

Spring 2012

Effects that Previous Employment Experiences Had on Organizational Commitment of an Hourly Workforce

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**Effects that Previous Employment Experiences
Had on Organizational Commitment of an Hourly Workforce**

by

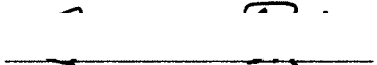
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A Dissertation Submitted to the Faculty of
Old Dominion University in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirement for the Degree of

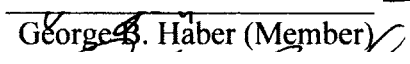
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY in EDUCATION
Occupational and Technical Studies

OLD DOMINION UNIVERSITY
May 2012

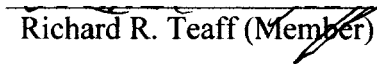
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ABSTRACT

Effects that Previous Employment Experiences
Had on Organizational Commitment of an Hourly Workforce

Charles August Bartocci
Old Dominion University, 2011
Director: Dr. John M. Ritz

A committed workforce is critical to the success of any organization. While there was a great deal of debate on how to best describe commitment, one model that attracted a significant following is the Three Component Model (TCM) developed by Meyer and Allen (1988). While it may be argued that the model is a mixed model combining attitudinal and behavioral measures, researchers have largely agreed that the scale that measures affective commitment is both valid and reliable. How commitment is developed in a workforce is of considerable interest. A minority of researchers have considered a variety of antecedents that contribute to the formation of organizational commitment (Cohen, 1993). One aspect of the employment experience is that of an involuntary job loss. It was unclear whether job loss would affect commitment. This study evaluated a population of individuals who were selected from an area that had experienced significant employment losses. All the subjects were part of a uniform pre-employment class prior to gaining employment in the same organization. This study demonstrated that individuals who have lost employment have similar levels of commitment compared to individuals who have not suffered a job loss. Employee demographics and union membership were found to be insignificant in the formation of affective commitment.

This dissertation is dedicated to Brenda, my wife and soul-mate, and to our four sons; thank you for your patience. Even though you never seemed to understand why your husband/dad would start on this educational path, at such a late stage in life, I appreciated all the love and support you gave me. The five of you have been the reason for everything I have done.

Chuck Bartocci

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

It would be impossible to adequately thank all those who brought me to this point in my educational life. First, my father and mother were my earliest supporters. I learned a lot about teaching by watching my father ignite a passion for mathematics in his high school students. My mother demonstrated in her role as nurse-educator that there were different pathways that a teacher can use to educate a student.

I would not have made this post-baccalaureate educational progress if not for the faculty and staff of the Occupational and Technical Studies graduate program. Yes, the department has been changed, but it was OTS/OTED through my master's degree and for most of the Ph.D. Dr. Ritz, you made any progress toward the completion of this degree possible by creating an educational road map, for this I am personally grateful. I also appreciate the work and forbearance of Mr. David Netherton who asked the tough questions during the formative stages of this study. And finally to Dr. Haber and Dr. Teaff for agreeing to participate on my advisory committee even with your already over-committed lives, thank you.

I would like to thank the administration of Dabney S. Lancaster Community College and in particular Dr. Joyce Edwards and Dr. Richard Teaff. You helped make this possible through your enthusiastic support and the financial assistance provided by the professional development program. I would be remiss if I did not include Gary Keener for his understanding and support. Finally, to my editor, colleague, and friend, Gary L. Boyer, Sr., thanks for all your help on this project as well as in our efforts to reduce third world poverty and provide health care to America's children.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Understanding the behavior of a workforce in terms of organizational commitment continues to be a subject of considerable interest. Whenever an employee makes a decision that is unrelated to the primary job concerns, which reinforces workplace behavior, that employee is displaying some form of commitment (Becker, 1960; Mowday, Steers, & Porter, 1979) to the organization. This is because extra-work behavior is not usually rewarded or punished, so the types of behaviors a worker displays is thought to evidence the level of commitment toward an organization. For instance, the decision to join a union is not central to the work being performed and is therefore defined as an extra-work behavior. Another example might be an employee who seeks additional education to improve his or her chances of retaining employment or advancement. The idea of commitment is rather open-ended; in other words, how is a worker committed and to what is that employee committed?

While a number of authors have attempted to define levels of commitment, the construct developed by Meyer and Allen (1988) continues to be repeatedly used to describe the variables in organizational commitment. Meyer and Allen studied university graduates during their first year of employment and found three factors critical in defining the different levels of organizational commitment. Particularly, *affective commitment* was the least stable of the factors and was the most easily influenced by positive work experiences in the first years of employment. Since this benchmark study, researchers have studied similar populations (Kwantes, 2003; Parish, Cadwallader, & Busch, 2006) and questioned the number of commitment levels or the assessment tools

used to define these levels (Culpepper, 2000). However, they do not challenge the central concept; they are merely refinements designed to increase instrument validity.

The construct of organizational commitment, as originally defined by Meyer and Allen (1988), separated commitment into three different expressions: (1) affective commitment, which is defined by a worker who 'loves' what he or she does, (2) normative commitment, which is defined by a worker who is motivated by monetary rewards or loyalty (some researchers believe there is a distinction here and have developed assessment tools to differentiate these two normative factors), and (3) continuance commitment, which is defined by a worker who believes he or she has no choice in employment. Although there is little evidence (Brooks, 2002) to support the contention that an affective worker has a positive impact on organizational effectiveness, this belief continues to drive many management decisions in the workplace. When an employee is initially hired, the relationships developed between his or her coworkers and superiors reinforce how the employee views the organization. Since these relationships are between individuals, how a worker responds in other non-workplace relationships has an effect on how that worker responds to relationships in the workplace. Affective commitment then is measuring not how an employee perceives the company, but how a worker interacts with the individuals with whom he or she comes into contact on a daily basis. While it should be understood that most employees will demonstrate some level of all three expressions of commitment, it is important to consider what effect outside factors have on affective commitment. Early work experiences (Meyer, Bobocel, & Allen, 1991) are critical to the formation of an affective organizational commitment.

Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this study was to determine the effect that previous employment experiences of hourly employees had upon the organizational commitment toward their current employer. Previous studies (Loscocco, 1990) have focused upon organizational commitment in a salaried workforce; however, there have been significant differences in how variation in organizational commitment has been assessed and the effect of various factors on organizational commitment. One critical variable was the use of employees working in different organizations for the same study (Cohen, 2007). This research sought to reduce the variation in organizational commitment due to this external influence.

When studies have investigated these influences, they have generally included college educated populations, such as management students entering the workforce from a single university (Meyer & Allen, 1988), nurses in a single location (Nogueras, 2006), and psychology students (Allen & Meyer 1990). With an educated survey group, there exists the potential for inflated answers that reflect positively on the individual (Ackerman, Beier, & Bowen, 2002). For instance, to a typical interview question, "Are you a helpful person?", most potential employees would answer, "Yes", or if the question is designed to yield a range of responses "Always" or "Almost always" would be the typical responses. The skewed nature of these responses is the result of self-testing inflation (Ackerman, Beier, & Bowen, 2002). Since the interviewee 'knows' what the 'correct' answer is, this is what is reported. A more accurate assessment of this characteristic would mean that the question would have to be open-ended, "Give us an example of how you have been helpful at your current job?" However, because the

question is open-ended, it requires interpretation on the part of both the interviewer and the interviewee. It is possible that an hourly workforce may be more 'honest' in its self-assessment due to the lack of familiarity with these assessment tools.

Another reason for assessing an educated population is the ability to survey a single cohort which will exhibit similar traits, thus reducing the variability inherent in the survey (Allen & Meyer, 1996). Attempting to survey a non-college, hourly workforce, introduces a range of variables that would be difficult to control: variables such as date of hire, different hiring organizations, and small numbers of hires. If it were possible to survey a non-college, hourly population at a single large organization, who were employed at the same time, it would be possible to account for many of those critical variables.

Hypotheses

This study explored how outside factors influenced an employee's organizational commitment. With the replacement of manual control in the operation of a modern paper mill, more women are entering this industry. While studies have attempted to link the differences in organizational commitment to gender (Bartol, 1976; Taveggia & Hedley, 1976), their findings may be misleading. Most gender studies do not compare men and women who perform similar blue-collar work. When the type of work was held constant, there was a lack of significant gender differences in organizational commitment (Loscocco, 1990). A more exhaustive, longitudinal study (Rowe & Snizek, 1995) demonstrated gender plays no significant role in these differences. This study considered only "full-time, out-of-home" workers. If there were gender based differences, Rowe and Snizek (1995) should have found them. It is possible when gender differences are

noticed it is with a part-time workforce. In these studies the analysis was based upon the assumption blue-collar work is a lower paid and less secure work environment, which may have accounted for differences in the measurements.

To guide this study, the following hypotheses were established and explained:

H₀₁: Gender has no effect on affective, continuance, and normative commitment toward an employee's organization.

Previous research (Rowe & Snizek, 1995) has demonstrated gender plays no significant role in commitment to an organization. This study sought to confirm that finding by studying the employees of a large single employer.

H₀₂: Employment tenure has no effect on affective, continuance, and normative commitment toward an employee's organization.

Previous research has demonstrated the longer a worker is employed, the more that worker takes his/her duties for granted (Mowday et al., 1979). This has been a problem for researchers, because an hourly workforce, in many organizations, is highly mobile in terms of turnover rates. This factor could be minimized if the research could study a workforce that is stable for reasons of superior salaries and benefits or lack of local opportunities.

H₀₃: The employee's age has no effect on affective, continuance, and normative commitment toward an employee's organization.

There seems to be a quantitative difference between the expectations of older workers and of younger workers (Valenti, 2001). This is one of the confounding variables in recent studies. It would be helpful if a cohort of hourly employees, hired at the same time, could be studied to evaluate and account for this variation.

H₀₄: Recent employment termination has no effect on affective, continuance, and normative commitment toward an organization which subsequently rehires that individual.

When an individual is fired, discharged due to downsizing, or had his or her company close, this individual undergoes significant psychological and emotional stress (Gallo, Bradley, Teng, & Kasl, 2006; Nordenmark, 1999). These stresses are not only the result of the loss of income, but also about the loss of a personal sense of worth. Investigating the changes in organizational commitment when a terminated individual is subsequently rehired is more difficult to measure, because many displaced workers tend to have a wealth of alternatives in employment. Some return to school, others leave their residences, and others are forced by perceived lack of opportunities to seek employment in less desirable organizations. This variable could be examined if one were able to locate a single large employer in an economically distressed area. Would workers who were fired, then subsequently rehired by this large organization, develop more affection to the organization?

Background and Significance

In August 2000, Westvaco Corporation (presently known as MWV since the merger with Mead Corporation) announced some significant changes in the employment process. While there had been a pre-employment class that was required for potential applicants, it was decided this class needed to be modified to meet the needs of the corporation (W. McKinney, personal communication, June 15, 2001). With this in mind, MWV contacted the local community college and requested the college assume the responsibility of redesigning the class. The goals were to make the class more closely

reflect the nature of the company and insure potential employees would be better informed regarding the nature and demands of the work. One glaring omission was the lack of any “in-mill experience”, which had led to employees self-terminating. As with any industrial concern, the environment was not as pleasant as the typical office or light manufacturer. Additionally, the workforce was required to work in shifts, as MWV is a 24 hour operation. It was also suggested that women have greater difficulty with making the transition to shifts than men (W. McKinney, personal communication, September 18, 2003). Since the cost of hiring is significant, research has shown a more accurate portrayal of the workplace can lead to lower rates of turnover (Maynard, Joseph, & Maynard, 2006).

