

To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting a thesis written by Christie Cunningham entitled “What Makes People Stay? Examining the Relationships among Loyalty to Supervisor, Organizational Commitment and Intent to Turnover.” I have examined the final copy of this thesis and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science with a major In Industrial Organizational Psychology.

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Dr. Bart Weathington, Chairperson

We have read this thesis and recommend its acceptance:

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Dr. Brian O'Leary, Committee Member

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Dr. Chris Cunningham, Committee Member

Accepted for the Graduate Council:

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Dean of the Graduate School

WHAT MAKES PEOPLE STAY? EXAMINING THE RELATIONSHIPS AMONG  
LOYALTY TO SUPERVISOR, ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT AND INTENT  
TO TURNOVER

A Thesis

Presented for the

Master of Science Degree

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Christie Cunningham

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Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to my wonderful husband Michael, and to my family for their never-ending love, support, and encouragement. You taught me to believe in myself and that nothing is out of my reach.

*"Be sure you put your feet in the right place, then stand firm."*

*Abraham Lincoln*

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Last but not least, thanks to my husband, family, and friends for their constant love, prayers, and support.

Abstract

Using survey data from a sample of 130 employees across a range of jobs in various organizations, the author examined the relationships among loyalty to supervisor, organizational commitment (affective, continuance, and normative), and intent to turnover. Regression analyses indicated that of the three forms of organizational commitment, only affective commitment fully mediated the relationship between loyalty to supervisor and intent to turnover. These results stress the importance of defining and creating a work environment in which both loyalty to supervisor and affective commitment are enhanced. Research implications, limitations, and areas for future research are also discussed.

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## INTRODUCTION

The study of employee commitment is important in terms of both organizational cost and resource utilization. When employees leave an organization, money is spent recruiting and training new employees to replace those who have left the organization (Rosch, 2001). Organizations must recover lost knowledge, and employees who remain with the organization must cope with feelings of anxiety, loss of coworkers, and feelings of uncertainty (Scott et al., 1999). The ability to understand and help an employee cope with issues of commitment may mean the difference between that employee staying in or leaving the organization.

Research has shown that organizational commitment is complex and multifaceted (Meyer, Allen, & Smith, 1993). For this reason, there is not a universally accepted definition for organizational commitment (Cohen, 1999; Meyer, Allen & Smith, 1993; Meyer, Stanley, Herscovitch & Topolnytsky, 2002). However, many researchers have relied on Meyer and Allen's (1991) three-component model to gain a better understanding of the concept of organizational commitment. Within this model, *affective commitment* refers to feelings of attachment which lead individuals to stay committed to the organization because they *want* to. With *continuance commitment*, individuals commit to the organization because they *need* to, and often employees use a cost-benefit analysis to determine the need to stay committed. Lastly, *normative commitment* refers to a feeling of *obligation* to commit to the organization. If individuals experience this form of commitment, they are only committed to the organization because they feel they should remain committed (Meyer et al., 1993).

The present study focused on voluntary turnover intent, defined as an individual's perception of how easy it would be to leave a job and how much an individual wants to leave a job (Mitchell, Holtom, Lee, Sablinski, & Erez, 2001, p. 1102). Most models of turnover propose that an employee's evaluation of the job can lead to feelings of job dissatisfaction, which in turn could lead to job-search behavior. Job dissatisfaction and job searching then result in intent to turnover for employees who find opportunities providing outcomes of greater value than their current job.

Loyalty to supervisor, as defined by Chen, Tsui, and Farh (2002) includes five dimensions: dedication to supervisor, putting forth extra effort for the supervisor, attachment to the supervisor, identification with supervisor values, and internalization of supervisor values. As will be discussed in the following sections, Figure 1 shows the hypothesized relationships among loyalty to supervisor, organizational commitment, and intent to turnover.

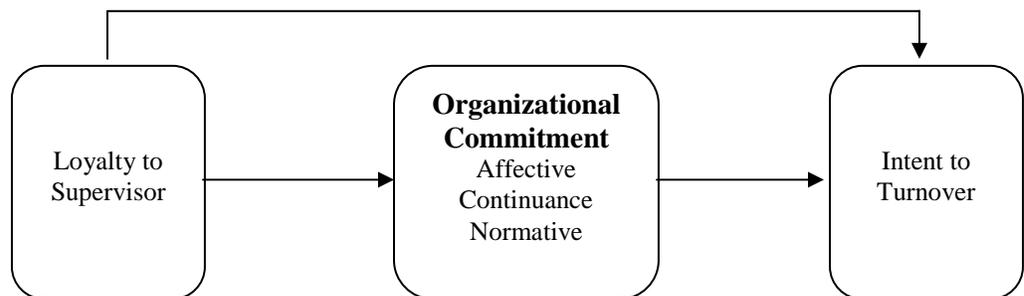


Figure 1. Proposed Relationships among Variables

It is proposed that loyalty to supervisor will have a negative relationship with intent to turnover, such that the more loyal an employee is to a supervisor, the less likely that employee is to leave the job or turnover (Hypothesis 1). Similarly, it is proposed that the three forms of organizational commitment – affective, continuance, and normative – will

also be negatively associated with intent to turnover (Hypothesis 2). It is also proposed that loyalty to supervisor is positively related to all three forms of organizational commitment (Hypothesis 3), and that the three forms of organizational commitment will mediate the relationship between loyalty to supervisor and intent to turnover (Hypothesis 4).

