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New development of organizational commitment: A critical review (1960 - 2009)

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This paper reviews the characteristics of main approaches to Organizational Commitment from the beginning of conception of Commitment in Becker (1960) till today, provides an overview of different eras and domains. Then discuss some new development of Organizational Commitment in commitment tendency or combined influence to organizational outcomes. This paper will argue some of thinking and ideas developed so far do provide the basic building blocks for suggesting a conceptualization that will attempt to clarify and to better represent the concept of organizational commitment. The advantages of suggested theory and its implications for the understanding of organizational commitment and future research on it are discussed.

Key words: Continuous commitment, affective commitment, normative commitment, time-dimension, combined influence.

INTRODUCTION

Academic scholars frequently respond extensive amount of empirical research to establish the relationship between commitment and organizational effectiveness for employers rising concerns about their desire to have a committed workforce to enhance their organizational performance. In the process, research on OC (organizational commitment) has since taken four different periods but overlapping routes from 1960 till now.

A review of the organizational commitment literature has pointed out several advantages as well as some limitations of the approach advanced from Becker (1960) till Meyer and Allen (1997) even Somers (2009) . To better understand the current state of commitment research, this paper proposed critical review of the development of the concept and measurement of organizational commitment as needed.

The concept of commitment in the workplace is still one of the most challenging and researched concepts in the fields of management, organizational behavior and HRM (Cohen, 2003; Cooper-Hakim and Viswesvaran,

2005; Morrow, 1993) . A great deal of research has been devoted to studying the antecedents and outcomes of commitment in the work setting. The conceptual and operational development of organizational commitment has affected the conceptualization and measurement of other commitment forms such as commitment to the occupation, the job, the workgroup, the union and the work itself (Cohen, 2003; Gordon, Philpot et al., 1980; Morrow, 1993).

As the employees' attitude to organization, organizational commitment does treat as the core predictors of turnover behavior, withdraw tendency and organizational citizen behavior (Mathieu and Zajac, 1990; Morrow, 1993; Sinclair and Wright, 2005). For OC evolution has developed over 50 years from Becker (1960) one-side-bet theory, Porter (1974) affective dependence theory, O'Reilly and Chatman (1986) . Meyer and Allen (1984, 1990) multi-dimension period till today's Cohen (2007) two-dimension and Somers (2009) combined theory, each of which had a strong impact on the current state of OC.

THE SIDE-BET PERIOD

The primal thinking is based on Howard Becker's (1960)

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conception that defined organizational commitment as the side-bet theory. This approach was one of the earliest attempts to study a comprehensive conceptual framework about organizational commitment from perspective on the individual's relationship with the organization.

According to Becker's theory, the relationship between employee and organization are based on the "contract" of economic exchange behavior, committed employees are committed because they have totally hidden or somewhat hidden investments, "side-bets," they have made by remaining in a given organization. If someone left, the investments of "side-bet" will be claimed hardly. The term "side-bets" refer to the accumulation of investments valued by the individual. Becker (1960) argued that over a period of time certain costs accrue that make it more difficult for the person to disengage from a consistent pattern of activity, namely, maintaining membership in the organization.

Becker's approach claimed that a close connection between organizational commitment and employees' voluntary turnover behavior. In fact, it identifies organizational commitment as a major predictor in the explanation of voluntary turnover. This contention was supported by later research that followed Becker's theory (Alutto, Hrebiniak and Alonso, 1973; Ritzer and Trice, 1969). According to these studies, commitment should be measured by evaluating the reasons, if any, that would cause a person to leave his organization. Becker's approach and the scales that were assumed to represent it were adopted by later research as the approach to conceptualize and examine commitment to the organization and/or to the occupation.

For evaluation of Becker's theory, Ritzer and Trice (1969) operated RTS (Ritzer Trice Scale) which may used in measuring employees' perceived loss, Alutto and Hrebiniak (1973) took some adjustment about it (Hrebiniak Alutto Scale), known as HAS, but unsatisfied of content and discriminant validity.

