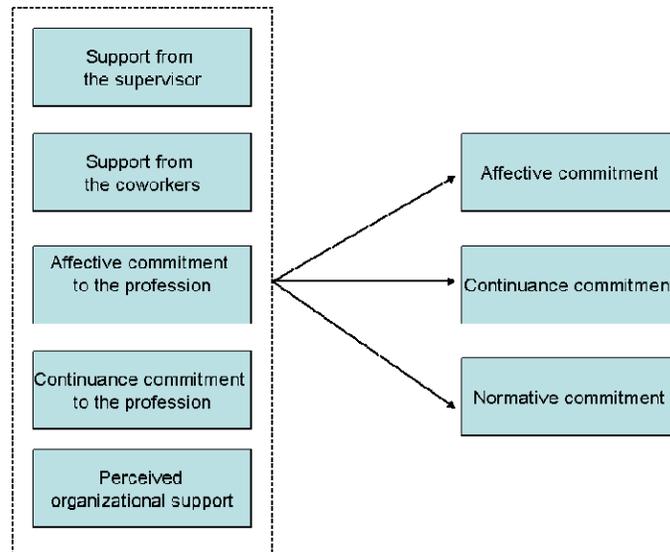


Figure 1: Organizational Commitment's three dimensions and some of their antecedents

ANTECEDENTS OF ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT

Organizational Climate (Support from the Supervisor)

Organizational climate, a relatively stable factor in any organization, is however, considered an elusive variable for research as it is created and experienced at the same time by the organization's workers (Mercado, 2000). Organizational climate entails the properties of the job environment that the employees' perceive as basic characteristics of the organization (Invankevich, 1992). James and James (1989) suggest that organizational climate represents the way in which the workers perceive and interpret their proximal job environment. Brown and Leigh (1996) conceptualize organizational climate as a function of five factors: worker's personal contribution, clarity in the job position, support from the immediate supervisor, expression of feelings, and recognition. Four of these factors, except support from the immediate supervisor, are well researched ones; there is some paucity of research on the relationship between immediate support from the supervisor and the three organizational commitment dimensions.

Joiner and Bakalis (2006) suggest that employees who perceive a friendly and supportive relationship with their supervisors will possess a strong positive commitment to their organizations. Support from the supervisor refers to the worker's perception that s/he is being supported by his immediate supervisor concerning the way of doing the job and his/her decision making (Brown & Leigh, 1996). Support from the immediate supervisor can be considered as a continuum with the extremes poles representing two opposing supervisory styles. At one end of the continuum is an inflexible and rigid style that reflects a lack of trust in the employee. At the other end of the continuum is a flexible style that allows workers to learn from their mistakes and utilize their creativity to resolve problems (Mercado, 2000). While Kahn (1990) argues that a rigid supervisory style negatively influences workers' motivation and commitment, Katz and Rosenzweig (1998) suggest that adequate support from the supervisor encourages employees' positive attitudes and loyalty to the organization. Hence, in this study it is postulated that:

Hypothesis 1: Support from the supervisor has a positive association with affective organizational commitment.

Hypothesis 2: Support from the supervisor has a negative association with continuance organizational commitment.

Hypothesis 3: Support from the supervisor has a positive association with normative organizational commitment.

Organizational Socialization (Support from the Coworkers)

Organizational socialization is the process by which workers know the organization's expectations and understand the values, behaviors, and social-based knowledge that are necessary to participate and succeed in the organization (Invanchevich, 1992). Organizational socialization is both a formal and an informal process. While a formal process refers to the organization's formal orientation programs, an informal process refers to the information and orientation that workers receive from others in the organization (Gibson, Invanchevich, & Donnelly, 1997). Through socialization, employees teach and learn the organizations' rules (Robbins, 1997). This learning process is likely to influence the employees' organizational commitment as they get integrated in the organization's culture (Roberts & Hunt, 1991). Taormina (1999) suggests that organizational socialization is a function of four factors: a) how employees understand their roles and that of the organization, b) training, c) employees' projection within the organization, and d) support from the coworkers. Three of these factors, except support from coworkers, are well researched ones; there is some paucity of research on the relationship between support from coworkers and the three organizational commitment dimensions. Support from the coworkers refers to the acceptance, support and assistance that a worker gets from his/hers peers at work and that helps him/her to gain an affective adaptation to the organization (Taormina, 1999).