*Loyalty to Supervisor & Intent to Turnover*

Chen, Tsui, and Farh (2002) studied loyalty to supervisor as a focus of commitment and found that loyalty to supervisor had more of an effect on employee behaviors than the general construct of organizational commitment. They sought to examine the definition of commitment to supervisor, and to examine the relationship between commitment to supervisor and employee performance. Chen et al. defined commitment in much the same way as Becker, Billings, Eveleth, and Gilbert (1996), as identification with the supervisor and internalization of the supervisor's values (p. 465).

Chen et al. (2002) believed that beyond identification and internalization, the dimensions of dedication to supervisor, putting forth extra effort for the supervisor, and attachment to supervisor are also important parts of the concept of loyalty to supervisor. The three added dimensions (dedication, extra effort, attachment) broadened the concept of loyalty to supervisor. Their results showed that at least in the Chinese culture, there appear to be more than just two dimensions of loyalty to supervisor. The dimensions of dedication and extra effort were tied to in-role performance and organizational citizenship behaviors. Overall, the results indicated that loyalty to supervisor has more influence on employee performance than commitment to the organization alone.

Similarly, Cheng, Jiang, and Riley (2003) studied organizational commitment, supervisory commitment and employee outcomes in a Chinese context. They found a negative relationship between supervisory commitment and intent to turnover. They suggested that by promoting attachment to the supervisor, intent to turnover could be decreased. Conversely, loyalty to supervisor is also related to intent to stay in the organization. Chen (2001) studied loyalty to supervisor in relation to intent to remain in the organization. His results indicated that loyalty to supervisor is positively related to intent to stay, suggesting that loyalty to supervisor can predict intent to stay.

Communication is an important part of the relationship between supervisor and subordinate, and as such can serve as a contributor to employee intent to leave. Scott et al. (1999) found that strong communication between supervisor and subordinate was associated with decreased intent to leave. Luthans and Peterson (2002) pointed out that when employees have strong emotional connections to their supervisor, feel that they are valued, and that their supervisor is interested in employee development, this can lead to positive outcomes, such as organizational commitment. Noe (2008) stated, “Employee’s commitment and retention are directly related to how they are treated by their managers” (p. 316).

*Hypothesis 1: Loyalty to supervisor will have a negative relationship with intent to turnover.*

#### *Organizational Commitment & Intent to Turnover*

Examining the attraction, selection, attrition (ASA) literature can shed light on the relationship between organizational commitment and turnover intention. The ASA model posits that potential employees are attracted to organizations in which they perceive fit,

and these organizations, in turn, select employees they feel would fit best with organizational goals and values. Once employees decide to become a part of the organization, they begin to develop organizational commitment. If employees decide that they do not fit in the organization, they will leave, either voluntarily or involuntarily (Schneider, 2007).

Similarly, Cohen (2007) pointed out that employees will examine their organizational commitment based on how they perceive the quality of exchanges between themselves and the organization. Solinger, van Olffen, and Roe (2008) suggested that the three component model of commitment proposed by Allen and Meyer (1990) should be used as a predictor of turnover intentions. In line with the definition of turnover intent provided above, Whitener and Walz (1993) examined how an exchange-based model of commitment and turnover predicted variables assessing the ease and desirability of leaving an organization. Results indicated that low levels of continuance commitment and a greater sense of ease of leaving were related to one another. Greater ease and desirability of leaving the organization were both associated with low levels of affective commitment. Results also indicated that affective commitment, but not continuance commitment, was a significant predictor of intent to turnover.

Huang, Lawler, and Lei (2007) examined how quality of work life impacted career and organizational commitment, and how commitment, in turn, affected turnover intention. Quality of work life was defined as, “favorable conditions and environments of work and life aspects such as family/work life balance, self-actualization, compensation, and supervisory behavior” (p. 737). They hypothesized that organizational commitment would have a negative impact on turnover intention, and results indicated support for this

hypothesis. They found that affective organizational commitment served as the strongest predictor of intent to turnover.

