ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT, RELATIONSHIP COMMITMENT AND THEIR ASSOCIATION WITH ATTACHMENT STYLE AND LOCUS OF CONTROL

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ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT, RELATIONSHIP COMMITMENT AND THEIR ASSOCIATION WITH ATTACHMENT STYLE AND LOCUS OF CONTROL

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Thanks to the participants.

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SUMMARY

Organizational commitment (OC) is a psychological state that binds an employee to an organization, and the Three-Component Model of organizational commitment (Meyer & Allen, 1991) posits that employees bind with their organizations as a result of desire (affective commitment), need (continuance commitment) and obligation (normative commitment). Similarly, relationship commitment between two people also has been conceived as a psychological state (Rusbult & Buunk, 1993), and Arriaga and Agnew (2001) outlined affective, cognitive and conative components of the state. This exploratory study examined the similarities between these conceptually parallel commitment models by determining how the dimensions of the two types of commitment correlate with one another, attachment style (Bowlby 1969/1982) and locus of control (Rotter, 1966). Data collected from 171 working adults yield several noteworthy associations and suggest future directions of inquiry.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

It is not unreasonable to suppose that the strength and nature of the commitment someone experiences in a personal relationship informs the manner in which that same person commits to an organization or work group. If an organization were to request that employees direct their efforts toward long-term goals, the message may be better understood by workers who have been engaged in strongly committed relationships over a long period of time. Additionally, if it is learned that the situational variables organizational commitment and relationship commitment are associated with a disposition such as attachment style (Bowlby, 1969/1982) or locus of control (Rotter, 1966), researchers and organizations alike should gain a deeper understanding of the factors that are associated with each style of commitment. Since important extra-role work behaviors such as organizational citizenship are believed to be associated with organizational commitment (Moorman, Niehoff, & Organ, 1993), it seems logical that an organization with a committed force of workers may be better positioned than its competitors to meet the challenges posed by a dynamic marketplace. Thus, the pursuit of a more global understanding of the means by which organizational commitment develops is critical and warrants an investigation into the relationships among locus of control, on attachment style, relationship commitment and organizational commitment.

CHAPTER 2

ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT

Be loyal to the company, and the company will be loyal to you, a credo emblematic of bygone era (Mowday, Porter, & Steers, 1982), obviously understates the complexity involved in a person's attitude toward and behavior within his or her employing organization. Organizational commitment has been defined as a psychological state that binds an employee to an organization, thereby reducing the incidence of turnover (Allen & Meyer, 1990), and as a mindset that takes different forms and binds an individual to a course of action that is of relevance to a particular target (Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001). Mowday, Porter & Steers (1982) outlined the distinction between *attitudinal commitment*, a mindset in which individuals consider the congruency of their goals and values with those of their employing organizations, and *behavioral commitment*, the process by which individuals' past behavior in an organization binds them to the organization. The *complementarity* of attitudinal and behavioral commitment was integral in Meyer and Allen's (1991) conceptualization of a multidimensional model of organizational commitment.

The Three-Component Model of organizational commitment (Meyer & Allen, 1991) has gained substantial popularity since its inception (Wasti, 2005). Meyer and Allen (1991) concluded that an employee's commitment reflected a desire, need and obligation to maintain membership in an organization. Consequently, commitment manifests itself in three relatively distinct manners. *Affective commitment* refers to the degree to which a person identifies with, is involved in, and enjoys membership in an

organization. Employees with affective commitment want to remain with an organization. *Continuance commitment* involves a person's bond to an organization based on what it would cost that person to leave the company. Continuance commitment echoes Becker's (1960) side-bet theory, and employees with continuance commitment remain with an organization out of need or to avoid the perceived cost of leaving. *Normative commitment* involves a feeling of moral obligation to continue working for a particular organization. For any number of reasons, such as a feeling of indebtedness, need for reciprocity or organizational socialization, normatively committed employees feel that they ought to remain with the organization (Meyer & Allen, 1991).

Affective commitment. Of the dimensions of the Three-Component Model (TCM) of organizational commitment, affective commitment has been most strongly linked to positive work-related behaviors (e.g., attendance, organizational citizenship behavior) (Meyer, Stanley, Herscovitch, & Topolnytsky, 2002), and as a result much of the TCM research has centered on affective commitment. Meyer et al. (2002) recently highlighted, through meta-analysis, the primary antecedents, correlates and consequences of organizational commitment; in this analysis affective commitment correlated with organizational support (ρ = .63), interactional justice (ρ = .50) and transformational leadership (ρ = .46). Among North American workers, role ambiguity was negatively correlated with affective commitment (ρ = –.39), and though job satisfaction has been shown to be a different construct than organizational commitment (Meyer & Herscovtich, 2001), overall job satisfaction was a significant correlate of affective commitment (ρ = .65). Job involvement (ρ = .53) and occupational (or job) commitment (ρ = .50) also were positively associated with affective commitment.

Meyer et al. (2002) also summed up the consequences of affective commitment, with low turnover cognitions (ρ = –.56) and more extra-role behaviors such as organizational citizenship behavior (ρ = .32) – individual behavior that contributes to organizational effectiveness but is not explicitly recognized by a formal reward system (Organ, 1988) – found to be associated with high affective commitment. These findings suggest that affective commitment may also be related to organizational spontaneity, pro-organizational individual behavior outside a prescribed role without consideration of reward (George & Brief, 1992). However, a recent study found no relationship between affective commitment and "interpersonal citizenship" behavior, which occurs when coworkers help one another outside of prescribed job roles to the benefit of the organization (Bowler & Brass, 2006). That affective commitment is associated positively with organizational citizenship behaviors and negatively with turnover cognitions illustrates its relevance to organizations and researchers alike.

