

THE MULTIDIMENSIONAL NATURE OF ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT

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ABSTRACT

Two distinct views of organizational commitment are proposed and examined in this study. Affective commitment describes an employee's emotional attachment to, identification with, and involvement in the organization. Continuance commitment is a behavioral view of commitment and describes an attachment to an organization based on "side-bets," or extraneous interests, such as pensions and seniority, which create costs in leaving an organization. These two dimensions are empirically examined for the case of 312 information systems (IS) employees. Further, both dimensions are correlated with measures of job satisfaction, intention to quit, self-esteem, and burnout. As predicted, affective commitment is positively related to job satisfaction and self-esteem, and negatively to intention to quit, and burnout. Continuance commitment showed a directly opposite relationship with these variables. It is negatively associated with satisfaction and self-esteem and positively with intention to quit and burnout. These findings demonstrate the importance of distinguishing between commitment based on a desire to stay in an organization and commitment based on a need to stay because of other factors.

Hiring and retaining IS employees has always been a key issue for IS managers. McGee [47] recently noted that companies such as Federal Express are taking drastic steps such as opening new data centers in states other than Tennessee to attract talented IS employees. Organizations are also working to retain good employees. These steps include better salaries, bonuses, quick promotions, and training programs in new systems and technologies.

Research on organizational commitment, however, has been limited. Some recent studies have examined organizational commitment in order to assess its relationship with employee turnover. For example, Igbaria and Greenhaus [24] found that committed employees are less likely to leave an organization than those who are less committed. These conclusions are similar to those by Mathieu and Zajac [44], who found in their meta-analysis,

that commitment is negatively related to withdrawal behavior; i.e., intention to search for job alternatives and an intention to quit.

Voluntary employee turnover also can have a significant financial impact on an organization, especially since American firms spent an estimated 50 billion dollars on training costs in 1994 [15]. IS training costs now represent 4.3% of total IS budgets [66] and IS personnel costs average 48% of total IS departmental budgets [24]. In addition, high employee turnover can have serious consequences for a firm. Wakin [68] notes that the departure of a staff member is estimated to cost an organization from one-half to one and one-half times that employee's annual salary.

Although it is important for organizations to enhance commitment because of its relationship to turnover, it is also reasonable to expect that organizational

commitment will be related to other work-oriented behavior and perceptions. For example, Igarria and Guimaraes [26] found a positive relationship between commitment and job satisfaction. Other characteristics, for example, self-esteem and burnout are equally important factors regarding the decision whether to stay in an organization. Therefore this study also examines the relationship between employee commitment to an organization and work-related characteristics: intention to quit, job satisfaction, self-esteem, and burnout.

In addition to the above, two different dimensions of organizational commitment are examined. Two views of commitment have dominated the organizational behavior literature: attitudinal (or affective) commitment and behavioral (or continuance) commitment [50]. *Affective commitment* is defined as an emotional attachment to an organization characterized by strong links [53]. Other studies have described affective commitment similarly. Buchanan [10] defined it as "a partisan, affective attachment to the goals and values of an organization" (p. 533), and Etzioni [18] proposed the concept of moral commitment as the internalization of norms and identification with authority.

Continuance commitment and the Side-Bet Theory of Commitment were popularized by Becker [7]. According to this theory, employees make certain investments or side-bets in their organizations, for example, tenure toward pensions, promotions, and work relationships. These investments are sunk costs which reduce the attractiveness of other employment opportunities. Commitment is, therefore, an outcome of inducements or exchanges between an individual and an organization.

Both types of commitment reflect links between an organization and an employee, and the presence of either reduces the chances of employee turnover. However, the nature of these links is quite different. Employees with strong affective relationships with an organization, those who want to stay with the organization, can be expected to not only remain in, but also to exert considerable effort on behalf of, that organization. Employees with continuance ties, those who feel compelled to stay in an organization, are, on the other hand, more likely to put in the minimum effort required to retain their tenure.