Jaros, Jermier, Koehler, and Sincich (1993) studied affective, continuance, and moral commitment in relation to the withdrawal process. They found that the forms of commitment they studied affected turnover indirectly, through employee withdrawal intentions. Tett and Meyer (1993) found a negative relationship between commitment and turnover intention. O'Reilly and Chatman (1986) found that identification and internalization (components of commitment) were negatively related to turnover. Similarly, Harris and Cameron (2005) found that the affective components of identification and commitment were negatively associated with turnover intent. Their results indicated that affective commitment served as a significant negative predictor of turnover intent, beyond other effects.

*Hypothesis 2a: Affective commitment will have a negative relationship with intent to turnover.*

*Hypothesis 2b: Continuance commitment will have a negative relationship with intent to turnover.*

*Hypothesis 2c: Normative commitment will have a negative relationship with intent to turnover.*

#### *Loyalty to Supervisor & Organizational Commitment*

Becker, Billings, Eveleth, and Gilbert (1996) examined employees' ability to distinguish between foci and bases of commitment, more specifically, employee ability to distinguish between commitment to supervisor versus organization, and commitment based on identification versus internalization. The supervisor is an important focus for

employee commitment because of the close relationship between employee and supervisor. Supervisors often have the ability to monitor, reward, and influence employee behavior. Becker et al. found that employees do make distinctions between committing to their supervisor versus the organization and between identification and internalization as bases of commitment.

Research by Clugston, Howell, and Dorfman (2000) supported Becker et al.'s (1996) findings that employees distinguish between commitment to the organization and commitment to supervisor. Chen (2001) also highlighted distinguishing organizational commitment from commitment to (loyalty to) supervisor. Results indicated that loyalty to supervisor is an important predictor of employee outcomes such as intent to turnover. Chen implied that future research should include a focus on the concept of loyalty to supervisor in addition to organizational commitment, and that this effort to study both foci of commitment would result in a more complete understanding of employee outcomes.

*Hypothesis 3a: Loyalty to supervisor will be positively related to affective commitment.*

*Hypothesis 3b: Loyalty to supervisor will be positively related to continuance commitment.*

*Hypothesis 3c: Loyalty to supervisor will be positively related to normative commitment.*

The three forms of organizational commitment may also serve as a mediator in important organizational relationships. Maertz, Griffeth, Campbell, and Allen (2007) found that when employees felt that they fit with and were supported by the organization,

this had a significant effect on turnover, which was mediated through affective commitment.

*Hypothesis 4: The relationship between loyalty to supervisor and intent to turnover will be mediated by the three forms of organizational commitment (affective, continuance, and normative).*

## METHOD

### *Participants*

Participants were 130 employees across a range of jobs from various organizations. Nearly 61 percent ( $n = 79$ ) of the participants were women, 38.6 percent ( $n = 51$ ) were men, and 1.5 percent ( $n = 2$ ) did not provide data on gender. The majority of participants were Caucasian ( $n = 121$ ; 91.7%), and the remaining were African-American ( $n = 1$ ; 0.8%), Hispanic ( $n = 2$ ; 1.5%), Asian Pacific Islander ( $n = 4$ ; 3%) or other ( $n = 2$ ; 1.5%). Two participants (1.5%) did not provide data on race. Participants ranged from age 20 to 74 years, with a mean of 39.6 years ( $SD = 11.4$ ). Most participants ( $n = 55$ ; 41.7%) had earned a four-year college degree. Other educational levels obtained included high school diploma or GED ( $n = 12$ ; 9.1%), some college ( $n = 24$ ; 18.2%), a 2-year college degree ( $n = 19$ ; 14.4%), a master's degree ( $n = 16$ ; 12.1%), a doctoral degree ( $N = 2$ ; 1.5%), a professional degree ( $N = 2$ ; 1.5%), and two participants (1.5%) did not provide data on educational level.

Most participants ( $n = 118$ ; 89.4%) were employed fulltime; 6.1% ( $n = 8$ ) were employed part time, 2.3% ( $n = 3$ ) were self-employed, and two participants (1.5%) did not provide data on employment status. Regarding organizational tenure, most participants ( $n = 46$ ; 34.8%) had been working in their current organization for two to

five years; 7.6% ( $n = 10$ ) had been in their organization for less than a year, 3.8% ( $n = 5$ ) had been at their job for one year, 26.5% ( $n = 35$ ) had been at their job for 5-10 years, 25.8% ( $n = 34$ ) had been working in their current organization for over 10 years, and two participants (1.5%) did not report data on organizational tenure.

### *Procedure*

Participants were solicited via a snowball sampling technique (see Weathington, Cunningham & Pittenger, in press). The survey was administered via the Internet to a volunteer (non-probability) sample, and survey recipients were encouraged to forward the survey to other professionals in their personal and professional networks. Data were collected anonymously via an Internet-based survey tool between January 30 and February 12, 2009. The survey was sent electronically with instructions explaining that the enclosed link would direct them to the survey. No incentives were offered to participants.

