

**ASSESSING THE INFLUENCE OF ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT ON
EMPLOYEE PERCEPTIONS OF SUPERIOR CUSTOMER VALUE CREATION**

by

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Abstract

The aim of this study was to assess whether organizational commitment influences employee perceptions of superior customer value creation. While these two constructs have been established in their separate fields as major sources for increasing organizational performance, their integration into a single model has been overlooked in the management literature. Drawing from the theories of the three-component model of organizational commitment and customer value creation, this study examined the extent to which affective commitment, continuance commitment, and normative commitment influence employee perceptions of superior customer value creation. The study also investigated whether affective commitment had a stronger overall influence on these perceptions as compared to the normative commitment. Pearson Correlations and Multiple regression analysis results, based on data collected from 158 customer-facing employees in the United States retail industry, revealed that affective commitment and continuance commitment were positively, but weakly related to perceptions of superior customer value creation whereas, normative commitment was positively but moderately related to these perceptions. In addition, all three types of commitment, together, statistically significantly predicted employee perceptions of superior customer value creation. However, there was not sufficient evidence to reject the null hypothesis that affective commitment did not have a stronger overall influence on these perceptions as compared to the normative commitment. The findings of this research provide insights about employee commitment as influencer of superior customer value creation. The study indicates directions for further research in the field that can contribute to the understanding of how employee-organization relationships affect customer outcomes.

Dedication

This research is dedicated to my lovely wife, Ameyo, and our adorable boys, Godson, Daniel, and Gabriel, whose sacrifices and prayers supported me throughout the challenging and triumphant moments of my doctoral journey. This research is also dedicated to the memory of my mother, Martine Atsroupi Simadou, who inspired me to attain my educational pursuits. This research is also dedicated to my family and friends who supported me throughout this process.

Finally, I am forever grateful to all the giants in the field of organizational management who have carried me on their shoulders so that I could see farther.

We are at the very beginning of time for the human race. It is not unreasonable that we grapple with problems. But there are tens of thousands of years in the future. Our responsibility is to do what we can, learn what we can, improve the solutions, and pass them on.

--Richard P. Feynman

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CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

Introduction to the Problem

One of the greatest challenges for management scholars and business leaders is to determine the factors that contribute to improving organizational performance. In today's marketplace, many organizations are facing the pressure to increase their profitability while creating favorable conditions for customer retention and loyalty. Unlike in the past, firms can no longer compete based only on low cost and high quality (Spiteri & Dion, 2004). Therefore, the issue of customer value creation has gained prominence among marketing researchers since the seminal work of Woodruff (1997), which identified the concept as a new source for competitiveness. As a result, several scholars have focused on factors that could lead to higher value for customers (Chang & Weng, 2012; Hsin & Hsin-Wei, 2011; Hui-Yao, & Shieh, 2012; Leelakulthanit & Hongcharu, 2012; Mathuramaytha & Ussahawanitchakit, 2008).

Although scholars have acknowledged customer value creation as the new archetype for gaining competitive advantage (C. Meyer & Schwager, 2007; Nilson, 2003), there has not always been a consensus on the way to define, create, or deliver value to customers. Therefore, the concept has been carried out in different directions with dissimilar emphasis within the organizational management field. There is a stream of literature that has addressed value creation from the customer's perspective

(Argandoña, 2003; Bielenberg, 2006; Daly & Kabanoff, 2002; DeHaan, 2005; Khalifa, 2004; Plaster & Alderman, 2006). However, few studies have addressed the issue from the perspective of employees, whose behaviors have been found to be pivotal to customer perceptions of value (Guenzi, De Luca, & Troilo, 2011; Harris, 2007). Instead, practitioners have associated customer value creation with quality management and process improvement methods (Plaster & Alderman, 2006), while customer dissatisfaction continues to be a serious concern in achieving organizational performance (Nemeroff, 2011).

According to national reports from the American Customer Satisfaction Index (2012), 76.1% of customers were satisfied with the American retail industry in 2012, which leaves plenty of room for improvement. Concomitantly, not only do American companies continue to face the challenge of customer dissatisfaction, but they also are confronted with widespread employee disengagement (Blacksmith & Harter, 2011) and lack of commitment (TNS Intersearch, 2003). According to BlessingWhite (2011), in 2011, an increasing number of employees were likely to quit their jobs for new opportunities outside their current organization, compared to 2008. According to a global commitment survey study conducted in 2002 by TNS Intersearch, which included almost 20,000 workers in 33 countries across the world, employees were somewhat less committed in the United States compared to many other countries (TNS Intersearch, 2003).

According to Barber, Hayday, and Bevan (1999), a committed employee influences organizational performance through increased sales, reduction of staff absenteeism, and improved customer satisfaction; an increase of only 1% in employee

commitment can result in a 9% increase in monthly sales. For example, the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM, 2006) reported that Caterpillar realized \$8.8 million annual savings with a decrease in attrition and absenteeism by implementing employee commitment initiatives at its European plant, whereas Intuit increased its revenue by 15% in 2006 and increased its stock value almost 300% over a 2-year period. Although Nutt (2001) suggested that commitment is the key to organizational performance, very few researchers have sought to link employees' feelings and mindset to the way they interact with customers.

Instead, previous studies have associated the necessity of creating value for customers with management practices that focused on cutting costs, improving quality, and streamlining operations and processes with the expectation to increase organizational performance (Hackman & Wageman, 1995; Plaster & Alderman, 2006). Even though these strategies were remarkably successful (Ahn & Dornbusch, 2004; Goeke & Offodile, 2005), a series of critics questioned the sufficiency of such strategies as a methodology to meet customers' needs (Antony, 2004; Goh, 2002; Kumar, Antony, Madu, Montgomery, & Park, 2008; Romano, 1994). Several researchers argue that today's customers are informed and much more sophisticated than they were years ago (Argandoña, 2003; Bielenberg, 2006; Daly & Kabanoff, 2002; DeHaan, 2005; Khalifa, 2004).

This present study emerged from the assumptions that employee behaviors and attitudes affect customer experience (Schmit & Allscheid, 1995; Schneider, Wheeler, & Cox, 1992) and that the level of employee commitment is related to customer satisfaction (Güres, Demirer, & Kara, 2009). Therefore, assessing the relationships between organizational commitment and employee perceptions of superior customer value

creation is an attempt to close the gap in the literature. Furthermore, this study highlights the way commitment can help predict these perceptions. By demonstrating the link between these two constructs, practitioners may gain deeper insight into their human resource (HR) practices and marketing management strategies.

Background of the Study

At the end of the 19th century, after the industrial revolution had swept across the European and American continents, managers from all types of industries began searching for a new definition of work and exploring different ways to increase organizational effectiveness (Chalofsky & Krishna, 2009). Thus, the new dynamic of the world economy prompted organizational psychologists to examine individual attitudes and behaviors toward work and organizations in order to provide insight that could help achieve higher customer satisfaction and superior profitability.

For many decades, organizations have relied on their employees to achieve performance (Crook, Todd, Combs, Woehr, & Ketchen, 2011), and they have counted on them as a leverage to create value for customers (Dierickx & Cool, 1989). However, J. P. Meyer and Allen (1991) anticipated that employees might be holding on to their jobs, either because they wanted to, needed to, or felt obligated to remain with the organization. In addition, the complexity of defining value from customers' standpoint alone continued to limit organizations' effort to achieve successful value creation strategies (Argandoña, 2003; Daly & Kabanoff, 2002; Slack, Amis, & Hinings, 2002). Therefore, these challenges have raised the question of whether it was sufficient to define value from a unique perspective or to begin looking at another approach. Despite the few

studies that have addressed the employee–customer value interface worth their while to be mentioned (Guenzi et al., 2011; Harris; 2007; Mascarenhas, Kesavan, & Bernacchi, 2004), no scientific research to date has linked employees’ commitment with their perceptions of superior customer value creation.