Over the past 15 years, MWV has invested more than one billion dollars in its Covington, Virginia, mill (Luke, 1997). During that same period of time, several departments have been eliminated to focus the manufacturing process and reduce duplication of services created by the merger. Even with these reductions, very few employees were terminated, with most of the workforce reduction occurring through inter-company transfers and retirements.

For the past seven years, 800 individuals have taken the pre-employment class and over 250 of those were subsequently hired. While the management of the company has been satisfied with the resulting workforce, there is a continued desire to improve the content of the class, as well as the attitude of the potential employees (W. McKinney, personal communication, September 8, 2008).

Few studies have been able to assess organizational commitment, and more specifically affective commitment, of employees who perform essentially the same work.

To generate sufficient data, it has been necessary to study workers employed in different corporations and to make assumptions that each corporation is similar enough that the participants were not significantly affected by those differences. By focusing this study on a single workplace and a single group of non-salaried workers, the researcher can eliminate many of the confounding variables found in earlier studies, as well as answer the question about the effect of job loss on affective commitment. This is significant; this research is studying variations in organizational commitment in a non-salaried workforce.

Limitations of the Study

The findings of this research were limited by the following parameters:

1. The participants of this study were limited to a technical, labor-based workforce with ten or less years of service with MWV-Covington, a large paper mill in Virginia.
2. This study was conducted upon a largely unionized workforce.
3. This study was conducted using personal interviews to collect data.
4. The researcher had personally instructed the pre-employment class that each participant had to successfully complete prior to employment.
5. Women represented a distinct minority of the participants.

Assumptions

The researcher based this study on the following assumptions:

1. All participants possess either a G.E.D. or high school diploma.
2. There would be no layoffs during the course of this study.
3. All individuals participated in a pre-employment class prior to gaining employment with MWV.

Procedures

This research was conducted with a survey of 255 hourly workers employed by MWV. A 30-item survey, based on the concepts identified through the review of literature, was administered to each worker individually via a telephone interview. Human Resource management at MWV reviewed the survey and gave verbal approval to conduct the study. In addition the study was approved by Old Dominion University.

The survey was developed from the Meyer and Allen (1997) eight-item scale that assessed affective commitment. Additional survey questions included five demographic items that included age at the time of employment and gender, as well as four items that identified previous work experiences, including the number of years of employment prior to seeking employment with MWV.

The survey was conducted over a six-month time frame, and since most participants were shift workers, the interviews were conducted at their convenience. All participants were informed of the rationale for the study and assured that their responses would be confidential.

The descriptive data, means, standard deviations, and correlations between dependent and independent variables were tabulated and analyzed. The reliability estimates and Cronbach's alpha for all independent variables were judged at acceptable values. One-way ANOVAs were calculated to test for significant differences between each demographic variable and the affective commitment scores.

Definition of Terms

The following terms are used to assist the reader throughout this research:

- Affective commitment – This term is applied to individuals who “identify with, are involved in, and enjoy membership in the organization” (Culpepper, 2000, p. 605).
- Continuance commitment – This term is applied to individuals who base their continued commitment to a target organization on “economic considerations” (Meyer & Allen, 1984, p. 372).
- Gender – This term is used to differentiate between male and female.
- MWV – For the purposes of this study this term refers to the primary paper mill located in Covington, Virginia.
- Involuntary turnover – This term is being used to describe individuals who were discharged from their workplace for any reason.
- Normative commitment – This term is applied to individuals who “consider(s) it morally right to stay with the company, regardless of how much status enhancement or satisfaction the firm gives him” (Marsh & Mannari, 1977, p. 59).
- Previous employment – A significant number of the research participants had recently lost their jobs as the result of plant closings (three area employers had terminated operations within eighteen months of this study). This term refers to employment prior to gaining employment with MeadWestvaco.
- Recently hired – This term refers to those employees who have taken a pre-employment class in the past five years and were subsequently hired by MWV.

- Recently terminated – This term refers to participants who lost their jobs for any reason within one year of being hired by MWV.
- Voluntary turnover – This term describes individuals who resigned employment on their own volition.
- Workforce – This term describes employees who work in salaried and non-salaried positions.

Overview of Chapters

This chapter has covered the significant research that has helped to identify one of the critical commitment factors to employees, affective commitment. Very few studies have focused upon a non-college workforce and those which have surveyed different organizations have led to some debate as to the validity of the findings (Kuvaas, 2006). In limiting the target population, this research was able to clearly place its focus upon the relationships between the dependent and independent variables.

In Chapter II, major research will be reviewed to provide a conceptual framework for the measurement of organizational commitment, as well as highlighting what disagreements exist in defining organizational commitment. In Chapter III, each item in the survey will be explained in terms of significance to this study. Statistical methods that will be used to evaluate the data will be discussed. In Chapter IV, data collected will be presented, as well as the statistics associated with each survey item. Finally, in Chapter V, the research conclusions will be discussed as well as recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This chapter will review the development and current understanding of organizational commitment as well as describing the conceptual framework for the measurement of affective commitment as defined by Meyer and Allen (1984). The research being done on organizational commitment is not without significant debate, not only about its nature, but as to how commitment is defined by and developed in individuals. Where disagreements exist in defining organizational commitment this chapter will highlight those disagreements.

Evolution of Commitment

There is a rich body of research (Reichers, 1985; Riketta & Landerer, 2002) that is focused on workplace commitment, defining commitment, and covering how individuals and organizations can affect the strength of commitment. The best description of commitment was articulated by Becker (1960) as a tendency of people to engage in “consistent lines of activity” (p. 32). Additionally, Becker (1960) believed that individuals demonstrate commitment when they are engaged in extra-work behaviors, which he defined as the committed person acting “in such a way as to involve interests of his, originally extraneous to the action he is engaged in, directly in that action” (p. 35). It is clear in this context commitment is defined by the behavior and not the attitude of the individual. Becker (1960) also described the four broad categories of extra-work behaviors --- cultural expectations, impersonal bureaucratic arrangements, individual adjustments to social positions, and face-to-face interaction. Culturally, a person is regarded as untrustworthy if that individual frequently changes jobs. The extra-work

behavior exhibited by an employee could be defined when an individual turned down a better job offer if that person had recently changed jobs. With this behavior, there is a time constraint mitigating their behavior; the more time that has elapsed between the current job and the new job offer, the less likely a person would be perceived as untrustworthy. In opposition Becker (1960) found that as the individual remained employed with a particular organization, the employee would gain organizational status and seniority which would reduce the tendency to resign. Because this category of behaviors is based on culture, there can be shifts in how behaviors may change between generations. While many traditional workplace behaviors are common between the generation of workers born between 1946 -1962 and the X-generation born between 1963 and 1981, Davis, Pawlowski, and Houston (2006) found that organization loyalty differed significantly. This, however, did not mean that the X-generation had higher turnover rates. When the turnover rates were corrected with organizational tenure (younger workers are in the workforce for a shorter period of time) the turnover rates were similar.

Impersonal bureaucratic arrangements are the policies and procedures that are codified within an organization. Promotion policies and retirement benefits are two examples of these types of extra-work behaviors that are designed to promote long-term employment. Individual adjustments to social position are efforts by the individual to adapt to a specific organization. Several aspects include organizational-specific training that may reduce the person's value to another concern. Home ownership, clearly outside organizational roles, has many times been determined by the individual's concern for social position; purchasing a home may strengthen organizational commitment.

Researchers van Leuvensteijn and Koning (2004) found that home ownership reduced job

mobility and therefore would be perceived as commitment to the organization. While having little to do with employment itself, the manner in which others perceive an individual is the basis for the face-to-face interaction. If individuals desire to be perceived as truthful, they will tell the truth. Goffman (1957) indicated that there are rules determining how an individual should interact with others in order to preserve self-image.

Three Forms of Commitment

By combining earlier attempts to define organizational commitment, Reichers (1985) partitioned commitment into three broad categories. The first category defined commitment as a function of the rewards and costs that are organizationally delineated. The Side-Bet model articulated by Becker (1960) theorized how this type of commitment might develop. The second category is defined when the employee engages “in behaviors that are volitional, explicit and irrevocable” (Reichers, 1985, p. 468). The third category of commitment is more complex in so far as the employee identifies with organizational goals and values and demonstrates efforts that support those goals and values. Each of these categories measure commitment and are distinct from one another. There was a growing awareness that each type of commitment was important and employees rarely displayed a single type of commitment.

In seeking to measure the attitudes that create the organizational extra-work behaviors, Mowday et al. (1979) developed the Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ). This questionnaire covered four broad categories, personal characteristics, structural characteristics, work experiences, and role-related experiences, which roughly match the four types of extra-work behaviors defined by Becker (1960). In analyzing the results of the OCQ administered to over 2500 employees in nine

different organizations, it became clear that there were three attitudinal factors that motivated commitment. Meyer and Allen (1984) developed two commitment scales: Affective Commitment Scale (ACS) and Continuance Commitment Scales (CCS). These further refined the measure of commitment. Affective commitment was defined as an “emotional attachment”, whereas continuance commitment was based on “economic considerations” (p. 372). When these two scales were tested against the OCQ, it was found that OCQ could adequately measure affective commitment but did not measure what was defined as continuance commitment. Both OCQ and ACS, while highly correlated with each other, did not seem to follow the attitudinal pattern created by Becker’s (1960) Side-Bet Theory. The CCS appeared to be a model that could explain Becker’s (1960) Side-Bet Theory; more recent research (Wallace, 1997) confirmed that commitment based on economic necessity seemed to resemble the Becker (1960) theory. It was later reported that the two scales, ACS and CCS, were not significantly correlated; they were orthogonal (Meyer et al., 2002).

These two commitment constructs, ACS and CCS, seemed to adequately describe most organizational commitment, except for the aspect of loyalty, or as Marsh and Mannari (1977) reported, “the worker [who] considers it morally right to stay with the company, regardless of how much status enhancement or satisfaction the firm gives him...” (p. 59). This statement was directed at the Japanese workforce in the context of the perceived cultural norm of lifetime industrial employment. Even though the concept of loyalty is similar in many respects to that of desire, it is possible that this idea of a lifelong commitment could explain an additional piece of the commitment model; Allen

and Meyer (1990) added it to their model as a third component called, “Normative Commitment” (NCS).

The Three Component Model

In the description of the Meyer and Allen (1988) Three Component Model (TCM), the attitudinal components were “want to”, “need to”, and “ought to” (p. 67). Individuals who scored highly on the ACS “want to” belong to the target organization; they had an emotional desire to maintain membership in the organization (Mowday et al., 1979). Individuals who scored highly on the CCS “need to” belong to the target organization; they recognized the high cost in leaving their current organization. Lastly, individuals who scored high on the NCS “ought to” stay associated with the target organization or, as Wiener (1982) described it, “they believe it is the ‘right’ and moral thing to do” (p. 421). Allen and Meyer (1990) also realized that by defining commitment to include desire, need, or obligation, it no longer would fall under the traditional definition of an attitude; commitment could now be defined as a psychological state. The desire to find a tool to assess the levels of commitment in individuals led Allen and Meyer (1990) to develop and test the three, eight item scales. This early work indicated the assessment tool could measure the three constructs reliably and the three constructs developed differently based on work experiences. Additionally, although affective commitment and continuance commitment were “empirically distinguishable” (p. 1), normative commitment seemed to share some of the characteristics of affective commitment. Researchers (Allen & Meyer, 1996) investigated the construct validity of the three scales and found that, based on factor analysis, the affective commitment scale was significantly different from the other two scales and supported the continued use of

the Affective, Normative, and Continuance Commitment Scales in organizational research. Affective commitment (Parrish et al., 2008) seemed to have the most significant effect on the organizational commitment model. As organizational commitment was extended to commitment to organizational change (Parrish et al., 2008), employees who had “quality relationships with their managers” (p. 45) were more willing to support organizational change. This particular antecedent appeared frequently as a factor in affective commitment.