Continuance commitment. Continuance commitment is said to occur when an employee remains with an organization largely out of need, whether due to lack of alternatives or costs associated with leaving, such as lost income, seniority or retirement benefits. Perhaps unsurprisingly, perceived lack of alternatives or an inability to transfer skills and education to another organization are the primary antecedents of continuance commitment (Meyer et al., 2002). It is logical to assume that once an employee experiences this restriction of options the perceived need to remain with his or her organization may increase. However, one study in which the commitment levels of temporary workers to their agencies were assessed, affective commitment was found to be higher than continuance commitment (Van Breugel, Van Olffen, & Ollie, 2005),

perhaps suggesting that a person in need of a job (e.g., a temporary worker) may experience higher affective commitment than continuance commitment in certain situations.

Employees with high levels of continuance commitment also have increased levels of role conflict and role ambiguity, as well as low withdrawal cognitions (Meyer et al., 2002). In such a scenario, which must be regarded as lose-lose for employee and organization alike, the continually committed employee remains in an uncomfortable position out of need or lack of alternatives. Since the employee continues to work in a position only out of need, he or she may potentially contaminate the work group. Such potential consequences support the proposition advanced by Meyer and Allen (1991) that the effectiveness of an organization depends on much more than just a stable workforce.

Normative commitment. The final component of the TCM is normative commitment, which involves a person maintaining membership in an organization out of a sense of obligation. This feeling that one *ought* to work for an organization has many of the same associations and consequences as affective commitment, though often to a lesser degree. The research that forms the basis of normative commitment in the TCM centers on a person's own moral compass and sense of responsibility to the organization (e.g., Marsh & Mannari, 1977). Thirty years ago, Marsh and Mannari (1977) researched a person's "lifetime commitment" to an organization, concluding that people who remain for such extended periods of time do so in part because they believe it to be morally correct. Such an obligation to an organization results from a person's internalized normative pressures, and a committed person may behave in a way in which they do not immediately consider personal benefits but because they believe that course of action to

be the morally right behavior (Wiener, 1982). It should be noted, however, that many changes in the nature of work have transpired since the notion of a long-term obligation to an organization gained prominence.

Normative commitment may develop when an organization offers employees rewards in advance, such as paying college tuition, or if the organization goes to great length or cost to hire or train the employee (Meyer & Allen, 1991), perhaps illustrating Gouldner's (1960) norm of reciprocity. Another antecedent of normative commitment is organizational tenure (Meyer et al., 2002), and it is not difficult to imagine a person developing a sense of obligation to an organization over long-term employment. Indeed, it has been suggested that normative commitment may best indicate the degree to which employees align themselves with organizational goals, a measure of how employees pull in the same direction as the company (Jaros, 1997). Iverson and Buttigieg (1999) found normative commitment to be significantly negatively correlated with years of education, raising the possibility that less educated workers harbor feelings of organizational loyalty reminiscent of a bygone era. Work experiences believed to contribute to the development of normative commitment include organizational support, organizational justice and role clarity, and normative commitment is positively associated with overall job satisfaction and job involvement (Meyer et al., 2002).

The importance of normative commitment is its association with withdrawal cognitions and organization citizenship behaviors. Low withdrawal cognitions lie at the heart of normative commitment (Iverson & Buttigieg, 1999; Meyer et al., 2002). After all, an employee with a sense of obligation to an organization is unlikely to seriously or frequently consider discontinuing the relationship. In fact, it may be anathema to the very

internalized notion a person has of commitment to ponder defection from an organization. It is tenable that the forces that shape a person's obligation to an organization also spur that person to ensure that the organization's goals are met, even if such a commitment involves taking action not prescribed in an employee's role. That a person would engage in organizational citizenship behaviors out of obligation would not only benefit the organization, but may also benefit the employee if the effort were ultimately recognized by the organization.

Individual differences in commitment. The bulk of the research into organizational commitment has focused on work-related variables perceived to contribute to the development of organizational commitment, many of which have been recounted above. The dearth of research concerning the influence of individual differences on organizational commitment compels the study proposed in this paper. Though the influence of organizational variables has explained some of the relationship between employees and their organizations, much of the variance in the relationship remains unexplained. Perhaps fundamental individual attributes contribute to the manner in which commitment develops, in that antecedent variables such as locus of control (Rotter, 1966) or attachment style (Bowlby, 1969/1982) inform general patterns of commitment among individuals, both in the workplace and other domains. Understanding the association of locus of control and attachment style with organizational commitment would be enhanced by determining if attachment style predicts individual commitment to another target, such as a romantic partner. The aim of this study is to examine if similarities exist between organizational commitment and relationship commitment, and if the patterns are associated with attachment style and locus of control.

CHAPTER 3

RELATIONSHIP COMMITMENT

Many of the models of commitment in the social psychology literature have in common the notion that a person's intent to continue or dissolve a relationship is a function of the factors that draw a person to a relationship and those that drive the person away from the partnership (Le & Agnew, 2003). Yet little consensus has emerged in the literature as to what exactly comprise the components of relationship commitment (Adams & Jones, 1997). Rusbult and Bunk (1993) defined commitment as a subjective psychological state that influences a variety of behaviors in a relationship, and Rusbult's (1980) Investment Model of commitment has generated a large amount of research (Le & Agnew, 2003). This model is based, in part, on interdependence theory (Kelley & Thibaut, 1978; Thibaut & Kelley, 1959) and its notion that a person's satisfaction with and attraction to an association is a function of the discrepancy between the value of the outcomes of the relationship and the person's expectations. The Investment Model states that commitment is affected not just by the outcome values of the current relationship and alternatives, but also by the amount of investment a person has made in a relationship. Rusbult (1980) argued that commitment should increase as the relationship becomes more valuable (or rewarding, with fewer costs), as alternatives decreases in quality, and as the magnitude of a person's investment in the association becomes larger.