Two streams of research have conceptualized the construct of employee commitment, each accompanied with either overlapping or very different definitions. Some years ago, J. P. Meyer, Allen, and Smith (1993) generalized the concept to occupational commitment. Later, J. P. Meyer and Herscovitch (2001) extended the concept and applied it to organizational commitment in general. While some researchers, such as Wiener (1982) and M. A. Ansari, Daisy Kee, and Aafaqi (2007), treated employee commitment as a one-dimensional construct, the difficulty in conceptualizing commitment dimensions from a single perspective has prompted many other scholars to adopt a multidimensional approach (Mayer & Schoorman, 1992, 1998). Although the issue of dimensionality has divided organizational behavior researchers, Allen and Meyer (1990) and J. P. Meyer and Allen (1991) suggested three main types of commitment (and have received substantial support in the literature; i.e., Dunham, Grube, & Castañeda, 1994; Nazari & Emami, 2012): affective commitment, continuance commitment, and normative commitment.

Furthermore, Tutuncu and Kucukusta (2007) classified the emergent themes of employee commitment broadly into three groups. The first group identified employees’ affection toward the organization and included commitment as an affective evaluation (Mottaz, 1988; O’Reilly & Chatman, 1986), a psychological attachment to the organization in terms of identification (O’Reilly & Chatman, 1986), and an involvement

with the organization (Mowday, Porter, & Steers, 1982). The second group referred to the analysis of cost and reward, which reflected employees' feeling of obligation to continue their jobs. This second group included continuance commitment (J. P. Meyer, Paunonen, Gellatly, Goffin, & Jackson, 1989), calculative commitment (Jaros, Jermier, Koehler, & Sincich, 1993), and compliance commitment (O'Reilly & Chatman, 1986). Finally, the third group referred to the feeling of a greater obligation toward the company and comprised of normative commitment (J. P. Meyer et al., 1989), moral commitment (Jaros et al., 1993), and internalization (O'Reilly & Chatman, 1986). These three groups of themes were consistent throughout the literature, and even though they overlapped, they provided a stable theoretical framework on which this current research was grounded to assess the extent to which organizational commitment could influence employee perceptions of superior customer value creation.

Previous studies suggested that there is a significant influence of employee commitment on organizational outcomes such as increased job performance (Mathieu & Zajac, 1990), increased sales (Barber et al., 1999), improved return on investment for shareholders (Walker Information, 2000), and increased job satisfaction (Vandenberg & Lance, 1992). Scholars also found that higher commitment contributed to decreased employee turnover (A. Cohen, 1991), intention to leave (Balfour & Wechsler, 1996), intention to look for alternative jobs (A. Cohen, 1993), and absenteeism (Barber et al., 1999; A. Cohen, 1993). While these findings were remarkable, they focused only on employees, organizations, or shareholders.

Although closely related theories to organizational commitment, such as motivation (O. U. Khan, Khan, & Saeed, 2011; Milne, 2007; Udechukwu, 2009),

organizational citizenship behavior (OCB; Alizadeh, Darvishi, Nazari, & Emami, 2012), social exchange (Cardona, Bentler, & Lawrence, 2004), and engagement (Welch, 2011), have largely discussed employee–organization relationships, some overlapping conceptualizations were not investigated as part of this study. Instead, this study was built on the related theories to highlight the importance of organizational commitment by testing the proposed model of value creation within the organization. Therefore, the theory of organizational commitment, as discussed further in this study, sheds light on the way employees perceive superior customer value creation in their organizations. Such research was lacking in previous literature.

Statement of the Problem

At the time that U.S. employees are either actively disengaged (Blacksmith & Harter, 2011), concerned about their job security (SHRM, 2011), or likely to quit their current jobs for new opportunities (BlessingWhite, 2011), organizational commitment has become a topic of major interest for both management scholars and practitioners. Iles, Mabey, and Robertson (1990) suggested that the lack of commitment affects the quality circle of the organization. Meanwhile, the fierce competitiveness of the global economy continues to put pressure on companies to not only meet customers' needs but also exceed their expectations (Assaf & Josiassen, 2011; Goddard, Birkinshaw, & Eccles, 2012; Jie, 2010). Thus, having a committed work force and creating a superior value for customers do far more for an organization than just gain a competitive advantage. They are also instrumental for business survival.

Although previous studies have examined the consequences of the commitment construct (Barber et al., 1999; A. Cohen, 1991, 1993; Mathieu & Zajac, 1990; Walker Information, 2000), no research has sought to link the nature and level of employees' commitment to their perceptions of superior customer value creation. Therefore, in this current study, assessing the relationships between each dimension of organizational commitment— affective, continuance, normative—and employee perceptions of superior customer value creation was an attempt to bridge the gap in the applied literature. The study also provides a valuable framework for both scholars and practitioners seeking to create a committed work force that embraces value-creating strategies.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this quantitative research was to examine the relationships between organizational commitment and employee perceptions of superior customer value creation and to describe how variation in the nature of commitment, based on the three-component model of commitment (J. P. Meyer & Allen, 1991; J. P. Meyer et al., 1993), influenced these perceptions. This study also examined the relationship between affective commitment and employee perceptions of superior customer value creation as compared to normative commitment. There is a gap in the current organizational commitment literature due to the lack of empirical studies that address superior customer value creation from an organizational commitment perspective. Therefore, the study also bridged this gap by investigating the issue in a meaningful way.

Understanding how each dimension of the commitment construct influenced perceptions of creating a superior value for customers would expand knowledge in the

field. In particular, the strength and direction of a correlational relationship between the independent variables (affective commitment, continuance commitment, normative commitment) and the dependent variable (superior customer value creation) could provide insight to management scholars and organizational leaders regarding employee empowerment strategy that could support customer value creation. A professional survey research organization was used to conduct a self-administrated online survey and collect data that provided answers to the research questions.

Rationale

This research attempted to answer questions regarding the extent to which organizational commitment influences employee perceptions of superior customer value creation based on J. P. Meyer and Allen's (1991) three-component model of organizational commitment. By using a quantitative research methodology with a survey design, this study was able to collect objective information and potentially generalize the findings to the population from which the sample was drawn (Amaratunga, Baldry, Sarshar, & Newton, 2002; Carr, 1994; Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). Among the various methodological approaches that have been used to research this topic in the past, the quantitative survey method has been instrumental in producing actionable knowledge despite its inherent challenges (Arif, Mehmood, & Siddiqi, 2011; Capell, Dean, & Veenstra, 2008; R. Islam & Ismail, 2008). According to Polit and Beck (2004), the quantitative method offers the possibility for a researcher to examine the relationships among variables, which can be measured and analyzed.

Furthermore, this study utilized a survey design to answer the research questions. Early studies found this design very helpful. For example, Spiteri and Dion (2004) investigated the role of personal contact selling in the veterinary pharmaceuticals market and collected data using a survey questionnaire. Mathuramaytha and Ussahawanitchakit (2008) also used a survey design to collect data in order to examine factors driving the creation of customer value among the furniture exportation business in Thailand. Other advantages of using a survey questionnaire include the low cost and the possibility of reaching multiple participants at the same time (Yang, Stafford, & Gillenson, 2011), particularly when the instrument is administered via the Internet (Couper, 2000; Shannon & Bradshaw, 2002). The results of this quantitative survey study contribute meaningfully to the advancement of the body of knowledge in the field of organizational management, particularly in professional training, career development, performance management, and marketing.

Research Questions

This study put forth two main research questions: one primary and one secondary.

Primary Research Questions

R₁: To what extent does employee commitment influence employee perceptions of superior customer value creation?

This question is broken down into the following subquestions:

R_{1a}: To what extent does affective commitment influence employee perceptions of superior customer value creation?