The Three Component Model (TCM) had come into question by researchers who believed the model measured turnover (Solinger, Olffen, & Roe, 2008), and it was a mixed model (Wallace, 1997; Solinger et al., 2008) which measured both attitudes and behaviors. Specifically (Solinger et al., 2008), affective commitment measured an attitude toward an organization and normative and continuance commitment measured anticipated outcomes of a behavior. Meyer, Srinivas, Lal, and Topolnytsky (2007) posited that while the Affective and Normative scales were similar and measured attitudinal behaviors, the Continuance scale measured an orthogonal variable related to commitment; their findings were not inconsistent with the weaknesses found by these researchers. Continuance commitment was found to be negatively related to affective commitment. Researchers (Luchak & Gellatly, 2001) found that as employee pensions increased with tenure, affective commitment decreased but continuance commitment increased. Even though increased continuance commitment led to decreased turnover, research conducted by Powell and Meyer (2004) has demonstrated this was a less desirable form of commitment than either affective or normative commitment. Continuance commitment was also thought (Blau & Holladay, 2006) to be constructed of

two different dimensions: accumulative costs and limited alternatives. Blau and Holladay (2006) found that a single construct for continuance commitment may be sufficient to explain this aspect of commitment.

Prior Workplace Experiences

As individuals enter the workplace, they brought with them personal experiences and a set of personal characteristics (Lee, Ashford, Walsh, & Mowday, 1992) that could affect how they would become acculturated to the work environment. Early research (Van Maanen, 1975) conducted on police cadets indicated that individuals with prior military experience had increased job satisfaction, motivation, and organizational commitment prior to any substantive work history with the target organization than did individuals without similar experience. Similarly, researchers (Stumpf & Hartman, 1984) found that MBA graduates had higher work motivation and more realistic expectations when they had information about the target organization and occupations prior to entering the workforce. O'Reilly and Caldwell (1981) reported that an individual's commitment, measured on the first day in a target organization, predicted voluntary turnover. It was critical to our understanding of organizational commitment to know that an individual's commitment to an organization could be influenced by factors not associated with the target organization.

Researchers Mowday, Porter, and Steers (1982) proposed that this inclination toward commitment was composed of three components: personal characteristics, expectations, and factors involving organizational choice. Personal characteristics, such as a desire for a career or familiarity with the target organization, could lead to increased commitment. Positive expectations would cause the individual to view the same

workplace experiences more positively than an individual with negative expectations. Finally, an individual with a choice of employment opportunities, defined by the desire to work for an organization or the irrevocability of the choice, would display a higher level of commitment than an individual without these characteristics. Mowday et al. (1982) believed that there was a difference between the inclination toward commitment and commitment itself; specifically that an inclination toward commitment was created prior to any exposure to the target organization. Lee et al. (1992) found that, "On average, for an increase of one standard deviation in initial commitment, the probability of voluntary turnover decreased by approximately 66%" (p. 28).

Converting the tendency for commitment into commitment to a target organization was contingent in part on how employees are handled by their managers. Research conducted by Mottaz (1988) upon workplace rewards such as autonomy, significance, and involvement had a very large, positive effect on commitment; whereas workplace values defined in the same way had a small negative effect on commitment. Shore, Barksdale and Shore (1995) found that if a manager perceived that an employee displayed affective commitment qualities, the manager created opportunities which led to increased affective commitment. These managerial behaviors included providing challenging assignments, participatory decision making, and constructive feedback. Conversely, Shore et al. (1995) found that if a manager perceived that an employee displayed continuance commitment qualities, the managers provided less leadership opportunities as well as denial of employee requests. Managerial judgments regarding the type of commitment displayed by employees led to reinforcement of the type of commitment displayed by the employee. Another important finding (Shore et al., 1995)

was that managers who perceived an employee as displaying affective commitment tendencies considered those employees as having higher managerial potential and being more promotable. Since some employees entered the workforce with a predisposition toward organizational commitment, managers would reward those attitudes creating a positive feedback loop. Managerial perceptions could be influenced by habits which existed apart from the models that described commitment (Solinger et al., 2008). One example would be an employee who was habitually early for any function. Since the employee was also arriving at work early, a manager might perceive this as an aspect of commitment to the organization. However, the employee was displaying an unconscious behavior. When considering organizational commitment, habits were outside any model, but must be considered when using management evaluations.

Another moderator of organizational commitment was the visibility or accountability (Riketta & Landerer, 2002) that some workers demonstrated toward the public. Individuals who demonstrated higher affective commitment to the target organization were more likely to behave in a manner that was coincidental with the organization's norms, whereas individuals with lower affective commitment were dependent on external accountability in order to conform to organizational norms. Individuals with high affective commitment to an organization were less impacted by external accountability than those employees who had a lower affective commitment. One limitation (Riketta & Landerer, 2002) was that this study examined public visibility, not managerial or customer-related accountability.

In a meta-analysis (Riketta, 2008) upon whether job attitudes affected job performance, it was found that although the effect was weak, job attitudes did

significantly affect job performance. This effect was found to be positively correlated with commitment, but workplace tenure would mitigate this positive effect. The analysis also showed that job performance was not related to subsequent job attitudes.

Demographic Variables

There are a number of demographic variables that may affect commitment to the organization. The following variables will be reviewed: gender, cultural roles, age, race, and education.

Gender

With the OCQ and TCM tools researchers could also investigate a range of demographic variables to determine whether commitment to a target organization could be linked to factors outside of the organization. Gender seemed to be the most obvious candidate, followed by age and race. All these variables were critical when considering the changing nature of the workers in the industrial workplace. The nature of employment in the industrial area has changed since the introduction of technology which has allowed for the increasing participation of women in the workforce (Jansen, Kant, Kristensen, & Nijhuis, 2003). This change has introduced a greater number of dual-income households. This demographic shift in the workforce created work-family conflict which was expressed in increased absences from the workplace by the individual who considered themselves to be the primary caregiver (Boyar, Maertz, & Pearson, 2005), and fatigue caused by work/family conflicts (Meyer et al., 2007). A committed employee was not necessarily a satisfied employee; Collins (2000) suggested committed workers would display their emotional attachment through active effort, whereas satisfied workers expressed themselves through retention or not seeking alternative employment.

The continuance and normative commitment scales would also define the level in which an employee was devoted to an organization, however, unlike affective commitment, employees who have a strong continuance commitment “restrict their behavior to what is absolutely required” (Meyer et al., 2007, p. 208).

When evaluating whether females in a professional environment dominated by males would display less organizational commitment, researchers (Aranya, Kushnir, & Valency, 1986) found while women were less satisfied overall than men, gender did not play a significant role in the difference. The first study (Scandura & Lankau, 1997) to pair male and female managers to investigate whether working conditions, specifically flexible working hours and the affect this can have upon the level of affective commitment, the researchers (Scandura & Lankau, 1997) found that there was a distinct gender component, with females having a significantly higher commitment to organizations that offered flexible working hours than females in less flexible environments. Males showed little change in their affective commitment regardless of the environment. One interesting side note was that “Individuals without family responsibility report similar levels of organizational commitment and job satisfaction regardless of environment” (Scandura & Lankau, 1997, p. 386). More recent studies (Boyar, Maertz, & Pearson, 2005; Nogueras, 2006) reported this same indication of gender neutrality in organizational commitment.

Cultural Roles

It was not gender, but the culturally traditional roles women take on that put them into the untenable position of having to choose between family responsibilities and work. In comparing gender to the formation of continuance (need to) commitment, Wahn

(1998) found that women had a slightly higher continuance commitment than men, and there was a positive relationship between tenure and continuance commitment, but there was a negative relationship between educational level and organizational standing. Longer tenure as a positive correlated to continuance commitment indicated that women believed they were compelled to stay working. Why this perception exists was not discussed. There could be a number of outside factors that influenced this type of commitment. How many were single heads of households; how many were trapped in their jobs because their significant other was not willing to relocate, or they were unemployed themselves. Commitment then was not just a consequence of work experiences but the interaction, or conflict, of work with family and social roles. When these family roles and responsibilities were held constant, gender differences became insignificant (Loscocco, 1990). Boyar, Maertz, and Pearson (2005) confirmed this finding in a study that investigated the effect of work/family and family/work conflicts on workplace withdrawal behaviors. While their research measured behaviors as opposed to attitudinal commitment, its major finding was that women, who had high work/family conflicts, had the highest absenteeism. This moderating influence on attitudinal commitment, now termed “social identity” (Meyer, Becker, & Van Dick, 2006), effected how commitment was formed. The type of commitment formed with the target organization could depend on whether the social identity was situational or deep structured, with the former leading to exchange-based (continuance) commitment and the later leading to value-based (affective) commitment. If individuals believed they were the primary wage earners, this belief would affect commitment to the target organization differently than if they believed they were the primary care givers. Until recently, these

social roles were stereotypically occupied by men and women respectively; however, as society has evolved, women's roles are changing and their social identity is critical in understanding their organizational commitment.

Age

Age is another area where previous life experiences might affect how commitment was developed in the workplace. Cohen (1993) found inconsistencies between the age of an employee and job tenure as it affected commitment. In the meta-analysis of 34 earlier studies, Cohen (1993) found that the age of an employee had a stronger commitment/turnover relationship than tenure. Cohen (1993) hypothesized that one problem with assessing commitment in younger workers was their commitment to an organization was in flux, which could lead to prediction errors. Later researchers (Davis et al., 2006) found similar tendencies in younger workers where the generation of workers born between 1946 and 1962 and the X-generation born between 1963 and 1981 had significantly different organization loyalty. When the turnover rates were corrected with organizational tenure (younger workers are in the workforce for a shorter period of time), the turnover rates were similar. Tenure was an unstable predictor as well. In the earlier stages of employment, tenure was an unstable predictor because of "unrealistic and inflated job previews and the need to justify their choice among employment alternatives" (Cohen, 1993, p. 1153). Inflated job previews could be mitigated in this study because the participants received a realistic organizational preview while participating in a pre-employment class.

The second factor, choices among employment alternatives, could be moderated by the lack of comparable employment opportunities in the immediate area. In

comparing workers born between 1965 and 1978 with workers born prior to 1965 (Valenti, 2001), it was discovered that younger workers did have higher rates of turnover than older workers, but no higher than that experienced with any cohort of workers entering the workforce. Commitment had a time sensitive component and as these workers age, their behavioral commitment moved into the range found in older workers. One difference was that these younger groups of workers showed higher levels of continuance commitment than that of older groups. Researchers Mayer and Schoorman (1998) found that both age and job tenure had significant effects on continuance commitment.

The age/job performance relationship was not linear, but it has an inverted U-shaped relationship (Sturman, 2003) where performance increased as job tenure increased; it reached a maximum and then declined in later years. Because job performance was one of the factors used to evaluate the level of employee commitment, it was critical that any commitment research normalizes for job tenure.