Lee, Ashford, Walsh, and Mowday (1992) find no support for the relationship between support from the coworkers and the workers' general levels of organizational commitment. Taormina (1999), on the other hand, suggests a positive association between support from coworkers and

the workers' organizational commitment levels. Mercado (2000) indicates that support from the coworkers facilitates workers' acceptance and adaptation to the organization, and thus fosters positive feelings and loyalty behaviors toward the organization. Joiner and Bakalis (2006) lend support to the above by suggesting that coworkers provide mutual support to one another in terms of providing information and assistance. Given that information and assistance may in turn increase the employees' sense of connection and commitment to the organization, in this study it is postulated that:

Hypothesis 4: Support from the coworkers has a positive association with affective organizational commitment.

Hypothesis 5: Support from the coworkers has a negative association with continuance organizational commitment.

Hypothesis 6: Support from the coworkers has a positive association with normative organizational commitment.

Commitment to the Profession

Mercado (2000) suggests that a person's job-related commitment is in general desirable; however, not all levels and types of commitment may be desirable. Her study indicates that employees may present different profiles of commitments, and thus, they might probably face a conflict among their commitments. For instance, employees can be committed to their profession, but not to the organization.

While organizational commitment refers to the workers' link with the organization, commitment to the profession refers to the persons' link with a group that distinguishes itself from others by sharing elements specific to a particular profession (Mathieu & Zajac, 1990). Meyer, Allen, and Smith (1993) suggest that the effects of the workers' commitment to their profession can expand and impact organizational commitment. Commitment to the profession impacts organizational commitment as people usually first decide what profession to be in, and after, which organization is appropriate to exercise such a profession (Mercado, 2000). Thus, if the person's professional objectives do not match those of the organization, or are not in accordance with organizational practices, then people may not be likely to get affectively attached to the organization (Litterer, 1979). Moreover, if the employee has a profession because he/she has no other opportunity, then he/she probably will remain in an organization with a strong continuance commitment.

Meyer et al. (1993) suggests that commitment to the profession is a three dimensional construct that encompasses elements of desire, need, and obligation. Affective commitment to the profession refers to the workers' affective feelings toward their profession (Meyer, Allen y Smith, 1993). Continuance commitment to the profession refers to the workers' degree of convenience to remain with a profession (Meyer, Allen y Smith, 1993). Thus, people can remain in a profession because they feel that they want, or need to do so (Meyer, et. al., 1993). In this study I focus on the affective and continuance dimensions of commitment to the profession, as past studies (Meyer et al., 1993) indicate problems with the psychometric properties of the normative commitment to the profession scales. Hence, in this study it is postulated that:

Hypothesis 7: Professional affective commitment has a positive association with affective organizational commitment.

Hypothesis 8: Professional affective commitment has a negative association with continuance organizational commitment.

Hypothesis 9: Professional affective commitment has a positive association with normative organizational commitment.

Hypothesis 10: Professional continuance commitment has a negative association with affective organizational commitment.

Hypothesis 11: Professional continuance commitment has a positive association with continuance organizational commitment.

Hypothesis 12: Professional continuance commitment has a negative association with normative organizational commitment.

Perceived Organizational Support

Perception is a complex cognitive process that produces an image of the world; however, such an image can be very different from reality (Luthans, 1989). Robbins (1997) suggests that employee conduct is primarily driven by the perception of their organization and job environment, and not by the existing objective environmental and organizational conditions. Perceived organizational support refers to the employees' global beliefs concerning the extent to which the organization values their contributions and cares about their well being (Eisenberger, Cummings, & Lynich, 1997). Eisenberger, Cummings, and Lynich (1997) suggests that perceived organizational support is generated when employees believe that the organizational rewards they receive are based on discretionary choice as opposed to external constraints beyond the organizations' control. Voluntary support from the organization is highly valued by employees because such support indicates the organization's genuine respect for employees and recognition of their contributions (Loi, Hangyue, & Foley et. al., 2006).

Employees with high perceived organizational support tend to respond favorably to the organization in the form of positive attitudes and behaviors (Loi et. al., 2006). However, if the organization gives little value to the workers' contributions, then the workers' perceptions about their employer can change and trigger negative attitudes and behaviors (Eisenberger et. al, 1997). In extreme cases people can perceive, and in consequence feel, that the organization exploits them. Employees' phrases such as "this organization exploits me" or "this organization exploits its personnel" reflect negative perceptions about the organization's practices and distributive justice that can undermine people's affective and normative commitment to the organization (Mercado, 2000). Hence, in this study it is postulated that:

Hypothesis 13: Perceived organizational support has a positive association with affective organizational commitment.

Hypothesis 14: Perceived organizational support has a negative association with continuance organizational commitment.