While the side-bet theory was abandoned as a leading commitment theory, the close relationship between organizational commitment and turnover as advanced by Becker affected most of the later conceptualizations of commitment and established turnover as the main behavior that should be affected by organizational commitment. The influence of the side-bet approach is evident in Meyer and Allen's Scale (1991), which might be named as the continuance commitment. This scale was advanced as a tool for the better testing of the side-bet approach and is one of the three dimensions of organizational commitment outlined by Meyer and Allen (1991), although be challenged from Cohen's (2007) instrumental commitment.

MIDDLE AFFECTIVE-DEPENDENCE PERIOD

Second period of organizational commitment was advanced by Porter et al. (1974). The focus of commit-

ment shifted from tangible side-bets to the psychological attachment one had to the organization. The affective-dependence school attempted to describe commitment as a kind of attitude-centered but "economic -contract". Employee's retention nor just only come from economic factors but also affective influence and maybe the later are more significant. Accordingly, commitment was defined by Porter and his followers as "...the relative strength of an individual's identification with and involvement in a particular organization..." (Mowday, Steers and Porter, 1979). Then they claimed organizational commitment was combined with three parts: "Strong acceptance", "Participation" and "Loyalty". The exchange theory was established as the main explanation for the process of commitment (Mowday, Porter and Steers, 1982).

They advanced commitment as an alternative construct to job satisfaction and argued that commitment can sometimes predict turnover better than job satisfaction. Commitment was characterized by 3 related factors (Mowday et al., 1979):

- a) A strong belief in and acceptance of the organization's goals and values.
- b) A willingness to exert considerable effort on behalf of the organization.
- c) A strong desire to maintain membership in the organization..."

However, although Porter and his colleagues had contributed for commitment's evolution, they still continued with one of the basic assumptions of Becker's theory, namely, the strong ties between commitment and turnover and following the one-dimensional guidance. O'Reilly (1986) regards that while the first component focuses on the psychological basis for attachment.

Based on the approach of Porter, Steers, Mowday and Boulian operated the famous OCQ (Organizational Commitment Questionnaire) which combined 15 items. It followed the three-dimensional definition and met satisfied reliability. In addition to the items that reflect the attitudinal notion of commitment, the OCQ included items that refer to what O'Reilly and Chatman (1986) termed the consequences of commitment. Critics of the OCQ would argue that some of the items of the scale deal with turnover intentions or with performance intentions and that all of the statements are more reflective of behavioral intentions than attitudes (O'Reilly and Chatman, 1986). And it is hard to partition the three dimensions from Porter theory clearly. For the critiques did convince researchers to be more cautious in the application of the OCQ. The solution found by these researchers was to use a shorter version of the scale, a 9-item version that omitted the six negatively phrased items (Iverson, 1999) or a 12-item version that omitted the three items supposedly dealing with turnover intentions (Becker and Wilson, 2000).

To overcome the limitation of OCQ, O'Reilly and Chatman (1986), Meyer and Allen (1984) extend it into

multi-dimension model respectively. Due to the criticism of the scale, whether justifiable or not, the need for an alternative to the OCQ became evident, with the call coming from two sources. One of them was the O'Reilly and Chatman (1986) approach that was specifically advanced as a conceptual and operational alternative to the OCQ. The second one, which of Meyer and Allen (1984), started first as a methodological paper aimed at an improved examination of the side-bet approach using scales more appropriate for this goal.

MULTI-DIMENSION PERIOD

Becker (1960) and Porter (1974) theories were all belong the one-dimension era, after them, two leading multi-dimensional approaches were advanced in the 1980s, one from O'Reilly and Chatman (1986) and the other from Meyer and Allen (1984). There were some other multi-dimensional approaches, but these had much less impact than the two main ones (Herscovitch, 2002).

O'REILLY AND CHATMAN THEORY

Main contributions of O'Reilly and Chatman (1986) theory located in, one is their approach upon the differentia among the antecedents and consequences of commitment and the outcomes for attachment on the other.

