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# Affective and continuance commitment to the organization: test of an integrated model in the Turkish context

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## Abstract

The present study investigated organizational commitment in Turkey, a predominantly collectivist society. A model of antecedents and consequences of organizational commitment was tested, where commitment was conceptualized as composed of two dimensions, affective and continuance. Affective commitment was hypothesized to develop from positive work experiences and to predict desirable outcomes. Continuance commitment, on the other hand, was argued to be culture-bound. In line with Becker (*Am. J. Sociol.* 66 (1960) 32), it was proposed that in a collectivist culture like Turkey, the normative nature of the employment relationship would generate expectations for loyalty to the organization, and the perceived costs of violating these expectations would be reflected in increased continuance commitment. In particular, it was expected that the endorsement of generalized norms for loyalty to one's organization and informal recruitment would lead to higher levels of continuance commitment.

The investigation involved two phases. In Study I, in-depth interviews were conducted with Turkish employees to develop emic items for the scales of interest. In Study II, the proposed model was tested using structural equations modeling. The results not only confirmed the cross-cultural generalizability of the antecedents and consequences of affective commitment, but also indicated that loyalty norms and ingroup approval increased continuance commitment. The influence of norms and the ingroup was stronger for allocentrics. Furthermore, for allocentrics, continuance commitment was related to more positive job outcomes. The results underline the importance of normative concerns in understanding employee attachment in collectivist contexts and also point to a need for a better measurement of calculative commitment.

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Dating back to the 1960s, organizational commitment has been measured and conceptualized in various ways in the North American literature. One popular conceptualization of organizational commitment has been to view it as an affective attachment to the organization. Typically measured by the Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ), commitment has been described as “the relative strength of an individual’s identification with and involvement in a particular organization” (Mowday, Steers, & Porter, 1979, p. 226). Other researchers, on the other hand, have viewed commitment as remaining with the organization due to recognition of costs associated with leaving. Mainly based on Becker’s (1960) side-bet theory, this approach has presented commitment to be a less affective and a more calculative concept that is a function of the accumulated interests in the organization, such as pensions and seniority. Calculative commitment has been measured by a scale developed by Ritzer and Trice (1969), later modified by Hrebiniak and Alutto (1972). However, the appropriateness of these measures has been questioned on both conceptual and empirical grounds (Meyer & Allen, 1984).

In 1984, Meyer and Allen proposed a bi-dimensional conceptualization of organizational commitment that drew on these early works, labeling the former view as affective and the latter as continuance commitment. In 1990, they added a third component, namely, normative commitment (Allen & Meyer, 1990). Originally introduced by Weiner and Vardi (1980), normative commitment refers to feelings of obligations to stay with an organization because of the belief that it is the right thing to do. Meyer and Allen (1991) argued that common to these approaches is the view that commitment is a psychological state that (a) characterizes the employee’s relationship with the organization, and (b) has implications for the decisions to continue or discontinue membership in the organization. Meyer and Allen (1991) further argued that affective, continuance and normative commitment are components, rather than types, of commitment as an employee’s relationship with an organization might reflect varying degrees of all three. Beyond this, however, the nature of these psychological states differs and the three components of commitment are argued to develop from different antecedents and to have different implications for job-related outcomes other than turnover (see Allen & Meyer, 1996 and Meyer & Allen, 1997, for a review). Affective commitment develops mainly from positive work experiences, such as job satisfaction and organizational fairness, and is associated with desirable outcomes, such as higher levels of organizational citizenship behaviors, and lower levels of withdrawal behaviors like absenteeism and tardiness. Continuance commitment, on the other hand, has been shown to have two primary antecedents: Lack of job alternatives and “side-bets”, that is, anything that increases the cost of quitting, such as investments in the organization in terms of time, money and effort. Continuance commitment as such, represents a need to stay with the organization and is not related to positive organizational or individual outcomes. Finally, normative commitment is argued to develop from organizational commitment norms that develop pre-entry (through familial and cultural socialization) or post-entry (through organizational socialization) and appears to be predictive of positive outcomes, albeit not as strongly as affective commitment.

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