Hypothesis 15: Perceived organizational support has a positive association with normative organizational commitment.

METHODS

This research uses survey methodology to obtain cross-sectional data from three hospitals in Mexico. This study assumes that supervisor support, coworker support, etc. are antecedents to commitment; however the data are cross-sectional, so the antecedence is only assumed and not demonstrated. This study's data are not appropriate to test for an ongoing dynamic bidirectional relationship over time, especially as would be predicted by exchange theories. I want to be explicit about the temporal uncertainty in the relations of these constructs.

A questionnaire, based on literature was used to collect data for a larger and more consulting-oriented project than the one presented here. A subset of such data is used to test this study's hypotheses with the permission of the original collector of the data. The data were analyzed using factor analyses and structural equations modeling (SEM) techniques.

Sample and data Collection

Data were collected using a validated questionnaire in three medium-size public hospitals in the city of Toluca, Mexico, during the first part of the year 2002. The target population at each of these hospitals was administrative and medical employees. These hospitals were conveniently chosen by the collector of the data. In each hospital data were collected in a non random fashion, as respondents were those administrative and medical employees who had time to answer the survey. With support from the hospitals' managers, in two of the hospitals available employees were requested to attend a meeting with the surveyor to fill out the questionnaire. There was only one meeting per hospital. To collect data from the third hospital, the surveyor had to visit the site several times during three consecutive months. In this hospital managers did not support a special meeting for the employees to fill out the survey.

The questionnaire survey consisted of an introduction and two major sections. The first section contained the 45 items needed to measure this research's constructs. Demographic and other questions were presented in the second section. The survey resulted in an overall response rate of 57.86% (935/1616). The response rate from the two first hospitals were 60.39% (343/568) and 64.01% (370/578) respectively. The response rate from hospital three was 47.23 % (222/470). A perusal of the returned questionnaires indicated that about 50 of them had substantial missing data as far as the key variables in the study were concerned. These 50 responses were dropped to yield an effective response rate of 54.76% (885/1616). One way analyses of variance (ANOVA) were conducted to test for differences across hospitals and for early versus late respondents effects. Except for affective commitment for the profession, all other *F* values indicated no differences across respondents. Respondents were female (78%), young adults between 31 and

40 years old (37.97%), married (61.24%), and most of them have been with the organization for more than 10 years (31.75%).

Measuring Instrument

The data collection instrument was developed from a synthesis of organizational behavior literature. As far as the variables focused on this study, the three organizational commitment dimensions were measured using Meyer and Allen's six item scale. Support from the supervisor was assessed using Brown and Leigh's (1996) four item scale. Support from the coworkers was measured using Taormina's (1999) five item scale. Commitment to the profession was assessed using Meyer et al.'s (1993) scale. This scale consists of two dimensions -continuance and affective commitments, with each being measured by six items. Perceived organizational support was assessed using Eisenberger et al.'s (1997) 6 item scale. Negatively phased items denoted by (R) were reverse coded prior to statistical analyses to maintain content consistency. All scales were on a seven point Likert-type scale and were translated from English to Latin-American Spanish. Due to some administrative problems, back translation procedures could not be used to improve the accuracy of the translation. Table 1 presents the results from the assessment of the reliabilities of each of the scales used in this study. This table also presents a sample scale for the present study.

Scale Validation

The data collected were subject to factor analysis. Out of the total of 45 items, 11 items were dropped to ensure unidimensionality. A low factor loading was the criteria to drop items. Support from coworkers was the only construct from which no item was dropped. One item was dropped from each of three constructs – perceived organizational support, affective and continuance commitment to the profession, and support from the supervisor. Two items were dropped from the continuance and normative commitment constructs respectively, and four items from the affective commitment construct.

| Constructs | Content | Reliability* | Sample scale for the present study |
|--|--|--------------|---|
| Affective organizational commitment | Affective emotional ties that employees feel toward their organizations. | 0.87 (0.620) | I do not feel emotionally attached to this organization (R) |
| Continuance organizational commitment | People's feelings that leaving the organization would result in an economic lose. | 0.75 (0.621) | I feel that I have too few options to consider leaving this organization |
| Normative organizational commitment | Moral sense of loyalty towards the organization. | 0.79 (0.622) | This organization deserved my loyalty |
| Affective commitment to the profession | Emotional link toward a particular profession. | 0.87 (0.749) | I feel regretted of having this profession (R) |
| Continuance commitment to the profession | Degree of economic convenience to have any profession. | 0.79 (0.748) | Too much in my life would be disrupted if I changed my profession right now |
| Support from the supervisor | Employees' feelings that their supervisors support them. | 0.88 (0.744) | My boss supports my ideas and the way I do my things |
| Support from the coworkers | Coworkers' acceptance, support, and help in the job. | 0.81 (0.696) | My peers have made a lot in helping me to get adapted to this organization |
| Perceived organizational support | Employees' general perception about the degree to which the organization values their contributions. | 0.93 (0.777) | This organization would help me if I would need a special favor |

Note: Numbers in parenthesis are the Cronbach's alphas obtained in this study. Numbers adjacent to these estimates are Cronbach's alphas obtained by the authors of the scales.

