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# A Literature Review on Organizational Commitment – A Comprehensive Summary

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**ABSTRACT**
The paper encapsulates the evolution of the concept of organizational commitment, and its constructs. It focuses and analyses the literature findings of organizational commitments over the last five decades. It categorizes the approaches into six broad eras, each era being an extension and modification over the preceding ones. This review paper brings to the fore the theories that have emerged in the body of knowledge regarding commitment in organizations in a chronological order, starting from the side bet theory to the more recent multiple commitment approach. The gaps in the theories proposed have been identified and reviewed critically. It is difficult to conceptualize and measure organizational commitment as it encompasses a vast and highly diverse body of knowledge. Due to this it becomes difficult to interpret and conclude from the existing bodies of literature. The paper also highlights the importance of recognizing the individual/employee's perspective towards organizational commitment.
**Keywords:** *Affective Commitment, Continuance Commitment, Normative Commitment, Employee Retention, Employee Commitment, Organizational Behavior, Organizational Commitment, Organizational Psychology, Turnover, Three Dimensional Model.*

## I.    INTRODUCTION

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. The term commitment means "engagement or involvement that restricts freedom of action" (Oxford Dictionary). The concept of commitment in the workplace remains a much researched topic and an intriguing trait of employee behavior. Studies in this area have also affected the conceptualization of commitment towards the job, occupation, the workgroup, representative employee bodies, and work itself. Research in this area has stemmed primarily from the need to establish a relationship between antecedents of organizational commitment and organizational outcomes in order to create and sustain a committed workforce contributing positively towards organizational commitment. There has been substantial review of the organizational commitment literature from the approach proposed by Becker (1960) through Meyer and Allen (1999) till Somers (2009). Employee commitment still remains one of the most intriguing and challenging concepts in the fields of management, organizational behavior and Human Resource Management (Cohen 2003; Cooper-Hakim and Viswesvaran, 2005; Morrow 1993). Organizational Commitment is a core predictor of employee's attitude to the organization and is a strong indicator of turnover behavior, withdrawal tendency and organizational citizenship behavior (Mathieu and Zajac, 1990; Morrow, 1993; Sinclair and Wright, (2005).

The leading study to OC has been the three-dimensional approach proposed by Meyer and Allen (1984; 1997), which categorizes commitment into three distinctive scales, namely, affective, normative and continuance commitment. Although these concepts find their roots in earlier studies (Becker 1960, Porter, Steers, Mowday & Boulian, 1974) on organizational commitment and have contributed significantly to the development of the concept, yet the limitations of these studies have prevented the construct of OC to be developed holistically and diminished the predictive validity of the Organizational Commitment dimensions (Cohen, 2003; Ko, Price, & Mueller, 1997).

This paper reviews the approaches to OC. Even though the multidimensional approach of Allen & Meyer, 1990) to OC is considered to be the dominant outlook towards OC, the contribution of a

few of its dimensions is still ambiguous and needs careful consideration towards understanding the concept of commitment. The evolution in OC concepts can be categorized into several theories: The Side Bet theory from Becker (1960), Porter's (1974) Affective Dependence theory, O'Reilley and Chatman (1986), Meyer and Allen's Multi-dimension theory (1984, 1990) till Cohen's Two-dimension (2007) and Somers' Combined theory (2009). Each of these theories has its own way of explaining the concept of and a strong bearing on the present status of Organizational Commitment.

## II. REVIEW OF THE COMMITMENT LITERATURE

### 2.1 The Early Era: The Side-Bet Approach

According to Becker's theory, the relationship between an employee and the organization is founded on behaviors bounded by a "contract" of economic gains. Employees are committed to the organization because they have some hidden vested investments or side-bets. These side-bets are valued by the individual because of the accrual of certain costs that render disengagement difficult. In fact Becker's theory identifies organizational commitment as a major predictor of voluntary turnover. Even though the side-bet theory was abandoned as a leading proponent of organizational commitment concept, yet the influence of this approach is very evident in Meyer and Allen's Scale (1991), better acknowledged as continuance commitment.