They defined commitment as the psychological attachment felt by the person for the organization, reflecting the degree to which the individual internalizes or adopts the characteristics or perspectives of the organization. They argued that one's psychological attachment may be predicted by three independent factors:

- (a) Compliance or instrumental involvement for specific, extrinsic rewards.
- (b) Identification or involvement based on a desire for affiliation.
- (c) Internalization or involvement predicated on the congruence between individual and organizational values.

Conceptually, O'Reilly and Chatman made a clear distinction between two processes of commitment, the instrumental exchange and the psychological attachment. The compliance dimension that represents the exchange process leads to a somewhat shallower attachment to the organization. The deeper attachment, according to O'Reilly and Chatman, results from the psychological attachment formed by the two other dimensions, namely identification and internalization.

Another interesting contribution of O'Reilly and Chatman was their view of the outcomes of organizational commitment. While former scholars (Becker, 1960; Porter et al., 1974) emphasized commitment as an important

determinant predictor mainly of turnover, O'Reilly and Chatman argued that the psychological attachment could result in other behaviors such as OCB (Organizational Citizenship Behavior) might be a relevant outcome of commitment.

Although O'Reilly and Chatman presented an interesting approach to commitment, for unclear reasons and because of its unclear questionable mechanism few researchers have followed this approach. Instead, the approach of Meyer and Allen (1984) became the dominant one to the study of commitment.

MEYER AND ALLEN THEORY

For more than 20 years, the leading approach to studying organizational commitment has been the three-dimensional (affective, normative, continuance) scales of Meyer and Allen (1984, 1990, 1997). This approach was rooted in earlier approaches to organizational commitment (Becker, 1960; Porter et al., 1974).

Meyer and Allen's (1984) approach started with a paper that argued that the side-bet approach was inappropriately operationalized. The paper "Testing the side-bet theory of organizational commitment: Some methodological considerations" argued that the scales developed by Becker's (1960) followers (Alutto et al., 1973; Ritzer and Trice, 1969) do not really measure side-bets but measure attitudinal commitment. Might the better way to measure side-bets is to use measures that more directly assess individuals' perceptions regarding the number and magnitude of the side-bets they have made. In order to test this contention, they compared the interrelationships among several common scales of commitment and two scales they had developed, one representing Affective commitment and the other Continuance commitment.

The affective commitment scale was advanced as a significant improvement over the OCQ. It was well defined as a tool for assessing commitment characterized by positive feelings of identification with and involves the work organization. Meyer and Allen proposed the continuance dimension as a better representation of Becker's side-bet approach. It was designed to assess the extent to which employees feel committed to their organizations by virtue of the costs that they feel are associated with leaving.

A few years later, a third dimension was added, the normative commitment (Allen and Meyer, 1990). Normative commitment was defined as a feeling of obligation to continue employment. Employees with a high level of normative commitment feel that they ought to remain within the organization (Meyer and Allen, 1990). Normative commitment is affected in the main by socialization and/or culture prior to entry into an organization.

For the tools for evaluation, more studies have used as the main instruments for studying commitment. These studies focused on examining the psychometric properties of the scales, particularly their discriminant

validity and their relationship with outcomes (Allen and Meyer, 1990; Becker and Wilson, 2000; Hackett, Bycio and Hausdorf, 1994; Jaros, 1997; Ko et al., 1997; McGee and Ford, 1987).

The three dimensions were characterized as a “three component conceptualization of Organizational Commitment” and were described as “...distinguishable components, rather than types, of attitudinal commitment, that is, employees can experience each of these psychological states to varying degrees...” (Allen and Meyer, 1990). Later, stronger conceptual justifications were developed regarding this approach with an attempt to relate it to motivation theories which defined as CCS, ACS and NCS (Meyer and Allen, 1990, 1997; Meyer et al., 2004; Meyer and Herscovitch, 2001).

ARGUMENT FOR CONTENTS OF OC

Vandenberg and Self (1993, 1994) measured four forms of commitment – the affective and continuance commitment of Meyer and Allen (1984), organizational identification, and OCQ – at three different points in time (the first day of work, the third month of work and the sixth month of work). They found a strong instability in the factor structures, particularly in affective and continuance commitment across the three timeframes. The first explanation they provided for this important finding was that work experiences during the entry period altered the newcomers to such an extent that the items took on a different conceptual meaning from one period to the next. Another explanation was that it might be unrealistic to assume that during the first months of work newcomers develop the depth of understanding about the organization and its constituent components required to relate to the items in a meaningful way. They concluded that respondents in different organizational career stages have difficulties in interpreting the items and assign different meanings to them.