Previous IS studies have not made a distinction between the two dimensions of commitment. Organizational commitment has been measured using an instrument (called the Organizational Commitment Questionnaire - OCQ) developed by Mowday, Porter, and Steers [53]. Although the OCQ instrument was primarily developed to examine affective commitment, it also included items relating to an employee's involvement,

willingness to exert effort, and desire to stay [14]. Subsequently, Meyer and Allen [48] clarified the properties of the organizational commitment construct. McGee and Ford [45] empirically validated the two-dimension theory of commitment proposed by Meyer and Allen [48] and examined the properties of two scales to measure affective and continuance commitment. These scales - the affective commitment scale (ACS) and continuance commitment scale (CCS) - have since been extensively studied in the organizational behavior literature [2, 22, 50].

In this study we propose to (a) empirically examine the dimensions of the organizational commitment construct (ACS and CCS) in the case of IS personnel; (b) update previous research conducted in the area of organizational commitment with respect to IS personnel by using the ACS and CCS scales; and (c) examine the relationship between ACS and CCS and four work-related attitudes: job satisfaction, intention to quit, organization-based self-esteem, and burnout. It is expected that affective commitment will be positively related to satisfaction and self-esteem and negatively to intention to quit and burnout. It is also expected that continuance commitment will show the reverse relationship: it will be negatively related to satisfaction and self-esteem and positively to intention to quit and burnout.

LITERATURE REVIEW

IS research related to organizational commitment. Several IS studies have focused on both the antecedents and consequences of organizational commitment. These studies have, however, examined only the affective component of commitment as measured by the OCQ instrument.

For example, Igarria, Greenhaus, and Parsuraman [23] determined that a match between career orientation and job setting is critical to the development of commitment (measured by OCQ). Their study of 517 IS professionals found that managerially-oriented employees in technical jobs and technically-oriented employees in managerial jobs displayed negative work attitudes including lack of organizational commitment.

Job-related characteristics have also been found to affect commitment. Igarria, Meredith, and Smith [27], in a study of 112 IS employees in South Africa, determined that job characteristics, salary levels, and job satisfaction had a direct impact on commitment (measured by OCQ). Task-based rewards (e.g., working with competent colleagues, working on professionally important projects, and having the freedom to be creative) and organization-based rewards (e.g., salary increases) were both determined to have a positive impact on organizational commitment. The study

also found that "intention to stay" is negatively related to commitment.

Perceived acceptance by the organization and fulfillment of expectations have also been determined to be antecedents of commitment (measured by OCQ). In a study of 138 IS professionals, Igbaria and Wormly [24] found that commitment was highest for employees who felt accepted by their organizations or who felt their career prospects were favorable.

Job satisfaction has also been found to an important antecedent of commitment. In a survey of 134 IS professionals, Igbaria and Greenhaus [24] found that job satisfaction has a strong direct impact on commitment (measured by OCQ).

Theoretical Development of Organizational Commitment in the Literature. The organizational commitment construct has been studied extensively and has been the subject of several critical reviews in the organizational behavior literature [6, 53]. Various definitions and measures of organizational commitment have also been proposed. Commitment to an organization is considered to reflect the relative strength of an individual's identification with and involvement in that organization [63]. According to Randall [58], it incorporates three main components: (a) a strong belief in and an acceptance of the organization's goals; (b) a willingness to exert considerable effort on behalf of the organization; and (c) a desire to maintain membership in the organization.

There are several positive consequences of high levels of commitment to an organization. It provides an organization with a secure and stable work force [63]. Highly committed employees are more willing to accept an organization's demands for work [18] and provide high levels of performance and task completion [67].

The common theme across most definitions of commitment is that it represents a bond between an individual and an organization. How that bond develops is, however, explained differently. Two distinct perspectives have developed to explain why this bond develops. These themes have become well established in the organizational commitment literature and are: *affective attachment* to an organization and the *perceived costs* (also known as *continuance commitment*) associated with leaving the organization.