Proposing a model of relationship commitment similar to but distinct from the Investment Model, Johnson (1991) argued that a person's decision to continue a relationship results from the experience of three types of commitment. One commitment

experience is termed *personal commitment*, and arises when a person is emotionally attached and wants to continue a relationship. Another form of commitment is *moral commitment*, which involves a person feeling an obligation to continue a relationship. The third commitment experience in the model arises when a person feels they have to continue a relationship and is referred to as *structural commitment*. According to its author, the commitment model is different from the Investment Model due to the centrality of experience in the development of commitment (Johnson, 1991). That is, the Investment Model is more strictly calculative, applying a straightforward calculus to the construct of commitment. One component of the Investment Model, however, acknowledges the use of experience – referencing past relationships – in a person's decision making regarding continuing a relationship (Rusbult, 1980).

Working from the Investment Model, Arriaga and Agnew (2001) defined commitment as a psychological state involving affective, cognitive and conative components. The affective component of commitment involves the *psychological attachment* within a relationship, or the affective connection between relationship partners. The cognitive component of commitment is termed *long-term orientation*, which Arriaga and Agnew (2001) state involves a strong assumption that the relationship will exist in the distant future. The conative component of commitment in the model is *intention to persist*, the motivation to continue a relationship beyond the present time. In separate studies of how dimensions of the model are associated with couple longevity and functioning, Arriaga and Agnew (2001) identified long-term orientation as the only component of the three factors to account for unique variance in predicting longevity, even when couple functioning was controlled.

Much of the research on relationships and marriage has centered on commitment. Commitment to a spouse has been found to predict marital quality in couples over 50 (Clements & Swenson, 2000); commitment has been touted as a crucial factor in the development and stability of personal relationships (Adams & Jones, 1997); and, similar to the antecedents of normative commitment to an organization, it has been suggested that a person's perceptions of relationship commitment are influenced by early family experiences (Weigel, Bennett, & Ballard-Reisch, 2003). Perhaps most applicable to the commitment between employer and employee is the proposition that commitment among couples is a phenomenon that is constructed by each spouse (Thompson-Hayes & Webb, 2004). Commitment in relationships also has been associated with forgiveness of betrayal (Finkel, Rusbult, Kumashiro, & Hannon, 2002), relationship satisfaction, and decline in available alternatives. Increases in investment size such as mutual friends, time spent together, shared possessions and activities uniquely associated with the relationship (Rusbult, 1983) also have correlated with relationship commitment.

The goal of the present study is to determine how individual differences are associated with the manner in which individuals commit to their organizations and interpersonal relationships. Specifically, the investigation centers on the possibility that individuals construct similar commitments across domain, and the sources of that process may be attachment style and locus of control. Affective commitment in the Three-Component Model of organizational commitment involves an identification with and emotional attachment to an organization, perhaps not unlike the connection a person with psychological attachment experiences in a relationship. Likewise, a person working a job due to lack of alternatives and potential costs associated with leaving may also report

similar dependence within a personal relationship, indicated by a higher level of long-term orientation in the Arriaga and Agnew (2001) model. Finally, a person who works for an organization out of a sense of obligation may intend to persist in a personal relationship as a result of the same internalized norms that compel the person to feel a sense of obligation to work for an organization.

CHAPTER 4

ATTACHMENT

His observations of the complex emotional reactions experienced by children separated from their primary caregivers spurred John Bowlby's early theoretical work on attachment (Bowlby, 1969/1982), setting the stage for a substantial amount of research. A central component of attachment theory is the notion than humans have an innate drive to physically and psychologically bond to their primary caregivers, a process that is both biologically based and adaptive (Bowlby, 1969/1982). Bowlby's four stages of attachment identified an infant's orientation toward people, discrimination of some people (like a mother) from others, preference for proximity to the discriminated person, and the development of a partnership between the infant and the discriminated object of attention (such as the child's mother). Over time, the child and primary caregiver gain a deepening understanding of each other, and their relationship becomes more complex.

Bowlby (1969/1982) asserted that the experiences infants have with their primary caregivers in their first year of life contribute to the formation of cognitive-affective structures about the self, others, and expectations of interactions with others. The pattern of interactions within the dyad forms the basis of these *working models* and, according to Bowlby (1969/1982), contributes to the infants' developing personalities. Working models are the psychological structures that inform *attachment styles,* which are regarded as patterns of expectations, needs, emotions and emotion-regulated strategies, and behavior (Shaver & Mikulincer, 2002). These working models result from what Bowlby

referred to as the innate *attachment behavioral system* and the accumulated history of attachment experiences (Shaver & Mikulincer, 2002).

Mary Ainsworth and colleagues (Ainsworth, Blehar, Waters, & Wall, 1978) elaborated on Bowlby's work on attachment and devised a classification system of attachment styles based on the Strange Situation test, in which infants were separated from and reunited with their mothers. Infants who were deemed to be insecurely attached to their mothers were labeled either *anxious-ambivalent* or *avoidant* (Ainsworth et al., 1978). Infants who exhibited distressed and mixed reactions to their reunions with their mothers and had difficulty returning to emotional equilibrium were regarded as anxious-ambivalent. Irritated infants who avoided or ignored their mothers upon reunion fell into the avoidant group, while those infants were straightforward in their approach to their mothers upon reunion, and were quickly calmed by their mothers, were labeled securely attached. However, as Ainsworth et al. (1978) used the Strange Situation test to examine the attachment between mother and child, it is relevant to note that the *relationships* – not the infants themselves – were classified according to this typology (Rholes & Simpson, 2004). These differences in attachment styles have been attributed to the variability in behavior of mothers and their children in the first year of the infants' lives, highlighting the role of the caregiver's responsiveness and emotional awareness of the child (Ainsworth et al., 1978). Subsequent research has found that among a sample of American mothers and infants, 62% were securely attached, 23% were avoidant, and 15% were anxious/ambivalent (Campos, Barret, Lamb, Goldsmith, & Sternberg, 1983).