Ko et al. (1997) and his colleagues contended that Meyer and Allen did not offer a precise definition of commitment that embraces the affective, continuance and normative components. They simply noted that what is common to the three components is a “psychological state” that links the employee to the organization, but it is not clear what is meant by this psychological state. Ko et al. (1997) focused on two main problems they diagnosed in the approach. The first one was the continuance commitment dimension. They contended that Meyer et al. (1993) argued that Becker's (1960) concept of commitment represents a component of attitudinal commitment because he emphasized the awareness of the costs associated with leaving the organization. However, Becker defined commitment as a consistent line of activity (such as maintaining membership in the organization) and attempted to explain what causes this inconsistency. Therefore, Becker's view of commitment seems to be more congruent with the behavioral rather than attitudinal

approach of Porter and his colleagues.

For the relationship between affective commitment and normative commitment, based on their findings, Ko et al. (1997) concluded that the concept of NC (such as normative commitment) is troublesome because it appears that there is considerable conceptual overlap between NC and AC (for example affective commitment). As indicated above, the normative component of commitment is based on the belief that it is the right thing to remain with the organization and that AC is attachment to the organization such that the strongly committed individual identifies with, is involved in, and enjoys membership in the organization. It is unclear how NC can be conceptually separable from AC for their higher connection 0.73 and 0.85 respectively (Ko et al., 1997). They concluded that because of the above mentioned problems considerable conceptual work needed to be done and new measures should be developed that adequately assess the new conceptualizations.

Meyer and Allen (1997) 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. Subsequently, major revisions in the continuance commitment scale were advanced (Powell and 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.

Anyway, Meyer and Allen (1984, 1990, 1997) approach is the leading centre of organizational commitment research and significant for following scholars. Especially their Affective commitment which perfected from OCQ might be most significant contribution for this academic area. Meyer and Allen's Continuous commitment, Affective commitment and Normative commitment with CCS, ACS and NCS, has become the main instrument to evaluate employees' behavior for their need to, want to and ought to operate in their organization.

NEW DEVELOPMENT

Following O'Reilly and Chatman (1986), Meyer and Allen (1984), some scholars continue the depths to be popular despite early reports of the non-significant and at best, moderate correlations between global organizational commitment and performance.

NEW MODEL BASED ON TWO DIMENSION OF TIME AND STYLE OF COMMITMENT

In 1982, the distinction between commitment and behavior intentions was advanced by Mowday, Porter

and Steers, who pointed out the difference between attitudinal and behavioral commitment. They argued that commitment tendency focuses on the process by which individuals come to think about their relationship with organization. In many ways, it can be thought of as a mind thinking in which individuals consider the extent to which their own values and goals to match with those of the organization. Behavioral commitment relates to the process by which individuals "coupled" into a certain organization.

Cohen (2007) developed his theory with two dimensions, one is the Time and employees will not begin in a given organization without some attitude toward commitment, therefore the intention might be the predictor for the commitment behavior. However, those intentions are perceptions general of commitment that were developed in the socialization process and were influenced by personal beliefs, values, expectations about the job and prior experiences. Studies have referred to these attitudes as commitment propensity. This concept was advanced by Mowday (1982) and was examined by Pierce and Dunham (1987) and Lee, Ashford, Walsh, and Mowday (1992), who found that it affected commitment to the organization developed during post-entry in an organization.

Following the guidance mentioned, it is suggested that Normative commitment as defined and measured by Allen and Meyer (1990) can be better understood as a pre-entry commitment propensity or kind of tendency rather than an commitment behavior as post-entry. Normative commitment was defined as the employees' feelings of moral obligation to the organization that push employees to remain in it. Meyer and Allen (1997) argued that this sense of moral obligation might be shaped by organizational socialization, in addition to early socialization effects, but earlier, it be developed during individual early socialization and background culture.