Affective attachment. Several authors view commitment as an affective orientation toward the organization. Kanter [33] termed this "cohesion commitment," and Mowday, Steers, and Porter [54]

describe this as:

"the relative strength of an individual's identification with and involvement in a particular organization." (p. 226)

What is the basis for one's psychological attachment to an organization? One important mechanism in the development of affective attachment is the process of identification [9] with the attitudes, values, or goals of an organization. These attitudes are accepted by the individual and become incorporated into his/her cognitive response set [32]. Affective commitment, therefore, is regarded as a psychological attachment felt by an individual for an organization. It also reflects the degree to which the individual internalizes or adopts characteristics or perspectives of the organization.

Thus, affective commitment proposes that an employee remains a member of an organization because he/she wants to, enjoys membership in that organization, and "identifies with it" [55]. However, the OCQ instrument, based on studies by Porter [57] and used to measure affective commitment, includes items that are considered to not adequately capture the affective component of commitment. For example, in the OCQ instrument, affective content is less important than an employee's desire to stay and willingness to exert effort [14]. Therefore, Allen and Meyer [1] proposed an alternative formulation of affective commitment and developed the ACS scale to measure it. The scale focuses on an employee's degree of psychological attachment to an organization and emphasizes the positive elements of attachment; e.g., loyalty, affection, belonging and happiness [31].

Perceived costs. Other authors view commitment as resulting from a recognition of the costs associated with leaving an organization. Becker [7] termed this *continuance commitment* and described it as a "disposition to engage in consistent lines of activity" (p. 33). Costs result from "side-bets" which would be lost due to termination of employment. Value is assigned to factors such as pension and seniority, which are contingent upon continued employment in that organization. Kanter [33] defines "cognitive-continuance commitment" as that which occurs when there is "a profit associated with continued participation and a 'cost' associated with leaving" (p. 504).

Continuance commitment is based on recognition on the part of the individual of the costs associated with discontinuing an activity. Without recognition, there is no commitment. As Becker [7] notes:

"The element of recognition of the interest created by one's prior action is a necessary component of commitment because, even though one has such interest, he will not act to implement it, unless he recognizes it is necessary." (p. 36)

Continuance commitment is thus a conscious psychological state shaped by environmental conditions (e.g., the existence of side-bets) and has implications for behavior (e.g., continued employment with the organization). Allen and Meyer [1] developed the CCS scale to measure continuance commitment, and the instrument focuses on the costs such as monetary, social, and psychological, that compel an employee to remain in an organization.

Both types of commitment reflect ties that develop between an employee and the organization. Both dimensions also describe links that provide reasons for an employee to remain in an organization. However, the nature of the links is different. Studies in the organizational behavior literature suggest that affective and continuance commitment are both predictors of turnover and the withdrawal process. A meta-analysis by Mathieu and Zajac [44] shows that affective commitment has a higher correlation with job involvement and job satisfaction than continuance commitment. Both dimensions should also be differentially related to other work-related behavior such as organizational-based self-esteem and experienced-burnout. These relationships have not, however, been examined in the IS literature.

RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

This study has three main objectives: first, to examine the multidimensionality of organizational commitment in the case of IS employees; second, to update previous research which has examined organizational commitment in the case of IS employees by using Allen and Meyer's [1] ACS & CCS instruments; and third, to analyze the relationship of ACS and CCS to work-related attitudes of IS employees.

Affective and continuance commitment should be associated differently with work experiences. As Meyer and Allen [51] suggest, it is reasonable to assume that affective commitment develops as the result of experiences that satisfy an employee's needs and allows him/her to feel physically and psychologically comfortable in the organization. Evidence of this can be seen in the positive correlations of affective commitment with organizational dependability [10], organizational support [17], and a feeling of personal importance to the organization [63].

Similarly, affective commitment has been shown to be negatively related to turnover and intention-to-quit

[31]. The positive nature of the binding between the organization and the individual is considered to be the key reason for this relationship. Therefore, affective commitment has been incorporated as the major variable in several models of the turnover process [5, 8, 65].

We further examine the relationship between affective and continuance commitment on satisfaction and turnover intentions and propose that:

- H1a: Affective commitment will be positively related to job satisfaction and negatively to turnover intentions.**
- H1b: Continuance commitment will be negatively related to job satisfaction and positively to turnover intentions.**

In addition, we examine the relationship of commitment dimensions on experienced-burnout and self-esteem.