Adult attachment. Bowlby (1969/1982) and Ainsworth (1989) each argued that attachment styles persist into adulthood, and while there is support for the notion of

attachment stability (Cassidy, 2000), it is not without its critics (see Lamb et al., 1984). Bowlby reasoned the continuity in attachment styles arose from the persistence of mental models involving the subject and his or her place in the context of a relatively stable family setting (Bowlby, 1973). Two streams of research in the domain of attachment have flourished over the last 20 years (Shaver & Mikulincer, 2002). The first approach has been undertaken by developmental psychologists working to understand the attachment bonds between infant and primary caregiver, while the second inquiry has been taken up by social psychologists interested in the application of attachment theory to romantic relationships.

The first researchers to assess attachment to a target other than a primary caregiver were Hazan & Shaver (1987), who theorized that romantic love is an attachment process, and used attachment theory to provide a framework for studying healthy and unhealthy forms of love. Hazan and Shaver argued that attachment to a romantic lover is distinct from the infant-caregiver attachment process, but they suggested that it could be influenced by an individual's early attachment experiences, including those that contributed to Bowlby's working models. Of the 574 adults surveyed Hazan and Shaver, 56% were identified as securely attached 23% avoidant and 19% anxious/ambivalent. The authors noted that "the best predictors of adult attachment style were perceptions of the quality of relationships with each parent and the parents' relationship with each other" (Hazan & Shaver, 1987, p. 516). Secure subjects reported warmer relationships with both parents and between parents than the other two groups.

Adult attachment styles can be conceptualized as areas in a two-dimensional space: attachment-related anxiety and attachment-related avoidance (Brennan, Clark, &

Shaver, 1998). A classification system of attachment styles that reflects that of Ainsworth and colleagues (Ainsworth et al., 1978) was advanced by Bartholomew and Horowitz (1991), in which individuals are classified according to what degree they are anxious or avoidant. Individuals high on the avoidance dimension are characterized by discomfort with psychological intimacy and a desire to maintain psychological independence, even in close relationships (Rholes & Simpson, 2004). The avoidance classification itself is further split into dismissing and fearful regions. Dismissing individuals avoid intimacy as a defense mechanism, maintaining independence and a negative disposition toward others; fearful individuals avoid intimacy out of a feeling of unworthiness and a high subjective likelihood of rejection (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991). Anxious individuals, on the other hand, tend to show a strong need for care and attention from attachment figures, as well as an uncertainty about the ability or willingness of attachment figures to respond to these needs (Rholes & Simpson, 2004). Secure individuals positively appraise themselves and others, and also express low levels of avoidance and anxiety.

Adult attachment research has uncovered plausible patterns between the different attachment styles and other variables. Securely attached individuals consistently express more optimistic expectations and interpret events in a less-threatening manner than anxious or avoidant people (Shaver & Mikulincer, 2002). Securely attached individuals report greater relationship satisfaction (Brennan & Shaver, 1995) and acceptance of their partners than anxious or avoidant individuals (Hazan & Shaver, 1987). Anxious individuals have been found to experience stable but dissatisfying romantic relationships (Feeney, 1994, 2002), and anxious attachment has been associated with neuroticism (Campbell, Simpson, Boldry, & Kashy, 2005; Mickelson, Kessler, & Shaver, 1997;

Shaver & Brennan, 1992). Secure individuals are less prone to eating disorders than individuals in the other attachment groups, and avoidant and anxious styles have been associated with *drinking to cope* behavior (Brennan & Shaver, 1995). More broadly, securely attached individuals have higher self-esteem, are more extroverted, and are more open to experience than avoidant and anxious individuals (Mickelson et al., 1997).

CHAPTER 5

LOCUS OF CONTROL

Locus of control refers to the attributions individuals make regarding outcomes of personal consequence (Rotter, 1966). Individuals with internal locus of control believe their behavior influences outcomes pertinent to them, while individuals with external locus of control feel that such outcomes are unpredictable or a function of chance. Similar to Bowlby's (1969/1982) proposition that individuals' working models are shaped by early experiences with the world, Rotter (1966) proposed that locus of control, too, results from a person's broad expectancy of the world. Individuals whose own efforts are rewarded come to view themselves as responsible for self-relevant outcomes and develop internal locus of control; individuals who persist in a course of action but do not succeed develop external locus of control (Rotter, 1966). Central to the concept of internal or external locus of control is the degree to which individuals feel their behavior affects outcomes of personal relevance.

In a study with more than 8,000 participants from a nationally representative sample of the United States, locus of control was found to be significantly related to attachment style (Mickelson, Kessler, & Shaver, 1997). A significant positive association for internal locus of control was found for securely attached individuals ($p < .05$), such that securely attached individuals were high in internal locus of control. Significant associations also were uncovered for avoidant ($p < .05$) and anxious ($p < .05$) individuals, as well, such that individuals fitting those classifications were high in external locus of control.

Locus of control is also associated with affective commitment, such that individuals with internal locus of control report higher levels of affective commitment than those with external locus of control (Coleman, Irving, & Cooper, 1999). These findings echo research done two decades ago in which organizational commitment was found to be positively related to internal locus of control (Luthans, Baack, & Taylor, 1987). The association between locus of control and both organizational commitment and attachment style forms the basis of the hypotheses of this study.

CHAPTER 6

HYPOTHESES

The first set of hypotheses addresses the perceived broad association between locus of control and attachment style, and how attachment style predicts organizational commitment and relationship commitment.

H_1: Locus of control will be associated with attachment style.

H_2: Attachment style will be associated with organizational commitment and relationship commitment.