Normative commitment propensity can be defined as the belief that one has a moral obligation to demonstrate loyalty and duty in all social situations in which one has a significant personal involvement. A committed individual retains membership in the organization not because he or she has determined that doing so is to his or her personal benefit, but because he/she believes that he/she "should" behave this way, because it is "right" and expected (Wiener and Vardi, 1980).

Just as mentioned, 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 become committed and as such is best described as a personal value that acts as an antecedent to commitment (Brown, 1996). As mentioned earlier, normative commitment propensity is a stable attitude and is rooted in one's past experiences, particularly culture and socialization. It can be affected very little by specific organizational experiences or experiences with any other relevant foci of commitment.

Thus, one difference between this conceptualization and Meyer and Allen (1991) one is the timeframe (Cohen, 2007).

Following the time dimension, here suggests that the nature of commitment is also two-dimensional, pre-entry and post-entry commitments. One is the instrumental one, is strongly tied to and is part of the motivational process. The second dimension views commitment as a normative or affective process resulting from one's early socialization or experiences. Cohen attempts to clear past difficulties in the conceptualization of commitment from the cost of leaving (continuance commitment) to the benefits of staying (instrumental commitment).

While the instrumental form of commitment can be described as a lower level order of commitment, the normative and affective ones may be characterized as higher of commitment. The term higher versus lower level order of commitment is parallel to similar distinctions made in management theory and industrial psychology where similar distinctions have been made for other constructs. Herzberg, (1959) motivation theory and Bass (1998) transactional leadership and transformational leadership theory are examples where such terminology is used.

Till now, we can scan the overall screen of Cohen (2007) Two-dimensional theory. Cohen contends that organizational commitment is two-dimensional. One dimension is instrumental in nature and the second is affective. In addition, a sharp difference needs to be made between commitment propensity that develops before individual entry into the organization and commitment attitudes that develop after he/she entry into the organization.

The conceptualization of organizational commitment of Cohen (2007) is presented in Figure 1. The model suggests two dimensions—the timing of commitment and the bases of commitment. The timing of commitment distinguishes between commitment propensity, which develops before entry into the organization and organizational commitment, which develops after entry into the organization. The second dimension, the bases of commitment, makes a distinction between commitment based on instrumental considerations and commitment based on psychological attachment.

As illustrated in Figure 1, two of these forms develop before entry into the organization and two develop after. The first two forms that develop before one's entry into the organization are instrumental commitment propensity, which is derived from one's general expectations about the quality of the exchange with the organization in terms of the expected benefits and rewards one might receive from it, and normative commitment propensity, which is a general moral obligation towards the organization.

The two forms developed after entry is instrumental commitment, which results from employee perception of the quality of the exchange between one's contributions and the rewards that one receives. Affective commitment,