Experienced-burnout has been defined by Maslach and Jackson [42] as "a syndrome of emotional exhaustion and cynicism" (p. 99). The most common conceptualization of burnout was developed by Maslach [43] and consists of three components: emotional exhaustion, low personal accomplishment, and depersonalization. Under this conceptualization, *emotional exhaustion* is characterized by a lack of energy and a feeling that one's emotional resources are used up. This fatigue may be accompanied by the realization that the individual cannot contribute to work as in the past. *Depersonalization* is marked by the treatment of others as objects rather than as people. Employees may display a detached or cynical attitude toward co-workers, clients, and the organization. The final component of burnout, *diminished personal accomplishment*, is characterized by a tendency to evaluate oneself negatively. This often leads to a decline in feelings of job competence [11].

The emotional exhaustion component of burnout resembles the standard stress variable [29]. Studies by Koeske and Koeske [36] show that "emotional exhaustion is the essence of burnout" (p. 132) and that it is an indicator of strain resulting from the demands of work and the resulting stress. Through a series of five different studies, Koeske and Koeske [36] show that the emotional exhaustion component of burnout mediates the relationship between stress and outcomes. Therefore, following Reilly [60], the current study focuses on emotional exhaustion and treats it as synonymous with burnout.

Prior research [38, 39, 40, 41] has shown that burnout can lead to lower commitment, turnover, absenteeism, and low morale. Other studies such as those by Jackson, Turner, and Brief [30], Leiter [37], and Reilly and Orsak [59] have shown that emotional exhaustion is highly correlated with measures of organizational

commitment. These relationships are examined here for both components of organizational commitment:

H2: Affective commitment will be negatively related to emotional exhaustion. Continuance commitment will have a positive relationship with it.

The final variable of interest in this study is organization-based self-esteem. The construct of organization-based self-esteem (OBSE) has been defined as "the degree to which organizational members believe that they can satisfy their needs by participating in roles within the context of an organization" [56]. This construct reflects the value that individuals have of themselves as organizational members. In previous studies, employees with high OBSE have been shown to perceive themselves as important, meaningful, and effectual within their organizations. Pierce et. al. [56] also propose that OBSE should be related to high organizational commitment and job satisfaction. This proposition is formally tested in this study for the case of both the affective and continuance commitment components:

H3: Affective commitment will show a positive relationship and continuance commitment will show a negative relationship with organization-based self-esteem.

Both hypotheses 2 and 3 are based on an argument for the positive aspects of commitment as described by Kobasa [35]. According to this perspective, commitment protects individuals from the negative effects of stress because it allows them to attach direction and meaning to their work. Employees undergoing work-related problems may confront insecurity or threats to belonging. Commitment, by providing "stability and feelings of belonging" [53], can serve as a buffer against these negative effects. As Antonovsky and Antonovsky [3] argue, commitment is a critical resource that enables individuals to resist the effects of tension in their environment. It connects members more closely to their environment and social networks. Therefore, affective commitment can be expected to provide to organizational members the benefits of tension and stress resistance.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Procedures

One hundred and sixty-one firms were randomly selected from the local chamber of commerce listings of five metropolitan areas (two midwestern, three eastern). IS

directors of these firms were contacted by phone and asked to participate in the study. This was followed by a letter explaining the project. Eighty-nine organizations agreed to distribute questionnaires to IS employees. This resulted in a total sample of 312 responses. All respondents were assured of confidentiality and anonymity and that only aggregate data would be reported. A variety of industries were included in the sample (shown in Table 1).

**Table 1
Frequency Distribution of Industries
in the Study Sample**

INDUSTRY	NUMBER OF COMPANIES	FREQUENCY
Insurance	5	7.7%
Manufacturing	24	18.9%
Financial Services	39	12.5%
Consulting	47	15.1%
Retail	40	12.8%
Utilities	21	6.7%
Healthcare	38	12.2%
Transportation	16	5.1%
Information Technology	23	7.4%
Other	5	1.6%

Job titles of individual respondents included system programmers (13%), project leaders (8%), application programmers (17%), systems analysts (20%), IS managers (8%), software engineers (13%), consultants (12%), and other (13%). Sixty-one percent of the respondents were involved in system development activities and 31% performed end-user computing support.