The second set of predictions builds on the first hypotheses and research on perceived

predictors of organizational commitment. The findings by Coleman and colleagues (1999) that individuals with internal locus of control report higher affective commitment than individuals with external locus of control raise the possibility securely attached individuals will also report higher affective commitment. Additionally, Hazan and Shaver (1990) found that securely attached individuals reported higher job satisfaction than other attachment groups, and job satisfaction has been a significant correlate of affective commitment (Meyer et al., 2002).

H_3: Individuals characterized by secure attachment will exhibit higher affective commitment than those with anxious or avoidant attachment styles.

The finding that securely attached individuals report being more accepting of their partners (Hazan & Shaver, 1987), and Feeney's (1994, 2002) finding that anxious

individuals experience stable but dissatisfying romantic relationships further contribute to the second set of hypotheses.

H_4: Individuals with internal locus of control will report greater psychological attachment in their relationships than individuals with external locus of control.

The final predictions of this study relate to the perceived interactions between locus

of control, attachment style, organizational commitment and relationship commitment.

H_5: Attachment style will partially mediate the relationship between locus of control and organizational commitment

H_6: Attachment style will partially mediate the relationship locus of control and relationship commitment.

Though no significant relationship between marital status and organizational commitment has been found in the literature, it is possible that *marital status* and its simple, broad connotation has prevented inquiry into the type of relationship commitment experienced by participants. After all, to say that each experience in marriage is alike requires an impossible omniscience or more than a small dose of naiveté. For instance, it is unlikely that a person who feels trapped in a relationship yet continues in it for purely financial reasons is committed to the relationship in a manner similar to a partner who feels great affection and goal congruency. Therefore, an investigation of the similarities between types of commitment in personal relationships (not bound by *marital status*) and organizational commitment is a worthy pursuit. Determining if locus of control and attachment style predict both organizational commitment and relationship commitment

would contribute to the literature in each domain and highlight directions for future inquiry.

CHAPTER 7

METHOD

Participants

A total of 171 adults employed at various organizations across North America comprised the sample for this study. Nearly two-thirds of the sample (64.5%) were male, 81.8% of the sample was white, and the average age was 39.34 years (*SD* = 11.52). More than half of the sample (60.36%) had obtained a bachelor's degree or higher, and all but six of the participants worked full-time at their organizations. Sixty-seven percent of participants were married, and income level was dispersed across the following range: 30.59% of participants had household incomes less than $60,000 a year, 36.47% reported household income between $60,000 and $120,000, and 26.47% of participants reported household income more than $120,000. Twelve participants declined to state their incomes, and four participants did not provide complete demographic information. Complete demographic information is displayed in Table 1.

Table 1. *Demographics*

Variable		*M*	*SD*	%
Age[a]		39.34	11.52	
Sex[a]				
	M			64.5
	F			35.5
Mar. Stat.[b]				
	Married			67.07
	Single			32.93
Org. Ten.[b]		7.08	8.64	
Rel. Ten.[f]		14.93	11.40	
House Inc.[c]				
	< $60k			30.59
	$60-120k			36.47
	> $120k			26.47
Ethnicity[d]				
	American Ind.			1.76
	Asian-P.I.			4.12
	Black			7.06
	White			81.76
	Hispanic/Latino			2.94
	Other			2.35
Education[e]				
	HS/GED			21.89
	Trade/CC			15.98
	Bachelor's			44.38
	Master's			13.61
	Law/PhD			2.37

Note. [a] $N = 169$; [b] $N = 167$; [c] $N = 160$; [d] $N = 170$; [e] $N = 165$; [f] $N = 140$.

Participants were drawn from three sources. One group (46.2%) came from organizations contacted by the researcher and invited to allow their employees to participate. The second group (32.16%) was comprised of employees from two organizations in which the researcher had an influential contact. The remaining 21.64% percent belonged to an informal network of professional contacts maintained by the researcher. Participants worked in a variety of industries, including manufacturing, law, printing, home furnishings, industrial lubricants, paper, construction, broadcasting, financial services and technology. Participation rate was approximately 25%.

Measures

The survey included a demographic questionnaire and four scales measuring the variables detailed below. Twenty-four participants from one organization (a financial services company) recorded responses on a paper survey, while the remaining participants were provided a link to an online survey. Response rate among participants who completed the paper survey was approximately 15%, while the online response rate was approximately 25%.

Organizational commitment. Affective commitment, normative commitment and continuance commitment were assessed by the revised 18-item TCM Employee Commitment Survey (Meyer, Allen & Smith, 1993). Participants responded to statements such as "I really feel as if this organization's problems are my own" (Affective Commitment Scale), "It would be very hard for me to leave my organization right now, even if I wanted to (Continuance Commitment Scale), and "I owe a great deal to my organization" (Normative Commitment Scale) on a 7-point scale ranging from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree. Following the advice of the survey authors, the questions

were presented in random order. Scores within each scale were averaged, yielding three commitment scores for each participant. Extensive research supports the reliability and validity of the survey (see Allen & Meyer, 1996, 2000).

Relationship commitment. Eighty-three percent of participants indicated they were involved in a committed relationship; they responded to an additional 12 items designed to tap the three underlying dimensions of relationship commitment (Arriaga & Agnew, 2001). The items assess psychological attachment, long-term orientation and intent to persist along a 9-point scale (1 = *do not agree at all*, 9 = *agree completely*). Sample items include "I am very affected when things are not going well in my relationship" (psychological attachment), "My partner and I joke about what things will be like when we are old" (long-term orientation), and "I feel inclined to keep our relationship going" (intent to persist). Three commitment scores for each participant were generated.