R_{1b}: To what extent does continuance commitment influence employee perceptions of superior customer value creation?

R_{1c}: To what extent does normative commitment influence employee perceptions of superior customer value creation?

Secondary Research Question

R₂: Does affective commitment have a stronger overall influence on employee perceptions of superior customer value creation as compared to normative commitment?

Null Hypotheses

H_{1a}: Employee affective commitment does not significantly influence employee perceptions of superior customer value creation.

H_{1b}: Employee continuance commitment does not significantly influence employee perceptions of superior customer value creation.

H_{1c}: Employee normative commitment does not significantly influence employee perceptions of superior customer value creation.

H₂: Employee affective commitment does not have a stronger overall influence on employee perceptions of superior customer value creation as compared to normative commitment.

Alternative Hypotheses

Ha_{1a}: Employee affective commitment significantly influences employee perceptions of superior customer value creation.

Ha_{1b}: Employee continuance commitment significantly influences employee perceptions of superior customer value creation.

Ha_{1c}: Employee normative commitment significantly influences employee perceptions of superior customer value creation.

Ha₂: Employee affective commitment has a stronger overall influence on employee perceptions of superior customer value creation as compared to normative commitment.

The information derived from testing the hypotheses and answering the research questions provided the path to determine the existence, nature, and importance of the relationships between organizational commitment and perceptions of superior customer value. The information also contributed to determine whether affective commitment had a stronger overall influence on employee perceptions of superior customer value creation as compared to normative commitment. The results yielded valuable information that could be necessary to implement effective commitment strategies in organizational development, human resource management (HRM), career training, or strategic change processes. Altogether, by knowing more about the nature of employee commitment, scholars and organizational leaders would be able to anticipate how value creation efforts resonate with employees.

Significance of the Study

A study assessing the influence of organizational commitment on employee perceptions of superior customer value creation was expected to highlight the impact of employee attitude and behavior on customer outcomes. The results could be a key indicator of the extent to which employee decisions to either stay with or leave their organizations could influence these perceptions. Previous research suggested there is a

relationship between employee commitment and organizational outcomes (Barber et al., 1999; Mathieu & Zajac, 1990; Vandenberg & Lance, 1992). By specifically assessing the relationships between the three dimensions of organizational commitment and superior customer value creation, practitioners seeking to improve customer satisfaction, retention, or loyalty could be provided with valuable information regarding recruiting, training, and motivating their work force to better serve customers. Results of this study could also challenge scholars and organizational leaders to examine the appropriate work environment, which could enhance the desirable commitment behavior susceptible of supporting organizational value-creating strategy. Further, the outcome of this study could provide insight into the changes that need to occur in job design, employee orientation, and commitment initiatives, in order to create a superior value for customers as a strategy of gaining a competitive advantage. In addition, this study could make a substantial contribution to the field of organizational management by filling the existing gap in the literature and by providing a working framework for marketing scholars.

Definition of Terms

For the purpose of consistency, the following conceptual definitions were adopted throughout the research.

Affective commitment. The degrees to which employees are emotionally attached to their organizations through identification with the values and involvement with organizational goals (J. P. Meyer & Allen, 1991).

Continuance commitment. Employees' consciousness of the cost that leaving the organization will involve (J. P. Meyer & Allen, 1991).

Customer orientation. “Commitment to understanding and meeting a customer’s needs and interest and ensuring long-term customer satisfaction” (Homburg, Müller, & Klarmann, 2011b, p. 56).

Employee commitment. “A psychological state that (a) characterizes the employees’ relationship with the organization and (b) has implications for the decision to continue or discontinue membership in the organization” (J. P. Meyer et al., 1993, p. 539). *Employee commitment* was used interchangeably with *organizational commitment*.

Innovative job performance. Employees’ problem-solving skills and creativity (O. F. Lee, Tan, & Javalgi, 2010).

In-role job performance. The specific responsibilities of the employee as formally prescribed in the job description (O. F. Lee et al., 2010).

Normative commitment. An employee’s sense of obligation for a continuing membership with the company (J. P. Meyer & Allen, 1991).

Organizational citizenship behavior (OCB). A discretionary behavior that is neither a requirement nor rewarded in the formal compensation system (Organ, 1990) but is characterized by employees’ willingness to collaborate, be innovative, or be spontaneous (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Paine, & Bachrach, 2000).

Organizational commitment. “A psychological link between the employee and his or her organization that makes it less likely that the employee will voluntarily leave the organization” (Allen & Meyer, 1996, p. 252). *Organizational commitment* was used interchangeably with *employee commitment*.

Organizational tenure. The number of years an employee has worked for a particular organization (McEnrue, 1988; Shirom & Mazeh, 1988).

Superior customer value creation. “The ability to creatively, proactively and rapidly create and transfer benefits to customers, as well as to solve customer problems, thus reducing what they perceive as sacrifice” (Guenzi & Troilo, 2007, p. 101).

Assumptions and Limitations

This study arose from both theoretical and methodological assumptions that empirical evidence was needed to bridge the gap in the existing literature; a quantitative survey research was the most effective methodology to assess the relationships between organizational commitment and superior customer value creation.

Theoretical Assumptions

First, this researcher assumed that a high level of organizational commitment would have a strong influence on employee perceptions of superior customer value creation, while a low level of organizational commitment would have a weak influence on these perceptions. This assumption was supported by previous studies, which found strong correlations between organizational commitment and job performance (Barber et al., 1999; Mathieu & Zajac, 1990).

Second, the researcher also assumed that organizational commitment develops as the result of distinctive stages of experience that determine employee perceptions of delivering superior value to customers. In one hand, this assumption was supported by the multiple dimensionality of the organizational commitment construct (Mathieu & Zajac, 1990; Mayer & Schoorman, 1992; J. P. Meyer & Allen, 1984, 1991). On the other hand, this assumption was supported by the general expectation that employees would

engage in positive behavior and attitude when interacting with customers (Brandy & Cronin, 2001; Hartline, Maxham, & McKee, 2000).

Third, an assumption was made that affective commitment would have an overall stronger influence on employee perceptions of superior customer value creation as compared to normative commitment. This assumption derived from established literature according to which, affective commitment had the most positive influence on organizations' outcomes as compared to the other types of commitment (Allen & Meyer, 1990; J. P. Meyer & Allen, 1991, 1997).

This research also assumed that individual circumstances and personal characteristics influence the nature of commitment. This assumption was supported by several previous studies (Allen & Meyer, 1993; Bakan, Buyukbese, & Ersahan, 2011; Mathieu & Zajac, 1990; M. Wang, Liao, Zhan, & Shi, 2011). For example, it has been found that as employees get older, the more committed they become to their organizations (Mathieu & Zajac, 1990). Although it was beyond the scope of this research to test the influence of demographic variables, descriptive statistics were used to convey dominant characteristics of the participants.

Methodological Assumptions

This study was grounded in the positivist assumptions according to which, reality is objective (Bielefeld, 2006; Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004) and social facts are measurable (Firestone, 1987). It also was assumed that a survey was an appropriate and efficient design by which to collect data (Couper, 2000; Couper & Miller, 2008; Frippiat & Marquis, 2010; Judeh, 2011). The researcher also assumed that potential participants were randomly selected and they represented the targeted population. In addition, it was

assumed that responses to the survey questions were truthful, honest, and unbiased. Finally, this research assumed that the results would be generalizable beyond the sample being studied and meaningful to the stakeholders.

Limitations

As with all research projects, this study acknowledges several limitations that should be accounted for despite the robustness of the design. Chief among these limitations include the recruitment of the participants. In this study, data were collected from a panel of SurveyMonkey members who chose to take the survey. Therefore, the generalization of the results was limited to the targeted group of the population within SurveyMonkey's ZoomPanel membership. In addition, the ability to compare results across other groups was diminished. Further, the use of a cross-sectional research design limited the generalization of the results. Other participants may have been excluded because the research was a snapshot of the phenomenon occurring at one point in time. Moreover, the survey was self-administered and participants were self-selected. Therefore, this design could have introduced a self-selection bias.