One year of experience was more meaningful early in an employee's work history than it was after many years in the workplace. This experience was also more important at lower levels in the corporate hierarchy than in higher levels. As workers became more senior and accumulated experience, it became critical that their experience was transferred to more junior employees. This would occur if the senior employee perceived that transfer as an in-role activity, a part of the job. If this transfer was viewed as an extra-role activity it would only occur if the senior employee had a high level of affective commitment. Most recently Davis et al. (2006) found that within a single profession, age differences had no significant effect on affective or continuance commitment, but there

was a significantly higher normative commitment in younger workers. The authors proposed two possible explanations for this significance. First, younger workers were offered a number of benefits to attract them and as such they may possess an obligation to remain with the target organization. Another, equally valid explanation was older employees have seen junior workers receive wages and benefits almost equal to their own, even though the junior workers had less seniority. This may have led to the senior employees having less of an obligation to the organization, less normative commitment.

Analyzing the results of 24 studies across different Western countries (Kooij, de Lange, Jansen, & Dijkers, 2008) found that older workers had reduced motivation, whereas commitment to the target organization remained stable or rose slightly. One confounding variable was the interaction of age with organizational tenure. Older workers appeared to be evaluated more harshly than younger workers (Sturman, 2003), were offered less training, and given reduced raises; therefore, it might not be age, but organizational tenure, that reduced affective commitment. One last factor in the increasing commitment seen in the early employment years was, in general, as people age they spend more time and become more financially committed to family responsibilities. As an individual becomes more committed to family responsibilities, that individual displayed more occupational embeddedness (Feldman & Ng, 2007). Since one of the objective measures of commitment was turnover and turnover intentions, any research regarding turnover should take into account family obligation factors.

Race

In a society where the majority of individuals in the workplace are of European descent (Caucasian), it might be expected that race would play some role in

organizational commitment. Yet researchers (Loscocco, 1990; Igbaria & Wormley, 1992; Mueller, Finley, Iverson, & Price, 1999) have found that race had little significance in organizational commitment. One interesting finding (Mueller et al., 1999) was that Caucasian teachers in a majority Black school system had lower organizational commitment levels than Blacks in a majority Caucasian school system; whereas Blacks experienced lower occupational commitment levels in majority Caucasian schools. When controlling for contextual variables such as autonomy, social interaction, role conflict, perception of student quality, and resource inadequacy, the difference between the commitment levels of Caucasian and Black teachers became insignificant. The lower commitment levels were to be expected. One limitation in their research (Mueller et al., 1999) was the population was composed of new teachers; the majority of commitment research indicated that individuals in their first year of work had the least stable organizational commitment scores. Additionally, there may have been a confounding variable in negative expectations of Caucasian teachers in a minority setting. Since teacher expectations were not tested directly (Irving & Meyer, 1995), it could not be determined whether entry expectations had any effect on the level of commitment. In research conducted on employee/supervisor relationships (Jinadu, 2006), it was found that both inter-racial and inter-gender relationships exhibited lower levels of “interpersonal comfort” (p. 215). Cunningham and Sagas (2004) found similar effects on organizational commitment in sports organizations. It was proposed that the lack of a shared identity may account for the lower organizational commitment. Brown (1996) believed the quantification of organizational commitment did not reflect the fluid nature of the employees being studied. Given that organizational commitment changes within a

population over time, Brown (1996) found the most stable of the three components was affective commitment.

Education

Education may be a factor in reduced affective commitment; Shore et al. (1995) found increased education of an employee led to increased continuance commitment and reduced affective commitment. Maynard et al. (2006) examined the effect of perceived over-qualification on commitment and found that individuals who believed they were over-qualified had significantly lower ($p < .01$) affective commitment. Kuvaas (2006) and Mayer and Schoorman (1998) found education had significant negative effect ($p < .05$) on affective commitment; increased education reduced affective commitment toward the target organization. Similar findings by Noguera (2006) emphasized that education would reduce organizational commitment, but it would increase occupational commitment. It appeared critical therefore to control for education. While most studies have made the assumption that “blue collar” jobs were lower wage and less secure, this current study examined individual commitment to an organization that was the most stable employer in the area offering the highest prevailing wages.

During many different studies (Maynard et al., 2006), one particular limitation occurred that was addressed in this study. Many researchers studying affective commitment (Cohen, 1993) had to survey employees across a variety of organizations to obtain sufficient data to conduct their study. It was found that after accounting for demographic variables, there was an unexplained variance between individuals. It was posited that one factor could be differences between organizations. To address this factor, this study targeted a single organization.

Turnover

How voluntary versus involuntary turnover affects affective commitment to a target organization, researchers (Allen, Kilburn, & Kilburn, 2005) suggested early employment experiences could increase workplace socialization and decrease turnover. To reduce employment costs, MWV embarked upon an intensive program of pre-employment training which accomplished two steps critical in this socialization process. First, the pre-employment class was conducted with a cohort of potential employees; this collective socialization extended to testing and interviews and should lead to a greater sense of common values. Secondly (Allen, Kilburn, & Kilburn, 2005), the pre-employment process was a formal process in that the class content, testing, and interviews were identical for each applicant. Research (Allen, Kilburn, & Kilburn, 2005) indicated that a well-defined set of pre-employment experiences supported workplace socialization. One unique aspect of the training was the in-mill exploratory tours conducted prior to testing and interviews. These tours exposed the potential employees not only to the unfamiliar sights, sounds, and smells of an integrated paper mill, but in many cases they were able to talk with friends and neighbors who worked for the target organization. These informal contacts may have helped to ease the difficult transition to rotating shift work.

Given that MWV was the most stable employer in the area and there have been a series of plant closings (B-Net, 2008; Indiacar.net, 2005), a significant number of potential employees were available who had been terminated and were in the process of seeking gainful employment. How had the loss of work impacted these potential employees? Research (Brockner, Wiesenfeld, Reed, Grover, & Martin, 1993) suggested

that individuals who have been terminated were subjected to increased uncertainty and might be willing to accept any job that provided them with a measure of control. Research (Brockner et al., 1993) had also shown these individuals would display organizational commitment in terms of continued employment, even when the work was undesirable. Psychologically, they internally justified the decision to stay with an undesirable job because those individuals have had some measure of control returned to their lives. The employer who returned some sense of control to these individuals may see increased organizational commitment compared to individuals who had not suffered a job loss. As to the nature of that commitment, whether affective, normative, or continuance, there was little research to make any firm statement in that regard. Casico and Wynn (2004) found that there was a diminished sense of loyalty (normative commitment) among the survivors of a layoff, and it was not unreasonable to believe that this same attitude may be reflected in the employees who were terminated.

Union Membership

Another aspect of the manufacturing environment was the presence or absence of a unionized workforce. Early research (Greenhalgh & Rosenblatt, 1984; Hartley, Jacobson, Klandermans, & van Vuuren, 1991) found that unionized employees experienced less job insecurity, hence more control over their work environment. However, when research (Filipkowski & Johnson, 2008) was conducted with an organization with both a unionized and non-unionized hourly workforce, it was found union membership did not greatly influence job security. Whereas unionized workers placed a greater reliance on union membership to provide some measure of job security, the non-unionized employees displayed more positive workplace behaviors, i.e., more

time on task and higher productivity. Additionally, it was found that the non-unionized workforce displayed stronger organizational commitment. Even though the target organization of this current study was a unionized facility, union membership was not required for an hourly worker to maintain employment. Still, 90% of the hourly workforce (Harrison, R., private communication, June 3, 2009) had elected to be part of a union. It was expected that union membership would play a minor role in its effect on organizational commitment. However, when studying a manufacturing facility, it would be prudent to incorporate the responses of both union and non-union employees. This study included both union and non-union employees and corrected for any time-based variance by holding tenure constant.

Summary

In Chapter II, major research was reviewed. Commitment was defined and the conceptual framework for the measurement of affective commitment was described. Given there is considerable debate whether organizational commitment is attitudinal or behavioral, researchers (Mowday, Porter, & Steers, 1982; Meyer & Allen, 1988) have attempted to measure workforce commitment. Although there existed some debate about the TCM (Meyer & Allen, 1988), even opponents of the TCM agreed the ACS does measure affective commitment. Demographic variables were studied with gender (Boyar, Maertz, & Pearson, 2005), age (Valenti, 2001), and race (Mueller, Finley, Iverson, & Price, 1999) having no significant effect on affective commitment. In Chapter III, each item in the survey will be explained in terms of significance to this study. Statistical methods that will be used to evaluate the data will be discussed.

CHAPTER III

METHODS AND PROCEDURES

This chapter will review the population on which organizational commitment was assessed. The eighteen items that make up the Allen and Meyer (1996) organizational commitment (OC) assessment will be discussed as will the questions that will define the population demographics and previous employment experiences. The data collection method will be discussed. Finally, the statistical tools that were used to evaluate the data will be discussed.

Population

Since 2001, individuals seeking hourly employment have been hired through a pre-employment process at MWV. Except for changes in the paper mill operation (two of five paper machines have been idled) which has modified the content of the pre-employment training class, the instruction has remained constant. There had been a number of employees hired during the period studied who had not participated in the pre-employment process, specifically individuals hired to salaried positions. These individuals were removed from the population studied because they were not employed in an hourly capacity. After those individuals were removed there was a pool of 255 employees who completed the pre-employment process and were hired. In order to reduce the probability of type-one error below five percent (Krejcie & Morgan, 1970) at least 147 employees needed to participate in the study.

Instrument Design

Organizational commitment was assessed using the Allen and Meyer (1997) organizational commitment 18-item scale that assessed affective, normative, and

continuance commitment. The Meyer and Allen model for commitment was chosen because it is “The most popular and thoroughly validated multidimensional model of organizational commitment” (Vandenberghe & Tremblay, 2008, p. 276). While the focus of this study was affective commitment, the entire Three Component Model (TCM) of Meyer and Allen (1997) was used because approval for its use was only given if the entire model was part of the survey. Items in this scale used a 7-point Likert-type scale with response options ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (7). The OC scale has six items for each form of commitment. Using coefficient alpha to estimate internal consistency, median reliabilities of .85, .79, and .73 were found for the Affective, Continuance, and Normative Commitment Scales, respectively. The commitment scales developed by Allen and Meyer (1996) have been examined for construct validity and determined that the scales developed did measure what they intended.

Following the 18 items of the Meyer and Allen (1997), TCM the researcher included items to survey the demographic makeup of the participants. The items that composed the demographic part of the survey were designed to quantify the age, gender, education, and race/ethnicity of the participants as well as their employment history. Since it was believed that a number of participants had faced employment termination prior to gaining employment with the target organization, this was assessed as well. The past hiring practices of MWV included screening potential applicants for prior work experience since the employment interview focused on work-related questions.

Question 19 asked, “What is your age (in years)?” Although this information was available through a document search, it was believed that participant confidentiality might be compromised if they were not given the opportunity to respond to this question.

Question 20 asked, “What is your gender?” Even though the list of potential participants included the individual’s name the researcher did not assume that gender was clearly established, so the participant was given the opportunity to respond to this question.

One assumption in this study was that a majority of study participants would have no more than a high school diploma. To verify this Question 21 was asked of each participant, “What is the highest level of education you have completed?” The participant’s response was constrained to one of five categories: G.E.D., High School, Associate degree, Undergraduate degree, and Graduate degree.