The average age of the 312 respondents was 31 years; average tenure in the organization was 4 years; and average tenure in the IS area was 5.3 years.

Measures

The following section discusses the measurement and operationalization of organizational commitment and outcome variables.

Organizational commitment. Commitment was measured by the eight-item affective and the eight-item continuance commitment scales used by Meyer and Allen [48], shown in Appendix 1. Responses were measured on 7-point, strongly disagree-strongly agree scales, and scale scores were computed by averaging across items. Internal consistency of these scales has been reported previously to

be in the range of 0.84 to 0.88 for affective commitment and 0.70 to 0.84 for continuance commitment [49].

Job satisfaction. Job satisfaction was measured using five items developed by Greenhaus, Parasuraman, and Wormley [20]. One global item, "Generally speaking, I am satisfied with my job," was added to further measure job-satisfaction sentiments. All items were measured on 7-point, strongly disagree-strongly agree scales. Alpha values for the scale as developed by Greenhaus et al. (1990) are 0.88.

Intention to quit. Turnover intentions were measured using four items. These are: (a) I am seriously thinking about quitting my job; (b) I am actively looking for a job outside this company; (c) As soon as I can find a better job, I'll leave this company; and (d) I have no desire to remain employed by this company. These items reflect the factors that Miller, Katerberg, and Hulin [52] found to be significant predictors of turnover: thinking of quitting, intention to search, and intention to quit.

Organization-based self-esteem (OBSE). The OBSE scale, as developed by Pierce, Gardner, Cummings, and Dunham [56], was used in this study. The scale consists of ten items that reflect an evaluation of self-worth. Pierce et al. report internal consistency values for the scale in the range of 0.82 to 0.96 based on seven different studies.

Experienced burnout. The emotional exhaustion sub-scale of the Maslach Burnout Inventory was used to measure the burnout syndrome. The sub-scale consists of nine items and its reliability coefficients have been reported to be 0.88 in previous studies [42, 60].

RESULTS

Dimensionality of the commitment scales. In order to assess the dimensionality of the commitment scales, the 16 items comprising the two commitment scales (affective and continuance) were factor analyzed using maximum likelihood estimation followed by varimax rotation. A two factor solution is shown in Table 2.

The eight ACS items loaded on the first factor. Six of the eight continuance-commitment items loaded on the second factor. Two items - CCS7 and CCS8 - did not load. These results mirror previous analysis conducted by McGee and Ford [45]. The factor analysis suggested deleting the two CCS items and recomputing the remaining six items as one scale. The reliability estimates for the ACS scale were 0.88 (8 items) and 0.84 for the revised CCS scale (6 items).

Table 2
Rotated Factor Loadings for
Organizational Commitment Items*

ITEM	ROTATED FACTOR LOADINGS	
	FACTOR 1	FACTOR 2
ACS1	0.816	
ACS2	0.818	
ACS3	0.768	
ACS4	0.837	
ACS5	0.629	
ACS6	0.582	
ACS7	0.608	
ACS8	0.500	
CCS1		0.550
CCS2		0.627
CCS3		0.804
CCS4		0.726
CCS5		0.740
CCS6		0.630
CCS7		0.420
CCS8		0.331

*ACS = Affective Commitment Sale; CCS = Continuance Commitment Scale; Only factor loadings above 0.50 are shown except for CCS7 and CCS8.

Dimensionality of the other study variables. Table 3 presents inter-item reliability (Cronbach's alpha), means, standard deviations, and correlations among the study variables.

Measures for job satisfaction, intention to quit, OBSE, and experienced-burnout were determined to be uni-dimensional. Reliability coefficients for these measures, as reported in Table 3 (0.88, 0.91, and 0.88 respectively) compare favorably with those reported in previous research described above.

The correlation matrix in Table 3 contains zero-order correlations below the diagonal. Third-order partial correlations, controlling for age, organizational tenure, and job tenure, appear above the diagonal.