Furthermore, the use of an Internet survey could limit participation to only those who have access to the Internet. In addition, the use of SurveyMonkey limited participation to those who subscribed to take surveys for the organization. As a result, findings could not be generalized beyond this setting. More importantly, the use of a correlational design could not permit inference of cause-effect relationships among variables. Finally, even though all the necessary measures were taken to ascertain the quality of the survey process, responses could still be biased due to participants' personal

feelings about the study, the degree to which their responses were honest, and whether they truly represented perceptions of creating superior value for customers.

This study made several assumptions and acknowledged some practical limitations that could diminish the quality of this study. However, the strengths of this study reside in the advantages of the design over the limitations. The criteria of selecting participants minimized coverage error. Further, the population of this study was finite in size, and SurveyMonkey was able to determine the number of individuals available in its database who met the inclusion requirement. Although true random sampling might be difficult to verify in the selection process, participants were diverse in demographics, were from all over the country, were employed at various positions, and represented a wide range of business sectors within the retail industry. These characteristics of the sample mitigated potential sampling errors.

Theoretical Framework

Creswell (2009) suggested that researchers could present their theories as a series of “hypotheses, if–then logic statements, or visual models” (p. 53). The theoretical framework of this study was conceptualized by using both a series of hypotheses and the visual model (see Figure 1).

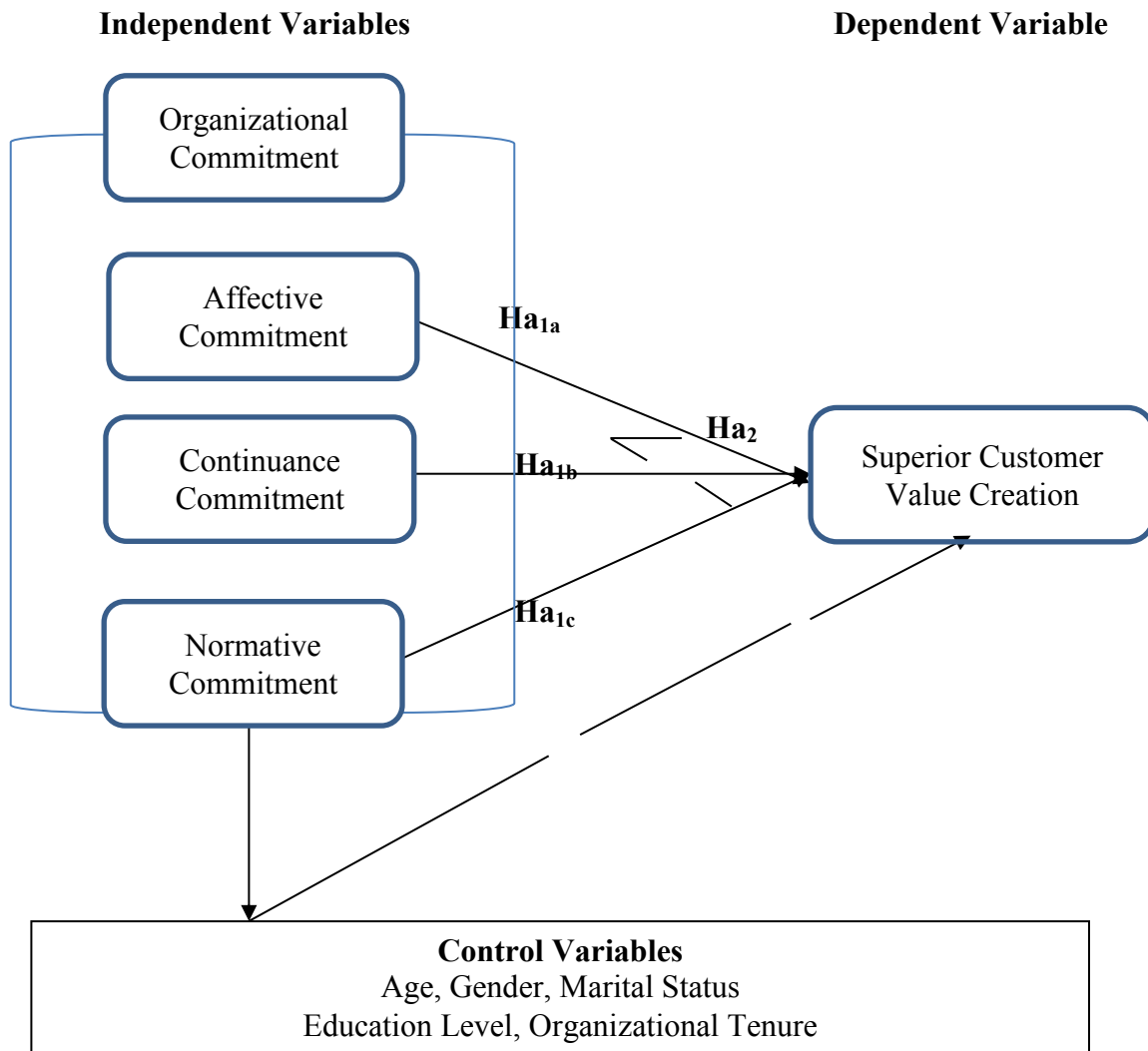


Figure 1. Theoretical framework.

Primary Research Question

R_1 : To what extent does employee commitment influence employee perceptions of superior customer value creation?

H_{a1a} : Employee affective commitment significantly influences employee perceptions of superior customer value creation.

Ha_{1b}: Employee continuance commitment significantly influences employee perceptions of superior customer value creation.

Ha_{1c}: Employee normative commitment significantly influences employee perceptions of superior customer value creation.

Secondary Research Question

R₂: Does affective commitment have a stronger overall influence on employee perceptions of superior customer value creation as compared to normative commitment?

Ha₂: Employee affective commitment has a stronger overall influence on employee perceptions of superior customer value creation as compared to normative commitment.

The study theorized that the nature of the relationships between the variables would be a simple correlation and would not infer presence of causality. The expected pattern of the relationships between the model variables was either absence of a relationship, a negative relationship, or a positive relationship (Trochim, 2006). Although the demographic variables were not included in the model, they were utilized to describe specific characteristics of the participants. In sum, the hypotheses, the visual model, and the interactions between the variables formed the theoretical framework of this study. The justification for the proposed model and its contribution to the literature are fully discussed in Chapter 2.

Organization of the Remainder of the Study

The remainder of this study is organized in the following four chapters. Chapter 2 provides a detailed literature review of both past and current knowledge regarding the

topic of the study. Chapter 3 discusses the research methodology and design that were used to answer the research questions. Chapter 4 delineates the statistical results from the data analyses, and Chapter 5 summarizes the findings of the research, presents implications, and provides recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview

With the current disturbance in the U.S. economy (A. Smith, Wagner, & Yandle, 2011) accompanied by a slow recovery of the labor market (Elsby, Hobijn, Şahin, & Valletta, 2011), organizational commitment has never been so crucial to understand what makes employees decide to leave their organizations or stay. Over the years, organizational researchers have operationalized and measured the construct of organizational commitment from different perspectives (J. P. Meyer & Allen, 1991). Although commitment has been determined to relate to organizational outcomes such as satisfaction (Vandenberg & Lance, 1992), performance (Mathieu & Zajac, 1990), turnover (A. Cohen, 1991), intention to leave (Balfour & Wechsler, 1996), absenteeism (Barber et al., 1999; A. Cohen, 1993), and employee well-being (J. P. Meyer & Maltin, 2010), no studies have focused specifically on this relationship relative to superior customer value creation. This chapter begins with a discussion of the three-component model of organizational commitment—*affective, continuance, normative*—as independent variables. It also discusses related theories as well as antecedents and consequences of organizational commitment. The literature review continues with discussion on the theory of superior customer value creation as the dependent variable. The chapter concludes with a discussion of research findings about the reliability and

validity of the instruments utilized in this study. Altogether, this chapter defines the historical background and the theoretical framework of the relationship that could exist between organizational commitment and perceptions of superior customer value creation.