Question 22 asked, “What is your race/ethnicity?” The participant’s response was constrained to one of six categories: Caucasian/White, African American/Black, Native American, Hispanic/Latino, Asian/Pacific Islander, and other.

Five questions in the survey focused on work history. Question 23 asked, “How long have you been working full-time since you completed your education?” Question 24 asked, “How long have you been working for MWV?” Question 25 asked, “How many other employers have you had prior to MWV?” To determine whether the study participant had ever lost a job, Question 26 asked, “Not counting leaving your former position to work for MWV, have you ever lost a job?” If the response was yes, a follow-up question was asked, “How many times have you been fired/laid off?” The length of time in which study participants worked prior to gaining employment with MWV, as well as the number of separate organizations for which each participant worked will be inventoried. Union membership was thought to be a variable in OC (Filipkowski & Johnson, 2008), since there was a large fraction of employees who have elected to

participate in union membership this study. Question 27 asked, “Do you belong to a union?”

To minimize the effects of common method bias, the items measuring the OC scale were separated from the independent variables. Research conducted by Moorman and Podsakoff (1992) suggested that the demographic questions should be administered following the OC survey. The questionnaire is presented in Appendix A. The 30-item survey contained the revised Meyer/Allen (1997) survey of Organizational Commitment, prior work history, and demographic characteristics.

Methods of Data Collection

Based upon the review of literature (Loomis & King, 1994), this survey was administered to each worker individually via a telephone interview. Human Resource management reviewed the survey and gave verbal approval to conduct the study; however management personnel would not provide any other assistance. All the procedures used in this research were articulated in the Old Dominion University application for exempt research and approved by the university’s Human Subjects Committee.

Participants were administered the survey via telephone which was conducted from June through December, 2010. Telephonic contact was chosen because of a higher expected response rate (Loomis & King, 1994; Shih & Fan, 2009) compared to web-based or mail surveys. The researcher attempted to contact each of the 255 individuals. Once an individual was contacted, the researcher was identified and each participant was assured that the research was not sponsored by MWV and as such his or her responses would be confidential and would not have any effect upon his or her employment status.

The script that was followed is located in Appendix B. Participants were informed that their participation was voluntary and all responses would be combined to preserve anonymity. Those who chose to participate were asked to respond to the prompts and questions based upon their current position.

Statistical Analysis

Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the survey questions. Each survey question was analyzed for the number of responses, frequency of responses, and mean. To test whether there was a difference in three commitment scales due to demographic variables, job termination, or union membership, the responses were analyzed using a one way analysis of variance (ANOVA). The one-way ANOVA was used to analyze the data because each variable was studied only in terms of a single commitment measurement. Although most reviewed literature used a probability of .05, some research also includes .01 and .001 values. This research will use a probability of .05 for each ANOVA (Patten, 2007). SPSS software was used to analyze the collected data.

Summary

In Chapter III, the survey used in the study was discussed and the significance of the selected demographic variables was explained. The Three Component Model (TCM) was used because it had been shown to reliably measure affective commitment. All three components were surveyed due to requirements made by the model's creator. Even though all reviewed literature indicated that there was no effect on affective commitment due to demographic variables, this study sought to confirm those prior findings. In using a uniformly trained group of hourly employees the number of variables found in prior research should be reduced. A telephonic survey was chosen due to a higher expected

response rate and the questions included in the survey were discussed. In Chapter IV, the data collected will be presented as well the statistics associated with each survey item.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

Chapter IV will discuss the demographics of the individuals who participated in this study. The responses given to the organizational commitment survey conducted on a population of hourly workers who had been hired by MWV after completing a pre-employment class will be presented. An analysis of variance was conducted on each of the survey responses and reported.

Survey Responses

Of the 255 potential participants, 148 were contacted and asked to participate in the study; only one potential participant declined to be interviewed. From the pool of 255 employees the researcher attempted to contact every individual in the target population. After the first attempt to contact each potential participant, the researcher was able to survey 66 individuals, with one potential participant declining to be surveyed. It was also found that there were 37 individuals who had disconnected or unlisted phone numbers. This reduced the number of potential participants to 218. Based on research done by Krejcie and Morgan (1970), in order to reduce the probability of type-one error below five percent at least 140 employees needed to participate in the study. Three more attempts to contact the remaining employees were made with 41 employees contacted on the second attempt, 29 employees contacted on third attempt, and finally 11 employees contacted during the fourth attempt. The researcher stopped calling potential participants after the fourth attempt because there were at least 140 completed surveys.

Organizational Commitment Responses

The participants were read a series of statements that were used to define affective commitment, continuance commitment, and normative commitment. There were six prompts read for each form of commitment, with the first six statements used to define affective commitment. A Likert scale was used to score each response with 1 representing “strongly disagree”, 4 representing neither agree nor disagree, and 7 representing “strongly agree”. Statement 1 was, “I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career in MeadWestvaco”. Three (2.0%) participants strongly disagreed with this statement, one (0.7%) participant disagreed with this statement, four (2.7%) participants somewhat disagreed with this statement, eight (5.4%) participants neither disagreed nor agreed with the statement, 18 (12.2%) participants somewhat agreed with the statement, 70 (47.6%) participants agreed with the statement, and 43 (29.3%) participants strongly agreed with the statement. The mean of the responses to this question was 5.85, with $\sigma = 1.16$, indicating that the surveyed population agreed with the statement.

Statement 2 was, “I really feel as if MeadWestvaco’s problems are my own”. Twelve (8.2%) participants strongly disagreed with this statement, 33 (22.4%) participants disagreed with this statement, five (3.4%) participants somewhat disagreed with this statement, 12 (8.2%) participants neither disagreed nor agreed with the statement, 23 (15.6%) participants somewhat agreed with the statement, 42 (28.6%) participants agreed with the statement, and 20 (13.6%) participants strongly agreed with the statement. The mean of the responses to this question was 4.41, with $\sigma = 1.99$, indicating that the surveyed population neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement.

Statement 3 was, “I do not feel like “part of the family” at MeadWestvaco”. Twenty-four (16.3%) participants strongly disagreed with this statement, 33 (40.8%) participants disagreed with this statement, 20 (13.6%) participants somewhat disagreed with this statement, 12 (8.2%) participants neither disagreed nor agreed with the statement, five (3.4%) participants somewhat agreed with the statement, 21 (14.3%) participants agreed with the statement, and five (3.4%) participants strongly agreed with the statement. The mean of the responses to this question was 2.98, with $\sigma = 1.74$. Due to the construction of the statement, it had to be reverse scored with the result incorporated into the affective commitment construct. The mean used in the analysis was 5.02, indicating that the surveyed population somewhat agreed with the statement, “I feel like “part of the family” at MeadWestvaco”.

Statement 4 was, “I do not feel “emotionally attached” to MeadWestvaco”. Fourteen (9.5%) participants strongly disagreed with this statement, 39 (26.5%) participants disagreed with this statement, 24 (16.3%) participants somewhat disagreed with this statement, 14 (9.5%) participants neither disagreed nor agreed with the statement, nine (6.1%) participants somewhat agreed with the statement, 40 (27.2%) participants agreed with the statement, and seven (4.8%) participants strongly agreed with the statement. The mean of the responses to this question was 3.77, with $\sigma = 1.89$. Due to the construction of the statement, it had to be reverse scored with the result incorporated into the affective commitment construct. The mean used in the analysis was 4.23, indicating that the surveyed population neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement.

Statement 5 was, “MeadWestvaco has a great deal of personal meaning to me”. One (0.7%) participant strongly disagreed with this statement, 18 (12.2%) participants disagreed with this statement, four (2.7%) participants somewhat disagreed with this statement, 16 (10.9%) participants neither disagreed nor agreed with the statement, 25 (17.0%) participants somewhat agreed with the statement, 53 (36.1%) participants agreed with the statement, and 30 (20.4%) participants strongly agreed with the statement. The mean of the responses to this question was 5.21, with $\sigma = 1.57$, indicating that the surveyed population somewhat agreed with the statement.

Statement 6 was, “I do not feel a strong sense of belonging to MeadWestvaco”. Sixteen (10.9%) participants strongly disagreed with this statement, 62 (42.2%) participants disagreed with this statement, 24 (16.3%) participants somewhat disagreed with this statement, 10 (6.8%) participants neither disagreed nor agreed with the statement, eight (6.1%) participants somewhat agreed with the statement, 24 (16.3%) participants agreed with the statement, and three (2.0%) participants strongly agreed with the statement. The mean of the responses to this question was 3.11, with $\sigma = 1.69$. Due to the construction of the statement it was reverse scored. The mean used in the analysis was 4.89, indicating that the surveyed population somewhat agreed with the statement “I feel a strong sense of belonging to MeadWestvaco”. When the results of all six statements were combined, the mean response for affective commitment was 4.95 with $\sigma = 1.19$, indicating that the surveyed population had a somewhat positive affective commitment toward MeadWestvaco.

The second set of statements used defined continuance commitment. A Likert scale was used to score each response with 1 representing “strongly disagree”, 4

representing neither agree nor disagree, and 7 representing “strongly agree”. Statement 7 was, “It would be very hard for me to leave MeadWestvaco right now, even if I wanted to”. Two (1.4%) participants strongly disagreed with this statement, 11 (7.5%) participants disagreed with this statement, four (2.7%) participants somewhat disagreed with this statement, eight (5.4%) participants neither disagreed nor agreed with the statement, eight (5.4%) participants somewhat agreed with the statement, 43 (29.3%) participants agreed with the statement, and 71 (48.3%) participants strongly agreed with the statement. The mean of the responses to this question was 5.87, with $\sigma = 1.58$, indicating that the surveyed population agreed with the statement.

Statement 8 was, “Too much of my life would be disrupted if I decided I wanted to leave MeadWestvaco right now”. Six (4.1%) participants strongly disagreed with this statement, 12 (8.2%) participants disagreed with this statement, three (2.0%) participants somewhat disagreed with this statement, six (4.1%) participants neither disagreed nor agreed with the statement, 10 (6.8%) participants somewhat agreed with the statement, 56 (38.1%) participants agreed with the statement, and 54 (36.7%) participants strongly agreed with the statement. The mean of the responses to this question was 5.61, with $\sigma = 1.75$, indicating that the surveyed population agreed with the statement.

Statement 9 was, “Right now, staying with MeadWestvaco is a matter of necessity as much as desire”. One (0.7%) participant strongly disagreed with this statement, seven (4.8%) participants disagreed with this statement, six (4.1%) participants somewhat disagreed with this statement, five (3.4%) participants neither disagreed nor agreed with the statement, 12 (8.2%) participants somewhat agreed with the statement, 47 (32.0%) participants agreed with the statement, and 69 (46.9%) participants strongly agreed with

the statement. The mean of the responses to this question was 5.97, with $\sigma = 1.4$, indicating that the surveyed population agreed with the statement.

Statement 10 was, “I believe that I have too few options to consider leaving MeadWestvaco”. Eight (5.4%) participants strongly disagreed with this statement, 34 (23.1%) participants disagreed with this statement, three (2.0%) participants somewhat disagreed with this statement, nine (6.1%) participants neither disagreed nor agreed with the statement, 15 (10.2%) participants somewhat agreed with the statement, 35 (23.8%) participants agreed with the statement, and 43 (29.3%) participants strongly agreed with the statement. The mean of the responses to this question was 4.81, with $\sigma = 2.07$, indicating that the surveyed population somewhat agreed with the statement.