Table 1: Construct reliabilities

RESULTS

The model hypotheses were tested using SEM. Figure 2 pictorially represents these hypotheses. The results in Table 5 indicate that all λ_i are significant and consistently high, which enhances the validity of the measures employed. The structural model's X^2 statistic is not significant ($p < 0.05$); however, the goodness of fit indices are high (GFI = 0.92, AGFI = 0.90, NFI = 0.91, CFI = 0.94, CN < 885). Segars and Grover (1993) suggest that a value of 0.90 for the GFI, AGFI, and CFI indices indicate a good fit. The goodness of fit indices in this study indicate a good fit for the hypothesized model even when the disturbance terms ζ_i were not permitted to correlate ($X^2 = 1734.70$, $p < 0.05$, $(df) = 502$; GFI = 0.90, AGFI = 0.88, NFI = 0.89, CFI = 0.92, CN = 322 < 885). Table 5 provides the results for the hypothesized relationships between the three organizational commitment dimensions and their antecedents. A perusal of the γ_i values denoting causal paths (see figure 2) indicates mixed results with not all postulated hypotheses being supported.

A perusal of the scale reliabilities (Cronbach's Alpha) indicates that they range from 0.62 (affective organizational commitment) to 0.77 (perceived organizational support). Validity was assessed by SEM using LISREL. Table 3 indicates that three scales had statistically significant X^2 at the 0.05 level. As the X^2 statistic is sensitive to issues such as sample size (Bagozzi & Yi, 1998), other goodness of fit indices were also considered. A perusal of the table indicates that the GFI, AGFI, NFI indices fall within the acceptable range, thus indicating adequate construct validity. Affective organizational commitment was not considered in this analysis as it was reduced to a two item scale at the end of the factor analysis. Hair, Black, Babin, Anderson, & Tatham (2006) suggests that a model with two items would be an under-identified model that has more parameters to be estimated than item variances and co-variances. A multi-structure measurement model was run for the three organizational commitment dimensions. The results in Table 3 indicates a good fit for the multi structure model (GFI = .097, AGFI = 0.95, NFI = 0.92). The standardized estimates of the affective commitment items are also significant as indicated by their t-values (1.35, $\lambda=1$, and 1.48, $t = 5.27$ respectively). Table 4 provides details on inter-trait correlations and reliability estimates. The results in this table provide additional support for the construct validity of the scales.

| Constructs | Reliability | $X^2(df)$ | p-value | RMSR | GFI | AGFI | NFI |
|--|-------------|-------------|---------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| Organizational commitment | | 124.84 (32) | 0.00000 | 0.1900 | 0.9700 | 0.9500 | 0.9200 |
| Affective organizational commitment | 0.620 | * | * | * | * | * | * |
| Continuance commitment | 0.621 | 2.71 (2) | 0.25756 | 0.0530 | 0.9900 | 0.9900 | 0.9800 |
| Normative organizational commitment | 0.622 | 8.77 (2) | 0.01200 | 0.6500 | 0.9900 | 0.9800 | 0.9800 |
| Affective commitment to the profession | 0.749 | 47.74 (5) | 0.00000 | 0.1200 | 0.9800 | 0.9400 | 0.9600 |
| Continuance commitment to the profession | 0.748 | 30.03 (9) | 0.00043 | 0.1200 | 0.9900 | 0.9700 | 0.9800 |
| Support from the supervisor | 0.744 | 0.6 (2) | 0.72590 | 0.0180 | 0.9900 | 0.9900 | 0.9900 |
| Support from the coworkers | 0.696 | 41.20 (5) | 0.00000 | 0.0950 | 0.9800 | 0.9400 | 0.9600 |
| Perceived organizational support | 0.777 | 28.75 (5) | 0.00003 | 0.1600 | 0.9900 | 0.9600 | 0.9800 |