Theory of the Three-Component Model of Organizational Commitment

The foundation of the three-component model is the recognition that organizational commitment is a multidimensional construct (Mayer & Schoorman, 1992, 1998; J. P. Meyer & Allen, 1991, 1997) as opposed to a one-dimensional construct (H. S. Becker, 1960; Mowday et al., 1982; Porter, Steers, Mowday, & Boulian, 1974; Wiener, 1982). From this perspective, employee commitment can take different forms and focus on various objectives (J. P. Meyer & Allen, 1997). Tutuncu and Kucukusta (2007) classified the themes that often emerged from the definitions found in the commitment literature into three main groups. The first group identifies organizational commitment as an affection that employees have toward the organization, and includes commitment as an affective evaluation (O'Reilly & Chatman, 1986; Wiener, 1982), a psychological attachment to the organization in terms of identification (O'Reilly & Chatman, 1986), and an involvement with the organization (Mowday et al., 1982). The second group is the analysis of cost and reward, which reflects employees' feelings of entrapment to continue their job, and include continuance commitment (J. P. Meyer et al., 1989), calculative commitment (Jaros et al., 1993), and compliance commitment (O'Reilly & Chatman, 1986). Finally, the third group refers to the feeling of an obligation toward the company and includes normative commitment (J. P. Meyer et al., 1989), moral commitment (Jaros

et al., 1993), and internalization (O'Reilly & Chatman, 1986). Finally, inconsistent definitions and the difficulty of operationalizing the construct from a single-dimension perspective increased the interest in the multidimensionality of organizational commitment.

Over the last 50 years, not only has the concept of organizational commitment been defined in various ways but its dimensionality has also evolved. WeiBo, Kaur, and Jun (2010) summarized the evolution of the commitment theory and distinguished two significant eras that characterize the process. They included the period when organizational commitment was thought of as a one-dimensional construct and the period when it was approached as a multidimensional construct, which led to the theory of the three components of organizational commitment. The following section discusses the two periods that marked the conceptualization of organizational commitment.

One-Dimensional Era

From 1960 to 1980, social scientists approached the theory of organizational commitment as a one-dimensional construct, characterized by the works of H. S. Becker (1960) and Porter et al. (1974) as the leading scholars in the field. First, organizational commitment originated from Becker's thinking of the concept as side bets that employees make in staying in the organization. According to the side-bet theory, as employees continue to stay in the organization, they accumulate investments that they value and which they may lose if they decide to leave the organization (WeiBo et al., 2010). This conceptualization was the leading framework of the commitment theory at its early stage, as it was believed to be a strong predictor of turnover. Even though the side-bet theory has been abandoned, it continues to influence studies on organizational commitment.

The second theory that influenced the development of organizational commitment was proposed by Porter et al. (1974), which represented a shift from the side-bet theory to the affective dependence theory. According to WeiBo et al. (2010), organizational commitment refers to the affective dependence of an employee toward the organization based on the perceived economic contract between employee and a particular organization. It also refers to the identification with goals and involvement with the organization (Mowday et al., 1982; Porter et al., 1974). Although Porter et al. contributed to the evolution of organizational commitment theory, they continued to explain commitment as a one-dimensional construct, as H. S. Becker (1960) and his colleagues did. The underlying assumption at the time was that organizational commitment was strongly related to turnover. The attempt of early researchers to approach commitment as a three-dimensional construct in terms of (a) value congruence between the employee and the organization, (b) effort, and (c) a strong willingness to stay resulted in the development of the Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ) with 15 items. However, critics warned that the scale should be used with caution (WeiBo et al., 2010), resulting in the proposal of a reduced number of items (Iverson, 1999). Further, the limitation of the instrument relative to its content and discriminant validity led to an increasing interest in the multidimensional approach to studying organizational commitment.

Multidimensional Era

The conceptualization of organizational commitment as a multidimensional construct emerged between the 1980s and 1990s and was characterized by the notion of a psychological attachment that employees developed toward the organization. Two groups

of seminal scholars dominated this period: O'Reilly and Chatman (1986) in one camp and Allen and Meyer (1990) and J. P. Meyer and Allen (1984, 1991, 1997) in the other. The contribution of O'Reilly and Chatman focused on both the antecedents and consequences of organizational commitment. They argued that, as a psychological attachment, organizational commitment could be explained in terms of compliance to policies, identification with organizational values, and internalization of norms and practices, which could lead to different work behaviors. Despite the significant contribution of O'Reilly and Chatman to the multidimensional school of thought, the weakness of the OCQ contributed to the lack of interest in their work. Therefore, only a few researchers followed in their footsteps (WeiBo et al., 2010), whereas Allen and Meyer (1990) and J. P. Meyer and Allen's (1991, 1997) three-dimensional conceptualization of organizational commitment has dominated the literature.

Building on the works of their predecessors, especially H. S. Becker (1960) and Porter et al. (1974), J. P. Meyer and Allen (1984) concluded that organizational commitment has two distinctive dimensions. First, they redefined the concept of affective dependence as an affective commitment that employees have toward their organizations. Then, they defined affective commitment as the level of emotional attachment to the organization through identification with the values and involvement with organizational goals (J. P. Meyer & Allen, 1991). A few years after their primary work, Allen and Meyer (1990) proposed a new scale—the Affective Commitment Scale (ACS)—as an improvement to the OCQ. Second, Meyer and Allen reexamined the side-bet theory and argued that Becker's contractual relation lacked precision; they proposed, instead, the continuance commitment that employees have toward their organizations. They defined

continuance commitment as employees' consciousness of the cost that leaving the organization will involve (J. P. Meyer & Allen, 1991), referring to the notion of investment or side bet an employee may have accumulated over time in the organization. A few years after their initial assessment in 1984, Allen and Meyer (1990) proposed the Continuance Commitment Scale (CCS) to measure this specific dimension of organizational commitment. They also introduced the concept of normative commitment, defined as a sense of obligation for continuing membership with the company (J. P. Meyer & Allen, 1991) and measured by the Normative Commitment Scale (NCS).

Although the construct of organizational commitment has been defined from various perspectives and its dimensions have evolved, the three-component model of organizational commitment has been immensely popular as the leading approach to study organizational commitment over the past two decades (Nazari & Emami, 2012; WeiBo et al., 2010). Not only have the validity and reliability of the three scales—ACS, CCS, NCS—contributed to the increasing interest in the model by commitment researchers (Allen & Meyer, 1996), J. P. Meyer and Allen (1991, 1997) also supported the conclusion that commitment is characterized by three different mindsets—desire, cost, and obligation—according to which, individuals are committed either because they want to, have to, or ought to (J. P. Meyer & Allen, 2004). Each mindset was referred to respectively as affective commitment, continuance commitment, and normative commitment, which formed the basis for the three-component model of organizational commitment theory (J. P. Meyer & Allen, 1991).