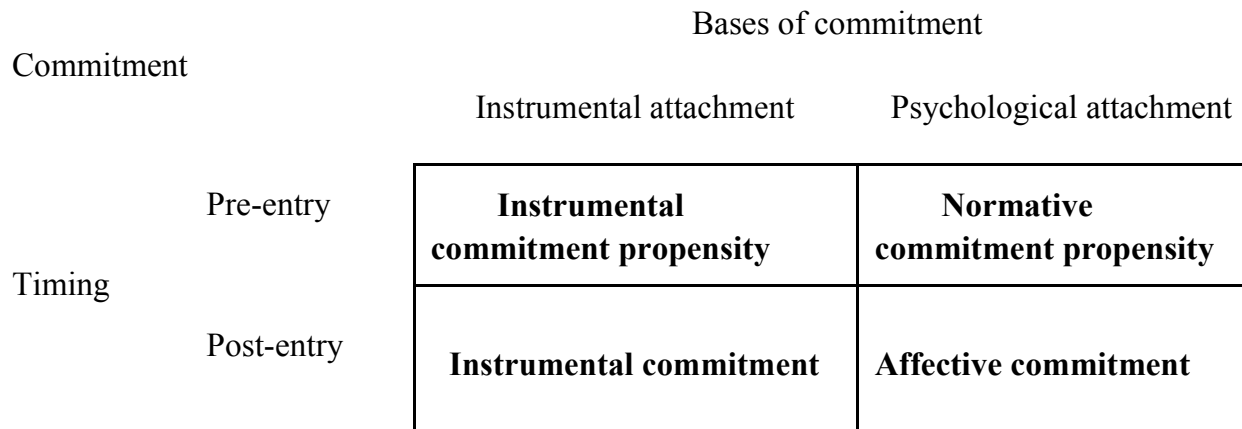


Figure 1. The two-dimensional commitment model Adapted from Cohen. A, (2006, 2007).

defined as a psychological attachment to the organization demonstrated by identification with it, emotional involvement and a sense of belonging. These forms are conceptually separate from one another, but they are related because the two pre-entry commitment forms are important determinants of the two post-entry commitments.

The two-dimensional model might solve two problems: First, the high correlation between affective commitment and normative commitment (Meyer et al., 2002). It has caused researchers to question the contribution of normative commitment to the conceptualization of commitment. Here, normative commitment as the time-dimension was defined as propensity to the affective commitment. The conceptualization here argues that the high correlations occur because normative commitment is in fact a propensity to be committed that should be examined before entry into the organization, not after entry. Second, the suggested instrumental commitment here might solve the limitation that has been associated with the definition and measurement of the continuance commitment form for a long time already (Ko et al., 1997). The problems in the dimensionality of continuance commitment, as well as its weak relationships with determinants and outcomes might be resolved by defining it as instrumental commitment that better represents the notion of exchange.

Cohen (2007) takes a purely attitudinal approach in order to avoid an overlap with predictive intentions and outcome variable of behavior. Second, a distinction is made between commitment propensity developed before entry into the organization and developed after entry. And, Cohen emphasizes the motivational force or the bases behind commitment. One of the two dimensions of commitment, the instrumental commitment is part of an ongoing exchange process. Fourth, the theory here emphasizes affective commitment as the highest order form of commitment comparing the basic instrumental one.

THE COMBINED INFLUENCE OF AC, CC AND NC

Somers (2009) suggest research in commitment should focus on the combined influence of commitment on work outcomes. In his sample of 288 hospital nurses, commitment profiles are 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 indicate that the most positive work outcomes are associated with the affective–normative dominant profile which included lower turnover intentions and lower levels of psychological stress.

Somers hypothesis there are eight commitment profiles in organizations that include: highly committed, affective dominant, continuance dominant, normative dominant, AC–CC dominant, AC–NC dominant, CC–NC dominant and uncommitted, five of the eight commitment profiles were reproduced using empirical clustering methods (the AC dominant, AC CC dominant and NC dominant profiles did not emerge). Somers suggest that commitment processes might be more complex than previously thought. It appears that the relative levels of commitment for each employee affect how the more general psychological state of commitment is experienced. For example, when AC and NC are high, the potentially negative effects of CC are attenuated possibly because employees do not feel stuck in their organizations, but rather invested in them. Potential negative effects of CC seem to be mitigated when AC and NC are also high at least for employee retention. As such, building beneficial patterns of commitment to organizations probably extends beyond affective commitment.

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.

Table 1. Evaluation of Organizational Commitment.