Table 2: Scales - reliability & factor structure

| Constructs | Mean | SD | AOC | COC | NOC | ACP | CCP | SS | PS | POS | |
|--|------|--------|--------|------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|----------|-----------|-----------|---------|
| Affective organizational commitment | AOC | 4.6593 | 1.793 | (0.620) | -0.2641 | 0.3629 | 0.4765 | 0.1335 | 0.3371 | 0.1633 | 0.2865 |
| Continuance organizational commitment | COC | 4.6726 | 1.4076 | -0.1046 ** | (0.621) | 0.4207 | -0.1004 | 0.5662 | -0.1369 | -0.0083 | 0.167 |
| Normative organizational commitment | NOC | 5.4263 | 1.1733 | 0.1725 ** | 0.2547 ** | (0.622) | 0.297 | 0.479 | 0.4603 | 0.3793 | 0.6878 |
| Affective commitment to the profession | ACP | 6.1528 | 1.0426 | 0.2549 ** | -0.0684 * | 0.2428 ** | (0.749) | 0.3657 | 0.2832 | 0.3452 | 0.1529 |
| Continuance commitment to the profession | CCP | 5.1699 | 1.3747 | 0.0542 | 0.2926 ** | 0.297 ** | 0.2551 ** | (0.748) | 0.0854 | 0.3343 | 0.111 |
| Support from the supervisor | SS | 4.852 | 1.4501 | 0.1296 ** | -0.0671 * | 0.2705 ** | 0.1873 ** | 0.0428 | (0.744) | 0.4438 | 0.8611 |
| Peers' support | PS | 5.151 | 1.1258 | 0.0809 * | -0.0053 | 0.2872 ** | 0.2941 ** | 0.216 ** | 0.2718 ** | (0.696) | 0.4648 |
| Perceived organizational support | POS | 3.9907 | 1.4324 | 0.1116 ** | 0.0828 * | 0.4093 ** | 0.1024 ** | 0.0564 | 0.4146 ** | 0.2883 ** | (0.777) |

Note: Diagonal elements in parenthesis are Cronbach's alpha. Elements below this diagonal are correlations of summated scales in which ** means that the correlation is significant at the 0.01 level; * indicates that correlation is significant at the 0.05 level. Elements above the diagonal represent a covariance matrix.

Table 3: Inter-trait correlations

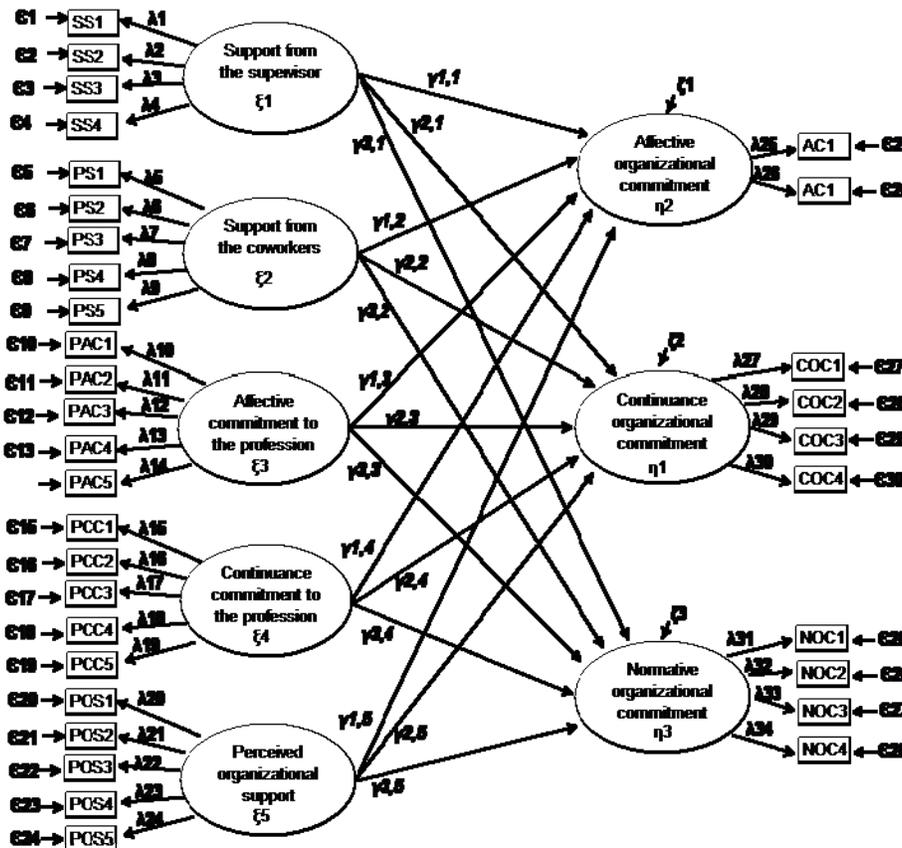


Figure 2: SEM Model of the three dimensions of organizational commitment and its antecedents