Affective commitment. According to J. P. Meyer and Allen (1991), affective commitment refers to the level of emotional attachment that employees have through

identification with the values and involvement with organizational goals. Although no empirical studies have examined the relationship between affective commitment and employee perceptions of superior customer value creation, previous studies have found that a high level of affective commitment correlates with positive customer-related behavior among employees (Allen & Grisaffe, 2001). In addition, Shum, Bove, and Auh (2008) conducted a qualitative study using in-depth interviews to collect data from the top five banks in New Zealand. The results indicated that employees who had strong emotional attachment with their organizations supported the implementation of a customer relationship management program. In order for such a program to be successful, Shum et al. argued that organizations should focus on engaging this behavior and attitude among employees. Further, Janet, Cadwallader, and Busch (2008) found a relationship between employee affective commitment, performance improvement, and the success of change implementation. Fu, Bolander, and Jones (2009) found that affective commitment has a positive and a direct influence on sales effort. Based on the evidences that affective commitment could predict favorable customer-related behaviors, this study anticipated that employee affective commitment would influence employee perceptions of superior customer value creation.

Continuance commitment. Continuance commitment refers to employees' consciousness of the cost that leaving the organization will involve (J. P. Meyer & Allen, 1991). Previous studies associated continuance commitment with adverse organizational outcomes, such as employee intentions to leave the organization (Labatmediene, Endriulaitiene, & Gustainiene, 2007; O'Donnell, Jayawardana, & Jayakody, 2012), lack of motivation (J. P. Meyer, Stanley, Herscovitch, & Topolnytsky, 2002), and

discretionary efforts (Shore & Wayne, 1993). It was thought these employees were committed because they had to be. Therefore, if they left the company, they would lose specific knowledge and nontransferable skills that they had acquired (O'Donnell et al., 2012). According to Allen and Grisaffe (2001), the higher the continuance commitment, the less likely these employees would be to engage in productive customer-relevant behavior. Moreover, J. P. Meyer et al. (2002) reinforced that this category of employees is not as motivated as other employees, or they would not likely exert discretionary effort (Shore & Wayne, 1993). As a result, continuance commitment may contribute to a dreary experience for customers. Although research has shown an interest in continuance commitment, no studies have linked continuance commitment to employee perceptions of superior customer value creation, perhaps because the phenomenon of commitment in general is a complex psychological state that people experience in varying ways (J. P. Meyer & Allen, 1991) or because the cost of leaving an organization is quite specific to individuals and not easily attributable to a general category (Stallworth, 2003). Therefore, this study anticipated that employee continuance commitment would influence employee perceptions of superior customer value creation.

Normative commitment. Wiener (1982) defined normative commitment, another dimension of employee commitment, as a complete internalization of pressures, which no longer need to be reinforced through discipline. According to Wiener, this internalization may be the result of the pressure the company exerts on employees before or after they are hired. According to O'Reilly and Chatman (1986), however, employees establish normative commitment when there is congruence between organizational values and their own values. Further, J. P. Meyer and Allen (1991) explained that normative commitment

reflects a sense of obligation for continuing membership with the company. In other words, employees are committed because they believe they ought to stay with the organization. Thus, employees with higher normative commitment have a stronger sense of obligation to stay with the company (J. P. Meyer & Allen, 1991). Although these employees may likely engage in a constructive customer-relevant behavior, they may also be reluctant to take the lead in accommodating the needs of customers (Allen & Grisaffe, 2001). Therefore, this study anticipated that employee normative commitment would influence employee perceptions of superior customer value creation.

Furthermore, research has shown that affective commitment has the strongest influence on organizations' outcomes as compared to normative commitment (Allen & Meyer, 1990; J. P. Meyer & Allen, 1991, 1997). Fu et al. (2009), using Brown and Peterson's (1994) survey instrument, conducted a research among salespeople in the United States who sold HR services to businesses all over the country. Although the nature of the influences was different, the results indicated that all three components of organizational commitment predicted sales effort in terms of overall commitment to the sales task, number of hours worked, and number of calls made. The results also indicated that while affective commitment strongly and positively predicted sales effort, normative commitment positively predicted sales effort but with less significance. Therefore, employees who have affective commitment to their organization could be thought to have a stronger customer-oriented behavior than those with normative commitment. Consequently, this study hypothesized that affective commitment would have a stronger overall influence on employee perceptions of superior customer value creation as compared to normative commitment.

Current Trend in Organizational Commitment Research

Although Allen and Meyer (1990), J. P. Meyer and Allen (1984, 1991, 1997), and J. P. Meyer et al.'s (1993) theory of organizational commitment has been very popular, it has also been criticized for its conceptual limitations. There are concerns about the strong relationships between affective commitment and normative commitment (J. P. Meyer et al., 2002) and the ambiguity of continuance commitment, which made current researchers question Meyer et al.'s contribution to the three-dimensional conceptualization of organizational commitment. A. Cohen (2007) distinguished three major limitations of the three-component model proposed by Meyer et al. He argued that the model had limited predictive validity. He criticized the overlap between affective commitment and normative commitment and argued that continuance commitment was unclear.

Building on the works of predecessors in the field (Fishbein, 1967; Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975; Ko, Price, & Mueller, 1997; Powell & Meyer, 2004; Vandenberg & Self, 1993), A. Cohen (2007) defined organizational commitment as both instrumental attachment and psychological attachment, which develops before and after entry to the organization. He determined that the concept has two dimensions: the base of commitment and the timing of entry to the organization. Thus, Cohen redefined normative commitment as commitment propensity that occurs before and after employee entry to the organization. He also conceptualized continuance commitment as the benefits employees perceive of staying in the organization and not the associated cost of leaving it.

Another recent conceptualization of organizational commitment was proposed by Somers (2009), who identified eight commitment profiles and tested them among hospital

nurses relative to (a) turnover intentions, (b) job search behavior, (c) work withdrawal, and (d) job stress. The results suggested that the influence of commitment on organizational outcomes was greater when multiple forms of commitment were combined compared to a single form. Therefore, Somers suggested that this new approach to commitment theory would contribute to improving the understanding of the dynamics between affective commitment, continuance commitment, and normative commitment as related to work outcomes.

Although the works of both A. Cohen (2007) and Somers (2009) have contributed to the commitment literature, they also highlight the complexity of the conceptualization of the commitment dimensions and the limitations of the current research. One major limitation of Cohen's four-component model of organizational commitment is the lack of empirical validation. Moreover, there is no instrument to test the proposed model. In addition, Somers's theory of combined commitment profiles was built on data collected from a specific professional group, which might amplify the influence of normative commitment over other commitment profiles. In either case, these two theories are still works in progress, as more research is needed to establish their validity.

Meanwhile, the multiple dimensionality of organizational commitment (Nazari & Emami, 2012), particularly Meyer et al.'s three-component model, remains the leading framework of current research in organizational commitment (Farahani, Taghadosi, & Behboudi, 2011; Fu et al., 2009; Gantasala & Prabhakar, 2011; T. Islam et al., 2012). As A. Cohen (2007) acknowledged, Meyer et al.'s three-component model has strong psychometric properties and acceptable construct validity. Finally, regardless of how organizational commitment has been defined, J. P. Meyer and Herscovitch (2001)

concluded that all the terminologies used in the literature refer to a psychological force that drives employees' behavior in the organization. Table 1 provides a synopsis of organizational commitment definitions from the literature.