Attachment style. The Revised Experiences in Close Relationships scale (ECR-R) (Fraley, Waller, & Brennan, 2000) was used to determine participants' attachment style. Based on the Experiences in Close Relationships measure designed by Brennan and colleagues (1998), the ECR-R assesses two dimensions of attachment: Anxiety and Avoidance. The first ECR was found to have high reliability and predictive and construct validity (Shaver & Mikulincer, 2002), and the ECR-R is regarded as an improvement on the original (see Sibley, Fischer, & Liu, 2005). Each dimension is represented by 18 items on the scale. Participants indicate the extent to which they agree with items such as "I'm afraid that once a romantic partner gets to know me, he or she won't like who I really am" by marking a 7-point scale ranging from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree.

Locus of control. Locus of control was assessed by Rotter's (1966) Internal-External Locus of Control Scale. The 29-item measure has been used in a majority of studies exploring locus of control, and the literature has shown the scale to be sensitive to individual differences in perception of control over self-relevant outcomes (Lefcourt, 1991). In each item, participants were asked to indicate which of two statements they agreed with more. Two such statements are "In the long run people get the respect they deserve in this world" and "Unfortunately, an individual's worth often passes unrecognized no matter how hard he or she tries." An individual high in external locus of control would agree with the second statement. Lefcourt (1991) has thoroughly summarized the properties of the measure.

Procedure

More than 40 organizations of various sizes with operations across the United States were contacted by mail, telephone or e-mail and made aware of the study. Ultimately, eight organizations agreed to allow employees to participate in the study, and the online version of the survey was distributed to these employees. Additionally, two organizations at which the researcher had an influential contact distributed the survey to its employees. Employees at one of these organizations completed a paper version of the survey. Finally, a network of professional contacts maintained by the researcher was contacted and asked to distribute the online survey to their coworkers. Employees who agreed to participate in the study provided informed consent on the first page of the survey. They also were informed that their responses would be recorded anonymously and held in confidence.

CHAPTER 8

RESULTS

Surveys from 192 participants were received. Twenty-one cases were excluded from analysis due to substantial missing or incomplete data. A missing value analysis was conducted on the remaining 171 cases to determine if values were missing from any of 96 data points that comprised the four scales used in the study. Following Cohen, Cohen, West and Aiken (2003) and James (personal communication, February 20, 2007), values that were missing from less than 3% of the cases and appeared to be missing at random were assigned values equivalent to the mean for the sex of that participant.

Analysis

Nine scores that comprised the variables for this study were generated for each participant. Affective, normative and continuance commitment scores were obtained by averaging participants' scores on each subscale of the TCM Employee Commitment Survey. Psychological commitment, intent to persist and long-term orientation scores were obtained by averaging ratings on each subscale of Arriaga and Agnew's (2001) measure of relationship commitment. Attachment style was reflected in two scores on the Revised Experiences in Close Relationships scale. Anxiety items and Avoidance items were separately averaged to obtain two scores for each participant, with lower scores indicating decreased levels of the dimensions. Each participant generated one locus of control score, with lower scores indicating internal locus of control. Scores on Rotter's (1966) Internal-External Locus of Control Scale were not dichotomized because dividing a continuous dimension into categories may decrease relationships between measured

variables and reduce power (Cohen, Cohen, West & Aiken, 2003). Means, standard deviations and internal-consistency reliabilities for each scale are displayed in Table 2.

Table 2. *Means, Standard Deviations, and Internal-Consistency Reliability Coefficients (alphas) for Organizational Commitment (OC), Relationship Commitment (RC), Attachment Style (AS) and Locus of Control (LOC)*

Variable		*Mean*	*SD*	α
OC				
	AC	4.82	1.40	.86
	NC	4.56	1.46	.89
	CC	3.80	1.19	.71
RC[a]				
	PA	8.07	1.05	.77
	IP	8.46	1.15	.94
	LTO	8.00	1.29	.66
AS				
	ANX	2.48	1.01	.93
	AVD	2.35	.95	.93
LOC		8.25	3.75	.75

Note. $N = 171$. [a] $N = 140$.

Multivariate analyses of variance revealed several mean differences between the 24 participants who completed a paper version of the survey and those who completed the online version. Additionally, mean differences among the three participant groups were observed. Means and standard deviations for participants of each group and for those who completed online and paper versions of the study can be found in Tables 3 and 4.

Table 3. *Means and Standard Deviations by Participant Type for Organizational Commitment (OC), Relationship Commitment (RC), Attachment Style (AS) and Locus of Control (LOC)*

Group 1		*Mean*	*SD*
OC			
	AC	5.23	1.28
	NC	5.05	1.31
	CC	3.72	1.21
RC[a]			
	PA	8.14	.97
	IP	8.57	1.01
	LTO	8.07	1.24
AS			
	ANX	2.37	1.01
	AVD	2.19	.89
LOC		6.89	3.50
Group 2			
OC			
	AC	4.36	1.58
	NC	4.21	1.57
	CC	3.83	1.19
RC[b]			
	PA	8.00	1.12
	IP	8.43	1.09
	LTO	8.02	1.14
AS			
	ANX	2.60	1.02
	AVD	2.51	.98
LOC		8.69	3.24
Group 3		*Mean*	*SD*
OC			
	AC	4.62	1.08
	NC	4.05	1.30
	CC	3.93	1.16
RC[c]			
	PA	7.99	1.18
	IP	8.19	1.50
	LTO	7.79	1.59
AS			
	ANX	2.52	1.01
	AVD	2.49	1.02
LOC		10.51	3.81

Note. Group 1 ($N = 79$): Organizations contacted by the researcher; Group 2 ($N = 55$): Organizations in which the researcher had an influential contact; Group 3 ($N = 37$): Members of professional network maintained by researcher. [a] $N = 74$; [b] $N = 37$; [c] $N = 29$.