Statement 11 was, “One of the few negative consequences of leaving MeadWestvaco would be the scarcity of available alternatives”. Two (1.4%) participants strongly disagreed with this statement, 18 (12.2%) participants disagreed with this statement, four (2.7%) participants somewhat disagreed with this statement, four (2.7%) participants neither disagreed nor agreed with the statement, 13 (8.8%) participants somewhat agreed with the statement, 49 (33.3%) participants agreed with the statement, and 57 (38.8%) participants strongly agreed with the statement. The mean of the responses to this question was 5.54, with $\sigma = 1.78$, indicating that the surveyed population agreed with the statement.

Statement 12 was, “One of the major reasons I continue to work for MeadWestvaco is that leaving would require considerable personal sacrifice; another organization may not match the overall benefits I have here”. Three (2.0%) participants strongly disagreed with this statement, 19 (12.9%) participants disagreed with this

statement, two (1.4%) participants somewhat disagreed with this statement, four (2.7%) participants neither disagreed nor agreed with the statement, seven (4.8%) participants somewhat agreed with the statement, 68 (46.3%) participants agreed with the statement, and 44 (29.9%) participants strongly agreed with the statement. The mean of the responses to this question was 5.54, with $\sigma = 1.69$, indicating that the surveyed population agreed with the statement. When the results were combined the mean response for continuance commitment was 5.55 with $\sigma = 1.24$, indicating that the surveyed population had a positive continuance commitment toward MeadWestvaco.

The third set of statements used defined normative commitment. A Likert scale was used to score each response with 1 representing “strongly disagree”, 4 representing neither agree nor disagree, and 7 representing “strongly agree”. Statement 13 was, “I do not feel any obligation to remain with MeadWestvaco”. Twelve (8.2%) participants strongly disagreed with this statement, 48 (32.7%) participants disagreed with this statement, 12 (8.2%) participants somewhat disagreed with this statement, 12 (8.2%) participants neither disagreed nor agreed with the statement, six (4.1%) participants somewhat agreed with the statement, 46 (31.3%) participants agreed with the statement, and 11 (7.5%) participants strongly agreed with the statement. The mean of the responses to this question was 3.91, with $\sigma = 2.0$. Due to the construction of the statement it was reverse scored. The mean used in the analysis was 4.08, indicating that the surveyed population neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement.

Statement 14 was, “Even if it were to my advantage, I do not feel it would be right to leave MeadWestvaco right now”. Thirteen (8.8%) participants strongly disagreed with this statement, 75 (51.0%) participants disagreed with this statement, four (2.7%)

participants somewhat disagreed with this statement, 11 (7.5%) participants neither disagreed nor agreed with the statement, 11 (7.5%) participants somewhat agreed with the statement, 21 (14.3%) participants agreed with the statement, and 12 (8.2%) participants strongly agreed with the statement. The mean of the responses to this question was 3.29, with $\sigma = 1.69$, indicating that the surveyed population somewhat disagreed with the statement.

Statement 15 was, “I would feel guilty if I left MeadWestvaco”. Twenty-nine (19.7%) participants strongly disagreed with this statement, 69 (46.9%) participants disagreed with this statement, seven (4.8%) participants somewhat disagreed with this statement, six (4.1%) participants neither disagreed nor agreed with the statement, 13 (8.8%) participants somewhat agreed with the statement, 18 (12.2%) participants agreed with the statement, and five (3.4%) participants strongly agreed with the statement. The mean of the responses to this question was 2.86, with $\sigma = 1.72$, indicating that the surveyed population somewhat disagreed with the statement.

Statement 16 was, “MeadWestvaco deserves my loyalty”. Five (3.4%) participants strongly disagreed with this statement, 24 (16.3%) participants disagreed with this statement, one (0.7%) participants somewhat disagreed with this statement, six (4.1%) participants neither disagreed nor agreed with the statement, 19 (12.9%) participants somewhat agreed with the statement, 72 (49.0%) participants agreed with the statement, and 20 (13.6%) participants strongly agreed with the statement. The mean of the responses to this question was 5.08, with $\sigma = 1.72$, indicating that the surveyed population somewhat agreed with the statement.

Statement 17 was, “I would not leave MeadWestvaco right now because I have a sense of obligation to the people in it”. Four (2.7%) participants strongly disagreed with this statement, 54 (36.7%) participants disagreed with this statement, six (4.1%) participants somewhat disagreed with this statement, 20 (13.6%) participants neither disagreed nor agreed with the statement, 13 (8.8%) participants somewhat agreed with the statement, 41 (27.9%) participants agreed with the statement, and nine (6.1%) participants strongly agreed with the statement. The mean of the responses to this question was 3.97, with $\sigma = 2.55$, indicating that the surveyed population neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement.

Statement 18 was, “I owe a great deal to MeadWestvaco”. Seven (4.8%) participants strongly disagreed with this statement, 25 (17.0%) participants disagreed with this statement, two (1.4%) participants somewhat disagreed with this statement, 10 (6.8%) participants neither disagreed nor agreed with the statement, 16 (18.9%) participants somewhat agreed with the statement, 63 (42.9%) participants agreed with the statement, and 24 (16.3%) participants strongly agreed with the statement. The mean of the responses to this question was 4.96, with $\sigma = 1.88$, indicating that the surveyed population somewhat agreed with the statement. When the results were combined the mean response for normative commitment was 4.07 with $\sigma = 1.36$ indicating that the surveyed population had neither a positive nor negative normative commitment toward MeadWestvaco

Demographic Responses

Question 19 asked, “What is your age (in years)?” The average age of the participant was 37.6 years, with $\sigma = 9.88$. Although this information was available

through a document search, it was believed that participant confidentiality might be compromised if they were not given the opportunity to respond to this question.

Question 20 asked, “What is your gender?” Even though the list of potential participants included the individual’s first name, the researcher did not assume that gender was clearly established. Therefore the participant was given the opportunity to respond to this question. There were 121 male participants (82.3%) and 26 female participants (17.7%)

One assumption in this study was that a majority of study participants would have no more than a high school diploma. To verify this assumption, Question 21 was asked of each participant, “What is the highest level of education you have completed?” The participant’s response was constrained to one of five categories: G.E.D., High School, Associate Degree, Undergraduate Degree, and Graduate Degree. Thirteen (8.8%) participants indicated that their highest level of education completed was a G.E.D. One hundred (68.0%) participants indicated that their highest level of education completed was a high school diploma. This represented the largest percentage in this study. Twenty-four (16.3%) participants indicated that their highest level of education completed was an associate’s degree. Nine (6.1%) participants indicated that their highest level of education completed was a bachelor’s degree. One (0.7%) participant indicated that the highest level of education completed was a master’s degree. Those participants who had completed a high school diploma or a G.E.D. represented 76.9% of the population in this study.

Question 22 asked, “What is your race/ethnicity?” The participant’s response was constrained to one of six categories: Caucasian/White, African American/Black, Native

American, Hispanic/Latino, Asian/Pacific Islander, and other. One hundred and forty-two (96.6%) participants indicated that they were Caucasian/White. Two participants (1.4%) indicated that they were African American/Black. Two participants (1.4%) indicated that they were Native American and one participant (0.7%) indicated Hispanic/Latino for ethnic origin. There were no Asian/Pacific Islanders or other ethnicities who participated in the study.

Five questions in the survey focused on work history. Question 23 asked, “How long have you been working full-time since you completed your education?” Eleven participants had worked for other organizations five years or less prior to gaining employment with WMV. This represented 7.5% of the population studied. Additionally, 25 participants had worked for other organizations over five years but no more than 10 years prior to gaining employment with WMV. This represented 17% of the population studied. Twenty-eight participants had worked for other organizations over ten years but no more than 15 years prior to gaining employment with WMV. This represented 19% of the population studied. Twenty-three participants had worked for other organizations over 15 years but no more than 20 years prior to gaining employment with WMV. This represented 15.6% of the population studied. Twenty-five participants had worked for other organizations over 20 years but no more than 25 years prior to gaining employment with WMV. This represented 17% of the population studied. Thirty-five participants had worked for other organizations over 25 years prior to gaining employment with WMV, with one participant having 43 years of prior work experience before beginning work for MWV. This represented 23.8% of the population. The mean for work experience prior to gaining employment at MWV was 18.3 years with $\sigma = 9.62$.

Since there may be a relationship between tenure and organizational commitment, Question 24 asked, “How long have you been working for MWV?” Even though the list of potential participants included the individual’s hire date, the researcher allowed the participant to provide this information. The population studied had less than 11 years of tenure at MWV, with a mean of 5.4 years of employment and $\sigma = 2.81$.

Question 25 asked, “How many other employers have you had prior to MWV?” The population studied had a mean of four employers before gaining employment at MWV with $\sigma = 4.7$.

To determine whether the study participant had ever lost a job, Question 26 asked, “Not counting leaving your former position to work for MWV, have you ever lost a job?” If the response was yes, a follow-up question was asked, “How many times have you been fired/laid off?” Ninety-five participants (64.6%) never experienced a lay off or other job loss, and fifty-two participants (35.4%) experienced at least one job loss. This group of 52 participants averaged 2.4 involuntary job losses before been employed by MWV.

Union membership was thought to be a variable in organizational commitment (Filipkowski & Johnson, 2008), since there was a large fraction of employees who had elected to participate in union membership. For this study Question 27 asked, “Do you belong to a union?” One hundred and seven participants (70.7%) indicated they belonged to one of the unions that represented various bargaining units. A fraction of the population (16 individuals or 10.9%) indicated that they were unsure or “I think I am.” This was not a choice given to them and when asked to provide a definitive answer they all indicated that they did not belong to a union. The remaining 27 participants (18.4%)

indicated that they did not belong to a union. Participant demographic data can be found on Table 1.

Statistical Analysis

The nine independent variables included in this study were location, age, race, gender, tenure, education, total work experience, workplace severance, and union membership. Race, gender, and union membership were nominal variables.

Hypothesis H₀₁

Hypothesis H₀₁ predicted gender had no effect on affective, continuance, and normative commitment toward an employee's organization. There were 121 male participants (82.3%) and 26 female participants (17.7%). To test this null hypothesis, an analysis of variance (ANOVA) was computed on the responses of the study participants. The result for affective commitment was $f(1, 146) = 1.176, p = .28$, continuance commitment was $f(1, 146) = 0.077, p = .78$, and normative commitment was $f(1, 146) = 0.09, p = .78$. The result of the ANOVA for gender is presented in Table 2.