### 2.2 The Middle Era: The Psychological Attachment Approach

In the Middle Affective Dependence period, the focus shifted from tangible side-bets to psychological connection developed towards the organization. This school of thought attempted to describe commitment as a combination of attitude and interest in economic gains from associating with the company. Employee retention was attributed not only to economic gains, but more so to affective influence. Porter and his followers hence define commitment as "the relative strength of an individual's identification with and involvement in a particular organization" (Mowday, Steers and Porter 1979; p.226).

Organizational Commitment, therefore, comprises of three components, namely, Strong Acceptance, Participation and Loyalty. It was even proposed that commitment was sometimes a better alternative construct to predict turnover intentions as opposed to job satisfaction. It is characterized by a belief in and strong acceptance of the company's values, norms and goals, the willingness to exert substantial effort for the well being and prosperity of the organization, and a resilient aspiration to serve the organization with loyalty and commitment (Mowday et al., 1979).

Porter et al. concept of organizational commitment is grounded on the basic assumption of Becker's theory, i.e., commitment and employee turnover are highly correlated. Based on Porter, Steers, Mowday and Boulian's approach to OC, a tool in the form of a organizational commitment questionnaire was developed that captured not only the attitudinal notion of commitment, but also encapsulated the consequences of commitment. Due to the inherent limitations of the Organizational Commitment Questionnaire, Meyer and Allen (1984), O'Reilly and Chatman (1986) proposed the multi-dimension model.

### 2.3 The Third Era: The Multidimensional Approach

This approach is the advancement from the single-dimension era of organizational commitment. The major proponents of the multi-dimension approach are Meyer and Allen (1984) and O'Reilley and Chatman (1986). Meyer and Allen's Three Dimensional Theory (1984, 1990, 1997), has been the leading approach to organizational commitment for more than two decades. The fallacies and drawbacks resulting from improper execution of Becker's Side-bet theory formed the basis for Meyer and Allen's (1984) research in this area. It was argued that the scales developed by Becker's followers (Alutto et al., 1973; Ritzer and Trice, 1969) measured attitudinal commitment rather than side-bets. They contended that the best way to measure side-bets was to employ indicators that can analyze the perceptions regarding the number and magnitude of side-bets an individual has made. After comparing the interrelationship between the common scales measuring organizational commitment, two scales were developed, one measuring Affective commitment and the other Continuance commitment.

The affective commitment scale developed was a significant improvement over the OCQ and was able to assess commitment which was exemplified by positive emotions of identifying with the work organization. It was designed to assess the extent to which an employee presents the desire to remain a member of an organization due to an emotional attachment to, and involvement with that organization. Meyer and Allen also argued that the Continuance commitment scale thus put forth would be able to enhance the representation of Becker's side-bet approach. This scale was designed to assess the extent to which an employee desires to remain a member of the organization because of the

awareness regarding the costs associated with leaving it.

Subsequently in the year 1990, Meyer & Allen proposed the third dimension of Organizational Commitment scale, namely, Normative Commitment. Normative commitment stems from the desire to remain a member of the organization due to a feeling of obligation, which includes a sense of debt owed to a superior, a co-worker or the company on the whole. The scales proposed by Meyer & Allen have been tested time and again so that they can be used as instruments for gauging organizational commitment. The scales were evaluated for their psychometric properties, discriminant validity and relationship with antecedents and outcomes (Allen & Meyer, 1990; beck & Wilson, 2000; Hackett, Bycio & Hausdorf, 1994; Jaros, 1997; Ko et al., 1997; McGee & Ford, 1987). Going forward, attempts were also made to relate normative commitment approach to motivation theories (Meyer & Allen, 1991, 1997; Meyer, Becker and Vandenberghe, 2004; Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001).

