



Combined effects of the three commitment components on focal and discretionary behaviors: A test of Meyer and Herscovitch's propositions [☆]

Ian R. Gellatly ^{a,*}, John P. Meyer ^b, Andrew A. Luchak ^a

^a *Department of Strategic Management and Organization, School of Business, University of Alberta, Edmonton, Alta., Canada T6G 2R6*

^b *Department of Psychology, University of Western Ontario, London, Ont., Canada N6A 5C2*

Received 8 September 2005
Available online 7 February 2006

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to test theoretical propositions advanced by Meyer and Herscovitch (2001) concerning the interactive effects of affective, normative, and continuance commitment on focal (staying intentions) and discretionary (citizenship) behavior. Study measures were gathered from a sample of 545 hospital employees. Several a priori predictions regarding commitment profile differences were confirmed. Significant three-way interactions were found for both staying intentions and citizenship behavior. The pattern of relations for both behavioral criteria partially confirmed the hypotheses, but also provided evidence of possible “context effects” whereby the meaning and implications of the commitment components varies as a function of the other components. These effects were most notable for normative commitment and may offer new insight into the nature of this construct. Implications for commitment theory and its application were discussed.

© 2005 Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

Keywords: Organizational commitment; Work attitudes; Organizational behavior

[☆] A version of this article was presented at the 19th Annual Conference of the Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology, Chicago, IL (April, 2004). The research was supported by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada.

* Corresponding author. Fax: +1 780 492 3325.

E-mail addresses: ian.gellatly@ualberta.ca (I.R. Gellatly), meyer@uwo.ca (J.P. Meyer), andrew.luchak@ualberta.ca (A.A. Luchak).

1. Introduction

It is now well recognized that acknowledging the multidimensionality of employee commitment has important implications for understanding its links to work behavior. These links have arguably been articulated most clearly in Meyer and Allen's (1997) three-component model of organizational commitment. According to Meyer and Allen, employee commitment can reflect varying combinations of desire (affective), obligation (normative), and perceived cost (continuance). Although Meyer and Allen proposed that the behavioral implications of commitment would depend on the relative strength of all three components (i.e., the commitment profile), the vast majority of studies conducted to test the model have reported only zero-order correlations or the results of regression analyses conducted to identify additive effects. Only a few studies to date have tested for interaction effects (e.g., Chen & Francesco, 2003; Jaros, 1997; Randall, Fedor, & Longenecker, 1990; Somers, 1995), and even fewer have conducted profile analyses (Wasti, 2005). This might be due, in part, to the fact that Meyer and Allen did not offer any specific predictions concerning the combined effects of the three components.

In a recent elaboration of the original theory, Meyer and Herscovitch (2001) addressed this limitation by presenting a series of propositions concerning the combined effects of the commitment components on behavior. In the process, the authors also elaborated on Meyer and Allen's distinction between behaviors specified within the "terms" of a commitment and behaviors that, albeit of relevance to the target of the commitment, fall outside the specified or implied terms. They referred to these behaviors as *focal* and *discretionary*, respectively, and argued that the nature of the combined effects of the commitment components varies slightly for these two forms of behavior. Staying with the organization is generally considered to be the focal behavior for the standard measures developed to test Meyer and Allen's three-component model (Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001). On-the-job behaviors, particularly those behaviors that are not clearly specified as conditions for employment (e.g., organizational citizenship behaviors: Organ & Ryan, 1995; and contextual or citizenship performance: Borman & Motowidlo, 1993; Borman, Penner, Allen, & Motowidlo, 2001) are considered discretionary.

The purpose of this study is to provide a comprehensive test of Meyer and Herscovitch's (2001) predictions concerning the combined influence of the three components of organizational commitment on measures of focal and discretionary behavior. As background to our study, we first describe the three components of commitment, then elaborate on Meyer and Herscovitch's (2001) propositions and use them to formulate the study hypotheses.

1.1. The three-component model of commitment

According to Meyer and Allen (1997), one of the most important reasons for distinguishing among the three forms of commitment was that they can have different implications for behavior. Although all three forms tend to bind employees to the organization, their relations with other types of work behavior can be quite different (see Meyer, Stanley, Herscovitch, & Topolnytsky, 2002). For example, Meyer and Allen argued that *affective commitment* (AC) and *normative commitment* (NC) would relate positively to job performance and discretionary citizenship behaviors, whereas *continuance commitment* (CC) would be unrelated, or even negatively related. That is, employees who *want* to maintain membership in the organization will also want to do what it takes to make the organiza-

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/887613>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/887613>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)