The hypothesized relationship between support from the supervisor and organizational commitment has partial support. Support from the supervisor has a positive and significant association with affective organizational commitment ($\gamma_{1, 1}$; $t = 2.37$) and a negative and

significant association with continuance organizational commitment ($\gamma_2, 1; t = -2.79$). Thus, hypotheses 1 and 2 are supported. However, the positive association between support from the supervisor and normative organizational commitment, although in the expected positive direction, is non-significant ($\gamma_3, 1; t = 1.60$). Therefore hypothesis 3 is not supported.

| Parameters | Items | Path | Standardized estimate | t-value |
|---|-------|----------------|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| Support from the supervisor ξ_1 | SS1 | λ_1 | 1.45 | λ_1 set to 1.0 |
| | SS2 | λ_2 | 1.51 | 18.53 |
| | SS3 | λ_3 | 1.13 | 14.82 |
| | SS4 | λ_4 | 0.85 | 10.73 |
| Support from the coworkers ξ_2 | PS1 | λ_5 | 1.29 | λ_5 set to 1.0 |
| | PS2 | λ_6 | 0.74 | 13.94 |
| | PS3 | λ_7 | 0.77 | 13.31 |
| | PS4 | λ_8 | 0.84 | 10.79 |
| | PS5 | λ_9 | 0.88 | 11.05 |
| Affective commitment to the profession ξ_3 | PAC1 | λ_{10} | 0.79 | λ_{10} set to 1.0 |
| | PAC2 | λ_{11} | 0.76 | 9.44 |
| | PAC3 | λ_{12} | 0.89 | 12.99 |
| | PAC4 | λ_{13} | 0.66 | 9.36 |
| | PAC5 | λ_{14} | 0.93 | 13.13 |
| Continuance commitment to the profession ξ_4 | PCC1 | λ_{15} | 1.33 | λ_{15} set to 1.0 |
| | PCC2 | λ_{16} | 1.37 | 14.92 |
| | PCC3 | λ_{17} | 0.94 | 10.53 |
| | PCC4 | λ_{18} | 1.07 | 12.58 |
| | PCC5 | λ_{19} | 1.00 | 13.51 |
| Perceived organizational support ξ_5 | POS1 | λ_{20} | 1.11 | λ_{20} set to 1.0 |
| | POS2 | λ_{21} | 1.07 | 16.99 |
| | POS3 | λ_{22} | 1.36 | 13.74 |
| | POS4 | λ_{23} | 1.35 | 14.07 |
| | POS5 | λ_{24} | 1.19 | 12.90 |
| Affective organizational commitment η_1 | AC1 | λ_{25} | 1.33 | λ_{25} set to 1.0 |
| | AC2 | λ_{26} | 1.50 | 6.090 |
| Continuance commitment to the organization η_2 | CC1 | λ_{27} | 1.07 | λ_{27} set to 1.0 |
| | CC2 | λ_{28} | 1.00 | 9.67 |
| | CC3 | λ_{29} | 1.31 | 10.26 |
| | CC4 | λ_{30} | 1.03 | 9.04 |
| Normative organizational commitment η_3 | NOC1 | λ_{31} | 1.06 | λ_{31} set to 1.0 |
| | NOC2 | λ_{32} | 0.95 | 11.68 |
| | NOC3 | λ_{33} | 0.71 | 10.35 |
| | NOC4 | λ_{34} | 0.99 | 10.94 |
| <i>Test of hypotheses:</i> | | | | |
| Support from the supervisor to affective organizational commitment | | $\gamma_{1,1}$ | 0.15 | 2.37 |
| Support from the supervisor to continuance organizational commitment | | $\gamma_{2,1}$ | -0.17 | -2.79 |
| Support from the supervisor to normative organizational commitment | | $\gamma_{3,1}$ | 0.09 | 1.60 |
| Coworkers support to affective organizational commitment | | $\gamma_{1,2}$ | -0.05 | -0.68 |
| Coworkers support to continuance organizational commitment | | $\gamma_{2,2}$ | -0.07 | -1.03 |
| Coworkers support to normative organizational commitment | | $\gamma_{3,2}$ | 0.10 | 1.64 |
| Affective commitment to the profession to affective organizational commitment | | $\gamma_{1,3}$ | 0.31 | 4.17 |
| Affective commitment to the profession to continuance organizational commitment | | $\gamma_{2,3}$ | -0.24 | -3.64 |
| Affective commitment to the profession to normative organizational commitment | | $\gamma_{3,3}$ | 0.15 | 2.62 |
| Continuance commitment to the profession to affective organizational commitment | | $\gamma_{1,4}$ | -0.07 | -1.18 |
| Continuance commitment to the profession to continuance organizational commitment | | $\gamma_{2,4}$ | 0.62 | 8.45 |
| Continuance commitment to the profession to normative organizational commitment | | $\gamma_{3,4}$ | 0.36 | 6.71 |
| Perceived organizational support to affective organizational commitment | | $\gamma_{1,5}$ | 0.06 | 0.93 |
| Perceived organizational support to continuance organizational commitment | | $\gamma_{2,5}$ | 0.29 | 4.54 |
| Perceived organizational support to normative organizational commitment | | $\gamma_{3,5}$ | 0.47 | 7.35 |
| <i>Global model fit diagnostics:</i> | | | | |
| χ^2 (df) | | | 1341.34 (502) | |
| p-value | | | 0.00000 | |
| GFI | | | 0.92 | |
| AGFI | | | 0.90 | |
| RMSR | | | 0.18 | |
| NFI | | | 0.91 | |
| CFI | | | 0.94 | |
| Critical N (CN) | | | 398.74 < 885 | |