### *Measures*

Participants responded to multiple scales presented as a composite survey in electronic format via SurveyMonkey internet survey provider. These measures were chosen due to their appropriate fit with the purposes of this research. The measures in the survey were presented in the order presented below. All measures used a Likert response format asking participants to report their level of agreement, with options ranging from 1 = Strongly Disagree to 7 = Strongly Agree. All items are included in Appendix A.

*Loyalty to Supervisor.* Loyalty to supervisor was assessed with the 17-item Loyalty to Supervisor scale developed by Chen, Tsui, and Farh (2002). The scale is designed to include five dimensions: dedication, extra effort, attachment, identification,

and internalization. For the purpose of the present study, an overall measure of loyalty to supervisor, and not the individual facets, was used. A sample item is “Even if my supervisor is not present, I will try my best to do the job assigned by him/her well.” Scores on the 17 items were averaged to yield a summary score reflecting overall loyalty to supervisor. The coefficient alpha for overall loyalty to supervisor in this study was  $\alpha = .92$ .

*Organizational Commitment.* Organizational commitment was assessed using the measure developed by Meyer and Allen (1990). This instrument has 24 items and is divided into three subscales: affective, continuance, and normative. Each of the subscales has eight items. Nine of the 24 items were reverse-scored. A sample item from the affective subscale is "This organization has a great deal of personal meaning for me"; an example of an item included in the continuance subscale is "Too much in my life would be disrupted if I decided I wanted to leave my organization now." An example of an item in the normative subscale is "One of the major reasons I continue to work for my organization is that I believe loyalty is important and I therefore feel a sense of moral obligation to remain." Scores from the eight items in each subscale were averaged to yield a summary score for each subscale. The coefficient alpha for the affective, continuance, and normative subscales in this study were  $\alpha = .81$ ,  $\alpha = .78$ , and  $\alpha = .77$  respectively.

*Intent to Turnover.* Turnover intentions were measured with the Turnover Intent scale developed by Mobley, Griffeth, Hand, and Meglino (1979). Participants responded to the 3-item scale using a 7-point response scale. A sample item is “I think a lot about leaving the organization.” Scores on the 3 items were averaged to yield a summary score

reflecting overall turnover intentions. The coefficient alpha for overall intent to turnover in this study was  $\alpha = .91$ .

## RESULTS

Means, standard deviations, correlations, and Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficients for the variables of interest are presented in Table 1.

Given that all responses were on a seven-point scale of agreement, four represented a neutral response. The results reported in Table 1 indicate that the means for the affective and continuance organizational commitment subscales (4.77 and 4.47, respectively) were slightly above four, while the mean for the normative commitment subscale (3.97) was slightly below four, indicating a neutral response. This indicates that employees in the investigated organizations were neither strongly committed nor strongly uncommitted to their organizations, although employees reported lower levels of normative commitment. Similarly, the overall mean of loyalty to supervisor was 4.95, indicating that while employees were neither loyal nor disloyal to their supervisors, they were more inclined toward displaying loyalty toward the supervisor. The overall mean of intent to turnover (2.61) was well below a neutral response of four, indicating that employees did not have turnover intentions at the time of the survey.

As predicted in Hypothesis 1, there was an inverse relationship between loyalty to supervisor and intent to turnover,  $r = -.252, p < .01$ . Results further indicate an inverse relationship between affective commitment and intent to turnover,  $r = -.501, p < .01$ , and between normative commitment and intent to turnover,  $r = -.234, p < .01$ , thus supporting Hypotheses 2a and 2c. Contrary to Hypothesis 2b, the relationship between continuance commitment and intent to turnover was weak and positive,  $r = .032$  but not statistically

significant. Hypotheses 3a-c proposed a positive relationship between loyalty to supervisor and each form of organizational commitment. Supporting Hypotheses 3a and 3c, loyalty to supervisor was moderately related to affective commitment and normative commitment ( $r = .445$ ;  $r = .380$ , respectively),  $p < .01$ . Contrary to Hypothesis 3b, the relationship between continuance commitment and loyalty to supervisor was weak,  $r = .036$  and non-significant (See Table 1).

Hypothesis 4 was tested using hierarchical multiple regression analyses, and in each step gender, education level, organizational tenure, and age were entered as control variables. Loyalty to supervisor, the independent variable, was entered as a predictor in Step 2. Each of the three forms of organizational commitment was entered separately for Steps 3a-c (See Table 2).

To test for mediation, it is necessary to demonstrate that (a) both the independent (loyalty to supervisor) and mediating (organizational commitment) variables are related to the dependent variable (intent to turnover); (b) the independent variable is related to the mediating variables; and (c) the relationship between the independent variable and the dependent variable becomes non-significant or is reduced significantly when controlling for the mediating variables (Baron & Kenny, 1986; Cohen, Cohen, West, & Aiken, 2003).