Since the previous approaches to OC failed to distinguish between the two processes of commitment, i.e., antecedent and outcomes of commitment on one hand and the root cause of attachment to organization on the other.  O'Reilley and Chatman (1986) pursued research in this area which would mitigate these problems at hand. They identified commitment as a psychological affiliation a person feels towards the organization manifested by the extent to which an individual is able to adopt and adapt to the attributes and viewpoints of the organization. An employee's psychological attachment can be predicted by their conformity to the company's rules and regulations in lieu of extrinsic rewards, involvement based on a desire for affiliation, and internalization depending on the congruence between the personal and organizational values. O'Reilley and Chatman were successfully able to distinguish between the two stages- a shallow level of commitment resulting from the compliance perspective arising out of an exchange process and a more deep rooted one arising out of psychological insinuations. Two dimensions of psychological attachment – identification and internalization, were also recognized. The other contribution of the O'Reilley & Chatman theory was to identify Organizational Citizenship Behaviour as an outcome of the psychological attachment of employees towards their organization. This was an addition to the OC-outcome relationship theorized by Becker, 1960, Porter et al. 1974, which primarily harped on commitment to be an important determinant of employee turnover intentions.

O'Reilley & Chatman's theory was also not without its detractors and critiques. Vandenberg, Self, and Sep (1994) argued that the scale for the 'identification' dimension captured the same information as an OCQ. Further, others (Bennett & Durkin, 2000) pointed out that the dimensions of 'identification' and 'internalization' are able to tap aspects which are similar in nature and the compliance dimension does not truly reflect an emotional association with the organization. Due to these reasons and difficulties faced in implementing this theory, researchers have preferred to follow the Meyer &Allen's (1984) approach to further studies in the domain of organizational commitment.

Even though Meyer & Allen's theory was preferred as a basis for future research, it fell short in explaining the delicate intricacies and interactions between the different dimensions of OC. Continuing this line of work, Vandenberg and Self (1993) measured four forms of commitment – affective and continuance commitment of Meyer and Allen (1984), Organizational identification, and OCQ – at three different points in time (the first day of work, third month of work, and sixth month of work). The findings yielded that affective and continuance commitment varied across the three time frames. The conclusion drawn from these observations indicate that at different stages of their career, individuals assign different meanings and interpret the parameters leading to commitment in different ways. As the tenure in the organization increases, the interpretation of commitment also changes.

Criticisms were also leveled against the discriminant and content validity of the scales developed by Meyer & Allen. Ko et al. argued that there were conceptual problems with these scales which rendered them difficult to be tested for psychometric properties. Further, the commitment definition put forward by Meyer & Allen did not encompass all the attributes of affective, normative and continuance commitment. Even though they identified a common factor between the three types of commitment, and characterized it as a psychological state, however, they failed to precisely define the meaning of psychological state (Ko et al., 1997, p. 970).[1]

Ko et al. focused on two main problems in this approach. Becker's (1960) concept of commitment represented a component of attitudinal commitment because he emphasized the awareness of the costs associated with leaving the organization. However, this argument was flawed. Becker defined commitment as a consistent line of activity of

[1] Cohen, A. (2007). Commitment Before And After: An Evaluation And Re-Conceptualization Of Organizational Commitment ;Human Resource Management Review 17: 336-354

maintaining membership in the organization and attempted to explain what caused this consistency. Therefore, Becker's view of commitment was more congruent with the behavioral rather than attitudinal approach of Porter and his colleagues. (Ko et al., 1997, p. 970).

Their second criticism focused on the relationship between affective commitment and normative commitment. Based on their findings that showed a lack of discriminant validity between the two concepts, Ko et al. (1997) concluded there is considerable conceptual overlap between NC and AC (e.g. affective commitment). It was unclear how NC can be conceptually separable from AC. (Ko et al., 1997, p. 971).

Because of the above mentioned problems, considerable conceptual work became necessary, and new measures were to be developed that would adequately assess the new conceptualizations. Meyer and Allen and their colleagues were aware of some of the problems associated with the three-dimensional scales. Throughout the years, some changes in the scales were proposed and tested. For example, a shorter 6-item version of the three scales was advanced, a revised normative commitment scale was also proposed, and a two dimensional continuance commitment scale was also suggested (Meyer & Allen, 1997). Subsequently, major revisions in the continuance commitment scale were advanced (Powell & Meyer, 2004). While these changes did improve some of the psychometric properties of the scales, they posed a dilemma for researchers as to which version of the scales to use. [2]

This paper argues that most of the approaches to OC developed so far have the potential to contribute to a better understanding of OC and thus cannot be ignored in any re-conceptualization of commitment. The strong relationship found between commitment and organizational citizenship behavior (Meyer et al., 2002) supports the usefulness of commitment in explaining other valuable outcomes in the workplace.