Table 1

Definitions of Organizational Commitment in the Literature

Definition	Author
Side bets an employee makes by remaining in the organization	H. S. Becker (1960)
Social relations	Kanter (1968)
Exchange or reward–cost relationships between employees and their organizations	Hrebiniak & Alluto (1972); Jaros, Jermier, Koehler, & Sincich (1993)
Emotional connection and subscription to the organization's values and objectives	Buchanan (1974); Sheldon (1971)
Strongly believing and accepting an organization's goal, which translates to the willingness to stay in the organization	Porter, Steers, Mowday, & Boulian (1974)
Employee's identification and involvement	Mowday, Steers, & Porter (1979)
Affective reactions, feelings of attachment to the organization's goals and values	J. Cook & Wall (1980)
A complete internalization of pressures, which no longer need to be reinforced through discipline	Wiener (1982)
Loyalty to the organization, which translates to employee readiness to exert extra effort and a strong desire to stay	Bateman & Strasser (1984)

Table 1

Definitions of Organizational Commitment in the Literature (continued)

Definition	Author
A psychological attachment that develops as compliance, identification, and internalization of the organization's norms and values	O'Reilly & Chatman (1986)
A bond between employees and organizations	Herbst (1963); Mathieu & Zajac (1990)
A psychological state that can take different forms, which employees experience in varying degrees	Allen & Meyer (1990); J. P. Meyer & Allen (1991); J. P. Meyer, Allen, & Smith (1993)
A psychological relationship or link between employees and their organizations that makes it difficult for them to leave voluntarily	Allen & Meyer (1996); J. P. Meyer et al. (1993)
Employee dedication	Morrow (1993)
Internalized belief	Shepherd & Mathews (2000)
Both instrumental and psychological attachments, which develop before and after entry into the organization	A. Cohen (2007)
A combined influence of several commitment profiles, which affects the general psychological state of the employee and determines how he or she experiences commitment. As such, organizational commitment is a much more complex process than initially thought.	Somers (2009)

Theories Related to Organizational Commitment

Among the various contemporary theories associated with organizational commitment, motivation, organizational citizenship behavior, and social exchange theories have been successful in explaining how employee–employer relationships affect

job performance and organizational profitability (Endres & Mancheno-Smoak, 2008; Markos & Sridevi, 2010). Specifically, the interest in examining these relationships began at the end of the 19th century, after the industrial revolution had swept across the European and American continents, when managers from all types of industries began searching for a new definition of work and exploring different ways to increase organizational effectiveness (Chalofsky & Krishna, 2009). Thus, the new dynamic of the world economy prompted organizational psychologists to examine the way in which individuals relate to the organization and respond to both work characteristics and environments, in order to provide insight that can help achieve higher profitability. Accordingly, scholars have gained insight from studies on motivation (O. U. Khan, Khan, et al., 2011; Milne, 2007; Udechukwu, 2009), OCB (Organ, 1990, 1997; Williams & Anderson, 1991), and social exchange (Mitchell & Cropanzano, 2005) to advance the knowledge on organizational commitment theory.

Motivation Theory Links with Organizational Commitment

The thought that organizations can improve their performance by influencing the behavior of workers has long been debated by organizational practitioners and theorists who believed that motivation is the psychological state of an individual that contributes to his or her level of commitment (Stoke, 1999). Several prominent scholars have shaped the organizational behavior theory of motivation. The most popular were Frederick Taylor, Elton Mayo, Abraham Maslow, and Frederick Herzberg because their works were precursors to employee commitment in various aspects.

First, Taylor hypothesized that workers naturally do not like work. Therefore, he suggested that task division, appropriate tools, the right training, close control, tight

supervision, and a fair pay system could encourage workers to increase their productivity (Gawel, 1997). Second, Mayo criticized Taylor for not considering human nature and social motivations (Cubbon, 1969). Mayo posited that workers' needs are not just material, workers are also looking to fulfill their social needs through better relations with managers, more participation of managers in employees' work lives, workers' participation in the decision-making process, and team work (Ackroyd, 1976; J. H. Smith, 1998). Third, Maslow's hierarchy of needs conceptualized the principles of motivation as a series of basic needs: physiological, safety/security, love/belonging, self-esteem, and self-actualization. Therefore, as he explained it further, once an individual achieves one level of need, the desire shifts to the next highest level (I. Wilson & Madsen, 2008). Fourth, Herzberg is among various behavioral theorists who have influenced American businesses (Gawel, 1997) because he was one of the most popular motivation theorists to address the nature of employees' needs that drive organizational performance (Baldonado & Spangenburg, 2009).

Building on the works of the seminal scholars, J. P. Meyer, Becker, and Vandenberghe (2004) combined both motivation and commitment theories into a single theory, which they believed could improve the understanding of human behavior in the workplace. They argued that commitment could be a powerful source for motivation, which could drive an employee to be persistent in his or her course of action even when facing adverse circumstances. Even though Mowday et al. (1982) found a positive relationship between commitment and motivation, recent studies took it a step further to explain the nature of this relationship based on each dimension of the commitment construct. Thus, in their correlational study, Janet et al. (2008) concluded that there was a

significant correlation between motivation and affective commitment but not so much with continuance commitment and normative commitment. Further, Moynihan and Pandey (2007) argued that as employees stay longer in the organization, certain aspects of their motivation may fade over time, which suggests, for example, that the longer employees remain in the organization because of lack of alternatives, the less motivated they are.

Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB) Links with Organizational Commitment

The concept of OCB has received growing attention over the last two decades. An increasing number of scholars and practitioners have shown interest in OCB as a measurement of performance (Bush & Jiao, 2011; Piercy, Cravens, & Lane, 2012; Yaghoubi, Salehi, & Moloudi, 2011). The term *organizational citizenship behavior* was first coined by Dennis Organ and his colleagues, who were inspired by the works of two other popular behavior theorists, Chester Barnard and Daniel Katz (Podsakoff et al., 2000). Drawing from the notion that employees are willing to cooperate, be innovative, or be spontaneous, Organ (1990) defined OCB as a discretionary behavior that is neither a requirement nor rewarded in the formal compensation system, which contributes to the success of the functioning of the organization. Earlier, Katz (1964) had emphasized that an organization that solely depends on the prescribed behaviors of its employees cannot stand. Over the last two decades, researchers have used different terms to describe citizenship behaviors, including *extra-role behavior*, *organizational spontaneity*, and *counter-role behavior* (Van Dyne, Graham, & Dienesch, 1994).

Alizadeh et al. (2012) conducted a literature review in order to understand the different constructs that have characterized the concept of OCB. They explained that there are two groups of OCB: behaviors that individuals direct toward their peers—organizational citizenship behavior toward individuals (OCBI)—and behaviors they direct toward the organization—organizational citizenship behavior toward organization (OCBO). Further, Podsakoff et al. (as cited in Alizadeh et al., 2012) explained that OCBI describes a helping behavior. Another stream of researchers specified that OCBI refers to a behavior that supports other individuals' interest (K. L. Lee & Allen, 2002; Williams & Anderson, 1991). In addition, Alizadeh et al. pointed out that OCBO is the sort of behavior that benefits the organization as a result of the internalization of rules and policies. Despite the double dimensionality of OCB, researchers agree on the key factors that constitute the antecedents of OCB. According to Alizadeh et al., factors contributing to OCB can be classified into four groups: (a) attitudinal measures (Organ, 1995; Organ & Ryan, 1996); (b) personality characteristics (Podsakoff et al., 2000); (c) task characteristics (Todd & Kent, 2006); and (d) leadership behaviors (Podsakoff et al., 2000).

Among other factors that predict employee citizenship behaviors, commitment has been carefully examined by organizational psychologists. In their study, Podsakoff et al. (2000) found that organizational commitment is positively correlated with OCB. The premise of this relationship is grounded in Porter et al.'s (1974) seminal work, according to which, committed employees identify themselves with the objectives of the company, they are willing to devote considerable effort to support its goals and tend to have a strong desire to maintain membership. Collecting quantitative survey data from 450

nurses in three hospitals in Taiwan, Huang and You (2011) used a multivariate hypothesis testing approach to examine the connections between the three dimensions of organizational commitment— affective, continuance, normative—and the two components of organizational citizenship behavior—OCBI and OCBO. The results indicated the following: (a) affective commitment has a positive influence on both OCBI ($\rho = .24$) and OCBO ($\rho = .32$), (b) continuance commitment has a negative effect on OCBI ($\rho = -.26$), and (c) normative commitment has a positive influence on the OCBO ($\rho = .27$). Conversely, the hypotheses that stated that continuance commitment has a negative impact on OCBO and normative commitment has a positive influence on the OCBI did not receive support from the results. Although the study presented some limitations in relation to the generalization of the results beyond the setting and the population of Taiwan, it suggested that, overall, committed employees tend to exert extra-role behavior toward individuals and organizations. Later, Sahertian and Soetjipto (2011) came to a similar conclusion by finding a substantial correlation between organizational commitment and OCBO. In addition, they agreed with O'Reilly and Chatman (1986) that a committed employee is loyal to his or her organization and is willing to work beyond the formal job roles.