Table 5: Test of hypotheses - estimates of SEM model

There is no support for the hypothesized relationship between support from coworkers and organizational commitment. This variable has a negative non-significant association with the

affective ($\gamma_1, 2; t = -0.68$) and continuance dimensions ($\gamma_2, 2; t = -1.03$) of organizational commitment. Although a negative association between support from the coworkers and continuance commitment was expected, the causal path $\gamma_2, 2$ is non-significant. Thus, hypotheses 4 and 5 are not supported. The association between support from the coworkers and normative organizational commitment, even though positive as expected, is also non-significant ($\gamma_3, 2; t = 1.64$). Hence, hypothesis 6 is not supported.

The hypothesized relationship between affective commitment to the profession and the affective, continuance, and normative dimensions of organizational commitment are all significant and in the expected directions. This indicates that hypotheses 7 ($\gamma_1, 3; t = 4.17$), 8 ($\gamma_2, 3; t = -3.64$), and 9 ($\gamma_3, 3; t = 2.62$) are supported. The hypothesized effects of continuance commitment to the profession on the organizational commitment dimensions are, however, mixed. Even though continuance commitment to the profession and affective organizational commitment have a negative association ($\gamma_1, 4; t = -1.18$), this association is non-significant. Thus, hypothesis 10 is rejected. As expected, continuance commitment to the profession has a strong positive and significant association with continuance organizational commitment ($\gamma_2, 4; t = 8.45$), which provides support for hypothesis 11. Normative organizational commitment and continuance commitment to the profession have a positive and significant association ($\gamma_3, 4; t = 6.71$). Thus, hypothesis 12, which predicted the opposite effect, is not supported.

Perceived organizational support has a non-significant association with affective organizational commitment ($\gamma_1, 5; t = 0.93$). Hence, hypothesis 13 is not supported. This variable also a positive and significant relationship with continuance organizational commitment ($\gamma_2, 5; t = 4.54$); this indicates that hypothesis 14, which predicted a negative association between these variables, is not supported. Perceived organizational support and normative organizational commitment have a positive and significant association ($\gamma_3, 5; t = 7.35$); thus, hypothesis 15 that predicted this effect is supported.

DISCUSSION

Organizational commitment is critical for organizations as a highly committed work force is crucial for attaining and maintaining competitive advantage in today's dynamic business environments. The findings from this study underscore the importance of focusing on appropriate antecedents, which target and foster the growth of different organizational commitment dimensions, in accordance with an organization's goals.

Past studies have indicated that support from the supervisor is an important factor that can influence the employee's commitment to the organization. In this study, results indicate that this variable has different associations with various dimensions of organizational commitment. Support from the supervisor increases workers' loyalty and enhances their affective feelings toward the organization. This in turn, triggers positive attitudes such as affective and normative commitment. A negative association between support from the supervisor and continuance commitment suggests that increasing levels of support from the supervisor may diminish the

effects of continuance commitment; this in turn, could negatively impact organizational turnover and absenteeism.