A need for giving more attention to the notion of time in the conceptualization of commitment was felt. The instability of the factor structures of commitment across different timeframes (Vandenberg & Self, 1993) suggested that employees had difficulty understanding the meaning

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[2] Cohen, A. (2007). Commitment Before And After: An Evaluation And Re-Conceptualization Of Organizational Commitment; Human Resource Management Review 17: 336-354

of the items typically included in measurements of commitment in different stages in their organizational career. Further, the role of normative commitment and continuance commitment needed to be reexamined in commitment conceptualizations. The high correlations between normative and affective commitment found in meta-analysis (Meyer et al., 2002), and the bi-dimensionality of continuance commitment suggested the need for modifications of these dimensions (Ko et al., 1997).

## 2.4 Model Based on Two Dimensions: Time and Style of Commitment

All the above proposed theories suffered from some limitations and hence efforts were made to minimize these limitations by a theory which contended that organizational commitment is two-dimensional- Instrumental and Affective. In addition, sharp difference was made between commitment propensity that developed before one's entry into an organization and commitment attitudes that developed after one's entry, i.e., the importance of time frame in development of organizational commitment.

On this basis, a four-component commitment model was suggested:

i) Commitment as an attitude:

The theory asserted that the intention to perform behaviour is determined by the individual's attitude towards performing the behavior and subjective norms held by the individual. Hence, attitude is the first antecedent of behavioural intention and behavioural intention refers to the likelihood that the individual will engage in the behaviour. Mowday, Porter and Steers (1982) pointed out the difference between attitudinal and behavioural commitment. According to them, attitudinal commitment focused on the process by which people came to think about their relationship with the organization. Behavioural commitment related to the process by which individuals became involved and associated with a certain organization and its dealings towards them. This distinction was subtle but important.

ii) Commitment as a two dimensional concept: Time and Nature:

The first dimension was the time of commitment- pre-entry and post-entry commitment to an organization. The second dimension differentiated between instrumental commitment and normative and affective commitment.

**First Dimension**: Time and Commitment: Pre-entry versus Post-entry

Employees, even before their engagement in an organization, develop an attitude in the socialization process and are influenced by personal values, beliefs, expectations about the job and prior

experiences, if any. These attitudes are also defined as commitment propensity, which influences commitment to the organization developed after entry. Commitment propensity, is theoretical, develops prior to entry in the organization and higher levels of it are more likely to impact the actual commitment development after entry.

Normative commitment is better understood as a pre-entry commitment propensity, rather than post-entry and develops during one's socialization in one's culture, family and surroundings. This is, therefore, inherent, in a general form and not specific to any organization.

Instrumental commitment reflects attachment based on a more tangible exchange relationship with the organization and is relevant to understanding the commitment of current employees. However, both commitments are influenced mainly by one's organizational experiences.

Hence it is proposed: (1) Timing is a key element in commitment, creating two dimensions: pre-entry commitment propensity versus post-entry commitment. Commitment propensity indicated general propensity to be committed to the organization or job, while post-entry commitment dealt with actual commitment to the specific organization.

**Second Dimension**: The nature of commitment has two dimensions: Instrumental and Affective.

The instrumental nature of commitment is strongly tied to and is part of the motivational process, whereas the second dimension views commitment as a normative or affective process resulting from one's early socialization or work experiences. The normative commitment can be described as the belief by an individual that one has a moral obligation to be loyal to the organization he is engaged in, as it is for one's family, country etc. Some of the researchers like Argyle (1989) proposed that commitment could also be thought in two ways: calculative and affective commitment. Calculative commitment is analogous to instrumental commitment, while affective commitment corresponds to notion of moral involvement, i.e., a non-instrumental, emotional attachment to the organization through internalizing the values.

Instrumental form of commitment can be described as a lower level order of commitment, the normative and particularly the affective ones may be characterized as higher level orders of commitment.