The correlations of ACS with job satisfaction and OBSE are positive and significant. In contrast, the correlations of continuance commitment with satisfaction and OBSE are negative and significant. Further, ACS scores correlated negatively with turnover intentions and experienced burnout while CCS scores correlated positively with these variables.

TABLE 3
Descriptive Statistics and Intercorrelations Among Variables^{a,b}

	Mean	S.D.	Age	Org. Tenure	Job Tenure	ACS	CCS	OBSE	Intention To-Quit	Job Satisfaction	Burnout
Age	31.00	7.80	-								
Org. Tenure	4.00	4.00	0.51	-							
Job Tenure	5.30	5.10	0.47	0.18	-						
ACS	31.81	9.80	0.06	0.06	0.08	(0.88)	-0.29	0.52	-0.61	0.63	-0.46
CCS	24.40	7.60	0.07	0.15	-0.03	-0.27	(0.84)	-0.31	0.15	-0.28	0.30
OBSE	55.50	8.50	-0.02	0.09	-0.09	0.50	-0.27	(0.91)	-0.30	0.53	0.39
Intention To-Quit	12.30	6.60	-0.06	-0.10	-0.10	-0.61	0.13	-0.28	(0.91)	-0.59	0.51
Job Satisfaction	27.00	7.14	0.01	0.08	0.04	0.62	-0.26	0.52	-0.59	(0.88)	-0.48
Burnout	25.30	9.22	0.18	0.03	0.05	-0.44	0.29	-0.40	0.50	-0.47	(0.88)

^a The diagonal shows alpha values; zero-order correlations are shown below the diagonal and third-order correlations are shown above the diagonal.
^b N=312; correlation coefficients above 0.15 are significant at p < 0.05.

The partial correlations between commitment and other variables are almost identical to the zero-order correlations. The relationships between commitment and other measures can therefore not be attributed to differences in age and tenure.

In order to examine whether there were any possible interaction effects between affective and continuance commitment, a moderated multiple regression was performed. The results of this analysis are reported in Table 4.

Table 4
Moderated Multiple Regression Analysis of Outcome Variable with ACS, CCS, and Their Product^a

Criterion	Multiple Correlations		
	R _{ACS}	R _{ACS*CCS}	R _{(ACS)(CCS)}
OBSE	0.50	0.52	0.54
Intention-to-quit	0.61	0.61	0.62
Job satisfaction	0.63	0.63	0.63
Burnout	0.45	0.48	0.48

^aACS = Affective Commitment Scale;
 CCS = Continuance Commitment Scale; N = 312

In no case, as can be seen from Table 4, did the inclusion of the interaction terms add significantly to the prediction of the dependent variable. All models tested were significant but the interaction terms were not. Only in the case of OBSE and experienced-burnout were the interaction terms close to significance. Thus, it does not appear from this analysis that affective and continuance commitment interact in their effects on the other work-related variables considered in this study.

DISCUSSION

This study was conducted with three specific objectives: first, to examine the multidimensionality of organizational commitment in the case of IS employees; second, to update previous research that has examined organizational commitment in the case of IS employees, by using Allen and Meyer's [1] ACS and CCS instruments; and third, to analyze the relationship of the ACS and CCS scales with work-related attitudes of IS employees.

The results indicate that organizational commitment is a multidimensional construct. Its dimensions - affective and continuance - are clearly

distinguishable. The maximum likelihood factor analysis shows the distinction between the two commitment components. The ACS scale, as developed by Meyer and Allen [48], has good internal consistency and was unidimensional. In the CCS scale, two items showed loadings less than 0.50. These items are "It wouldn't be too costly for me to leave my organization in the near future," and "I am not afraid of what might happen if I quit my job without having another one lined up." Previous factor analysis by McGee and Ford [45] has also resulted in these items being dropped. The remaining six-item scale had an acceptable alpha value of 0.84. Overall, we find support for the conceptual distinction between ACS and CCS in the case of IS professionals.