Hypothesis H₀₂

Hypothesis H₀₂ predicted employment tenure had no effect on affective, continuance, and normative commitment toward an employee's organization. Since the organization studied offered stable employment in a region of unstable employment, it was believed the effect of tenure on organizational commitment would not be significant. The mean for mill tenure for the population in this study was 5.6 years ($\sigma = 2.814$). To test this null hypothesis, an ANOVA was computed to determine whether a relationship existed between tenure and affective, continuance, and normative commitment. The result for affective commitment was $f(1, 146) = 1.336, p = .18$, continuance commitment

Table 1

Demographic Data of Study Participants

Gender	No.	%	Race	No.	%
Male	121	82.3	Caucasian	142	96.6
Female	26	17.7	Black/African American	2	1.4
			Hispanic/Latino	2	1.4
			Other	1	0.7
Education	No.	%	Tenure	No.	%
GED	13	8.8	1 year	17	11.5
High School diploma	100	68.0	2 years	13	8.8
Associate degree	23	16.3	3 years	14	9.5
Baccalaureate degree	10	6.1	4 years	9	6.1
Masters degree	1	0.7	5 years	13	8.8
			6 years	25	17.0
			7 years	27	18.4
			8 years	8	5.5
			9 years	7	4.8
			10 years	16	10.9
No. of Employers	No.	%	Job Loss	No.	%
0-1	27	18.4	0	96	65.3
2-3	42	28.6	1-3	47	32.0
4-9	70	47.6	4-9	3	2.0
10 or more	8	5.4	10 or more	1	0.7
Union Membership	No.	%			
Yes	104	70.7			
No	33	29.3			

Table 2

F-Values for the Major Study Variables

SCALE	MEAN	SDEV	ACOM	CCOM	NCOM	LOC	AGE	GEN	EDUC	RACE	FTW	TEN	NE	LOSS
1. ACOM	4.952	1.189	0											
2. CCOM	5.55	1.235	1.35	0										
3. NCOM	4.066	1.361	4.224**	0.938	0									
4. LOC	2.61	0.771	.0268	2.203	2.484	0								
5. AGE	37.59	9.883	0.838	0.881	1.200	0.338	0							
6. GEN	0.16	.0383	1.176	0.077	0.890	0.558	0.988	0						
7. EDUC	2.22	0.717	1.841	1.883	3.361*	3.174**	1.571*	0.642	0					
8. RACE	0.06	0.335	0.932	2.343	1.991	2.719	1.026	0.129	2.929	0				
9. FTW	18.25	9.616	0.856	0.762	0.872	0.168	27.484**	2.326	0.533	1.526	0			
10. TEN	5.43	2.814	1.336	1.074	1.168	5.081**	1.663*	0.009	1.068	1.056	2.151*	0		
11. NE	4.03	4.695	1.740	1.454	1.306	0.176	0.947	0.023	0.528	0.187	0.712	0.584	0	
12. LOSS	0.85	4.114	1.564	0.531	0.912	0.168	0.581	0.403	0.143	0.024	0.43	0.282	348.136**	0
13. UNION	0.71	0.456	0.174	0.009	0.453	2.023	0.924	1.528	1.587	0.704	1.147	1.473	1.309	1.025 0

Note. The following abbreviations were used in this table: ACOM = Affective Commitment, CCOM = Continuance Commitment, NCOM = Normative Commitment, LOC = Location of workplace, AGE = Age of respondent, GEN = Gender of Respondent, EDUC = Level of education of respondent, RACE = Race of Respondent, FTW = Number of years the respondent had full-time employment, TEN = Number of year respondent was employed at MWV, NE = Number of employers had by the respondent, LOSS = Number of job losses had by the respondent, UNION = Union membership of the respondent.

* $p < .05$

** $p < .01$

was $f(1, 146) = 1.074, p = .39$, and normative commitment was $f(1, 146) = 1.168, p = .30$. The result of the ANOVA for tenure is presented in Table 2.

Hypothesis H₀₃

Hypothesis H₀₃ predicted the employee's age has no effect on affective, continuance, and normative commitment toward an employee's organization. The organization studied hired their employees in cohorts. It was believed that a variation due to age of an employee could be evaluated. The mean for age of the population in this study was 37.6 years ($\sigma = 12.63$). To test this null hypothesis, an ANOVA was computed to determine whether a relationship existed between age and affective, continuance, and normative commitment. The result for affective commitment was $f(1, 146) = 0.84, p = .73$, continuance commitment was $f(1, 146) = 0.88, p = .67$, and normative commitment was $f(1, 146) = 1.20, p = .23$. The result of the ANOVA for age is presented in Table 2.

Hypothesis H₀₄

Hypothesis H₀₄ predicted recent employment termination has no effect on affective, continuance, and normative commitment toward an organization which subsequently rehires that individual. In the population studied, 52 individuals (35.4%) had suffered an involuntary job loss. To test this null hypothesis, an ANOVA was computed to determine whether a relationship existed between job loss and affective, continuance, and normative commitment. The result for affective commitment was $f(1, 146) = 1.564, p = .15$, continuance commitment was $f(1, 146) = 0.53, p = 0.810$, and normative commitment was $f(1, 146) = .91, p = .50$. The result of the ANOVA for recent employment termination is presented in Table 2.

Summary

In Chapter IV demographic data were discussed on the 147 individuals who participated in this study. There were 121 male participants and 26 female participants. The participants were predominately Caucasians (142 individuals) and five individuals representing minority groups. All participants studied had been hired by MWV since 2001 with an average tenure of 5.6 years. The study participants were largely (76.8%) individuals who had either received a high school diploma or completed either a GED. A significant number of individuals (35.4%) had suffered an involuntary job loss.

The responses given to the organizational commitment survey were presented. The mean for affective commitment of the group studied was 4.95 ($\sigma = 1.19$); the mean for continuance commitment was 5.55 ($\sigma = 1.24$); the mean for normative commitment was 4.07 ($\sigma = 1.36$).

Hypothesis H_{01} predicted that gender had no effect on organizational commitment. The ANOVA on the survey responses for affective commitment was $f(1, 146) = 1.18$, continuance commitment was $f(1, 146) = 0.08$, and normative commitment was $f(1, 146) = 0.89$. Hypothesis H_{02} predicted that employment tenure had no effect on organizational commitment. The ANOVA on the survey responses for affective commitment was $f(1, 146) = 1.37$, continuance commitment was $f(1, 146) = 1.07$, and normative commitment was $f(1, 146) = 1.17$. Hypothesis H_{03} predicted that the employee's age had no effect on organizational commitment. The ANOVA on the survey responses for affective commitment was $f(1, 146) = 0.84$, continuance commitment was $f(1, 146) = 0.88$, and normative commitment was $f(1, 146) = 1.20$. Hypothesis H_{04} predicted that employment termination has no effect on organizational commitment. The

ANOVA on the survey responses for affective commitment was $f(1, 146) = 1.56$, continuance commitment was $f(1, 146) = 0.53$, and for normative commitment was $f(1, 146) = 0.91$.

Chapter V will summarize the problem of workplace commitment and the results of this research study. Conclusions based on the statistical analysis of the participant responses will be presented. Finally, recommendations for future research will be discussed.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter will summarize the problem of workplace commitment and answer the hypotheses used to study how demographic variables effect workplace commitment. Conclusions based on the responses of the study participants will be presented. Recommendations to further extend the results of this study will be articulated.

Summary

This study sought to examine whether prior workplace experiences, such as a job loss, would affect the workplace commitment of an hourly workforce in a large manufacturing facility. This was a unique opportunity because the individuals had all participated in a realistic pre-employment class that included a comprehensive tour of the workplace. Past studies (Stumpf & Hartman, 1984; Meyer & Allen, 1988; Cohen, 1993; Muller, Finley, Iverson, & Price, 1999) have pointed to inflated job expectations as one reason that organizational commitment is unstable during the initial year of employment. Individuals from different sites and professional or para-professional occupations have caused concerns in previous studies (Allen & Meyer, 1990; Loscocco, 1990) . To account for those weaknesses this study limited its research to individuals who were non-professional and engaged in similar workplace environments and tasks. This study examined the effect of gender, tenure, age, job loss, union membership, and education on the affective, continuance, and normative commitment in employees for a large Virginia employer.

The literature review (Vandenberghe & Tremblay, 2008) demonstrated that the most consistently used assessment for workplace commitment was the Three Component

Model (TCM) of Meyer and Allen (1997). While there is debate about the model (Cohen, 1993), it is “The most popular and thoroughly validated multidimensional model of organizational commitment” (Vandenberghe & Tremblay, 2008, p. 276). The TCM measured the three forms of workplace commitment with six statements which were scored on a seven point Likert Scale.

Previous research (Scandura & Lankua, 1997; Boyar, Maertz, & Pearson, 2005; Nogueras 2006) had shown that gender and race, when other demographic variables were normalized, displayed no significant effect on workplace commitment. However tenure negatively impacted Affective Commitment while positively affecting Continuance Commitment. Education and union membership (Mayer & Schoorman, 1998; Kuvaas, 2006; Filipkowski & Johnson, 2008) were shown to negatively impact Affective Commitment. The literature (Brockner, Wiesenfeld, Reed, Grover, & Martin, 1993; Casio & Wynn, 2004) presented mixed data on job loss and how it affected organizational commitment. The area from which WMV primarily selects its hourly workforce has had a number of plant closings and layoffs. It was expected that a significant number of unemployed individuals would seek employment through the MWV pre-employment process.

A survey was constructed using the Three Component Model (TCM) of Meyer and Allen (1997) and a series of questions to help define the demographic nature of the study participants. A telephonic survey was conducted over a six month period; the researcher attempted to contact all 255 individuals who had taken a pre-employment class and was subsequently hired by MWV. To reduce the probability of a type-one error below five percent (Krejcie & Morgan, 1970), 147 (57.6% of 255 potential participants)

individuals were administered the instrument. There were 121 male participants and 26 female participants. The demographic distribution of the participants indicated that they were predominately Caucasians (142 individuals) with an average tenure of 5.6 years. The study participants were largely (113 respondents) individuals who had either received a high school diploma or completed either a GED. A significant number of participants (52 individuals) had suffered an involuntary job loss. There were 104 participants who indicated that they were members of a union.

Conclusions

An analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to test the previously stated hypotheses to determine if there were significant differences between the Three Commitment Model and the demographic variables in the survey. Significance was set at $p = .05$ for all analyses.

Gender

Hypothesis H₀₁ predicted gender had no effect on affective, continuance, and normative commitment toward an employee's organization. The result for affective commitment was $f(1, 146) = 1.18, p = .28$, continuance commitment was $f(1, 146) = 0.08, p = .78$, and normative commitment was $f(1, 146) = 0.89, p = .78$. Based on the ANOVA for gender verses commitment, with all p values exceeding .05, this study must accept the null hypothesis that gender played no significant role in organizational commitment.

The findings of the current study supported the literature and empathize that gender played a minor role in organizational commitment when family roles and responsibilities were equalized (Boyar, Maertz, & Pearson, 2005; Loscocco, 1990;

Nogueras, 2006; Rowe & Snizek, 1995; Scandura & Lankau, 1997). Based on the results of the ANOVA conducted on gender verses organizational commitment, this study concluded that gender had no effect on organizational commitment.

Tenure

Hypothesis H_{02} predicted employment tenure had no affect on affective, continuance, and normative commitment toward an employee's organization. Since the organization studied offered stable employment in a region of unstable employment, it was believed the effect of tenure on organizational commitment would not be significant. The mean for mill tenure for the population in this study was 5.6 years ($\sigma = 2.81$). The result for affective commitment was $f(1, 146) = 1.34, p = .18$, continuance commitment was $f(1, 146) = 1.07, p = .39$, and normative commitment was $f(1, 146) = 1.17, p = .30$. The findings of the current study were supported by previous research studies with age having a stronger effect on commitment than tenure (Cohen, 1993) and as tenure increases (Sturman, 2003) job performance increases. While workers with higher tenure (Kooij, de Lange, Jansen, & Dijkers, 2008) may display less motivation, organizational commitment remained unchanged. Based on the ANOVA for mill tenure verses commitment, with all p values exceeding .05, this study accepts the null hypothesis that mill tenure played no significant role in organizational commitment.