The first condition was met for two forms of organizational commitment (Affective Commitment;  $r = -.50$ ,  $p < .01$ ; Normative Commitment;  $r = -.23$ ,  $p < .01$ ), and a significant inverse correlation was found between loyalty to supervisor and intent to turnover ( $r = -.25$ ,  $p < .01$ ). This condition was not satisfied for continuance commitment, which had a weak non-significant correlation with intent to turnover ( $r =$

.03). For the second condition, a significant correlation was found between loyalty to supervisor and both affective commitment ( $r = .45, p < .01$ ) and normative commitment ( $r = .38, p < .01$ ). Similar to the first condition, continuance commitment was weakly correlated with loyalty to supervisor ( $r = .036$ ) and was non-significant. However, a regression analysis controlling for organizational commitment in order to test for mediation revealed that the third condition was met only for affective commitment ( $\beta = -.485, p < .01$ ). The relationship between loyalty to supervisor and intent to turnover became non-significant only when controlling for affective commitment, indicating that loyalty to supervisor is mediated through affective commitment.

## **DISCUSSION**

The purpose of this study was to examine relationships among loyalty to supervisor, organizational commitment (affective, continuance, and normative), and intent to turnover. Specifically, it was hypothesized that organizational commitment mediated the relationship between loyalty to supervisor and intent to turnover. Organizations seek to build and reap the benefits of a committed workforce. As such, it is important to identify the factors that contribute to employee feelings of commitment in order to develop such a committed workforce. Consistent with previous research (Luchak & Gellatly, 2007; Meyer et al., 2003) findings suggest that affective commitment is most strongly related to work outcomes while normative commitment is also a positive but weaker predictor. Results of the present study support previous research findings (Luchak & Gellatly, 2007; Whitener & Walz, 1993) that affective commitment is a more robust predictor of intent to turnover than continuance commitment. As hypothesized in this

study, affective commitment was significantly negatively related to intent to turnover, while continuance commitment showed only a weak relationship to intent to turnover.

It was proposed that the relationship between loyalty to supervisor and intent to quit would depend on the extent of organizational commitment displayed by employees. Results provided support for this hypothesis in that affective commitment mediated the relationship between loyalty to supervisor and intent to turnover. This suggests that employees who display loyalty to their supervisor and who have a high level of affective commitment are less likely to consider leaving the organization. The significant positive correlation between loyalty to supervisor and affective commitment supports this conclusion. The lack of a significant correlation between loyalty to supervisor and continuance commitment is consistent with past research (Luchak & Gellatly, 2007), but may also be related to the current state of the economy. Continuance commitment is focused on the costs associated with leaving the organization. Due to the current economic downturn, layoffs and downsizing are commonplace, leaving the job market uncertain. Employees may be remaining with the organization simply because leaving the organization during such a difficult economic time is a greater cost than they can afford.

The results imply that, if conditions are met for employees to develop affective commitment and to develop a loyal relationship with their supervisor, turnover intentions may be decreased. As previously described, affective commitment can be equated with emotional attachment - feelings of wanting to stay with the organization. Therefore, employers may want to invest effort into providing a pleasant work environment that promotes such positive feelings toward the organization, and thereby allows the spillover opportunity for development of feelings of loyalty toward the supervisor. Rhoades,

Eisenberger, and Armeli (2001) found that constructive work environments increase affective commitment via perceived organizational support, which can lead to decreased turnover intentions.

*Limitations & Directions for Future Research*

The present study is not without its limitations. The first limitation concerns the research sample, in that most research participants were Caucasian females. Furthermore, the use of the snowball sampling technique did not allow for a truly random sample of the population. Because it is nearly impossible to determine the geographic location of participants who took the survey, it is difficult to say whether the sample is truly representative. Therefore, the results are more difficult to generalize across gender and race. For this reason, results should be interpreted with caution. Future research should include a broader range of people working in various industries and occupations to ensure that results are accurate and applicable across genders and cultures and to determine if results would vary across industries and occupations.

A second limitation concerns the impact of potential changes in employee commitment. Commitment is founded upon personal beliefs and reasons, and as such, it is possible that people may change their level or form of commitment over time. This is especially true during the current economic downturn we are facing. Longitudinal research should be conducted in the future to account for these changes in commitment and the factors that contributed to these changes.

Another major limitation of the study is the fact that this is a research area without a substantial amount of empirical and theoretical support. At the present time, there is little supporting literature to provide a theoretical foundation for this research, which

made it difficult to understand the full implications of the results. Studies should be completed that focus on the construct of loyalty to supervisor and how it relates to important work outcomes.

Finally, a further limitation was that of common method variance. The only tool used for data collection was an internet-based survey. As such, there may have been spurious positive correlations between constructs that may in actuality be uncorrelated. However, it should be noted that surveys are a common way to conduct research in the social sciences (Kline, Sulsky, & Rever-Moriyama, 2000), and Spector (1994) has pointed out that self-reports are often the best mechanism for obtaining this type of information.