This difference also related to transactional leadership and transformational leadership (Bass 1998). The former motivates the employees to perform through short term exchange of specific benefits and contributions that are monetary or economic in nature, while the latter which works more on relational contract refers to a long term exchange involving a mutually satisfying relationship with open-ended arrangements that include socio-emotional as well as economic terms. This is, in short, a difference between status enhancement, advancement, higher pay, etc., on one hand and "life time commitment norms and values" according to Marsh & Mannari, who made a strong cultural differentiation by suggesting that "the status enhance is common in American culture, while the life-time commitment is more in Japanese society".

In short, these two dimensions, time (pre and post entry commitment) and basis (instrumental versus affective/normative) of commitment, provided the basic framework of the theory as under:

(2) The basis of commitment separates commitment into two dimensions - instrumental commitment, which is based on instrumental exchange, and normative and affective commitment which are based on psychological and the internalization of the goals and values of the organization.

**Commitment propensity** - Normative and Instrumental propensities:

Normative commitment is regarded, according to Meyer & Allen (1991) as normative propensity, defined as a general feeling of moral obligation toward the organization and employment in the organization. Normative propensity is relevant before one's entry into the organization. "As suggested by Angle and Lawson (1993), it represents commitment propensity, an inclination to be committed, and as such is best described as a personal value that acts as an antecedent to commitment" (Brown 1996). Hence, (3) Normative commitment propensity is a general moral obligation towards the organization that reflects the likelihood of becoming committed to it. In 1980 , Wiener and Varde argued that in business organizations, the primary mechanism is "motivation", because the essence of employees' 'involvement' and 'contract' with the organization is economic and incentive-oriented; in such settings rewards, particularly monetary ones, serve as 'basic control mechanisms'. This is instrumental commitment propensity, which is defines as a "general tendency to be committed to a given organization based on one's expectation of benefits, compensation and remunerations from the specific organization, an expectation that such an exchange will be beneficial to the individual will lead to a high level of instrumental propensity. So, (4) Instrumental commitment propensity is desired for one's own general expectations about the quality of exchange with the organization. This exchange is based on the expected benefits and rewards one might receive from the organization.

**Instrumental and Affective Commitment**

When one begins employment in a given organization, two types of commitment start to

develop, instrumental commitment and affective commitment. While the logic of these two commitments is similar to that of the instrumental and normative propensities, there is a difference in as much as while the latter are tendencies or inclinations, the former are concrete and based on practicalities, situational and organizational ones. In early commitment literature, Etzioni (1961) made a distinction between moral involvement and cumulative involvement. The first represents positive and intense orientation towards the organization, based on the organization's goals, values, norms, etc. in contract, calculative involvement represents a less intense relationship, largely based on the exchange relationship, relationship based on benefits, rewards etc. Instrumental commitment is based on tangible exchange relationship and the attachment deepens on the perception of one's contribution to the organization and rewards in exchange. Therefore, (5) Instrumental commitment is an attachment resulting from one's perception of the quality of the tangible exchange between his/her contributions to the organization and the rewards that he/she receives.

In the early stages of one's employment, the dominant commitment is the instrumental one. However, with passage of time and more information and understanding of the workplace, a deeper level of commitment, the affective one develops. This commitment will be characterized by feelings of identification, belonging and emotional involvement akin to affective commitment.

Affective commitment develops more slowly and generally later than the instrumental one, but it emphasizes the deep psychological attachment of the highly committee individuals. Therefore, (6) Affective commitment is a psychological attachment to the organization such that the strongly committed individual identifies with, is emotionally involved in, and feels a strong sense of belonging to the organization.

## Model of the development of organizational commitment
### Pre-entry process of commitment:
New employees entering organizations have different goals and values which they seek to satisfy through employment. The more congruence employees perceive between their values and beliefs and those of the organization, the stronger is their propensity to commit to the organization. So, (7) Normative commitment propensity will be strongly affected by personal characteristics such as personal values and beliefs. Contrary to this, (8) Instrumental commitment propensity will be strongly affected by the characteristics of job choice and expectations about the job. It flows from the above that, (9) An employee with high level of normative commitment

propensity is more likely to develop a high level of affective commitment. An employee with a high level of instrumental commitment propensity is more likely to develop a high level of instrumental commitment. As a corollary thereto, (10) instrumental commitment will be influenced by one's experience in the organization regarding the quality of exchange (exchange in lieu of performance ) with the organizations and the way in which one's earlier expectation regarding this exchange were met.