There is also significant support for each of the study hypotheses. ACS and CCS were expected to have differential relationships with job-related attitudes: job satisfaction, intention-to-quit, OBSE, and experienced-burnout. Table 3 provides evidence for these hypotheses. As proposed, ACS was positively related to job satisfaction and negatively to intention-to-quit. These results support previous research that has used the OCQ instrument to measure commitment. Table 5 shows correlations obtained in previous and in the current research between commitment and other behavioral variables.

Table 5
A Comparison of Current Study Results
With Previous Research

Variable	Igbaria & Siegal (1992) OCQ	Igbaria & Meridith (1992) OCQ	Igbaria (1991) OCQ	Igbaria & Guimares (1993) OCQ	Current Study ACS	CCS
Job Satisfac-tion	0.64	0.59	0.61	0.46	0.62	-0.26
Intention to-quit	-0.52	-0.43	-0.52	-0.44	-0.61	0.13
Exper- ienced burnout					-0.44	0.29
Organ- ization- based self- esteem					0.50	-0.27

As can be seen, the correlations obtained in the current study between ACS, job satisfaction, and intention-to-quit support past results obtained between OCQ and the same variables. The results obtained for CCS extend what we know about the correlates of

organizational commitment. CCS is positively related to intention-to-quit and negatively to job satisfaction.

In addition, we also examined the correlations of ACS and CCS with OBSE and experienced-burnout. As Table 3 shows, ACS is positively related to OBSE and negatively to experienced-burnout. CCS shows the opposite correlations. These results support the third hypothesis of the study.

CONCLUSION

The idea that one view of commitment is not likely to encompass the meaning of the construct has been the motivating force behind commitment research. An increasing number of studies have been based on this "more than one type of commitment" view. The current study is also motivated by this idea. Two dimensions of commitment -affective and continuance - are examined. This study provides evidence for the generalizability of the two-component model of organizational commitment in the IS context.

Adequate support for two distinct components of commitment as theoretical constructs was found. This supports previous research by Meyer and Allen [48] and suggests that both these components should be included in future IS research. The value of commitment to an organization is unquestionable. However, this study has found that this value may well depend on the nature of the commitment.

The two types of commitment were found to be differentially related to variables considered to be antecedents or consequences of commitment. These relationships were consistent with previous studies. Affective commitment was related to positive experiences; e.g., job satisfaction. It was also negatively related to undesirable behaviors; e.g, intention-to-quit, burnout, and lower self-esteem. These findings suggest that individuals can become attached to organizations for entirely different reasons, and the implications of this for work-related behavior can be significant.

When commitment reflects an identification with and an involvement in the organization, the organization may benefit due to reduced intention-to-quit, higher satisfaction, higher self-esteem among employees, and reduced burnout. In contrast, when an employee's commitment to an organization is primarily based on a recognition that there are costs associated with leaving, the organization may realize reduced turnover at the expense of reduced job satisfaction, higher burnout, and a sense of reduced self-esteem.

This study suggests that organizations need to re-examine policies related to building commitment. Commonly employed strategies such as rapid promotions,

non-vested pension plans, participation in stock options, and the development of organization-specific skills may, in fact, be working against the organization. Although these steps undoubtedly make it difficult for employees to leave, they may not encourage them to contribute. Instead, some employees may find themselves in a position where they may want to quit, but may not be able to afford to do so. Some employees may be motivated to do just enough to maintain their jobs. In these cases, commitment-fostering steps may actually be counter-productive. Affective commitment may be harder to foster but is strongly related to the results that organizations value - higher job satisfaction and a desire to contribute to the organization's effectiveness.

Some of the correlations obtained in this study are of significant theoretical interest. The finding that age and job tenure were not related to continuance commitment and did not influence the relationships with outcome variables is important. It has been presumed that, as employees advance in their careers, they recognize that they have invested significantly in the organization and this makes it costlier for them to leave. What is interesting to note is that, in this study, this was not the case. Demographic variables (age, organizational tenure, and job tenure) did not influence the correlations between affective and continuance commitment and outcome variables (i.e., job satisfaction, intention to quit, burnout, and self-esteem). This indicates that there are other antecedents of continuance commitment.