Luchak and Gellatly (2007) examined both linear and nonlinear relationships between affective and continuance commitment and work outcomes such as turnover cognitions. Results indicated a linear, negative correlation between affective commitment and turnover cognitions. Accordingly, Luchak and Gellatly suggested that affective commitment has a stronger relationship with work outcomes than continuance commitment. They also suggested that continuance commitment is not best represented in linear relationship with work outcomes. Their research suggests recognizing that continuance commitment has its greatest impact on work outcomes at low to moderate levels, and that at high levels, both affective and continuance commitment lead to similar results. Future research studies can use this methodological framework to study both linear and nonlinear relationships between organizational commitment and work outcomes such as intent to turnover.

Future researchers should look further into how to build ideal conditions for fostering both loyalty to supervisor and affective commitment. Researchers could study these constructs to determine if they have an impact on organizational processes such as selection. Also of value, researchers could seek to understand if some sort of awareness training or interpersonal skills training would benefit employers, to help in creating ideal working conditions.

As presented in Table 2, adding continuance commitment in Step 3b amplified the effect of loyalty to supervisor. For this reason, future researchers could look into the possible role of suppressor variables in the proposed relationships of this study (see Maassen & Bakker, 2001). The results of the present study can also provide a foundation for the development of a more elaborate model of the relationships among variables that can be analyzed through the use of structural equation modeling or other similar techniques.

### *Conclusion*

A specific way in which an organization can foster the development of affective commitment in employees is to adopt a prosocial value system, one in which the focus is on being helpful and building positive relationships (Rioux & Penner, 2001). Affective commitment can act as a buffer against employee interest in alternative employment opportunities, in that employees with high levels of affective commitment are more inclined to remain in their current organization regardless of the value systems adopted by competing organizations. Employees build affective commitment by tying in their own values with the perceived values of their current organization, and this connection is

made easier when organizations operate under prosocial values such as vision and humanity (Abbott, White, & Charles, 2005).

While building affective commitment is important, the present study also suggests that loyalty to supervisor is an important construct to consider, one that has an impact on employee outcomes. Chen (2001) suggests that those who are concerned with employee intent to stay should focus more attention on loyalty to supervisor in addition to organizational commitment. Chen (2001) also found that the three dimensions of dedication to the supervisor, extra effort for the supervisor, and attachment to the supervisor were significantly related to employee outcomes such as intent to stay in the organization. Therefore, it stands to reason that focusing on the dynamics of the supervisor-employee relationship in an effort to promote these three dimensions of loyalty to supervisor would contribute to employee desire to remain in the organization.

As can be seen through this research, constructs such as loyalty to supervisor and organizational commitment are important to an organization's vitality, as they have an impact on employee turnover intentions. The type of relationship developed between employee and supervisor affects employee thoughts, one of which is intention toward either remaining in or leaving the organization. This research shows that it is critical to understand both how to foster loyalty to supervisor and how to develop employee affective commitment. While both constructs have a positive impact on employee commitment, together, they represent a better overall predictor of employee intent to turnover. It appears that both of these concepts are necessary for an ideal work environment, one that better equips an organization to build a committed workforce.

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**TABLES**

Table 1  
Means, Standard Deviations and Correlations Among Variables of Interest

	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5
Variables							
1. Loyalty to Supervisor	4.95	1.11	(0.92)				
2. Affective Commitment	4.77	1.08	0.45 **	(0.81)			
3. Continuance Commitment	4.47	1.21	0.04	0.09	(0.78)		
4. Normative Commitment	3.97	0.1	0.38 **	0.39 **	0.22 *	(0.77)	
5. Intent to Turnover	2.61	1.64	-0.25 **	-0.50 **	0.03	-0.23 **	(0.91)

\* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ . Note. For Value of variables 1 through 5, scores could range from a minimum of one to a maximum of seven. Cronbach alpha reliability coefficients are shown in parentheses on the diagonal.

Table 2

*Summary of Regression for Mediation of Organizational Commitment between Loyalty to Supervisor and Intent to Turnover*

Predictors		Intent to Turnover		
		<u>B</u>	<u>SE B</u>	<u>β</u>
Step 1	Tenure	-0.224	0.148	-0.156
	Gender	0.477	0.302	0.142
	Education Level	-0.022	0.115	-0.017
	Age	0.002	0.015	0.014
Step 2	Loyalty to Supervisor	-.349	.129	-.237 **
Step 3a	Loyalty to Supervisor	-.027	.131	-.018
	Affective Commitment	-.739	.136	-.485 ***
Step 3b	Loyalty to Supervisor	-.353	.129	-.240 **
	Continuance Commitment	.059	.118	.044
Step 3c	Loyalty to Supervisor	-.258	.135	-.176 **
	Normative Commitment	-.324	.159	-.198 *

\* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ . \*\*\* $p < .001$

*Note.*  $\Delta R^2 = .040$  for Step 1;  $\Delta R^2 = .054^{**}$  for Step 2;  $\Delta R^2 = .177^{***}$  for Step 3a;  $\Delta R^2 = .002$  for Step 3b;  $\Delta R^2 = .029^*$  for Step 3c.