Age

Hypothesis H_{03} predicted the employee's age had no effect on affective, continuance, and normative commitment toward an employee's organization. The organization studied hired their employees in cohorts. It was believed that a variation due to the age of an employee could be evaluated. The mean for age of the population in this

study was 37.6 years ($\sigma = 12.63$). The result for affective commitment was $f(1, 146) = 0.84, p = .731$, continuance commitment was $f(1, 146) = 0.88, p = .67$, and normative commitment was $f(1, 146) = 1.20, p = .23$. When other factors were taken into account previous research studies support the findings of this study. Within a single profession, age differences had no significant effect on affective or continuance commitment (Davis, Pawlowski, & Houston, 2006, Kooij, de Lange, Jansen, & Dijkers, 2008). Turnover rates were no greater for younger workers compared to older workers (Valenti, 2001) when tenure was held constant. Based on the ANOVA for age verses commitment, with all p values exceeding 0.05, this study accepts the null hypothesis that age played no significant role in organizational commitment.

Job Loss

Hypothesis H_{04} predicted recent employment termination had no effect on affective, continuance, and normative commitment toward an organization which subsequently rehires that individual. In the population studied, 52 individuals (35.4%) had suffered an involuntary job loss. The result for affective commitment was $f(1, 146) = 1.56, p = 0.15$, continuance commitment was $f(1, 146) = 0.53, p = 0.81$, and normative commitment was $f(1, 146) = .91, p = 0.50$. These findings are supported by the literature. Although prior experience affected organizational commitment (Van Maanen, 1975; Stumpf & Hartman, 1984), terminated individuals may be more willing to accept undesirable employment (Brockner, Wiesenfeld, Reed, Grover, & Martin, 1993) because any employment gave a worker some sense of control over their circumstances. However terminated workers may have a diminished sense of loyalty (Casico & Wynn, 2004), which is one component of organizational commitment. Based on the ANOVA for recent

job loss verses commitment, with all p values exceeding .05, one must accept the null hypothesis that a previous job loss played no significant role in current organizational commitment. Based on the ANOVA for recent job loss verses commitment, with all p values exceeding .05, this study accepts the null hypothesis that a previous job loss played no significant role in current organizational commitment.

Effect of Education

Earlier research studies found that increased education reduced affective commitment (Kuvaas, 2006; Mayer & Schoorman, 1998; Nogueras, 2006; Shore, Barksdale, & Shore, 1995). As educational levels increased it was found (Maynard, Joseph, & Maynard, 2006) that individuals who believed they were over-qualified had significantly lower organizational commitment. The literature reviewed indicated the education of an individual was negatively correlated with commitment.

This study confirms the earlier research that increased levels of education had a negative effect on organizational commitment, specifically normative commitment. The result for affective commitment was $f(1, 146) = 1.84, p = .12$, continuance commitment was $f(1, 146) = 1.88, p = .12$, and normative commitment was $f(1, 146) = 3.36, p = .01$. The results of the ANOVA between level of education and normative commitment $f(1, 146) = 3.36, p = .01$ revealed for this study that education had a significant effect on normative commitment. A linear regression analysis of the independent variable level of education against the dependent variable normative commitment ($\beta = -0.20, p = .015$) revealed that level of education negatively impacted normative commitment. Normative commitment is the “ought to” or loyalty component of commitment. This study supports

the findings of other researchers (Allen & Meyer, 1990) suggesting that education reduces the emotional aspect of loyalty.

Recommendations

This study investigated the effect of job loss and tenure on organizational commitment. The result of affective commitment and job loss is intriguing and deserves additional exploration. Although the result of the ANOVA for affective commitment verses job loss was $f(1, 146) = 1.56, p = 0.15$, and not significant, the p value indicates that there may be an interaction between job loss and commitment. Because organizational commitment was measured through a survey, it could not answer why a newly reemployed individual would have a different level of organizational commitment. A qualitative study focusing on those individuals who had lost employment and were subsequently reemployed by MWV could reveal how organizational commitment developments after a job loss.

Tenure also represents an area to explore given the findings in this current study. Although the result of the ANOVA for affective commitment versus tenure was $f(1, 146) = 1.34, p = .18$, it is possible that more time may be required before the effect of tenure can be expressed. Given the mill tenure for the population in this study was 5.6 years ($\sigma = 2.81$), additional research using the same population may help quantify the time-based effect of tenure.

Additional research into the conflict between education and organizational loyalty may be profitable. The results of the ANOVA between level of education and normative commitment $f(1, 146) = 3.36, p < .01$ revealed education had a significant effect on normative commitment. The loss of organizational commitment as a worker achieves

educational advancement places organizations in conflict with their workforce. A more educated workforce should be a more productive workforce, but the loss of commitment indicated that the organization risks losing an educated employee. A qualitative study on a single cohort of individuals as they progress through different educational goals may help define why education negatively impacts organizational commitment.

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APPENDIX A

Organizational Commitment and Demographic Survey

	Indicate the level of organizational commitment with the following statements.						
	Organizational Commitment Scale Meyer & Allen (1997) AC = Affective Commitment CC = Continuance Commitment NC = Normative Commitment						
AC	I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career in MeadWestvaco.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
AC	I really feel as if MeadWestvaco's problems are my own.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
AC	I do not feel like "part of the family" at MeadWestvaco.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
AC	I do not feel "emotionally attached" to MeadWestvaco.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
AC	MeadWestvaco has a great deal of personal meaning to me.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
AC	I do not feel a strong sense of belonging to MeadWestvaco.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
CC	It would be very hard for me to leave MeadWestvaco right now, even if I wanted to.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

CC	Too much of my life would be disrupted if I decided I wanted to leave MeadWestvaco right now.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
CC	Right now, staying with MeadWestvaco is a matter of necessity as much as desire.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
CC	I believe that I have too few options to consider leaving MeadWestvaco.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
CC	One of the few negative consequences of leaving MeadWestvaco would be the scarcity of available alternatives	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
CC	One of the major reasons I continue to work for MeadWestvaco is that leaving would require considerable personal sacrifice; another organization may not match the overall benefits I have here.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
NC	I do not feel any obligation to remain with MeadWestvaco.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
NC	Even if it were to my advantage, I do not feel it would be right to leave MeadWestvaco right now.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
NC	I would feel guilty if I left MeadWestvaco.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
NC	MeadWestvaco deserves my loyalty.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
NC	I would not leave MeadWestvaco right now because I have a sense of obligation to the people in it.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
NC	I owe a great deal to MeadWestvaco.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

19. What is your age (in years)? _____

20. What is your gender? Male ☐ Female ☐

21. What is the highest level of education you have completed?

G.E.D. ☐ High School ☐ Associate degree ☐ Undergraduate Degree ☐ Graduate Degree ☐

22. What is your race/ethnicity?

Caucasian/White ☐ African American/Black ☐ Native American ☐ Hispanic/Latino ☐
Asian/Pacific Islander ☐ Other ☐

23. How long have you been working full-time since you completed your education? _____

24. How long have you been working for MWV? _____

25. How many other employers have you had prior to MWV? _____

26. Not counting leaving your former position to work for MWV, have you ever lost a job? Yes ☐ No ☐

If the response is yes to question 26, how many times have you been fired/laid off? _____

27. Do you belong to a union? Yes ☐ No ☐

APPENDIX B

Script for Conducting the Organizational Commitment Survey

Purpose

The survey was constructed to insure that each participant was asked the organizational commitment scales as well as demographic questions uniformly. The 18 item Three Commitment Scale developed by Meyer and Allen (1997) was used as well as 12 questions that identified demographic and employment variables. There are two additional questions that may be asked if the participant responds affirmatively to two specific survey items.

Directions

Prior to contact with each participant, a three page survey response form was created with a number unique to each participant. The response form can be found in Appendix A. To insure that the participant's identity was kept confidential, the participant's name and unique number was kept in a non-electronic file. A script was also developed to reduce the variation that may be inherent in a telephone survey. Ask each survey item and record each response. There may be questions about a survey item, do not expand on any item beyond repeating the item in question.

Script

"Hello (name of potential participant), this is Chuck Bartocci, you may remember me from the pre-employment training class you took prior to being employed at MeadWestvaco."

"I am calling today to ask you to participate in a brief survey which is part of my coursework that will lead to the completion of my Ph.D. Whether you choose to

participate or not, your participation is completely voluntary, confidential, and in no way will your participation affect your employment status. Would you like to participate in this survey?"

If the answer is no: "Thank you for your time today."

If the answer is yes: "Thank you. The survey will ask you questions about organizational commitment and your responses will be kept totally confidential."

Ask each survey item and record each response. There may be questions about a survey item; do not expand on any item beyond repeating the item in question.

VITA

Charles A. Bartocci
Occupational and Technical Studies
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Education:

Ph.D., Education, Old Dominion University, Norfolk, VA 2012

Dissertation: The Effect of Previous Employment Experiences on Organizational Commitment

M.S., Education, Old Dominion University, Norfolk, VA 2004

Concentrations: Occupational Studies, Community College Teaching

B.S., Paper Engineering, Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo, MI 1980

Experience:

Dabney S. Lancaster Community College

Courses: Developed and instructed all Wind Energy classes as well as all Pulp and Paper Technology classes. Additionally provided MasterCraft Training, Mathematics Instruction for Electrical Apprentices, and Pre-Employment Training for MWV.

Instructor, 1989 - 1996

Assistant Professor 1996 – 2004

Associate Professor 2004 – 2008

Professor 2009 – Present

Presentations:

(10/2008) Presenter. Incorporating ITEA Technology Standards into a Pre-Engineering Course. Presented at the Southeastern Technology Education Conference, Norfolk, Virginia.

(04/2008) Presenter. The Creation and Effect of a Pre-Employment Course on Employability. Presented at the Virginia Community College System New Horizons 2008: Partnerships for Learning Conference.

24 other presentations were made to a variety of professional conferences.

Curriculum and Training Development:

(01/2010) Developed MasterCraft training and documentation materials for MWV, Covington, Virginia.

(06/2008) Developed Incumbent Worker training program and documentation for Bear Lake Fibre, LLC, Niles, Michigan.

(08/2006) Developed ABB training and documentation materials for the #3 paper machine press section, Georgia-Pacific Corporation, Big Island, Virginia.

(06/2005) Developed documentation, validation, and training assistance to the staff due to the modifications to the #3 paper machine's thin stock system at Georgia-Pacific, Big Island, Virginia.

13 additional paper industry-related training programs were developed.

Grants and Fellowships:

- Michigan Incumbent Worker Program (IWP) Grant (2008), \$9,800
- Tech-Prep Continuation Grants, (1997-98), \$1,550
- John Corstaphney Special Projects Grant (1995) \$2,000
- Initiated the DSLCC Student TAPPI scholarship, 1995 (\$1,500 per year)
- ARC Grant (Appalachian Regional Commission, 1993), \$65,000
- Laboratory Improvement Grant (50% match of the ARC grant), \$65,000

Professional Organizations:

Held various leadership posts for Virginia/Carolina Technical Association for the Pulp and Paper Industry, 1995-2000

Chairman for Virginia/Carolina Technical Association for the Pulp and Paper Industry, 2000

Awards and Honors:

Faculty Marshal – DSLCC Convocation – May 2011

DSLCC Faculty Showcase Award – VCCA, 2010

Chancellor's Award – Outstanding Trainer/Instructor, 2007