The affective commitment will also be influenced by factors other than just purely tangible instrumental ones. Non-instrumental considerations are perceptions of justice, organizational support and transformational leadership which endow employees with more responsibility and treat them with more trust. This leads the employees to believe that the organization is committed to them, values them and treats them more equitably. The employees also feel inclined to reciprocate and with strong perceptions of organizational support would feel enthused to repay in terms of organizational commitment. Therefore, (11) Affective commitment will be influenced by factors such as transformational leadership, perceptions of justice and organizational support that represents higher order exchanges.

Organizational socialization is also an important ingredient to affect one's instrumental and affective commitment. This socialization means inculcating in the new employee organizational culture, beliefs, value system, orientation and concern for the employees, this socialization process can influence the role orientation that the employees ultimately adopt. This process also influences affective commitment of the employees by providing information about the goals, objectives and ideals of the organization with which employees can identify themselves and feel encouraged to give their best. Therefore, (12) instrumental commitment and affective commitment will be positively influenced by organizational socialization tactics.

It can also be deduced quite logically that, (13) instrumental commitment will be positively influenced by affective commitment. (14) Affective and instrumental commitment will become an ingredient in the antecedents of commitment propensities and will affect these propensities.

From the above discussion and narrations it can be concluded that this theory regarding employee commitment takes into account the past theories and builds on that, in the following:
(i) It takes an attitudinal approach
(ii) It stresses that commitment is not static but has different meanings in different time-frames of an employee's career.

(iii) It distinguishes between pre-entry commitment propensities and post-entry commitment of an employee to the organization.

(iv)The different bases of commitment have been distinctly articulated viz, affective commitment based on normative propensies of an individual and instrumental commitment.

This analysis clearly established a societal relationship of employees' commitment to an organization. This theory also brought into focus real-life practical issues like the difference between normative commitment propensity and affective commitment as a sequel to that, vis-à-vis instrumental commitment. Employees with a higher normative propensity in comparison to the instrumental committed ones needed less organizational socialization as they were pre-motivated. An important conclusion derived there from which has enormous practical implications was that " organizations that focus mainly in instrumental exchanges should be aware of the fact that their employees will develop a shallow level of commitment , not based on deep psychological attachment , and might be more vulnerable to voluntary turnover when exploring job offers with higher and better rewards" .[3]

## 2.5 The Combined influence of AC, CC and NC Approach

In 2009 Somers studied a sample of 288 hospital nurses. Their commitment profiles were compared to turnover intentions, job search behavior, work withdrawal (absenteeism and lateness) and job stress. Five empirically-derived commitment profiles emerged: highly committed, affective–normative dominant, continuance–normative dominant, continuance dominant, and uncommitted. Results indicated that the most positive work outcomes were associated with the affective–normative dominant profile which included lower turnover intentions and lower levels of psychological stress. There were no differences among the commitment groups for late coming, and the continuance–normative dominant group had the lowest levels of absenteeism. Somers suggested that future research should focus on the combined influence of commitment on work outcomes.[4] He proposed that commitment processes

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[3] Cohen, A. (2007). Commitment Before And After: An Evaluation And Re-Conceptualization Of Organizational Commitment; Human Resource Management Review 17: Pages 336-354.

[4] The Combined Influence Of Affective, Continuance And Normative Commitment On Employee Withdrawal Mark John Somers Journal of Vocational Behavior Volume 74, Issue 1, February 2009, Pages 75–81.

are very complex as it involves the human psyche and emotions. The relative levels of commitment for each employee affect how the psychological state of commitment is experienced. For example, when AC and NC are high, the potentially negative effects of CC are eased out because employees do not feel stuck in their organizations, but feel invested in them. In case of employee retention, potential negative effects of CC seem to be mitigated when AC and NC are also high. Studies of Somers (2009) are better directed toward exploring the combined influence of commitment on outcome variables especially those associated with employee retention and citizenship behavior. This is an extension of the O'Reilley & Chatman's theory that identified Organizational Citizenship Behaviour as an outcome of the psychological attachment of employees towards their organization in addition to the OC-outcome relationship theorized by Becker, 1960, Porter et al. 1974, which primarily harped on commitment to be an important determinant of employee turnover intentions.