**APPENDICES**

Appendix A

**LOYALTY TO SUPERVISOR (Chen, Tsui, & Farh, 2002)**

This scale consists of a number of statements that describe the relationship you have with your supervisor. Read each item and then mark the appropriate answer in the space next to that word. Indicate to what extent you generally feel this way about your supervisor. Use the following scale to record your answers.

		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
		Strongly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Slightly Agree	Moderately Agree	Strongly Agree
1.	When my supervisor is treated unfairly, I will defend him/her.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2.	When somebody speaks ill of my supervisor, I will defend him/her immediately.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3.	I will put myself in my supervisor's position to consider his/her interests.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4.	I would support my supervisor under all circumstances.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5.	Even if my supervisor is not present, I will try my best to do the job assigned by him/her well.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6.	I will try my best to accomplish the job assigned by my supervisor.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7.	I will do my job conscientiously so that my supervisor will not worry about it.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8.	Even if there may be better alternatives, I will still remain to work under my supervisor.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

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9.	I would feel satisfied as long as I can work under my supervisor.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10.	No matter whether it will benefit me or not, I will be willing to continue working under my supervisor.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
11.	If it is possible, I would like to work under my supervisor for a long time.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12.	When someone praises my supervisor, I take it as a personal compliment.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
13.	When someone criticizes my supervisor, I take it as a personal insult.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
14.	My supervisors' successes are my successes.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
15.	My attachment to my supervisor is primarily based on the similarity of my values and those represented by my supervisor.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
16.	The reason I prefer my supervisor than another is because of what he/she stands for, that is, his/her values.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
17.	Since starting this job, my personal values and those of my supervisor have become more similar.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

**ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT (Allen & Meyer, 1990)**

This scale consists of a number of items that describe how you act at work. Read each item and then mark the appropriate answer in the space next to that word. Indicate to what extent you generally feel this way. Use the following scale to record your answers.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<i>Affective Commitment</i>	Strongly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Slightly Agree	Moderately Agree	Strongly Agree
1. I would be very happy to spend the rest of my work career with my current organization.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. I enjoy discussing my organization with people outside it.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. I really feel as if my organization's problems are my own.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4. I think that I could easily become as attached to another organization as I am to my current job. <b>R</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5. I do not feel like "part of the family" at my organization. <b>R</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6. I do not feel "emotionally attached" to my organization. <b>R</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7. This organization has a great deal of personal meaning for me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8. I do not feel a strong sense of "belonging" to my organization. <b>R</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

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R = Reversed Score

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<i><b>Continuance Commitment</b></i>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>
	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Moderately Disagree</b>	<b>Slightly Disagree</b>	<b>Neither Agree nor Disagree</b>	<b>Slightly Agree</b>	<b>Moderately Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>
1. If I quit my job without having another one lined up, I am not afraid of what might happen. <b>R</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. It would be very hard for me to leave my organization right now, even if I wanted to.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. Too much in my life would be disrupted if I decided I wanted to leave my organization now.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4. It wouldn't be too costly for me to leave my organization now. <b>R</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5. Right now, staying with my organization is a matter of necessity as much as desire.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6. I feel that I have too few options to consider leaving my organization now.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7. One of the few serious consequences of leaving my organization would be the scarcity of available alternatives.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8. One of the major reasons I continue to work for my organization is that leaving would require considerable personal sacrifice – another organization may not match the overall benefits I have now.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

R = Reversed Score

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<i><b>Normative Commitment</b></i>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>
	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Moderately Disagree</b>	<b>Slightly Disagree</b>	<b>Neither Agree nor Disagree</b>	<b>Slightly Agree</b>	<b>Moderately Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>
1. I think that people these days move from company to company too often.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. I do not believe that a person must always be loyal to his or her organization. <b>R</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. Jumping from organization to organization does not seem at all unethical to me. <b>R</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4. One of the major reasons I continue to work for my organization is that I believe loyalty is important and I therefore feel a sense of moral obligation to remain.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5. If I got another offer for a better job elsewhere I would not feel it was right to leave my organization.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6. I was taught to believe in the value of remaining loyal to one organization.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7. Things were better in the days when people stayed with one organization for most of their careers.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8. I do not think that wanting to be a "company man" or "company woman" is sensible anymore. <b>R</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

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R = Reversed Score

**INTENT TO TURNOVER (Mobley, Griffeth, Hand, & Meglino, 1979)**

This scale consists of a number of items that describe how you feel about leaving your current job. Read each item and then mark the appropriate answer in the space next to that word. Indicate to what extent you generally feel this way. Use the following scale to record your answers.