This study's results indicate lack of significant support for the association between support from coworkers and organizational commitment dimensions. The postulated relationships are, however, in the expected directions – negative for continuance commitment, and positive for normative commitment. The findings suggest that support from coworkers could be context specific; for example, jobs requirements do not require much interaction with/support from coworkers. Further, fine-grained research is needed to tease out these relationships.

Commitment to the profession has significant associations with different dimensions of organizational commitment. Affective commitment to the profession impacts worker's attitudes and influences their motives to remain in an organization. This in turn, is likely to enhance loyalty and affective behavior toward the organization. Employees who can match their professional and organizational objectives are more prone to develop loyalty towards the organization. The results also indicate that affective commitment to the profession is negatively associated with continuance organizational commitment. This indicates that the more individuals like their professions, the less likely is that they work in an organization because they feel that they have to do so.

Continuance commitment to the profession exhibits a negative association with affective organizational commitment; however, this association is non-significant. This suggests that workers who enter and continue to work in a profession, which is not in tandem with their personal convictions, are not likely to develop affective commitment. Continuance commitment to the profession has a very strong and significant association with continuance organizational commitment. This suggests that people, strong on this antecedent variable are less likely to develop positive attitudes toward the organization. Continuance commitment to the profession has a positive association with normative organizational commitment. This was an unexpected finding. However, I acknowledge that the human psyche is complicated, thus it can be possible that employees' who work in an organization because they have to, may, over time, develop a sense of moral obligation toward the organization. This finding could also be context specific, given that the sample was obtained from a service-oriented organization.

Perceived organizational support has a positive, though non-significant, association with affective organizational commitment. This suggests that perceptions of organizational support may not always result in strong positive attitudes toward the organization. Perceived organizational support has a positive and significant association with continuance organizational commitment. This could be due to perceived organizational support enhancing employees' feelings about their investments (effort, time, and so on) in organizations. The results indicate that this variable has a positive and significant association with normative commitment. This suggests that employees who perceive that their organization recognizes their contributions may tend to develop loyalty and positive moral feelings toward their organizations. In sum, employees who perceive strong organizational support are likely to develop a stronger attachment to the organization, and, eventually will be less inclined to leave their jobs.

This study explores the relationship between the various dimensions of organizational commitment and some of their less researched antecedents. Affective organizational commitment exhibited positive and significant associations with support from the supervisor and affective commitment to the profession. However, there were non-significant associations with support from the coworkers, continuance commitment to the profession, and perceived organizational support. These relationships, although non-significant, were mostly in the hypothesized direction. Thus, I suggest that affective commitment, is in general, positively associated with job-related and personal factors and these create positive feelings and attitudes toward the organization.

Continuance organizational commitment had significant associations with support from the supervisor, and with affective and continuance commitment to the profession. There was also a non-significant association with support from co-workers, though the relationship was in the hypothesized direction. The above suggests that continuance organizational commitment is negatively related to factors that lead to positive attitudes and feelings toward the organization. Organizations need to place emphasis on those factors that could possibly diminish their employees' affective commitment levels and enhance continuance commitment.

Normative organizational commitment exhibited positive and significant associations with affective commitment to the profession and perceived organizational support. Normative organizational commitment also indicated positive, though non-significant, associations with support from the coworkers and support from the supervisor. The above suggest that personal and organizational factors that enhance positive feelings toward the organization could increase employee loyalty and, in turn, reduce turnover.

Overall, the above findings suggest that various antecedents influence the three dimensions of organizational commitment in different ways. Organizations should first upfront decide on their objectives. They should then focus on appropriate antecedents to influence the desired organizational commitment dimensions. Triggering the desired organizational commitment dimensions should help organizations to reduce turnover and more effectively attain their objectives.

Limitations and Future Research

Arias-Galicia and Heredia (1999) suggests that Meyer and Allen's organizational commitment scale is prone to cultural influences. They have found lower reliabilities for the Meyer and Allen's scales used in Latin America. The findings from this study also suggest that problems with the affective organizational commitment scale could be attributed to the above. Moreover, as evidenced from Table 2, the reliabilities of the scales are lower than those of the Meyer and Allen's study, which strengthens the cultural differences argument. Future research could address the adaptation of the organizational commitment scale to national cultural differences.

Future fine-grained research is needed to explore the reasons why there was no significant support for the antecedent – support from co-workers. Future research is also needed in areas where this study's findings run contrary to the findings of past studies. For example, the positive association between continuance commitment to the profession and normative organizational

commitment; and positive and significant associations between perceived organizational support and continuance organizational commitment.

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