## 2.6 The Era of Multiple Commitments

Lack of emphasis on an individual's own experience of being committed emerged as a major loophole in the commitment literature. Definitions and approaches of commitment have evolved from reviews of the literature and hybridizations of previous definitions. Since researchers had not involved the  subjects directly (or even indirectly) for their own perceptions and definitions of commitment, current measures of commitment were inadequate to throw light upon the way people in organizations experienced their own attachments to organizational life. Development and progress in commitment research therefore, should include an attempt to understand commitment from the standpoint of the individual. Organizational commitment can be viewed as a collection of multiple commitments to various groups that comprise the organization. A multiple commitments perspective strongly suggests that the commitment experienced by any one individual may differ markedly from that experienced by another. One individual's "organizational commitment" may stem from the perception that the organization is dedicated to high quality products at a reasonable price; another person's commitment may depend on the individual's belief that the organization advocates humanistic values towards employees. A global measure of organizational commitment reveals both employees to be equally committed to the organization, yet the focus of the two commitments is entirely different. A multiple commitments approach aids in organizational diagnosis and

intervention procedures that could pinpoint the strength, presence, or absence of particular commitments. Knowledge of the source(s) or type(s) of commitment that is largely responsible for the individual's investment in organizational membership allows for the prediction of changes in commitment levels. Especially in today's dynamic global market scenario, as organizations enter new markets they experience changes in the composition of top management, and as they face changing competitive or governmental constraints, different goal orientations on the part of top managers may evolve. The goals and values of one group may become more prominent, and organizational resources may be diverted into satisfying the goals and values of a previously neglected group.

When this happens, individuals who were primarily committed to the goals of now-slighted groups may experience decreased commitment to the organization as a whole, because the degree of commitment experienced depends on the strength of the individual's identification with the relevant community. When organizations pursue conflicting goals of multiple constituencies, individuals who are committed to these constituencies may suffer from conflicts over the direction that their energies and loyalties should take. Commitment to one group may imply the necessary abandonment of other identifications with other groups. Individuals may attempt to resolve these conflicts by withdrawing from the organization, and thus continued relationships between commitment and turnover could be expected. However, this would result not from decreased organizational commitment per se, but from the conflict engendered by too many intense organizational commitments.

Individual conflict resolution styles would play a major role in determining the commitments-withdrawal relationship. The concept redundancy that has characterized organizational commitment may be decreased when commitment is conceptualized and measured as a multifaceted construct that possesses multiple foci. Global organizational commitment demonstrates disturbingly high statistical overlap with concepts such as job involvement, job attachment, and career satisfaction (Morrow, 1983). It is therefore safe to suggest that specific commitments to particular goal orientations may demonstrate less redundancy with other concepts than has been true for measures of global commitment in the past.

It has been argued that current approaches to organizational commitment ignore the multifaceted conceptions of organization that have been prominent among organizational theorists. Commitment should be re-theorized to reflect multiple commitments of the multiple groups that constitute the organization by incorporating a macro perspective on organizations, coupled with reference group and role theories. This approach steers the natural development of OC from a general to a more specific orientation. It presents commitments in a way that may be more closely aligned to individuals' actual experiences in organizations, raises questions about the relationship between conflict and commitments.

### III. CONCLUSION

After reviewing the literature available, it may be concluded that most of the approaches to OC developed so far have the potential to contribute to a better understanding of OC and thus cannot be ignored in any re-conceptualization of commitment. The criticism leveled against these approaches can be used as a basis for furthering the scope of research in organizational commitment. From review of the existing theories, it also emerges that a multi-dimensional approach towards OC needs to be adopted. It is multi-faceted and hence needs to take into cognizance the organization and also an individual's perspective. Since commitment has both attitudinal and behavioural implications, it is paramount to come out with a proposition which tries to delve deeper into the psyche of the individual and their interactions with their organization.

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