Period	Scholar	Conception frame	Main ideas	Instruments	Limitations	Annotate
Side-bet theory	Howard Becker (1960)	Contractual relation		RTS, HAS	Unsatisfied of content and discriminant validity	Defined by Allen as "Continuous Commitment"
Affective dependence	Porter (1974, 1979) Mowday, Steers (1979)	<u>Affective dependence</u> 3 related factors: Strong acceptance; Participation and Loyalty	One dimension OC lead to turnover	OCQ	Acceptable reliability; unsatisfied discriminant validity	Defined by Allen as "Affective Commitment"
Multi-dimension period	O'Reilly and Chatman (1986)	Compliance, Internalization, and Identification Commitment; Contribution: instrument (lower dependence) and affective dependence (deeper).	Multi-dimension Such as Turnover, Job search, Withdraw, Absenteeism, Lateness, Job stress, Organizational citizenship behavior and so on		Unclearly in its mechanism, so few of follower, instead by Allen's theory	
	Meyer and Allen (1984, 1990, 1997)	Continuous Commitment and Affective Commitment		CCS and ACS NCS	CCS, better content and discriminant validity, but index point is unstable from 0.58- 0.82; ACS and NCS are highly correlative/interrelated (0.75-0.85, KO 1997)	
New development	Cohen (2007)	Two dimensional: Time be parted into before (propensity) and after (commitment attitudes) one's entry into the org; Commitment be parted into Instrumental Commitment and Affective Commitment			Proposed model need to be validated	
	Somers (2009)	Combined influence mechanism theory; 8 commitment profiles: Highly Committed, AC dominant, CC dominant, NC dominant, AC-CC, AC-NC, CC-NC dominant and Un-commitment.			More complex to measure clearly	

IMPLICATION OF THE MODEL FOR THEORY AND PRACTICE

Summary and conclusion from the literature review

This paper argues that most of the approaches to organizational commitment 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 conclusions are shown as follows in Table 1.

Research on organizational commitment spans over four decades and remains an area of interest

to both researchers and practitioners. Commitment was initially defined and studied as one-dimensional construct tied either to one's emotional attachment to an organization (Porter et al., 1974) or to the costs associated with exit (Becker, 1960). As work in this area progressed, these views of commitment converged and a new, multidimensional dimensional framework was adopted based on three distinct but related forms of commitment: affective, continuance and normative (Allen and Meyer, 1990). The affective dimension of commitment refers to an emotional attachment to and involvement with an organization while continuance commitment denotes the

perceived costs of leaving an organization (Meyer and Allen, 1991). Normative commitment is a newer addition to the commitment typology and is viewed as felt responsibility to support and remain a member of an organization (Allen and Meyer, 1990).

Then, later scholars, based on commitment theory and research, Meyer and Herscovitch (2001) suggest limiting outcome variables to two main classes: focal and discretionary. Focal variables include those associated with withdrawal from the organization while discretionary variables are extra-role activities that benefit the organization such as citizenship behavior. Cohen (2007)

takes a two-dimensional model approach in order to avoid an overlap with predictive intentions and outcome variable of behavior. Therefore overcame the unclear understanding between affective commitment and normative commitment and defined normative commitment as propensity to predict former one. His theory here emphasizes affective commitment as the highest order form of commitment comparing the basic instrumental one. Somers (2009) suggest research in commitment should focus on the combined influence of commitment on work outcomes.

Future research directions: Foci performance implications

From Side-bet thinking till Affective dependence even Multi-dimensional period, commitment authors have identified different theories to explain the correlations between the foci of organizational commitment and outcomes. Based on Lewin's (1997) Field theory, domains that are proximally nearer to employees such as their peers and supervisors are believed to have comparatively more influence on employee loyalty, attitudes and work behaviors than a domain like the organization (Becker et al., 1996; Becker and Kernan, 2003; Chen et al., 2002; Cheng et al., 2003). With regular interaction and prompt feedback from the targets of their commitment, employees are likely to behave in a manner that matches the goals and values of those target domains (Bishop et al., 2000). Like Becker et al. (1996), recent commitment studies also reveal that employees can distinguish the support they received from the different domains. They would react and behave differently based on the source of their support and object of their commitment. They are likely to reciprocate by directing their positive attitudes and behaviors towards the domains with the same values and those they consider as important (Becker et al., 1996). Any reports of the significant relationships between the domain-specific variables would indicate the extent to which employees perceive that the domains support them.

Siders et al. (2001) suggest that it is the extrinsic rewards from specific domains that drive employees to be committed to and perform in relation to the same domains.

During today, the mergers and acquisitions of organizations, the global and virtual teams cooperation and the threats of job insecurity, there will be newer challenges and opportunities in organizational commitment research. This article highlights a critical review and some recent developments of commitment to enhance the understanding and interest in this discipline among academics and human resource followers.

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