What could be some antecedents of continuance commitment in the IS area? Technology and the rapid change in skills required may also be a factor. For example, King [34] notes that corporate downsizing, ongoing business process reengineering, and frequent organizational restructuring are wrecking havoc on IS morale. Changing technologies, the move to client/server, and working more closely with business users are requiring new skill sets. These changes make it necessary for organizations and employees to make sure that their skills are current. While ultimately skill improvement may be the responsibility of the employee, it is critical for the organization to build training programs as well. In the absence of such programs, employees may well feel that they lack skills to take on new responsibilities and projects and for the same reason may not feel skilled enough to look for alternate employment. Consider, for example, the 1995 *Computerworld Survey of Job Satisfaction* [69]. The survey, based on 571 respondents, reported that "Where work demands have increased and

IS staffers are not being trained in new technologies or recognized for their contributions, they also are experiencing greater amounts of stress." (p. 82) Further, the study shows that this can lead to severe burnout to a point where IS professionals change careers to something other than IS.

As shown in the study, higher affective commitment is associated with lower burnout while higher continuance commitment is positively related to burnout. The relationship between these variables has not been examined in detail in the literature. One possible explanation of this relationship is that commitment moderates an employee's reaction to adverse conditions. Burnout is a reaction to chronic stressors that suggests exhaustion due to constant work demands. High attachment to an organization is often associated with increased identification with it and therefore employees report less stress.

In general, this study reports that an affective attachment to an organization is associated with the desirable outcome variables of higher job satisfaction and self-esteem, and lower burnout and intention to quit. On the other hand, continuance commitment demonstrates inverse relationships with these variables. It is associated with lower job satisfaction and self-esteem, and with higher levels of intention to quit and burnout.

Several directions for research are suggested by these results. The clarification of specific antecedents of both affective and continuance commitment is needed. While motivating and retention ideas such as cash and non-cash incentives and employee ownership are suggested in the literature, there is a need for clarification regarding specific factors that lead to affective commitment and a reduction of continuance commitment. In addition, the fact that continuance commitment is present in organizations necessitates the question, "What should be done about it?" It seems reasonable to speculate that in cases where employees perceive their side-bets to be permanent, there may be need for active intervention for psychological bolstering.

Finally, it is reasonable to expect that organizations value employees who are committed to the organization. Incentive strategies designed to nurture and increase commitment must, however, take into account that not all incentives may be having positive impacts on the employee. Some of these steps may make it difficult for employees to leave an organization even if they wanted to. At this point, the cost to an organization of retention may far exceed the cost of turnover.

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Appendix 1
Items Used to Measure Affective and Continuance Commitment based on McGee & Ford (1987)

AFFECTIVE COMMITMENT SCALE
(ACS)

- | | |
|------|--|
| ACS1 | I do not feel a strong sense of belonging to my organization. |
| ACS2 | I do not feel "emotionally attached" to this organization. |
| ACS3 | This organization has a great deal of personal meaning for me. |
| ACS4 | I do not feel like "part of the family" at this organization. |
| ACS5 | I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career with this organization. |
| ACS6 | I enjoy discussing my organization with people outside it. |
| ACS7 | I really feel as if this organization's problems are my own. |
| ACS8 | I think I could easily become as attached to another organization as I am to this one. |

CONTINUANCE COMMITMENT
SCALE (CCS)

- | | |
|------|---|
| CCS1 | Right now, staying with my organization is a matter of necessity as much as desire. |
| CCS2 | One of the major reasons I continue to work for this organization is that leaving would require considerable personal sacrifice - another organization may not match the overall benefits I have. |
| CCS3 | I feel I have few options to consider leaving this organization. |
| CCS4 | One of few negative consequences of leaving this organization would be the scarcity of available alternatives. |
| CCS5 | It would be very hard for me to leave my organization right now, even if I wanted to. |
| CCS6 | Too much in my life would be disrupted if I decided I wanted to leave my organization. |
| CCS7 | It wouldn't be too costly for me to leave my organization in the near future. |
| CCS8 | I am not afraid of what might happen if I quit my job without having another one lined up. |
-