Table 4. *Means and Standard Deviations by Survey Type for Organizational Commitment (OC), Relationship Commitment (RC), Attachment Style (AS) and Locus of Control (LOC)*

Online Survey		*Mean*	*SD*
OC			
	AC	4.99	1.24
	NC	4.72	1.34
	CC	3.84	1.21
RC (*N*= 121)			
	PA	8.06	1.02
	IP	8.44	1.15
	LTO	7.96	1.31
AS			
	ANX	2.52	1.04
	AVD	2.39	.96
LOC		8.13	3.86
Paper Survey		*Mean*	*SD*
OC			
	AC	4.75	1.81
	NC	3.60	1.79
	CC	3.58	1.03
RC (*N*= 19)			
	PA	8.16	1.26
	IP	8.53	1.13
	LTO	8.22	1.17
AS			
	ANX	2.21	.74
	AVD	2.13	.88
LOC		9.00	2.99

Note. Online survey $N = 147$; Paper survey $N = 24$.

Hypotheses

The first hypothesis of the study predicted that locus of control would be associated with attachment style. Due to the significant correlation between the Anxiety and Avoidance subscales ($r = .64$; $p < .05$), a principal components analysis was conducted on the two subscales to determine if a single component accounted for most of the variance in the original variables (Stevens, 2002). The first component had an eigenvalue of 1.64, accounting for 82.11% of the variance in scores on the ECR-R, and both Anxiety (.91) and Avoidance (.91) loaded highly on the first component. The first component was positively related to locus of control ($r = .17$; $p < .05$), and a Pearson product-moment correlation between locus of control and the Anxiety subscale provided further support for the predicted association. The correlation between locus of control and Anxiety was .16 ($p < .05$), indicating that the less an individual feels in control of personally relevant outcomes, the more likely he or she is to be needy and insecure in relationships with attachment figures. The correlation between locus of control and Avoidance ($r = .15$, $p = .05$) was not significant, but is was similar to that of locus of control and Anxiety. This finding suggests that people who don't feel in control of personally relevant outcomes may tend to avoid intimate relationships. No relationship was found between attachment style and affective or normative commitment.

The second main prediction of this study was that attachment style would be associated with both organizational commitment and relationship commitment. Product-moment correlations support many of these relationships. Continuance commitment was related to both Anxiety ($r = .25$; $p < .05$) and Avoidance ($r = .17$; $p < .05$), such that individuals who report being attached to their organizations as a result of need also tend

to feel uncomfortable with psychological intimacy and uncertain about their attachment figures' willingness and ability to respond to their needs. The first principal component derived from the ECR subscales also was related to continuance commitment ($r = .23$; $p < .05$).

The three dimensions of relationship commitment correlated highly with one another, and a principal components analysis of the three subscales yielded a first component that accounted for 85.35% of the relationship among the scales. Psychological attachment (.91), long-term orientation (.91) and intent to persist (.95) substantially loaded on the first component, and the component was related to both Anxiety ($r = -.36$; $p < .05$) and Avoidance ($r = -.55$; $p < .05$). These data indicate that individuals comfortable with psychological intimacy in relationships also experience elevated relationship commitment as operationalized by the Arriaga and Agnew (2001) measure.

The remaining predictions of the study were not supported. No relationship between attachment style and affective commitment was uncovered, and psychological attachment in relationships was not predicted by locus of control. However, the range of psychologically attached participants was quite restricted, which would obscure any potential relationship. [Mean score for psychological attachment was 8.07 ($SD = 1.05$) on a 9-point scale.] Additionally, no support was found for the predicted mediation models. In the first model, attachment style was predicted to partially mediate the relationship between locus of control and organizational commitment. Following James, Mulaik and Brett (2006), partial mediation was disconfirmed due to lack of significance in the coefficient generated when continuance commitment was regressed on locus of control with attachment held constant. A similar lack of significance was found in examination of

the partial mediation of attachment style on the relationship between locus of control and relationship commitment.

CHAPTER 9

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to determine if individuals commit to their organizations as they do to partners in their personal relationships, and if dimensions of each commitment are related to attachment style and locus of control. Though it may speak well for the nature of the relationships of participants in the study, the restricted range of responses among the scales of Arriaga and Agnew's (2001) measure of relationship commitment obviates a direct comparison of the commitment models. However, there are many noteworthy associations in the correlations depicted in Table 5, beginning with the antecedent variables age and locus of control.

Table 5. *Correlations*

	Sex	Age	Mar	Inc	AC	CC	NC	PA	LO	IP	RC	AX	AV	AS	LC	OT
Sex[a]																
Age[b]	-.13															
Mar[c]	-.10	***.45***														
Inc[d]	***-.18***	***.42***	***.54***													
AC[e]	-.09	***.25***	***.19***	***.20***												
CC[e]	-.01	-.06	-.01	-.14	-.05											
NC[e]	***-.18***	***.18***	***.16***	***.22***	***.73***	.02										
PA[f]	-.11	.12	***.50***	.13	-.01	.01	.01									
LO[f]	-.02	-.02	***.37***	.16	-.07	-.10	-.04	***.71***								
IP[f]	-.03	.05	***.46***	.13	-.07	.01	-.06	***.82***	***.81***							
RC[f]	-.06	.05	***.49***	.15	-.05	-.03	-.03	***.91***	***.91***	***.95***						
AX[e]	.12	***-.17***	***-.40***	***-.33***	-.04	***.25***	.05	***-.37***	***-.31***	***-.31***	***-.36***					
AV[e]	-.02	-.12	***-.33***	***-.16***	-.02	***.17***	.04	***-.53***	***-.49***	***-.51***	***-.55***	***.64***				
AS[e]	.06	***-.16***	***-.40***	***-.27***	-.04	***.23***	.05	***-.51***	***-.45***	***-.46***	***-.51***	***.91***	***.91***			
LC[e]	.13	***-.29***	***-.20***	***-.18***	***-.35***	***.17***	***-.29***	-.06	.03	-.03	-.02	***.16***	.15	***.17***		
OT[c]	***-.23***	***.52***	***.24***	***.35***	***.31***	***.23***	***.20***	-.10	.01	.09	.07	-.13	-.05	-.01	***-.23***	
RT[f]	***-.20***	***.77***	***.44***	***.24***	***.21***	-.01	***.26***	***.18***	.09	.16	.15	-.01	-.06	-.04	***-.27***	***.36***

Note. Inc = Household income; RC = First relationship commitment principal component; AS = First attachment style principal component; OT = Organizational tenure; RT = Relationship tenure. [a] $N = 169$; [b] $N = 168$; [c] $N = 167$; [d] $N = 159$; [e] $N = 171$; [f] $N = 140$. **Bold**: $p < .05$.