		<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>
		<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Moderately Disagree</b>	<b>Slightly Disagree</b>	<b>Neither Agree nor Disagree</b>	<b>Slightly Agree</b>	<b>Moderately Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>
1.	I think a lot about leaving the organization.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2.	I am actively searching for a substitute for the organization.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3.	As soon as possible I will leave the organization.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

## DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

Please fill in the following demographic information as honestly and accurately as possible. This information is voluntary and will remain completely anonymous. It will only be accessible to individuals involved in this study. Please try not to leave any information blank.

### **Gender:**

- Male
- Female

**Age:** \_\_\_\_\_

### **Race:**

- White
- African-American
- Hispanic
- Asian-Pacific Islander
- Native American
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

### **Highest level of education completed:**

- Less than high school
- High school / GED
- Some college
- 2-year college degree (Associates)
- 4-year college degree (BA, BS)
- Master's Degree
- Doctoral Degree
- Professional Degree (MD, JD)

### **What is your work status? (Check all that apply)**

- Part-time
- Full-time
- Self-employed
- Unemployed

### **How long have you been at your current job?**

- Less than a year
- 1 year
- 2-5 years
- 5-10 years
- Over 10 years

**What is your current annual income?**

**If you are married, what is your current combined annual income?**

**If not married, please indicate with N/A.**

Appendix B

## **INFORMED CONSENT STATEMENT**

### **PURPOSE OF THE STUDY AND PROCEDURE**

We are interested in the variables that lead to an employee remaining in his/her job. The main focus here is on organizational commitment. You will respond to a survey that asks you to rate a series of statements based on your feelings. In addition, other questions will provide us with information about your background, general attitudes, and present employment status. These questions will help us to interpret the rest of the study.

### **GENERAL INFORMATION**

Participants will complete self-report questionnaires plus a demographic questionnaire. The duration of the study is about 10-20 minutes. While you will not receive any direct benefit from participating, we believe that the results of this study can provide information that will assist organizations in understanding their workers better.

### **PARTICIPATION & RISKS**

Participation in this study is completely voluntary. You may elect not to participate at any time. All participants must be at least 18 years old. There is only minimal risk associated with responding to the questions in this research.

### **CONFIDENTIALITY**

The information that you provide in these questionnaires will be kept strictly confidential. Your responses to these questionnaires are completely anonymous—we do not ask that you identify yourself in any way. This information will be stored securely and will be made available only to persons directly involved in the study. Your name and place of work **will not** be included on any documents. At no time will single responses be identified.

### **CONTACT**

The UTC Institutional Review Board has reviewed and approved this research. If you have any questions about your rights as a participant, please contact:

**Chair of the IRB Board: Dr. M. D. Roblyer, (423) 425-5567  
Margaret-Roblyer@utc.edu**

If you have questions at any time about the study or the procedures or you would like to obtain a report of this research study when the results have been completed, please contact:

**Dr. Bart Weathington: Bart-Weathington@utc.edu / (423) 425-4289  
Dept. of Psychology, The University of Tennessee at  
Chattanooga**

### **CONSENT**

I have read and understand the above information. I have received a copy of this form via electronic format. By choosing to continue on and complete the survey, I agree to participate in this study.

**The Institutional Review Board of the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga  
(FWA00004149) has approved this research project # 08-163.**

Appendix C

**MEMORANDUM**

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TO: Christie Cunningham  
Dr. Bart Weathington **IRB # 08-163**

FROM: Lindsay Pardue, Director of Research Integrity  
M. D. Roblyer, IRB Committee Chair

DATE: October 13, 2008

SUBJECT: IRB # 08-163: What Makes People Stay? Examining the Relationships among Loyalty of Supervisor, Organizational Commitment, and Intent to Turnover

The Institutional Review Board has reviewed and approved your application and assigned you the IRB number listed above. You must include the following approval statement on research materials seen by participants and used in research reports:

***The Institutional Review Board of the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga (FWA00004149) has approved this research project # 08-163.***

Please remember that you must complete Form C when the project is completed or provide an annual report if the project takes over one year to complete. The IRB Committee will make every effort to remind you prior to your anniversary date; however, it is your responsibility to ensure that this additional step is satisfied.

Please remember to contact the IRB Committee immediately and submit a new project proposal for review if significant changes occur in your research design or in any instruments used in conducting the study. You should also contact the IRB Committee immediately if you encounter any adverse effects during your project that pose a risk to your subjects.

For any additional information, please consult our web page <http://www.utc.edu/irb> or email [instrb@utc.edu](mailto:instrb@utc.edu)

Best wishes for a successful research project.