Both age ($r = .25$; $p < .05$) and locus of control ($r = -.35$; $p < .05$) were related to affective commitment, and age remained a significant predictor of affective commitment when locus of control was held constant. Meyer et al. (2002) reported similar relationships between age, locus of control and affective commitment in their meta-analysis of variables associated with organizational commitment. These findings imply that older individuals who believe their own actions are responsible for self-relevant outcomes more frequently identify with and are involved with their organizations than younger individuals and those who tend not to feel responsible for the events that affect them. The associations between age and organizational tenure ($r = .52$; $p < .05$) and locus of control and organizational tenure ($r = -.23$; $p < .05$) further suggest the possibility that the longer a person works in an organization – and the older they become – their feelings of responsibility for outcomes relevant to them also increases. Organizations interested in increasing affective commitment, seen as the most desirable form of organizational commitment, might consider developing programs aimed simultaneously at enhancing employee tenure and locus of control. Such findings should be of particular interest to scientists and practitioners interested in issues related to aging workers.

Locus of control also was related to normative commitment ($r = -.29$; $p < .05$) and continuance commitment ($r = .17$; $p < .05$), such that individuals with internal locus of control tend to feel obligated to their organizations and those with external locus of control tend to report a need to work for their organizations. Age ($r = -.17$; $p < .05$) and locus of control ($r = .16$; $p < .05$) also were associated with Anxiety, which is involved in perhaps the most striking association of the study.

The finding that continuance commitment was related to Anxiety ($r = .25$; $p < .05$) is noteworthy because it bridges two related findings and perhaps highlights an area of potential inquiry. First, anxious individuals have been found to experience stable yet unsatisfying personal relationships (Feeney, 1994, 2002). Second, in organizational settings continuance commitment has been associated with a lack of withdrawal cognitions, increased role conflict and work-family conflict, and possibly even decreased job satisfaction (Meyer et al., 2002). In each of the scenarios, a person persists in a relationship in which he or she is not satisfied or content and perhaps does not think of terminating. Restating the finding of this study in this light, individuals who are uncomfortable with intimacy in their personal relationships also tend to commit to their organizations out of a perceived sense of need. Scores on the Anxiety scale in this study were not associated with the more desirable forms of organizational commitment, affective commitment and normative commitment, so perhaps there is a common trait that underlies the Anxiety-continuance commitment relationship commitment.

Future Directions & Limitations

The findings of this exploratory study highlight some potentially interesting directions in future inquiry, notably stemming from the association of anxiety as operationalized by the Fraley et al. (2000) measure and continuance commitment. The similar correlates shared by these components support a somewhat general idea that an anxious individual tends to experience bonds that are both stable and unfulfilling. The notion that a person continues in a relationship or an organization despite this lack of satisfying emotional connection suggests some sort of mental calculation, a choice of one tolerable path over a course of action perhaps even less palatable.

Subsequent investigations might focus on the trait fear of failure (Atkinson, 1957), which involves a relatively consistent predisposition to respond with apprehension and anxiety to achievement-oriented tasks (James & Mazerolle, 2002). This reaction by individuals with fear of failure results from the fear of failing at a task or being regarded as incompetent by others. Emblematic of individuals with fear of failure are *inhibitory behaviors* (Atkinson, 1978; James & Mazerolle, 2002), in which individuals engage to reduce the anxiety over failing. These behaviors serve to inhibit the undertaking of achievement-oriented tasks through the withholding of effort, substitution of easily attainable goals for more challenging ones, or assigning responsibility for outcomes to external – that is, non-intraindividual – sources. In the current study, locus of control was associated with many variables, such that external locus of control predicted lower affective commitment ($r = -.35$; $p < .05$), higher Anxiety ($r = -.16$; $p < .05$), and even not being married ($r = -.24$; $p < .05$).

Perhaps a higher-order factor such as fear of failure is involved in the association among Anxiety, locus of control and continuance commitment. A principal components analysis of the three variables yielded an unrotated first factor with an eigenvalue of 1.39 that accounted for 46.24% of the variance in the relationship among the three. Anxiety loaded .70 on the factor, continuance commitment loaded .72, and locus of control loaded .61 on the component. The relationships suggested by the results of this study and this analysis warrant more detailed investigation. Particularly as scientists and practitioners press their focus upon the interaction between organizations and their employees, understanding the implications of these relationships is critical.

Limitations

Further explorations of the relationships suggested by the results of this study would benefit from a couple of improvements on the current study, beginning with the use of multiple methods to assess the variables in question. Though participant anonymity was assured and potentially reduced demand characteristics, both the predictor and criterion variables were collected from the same source, contributing to the possibility of common method variance (Podsakoff, Mackenzie, Lee, & Podsakoff, 2003). Additionally, though the sample size was sufficient to detect many of the relationships in question, more rigorous tests of multiple regression would be permitted with participants enough to regress several predictors on criterion variables. Finally, a more heterogeneous sample of participants is necessary. The goal of the current study was to determine if individual patterns of commitment replicate across organizations and personal relationships, and while preliminary indications suggest some interesting findings, they do so for, on the whole, white, educated and married people with high levels of commitment in their relationships.

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