Social Exchange Theory Links with Organizational Commitment

Among the various organizational behavior theories that explain the construct of employee commitment, social exchange theory has added a new insight by focusing on work relationships as a result of an exchange between employees and their organizations (Mitchell & Cropanzano, 2005) and the willingness of these employees to reciprocate with a better attitude (Saks, 2006). According to Blau (1964), social exchange theory

suggests that the relationships between two parties are not limited to the economic exchange; they also include social relationships. From the organizational researcher's perspective, employee–organization relationships are not limited to the exchange of impersonal resources; they also include emotional dimensions such as appreciation, respect, recognition, and support (Lew, 2009). On one hand, Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchison, and Sowa (1986) referred to these social emotions as perceived organizational support (POS). On the other hand, Gouldner (1960) used the norm of reciprocity to address employees' willingness to return favors. These two concepts have become the fundamental principles underpinning social exchange theory.

According to Eisenberger et al. (1986), POS refers to the extent to which organizations care about their employees, show interest in their well-being, and value their contributions. Particularly, J. P. Meyer et al.'s (2002) meta-analysis found positive correlations between POS and both affective and normative commitment, whereas they found negative correlation between POS and continuance commitment. More recent studies found that employees' POS increased their engagement and strengthened their commitment to the organization (Cameron, Cropanzano, & Vandenberghe, 2007; Kuvaas & Dysvik, 2010). Specifically, when employees perceived a high level of organizational support from their organization, they tended to return the favor with positive attitudes, including high affective commitment and better work behaviors (Lew, 2009). Further, Guerrero and Herrbach (2009) found a significant correlation between POS and affective commitment.

Altogether, motivation, OCB, and social exchange theories have played an important role in understanding the concept of organizational commitment. While the

nature of their respective constructs presents conceptual differences, they also have psychological similarities. Motivation theorists suggest that employees are motivated to behave in a certain way if their work role is relevant and helps them fulfill their needs (Clifford, 2010). In contrast, OCB theorists argue that employees are likely to respond to the work environment with two sorts of behaviors—“in-role” (Ahmadi, Forouzandeh, & Kahreh, 2010, p. 109) and “extra role” (p. 109)—based on their perceptions of support and how the organization values their contributions (Mitchell & Cropanzano, 2005; Saks, 2006).

Morrison (1994) described in-role behavior as the fulfillment of formal job prescriptions and extra-role behavior as what employees accomplish beyond their normal work requirements. These constructs are conceptually different from motivation because they suggest that employees have a choice between the two types of behaviors, whose boundaries could vary based on the way the roles are classified. Compared to both motivation and OCB, social exchange theory related employee work behaviors to a social dynamic of a reciprocal attitude or a give-and-take relationship (Mitchell & Cropanzano, 2005). From these perspectives, employees are not looking to fulfill any particular need that might influence their behaviors; rather, they respond to a particular work environment based on their perception of support, fairness, or justice. Consequently, they reward their companies with discretionary effort.

Although motivation, organizational citizenship behavior–OCB–, and social exchange theories are conceptually different, their assumptions are psychologically similar. Psychologically, each of the theories suggests that employees are driven by their needs (physiological and/or social), and whenever they perceive that their organization

helps them fulfill these needs, they reciprocate with extra-role behavior. Hence, drawing from this assumption, commitment scholars define the construct as a psychological relationship between employees and their organization, which makes it difficult for employees to voluntarily seek another job (Allen & Meyer, 1996; J. P. Meyer et al., 1993). In summary, the literature revealed that employees define their relationships with their employers based on their needs, the relative cost of leaving, or the feeling of obligation they have to stay with the organizations. Each one of these psychological states is referred to as affective commitment, continuance commitment, or normative commitment (J. P. Meyer & Allen, 1991).

Antecedents of Organizational Commitment

Perhaps the most discussed aspect of the organizational commitment construct in the seminal literature is antecedents. Various factors have been found to influence organizational commitment (Allen & Meyer, 1990), which could be classified into two broad categories: demographic factors and work environment factors. While many organizational psychologists examined the antecedents of commitment as a general concept, others focused on the links the antecedents might have with each of the three components of organizational commitment. This section reviews the studies that addressed the way demographic factors and work environment factors relate to organizational commitment.

Demographic Factors

Previous studies examined the relationships between a series of demographic variables and organizational commitment in order to understand the extent to which they

could potentially influence employee commitment to an organization. The most common demographic variables that have been included in commitment research are age, education level, gender, marital status, and organizational tenure (Kacmar, Carlson, & Brymer, 1999; Mayer & Schoorman, 1998; J. P. Meyer & Allen, 1997). The following sections examine each one of these variables.

Age. The age of an employee has been one of the salient demographic variables believed to influence organizational commitment. Previous commitment theorists sought to understand the difference in employees' commitment levels as employees grew older (A. Cohen, 1993; March & Simon, 1958; J. P. Meyer & Allen, 1984). In their early meta-analytic study, Mathieu and Zajac (1990) concluded that age and employee commitment were positively related. They suggested that as employees get older, they develop an attitudinal type of commitment to the organization because of greater satisfaction with the job or a better position (J. P. Meyer & Allen, 1984). Further, Dunham et al. (1994) suggested that older employees have a stronger bond with the company than do younger employees. Although these studies linked age to organizational commitment, details came from J. P. Meyer et al.'s (2002) meta-analysis that specified the influence of age on each dimension of commitment. The results indicated that employee age positively correlates with all three components of organizational commitment (AC, $\rho = .15$; CC, $\rho = .14$; NC, $\rho = .12$). These findings were consistent with a more recent study conducted by Popoola (2009), according to which, age and organizational commitment were significantly and positively correlated ($r = .682, p < .05$). In other words, as employees aged, the more they developed a psychological state that influenced the nature and type of their commitment to the organization. In sum, Chawla and Sondhi (2011) concluded

that older employees have less intention to leave their current organizations as compared to younger employees.

Education level. Education level has also received particular interest among the demographic variables that have been linked to organizational commitment. According to Gallie and White (1993), highly educated employees show greater task commitment. Conversely, other behavioral scientists found a weak and negative correlation between education level and employee commitment to the organization (Battarsby, Hemmings, Kermode, Sutherland, & Cox, 1990; DeCotiis & Summers, 1987; Mowday et al., 1982). There is a stream of literature that supports similar conclusions (Angle & Perry, 1981; Morris & Scherman, 1981; Morris & Steers, 1980). Further, in an effort to examine the way education level relates to each dimension of organizational commitment, J. P. Meyer et al. (2002) included the variable in their meta-analytic study. The results indicated that education level was weakly and negatively correlated with both affective commitment ($\rho = -.02$) and continuance commitment ($\rho = -.11$), which indicated that the more educated employees were, the less emotional attachment they had to the organization and the less entrapped they felt. In addition, education level was weakly but positively related to normative commitment ($\rho = .01$), suggesting that highly educated employees believed that maintaining membership was an obligation to the organization.

More recently, Bakan et al. (2011) conducted a quantitative survey research among employees working in a textile company in Turkey. They examined the relationships between education level and each dimension of organizational commitment. The results indicated that employees with higher levels of education had the lowest levels of affective commitment, consistent with prior studies (J. P. Meyer et al., 2002). In

addition, employees with more advanced degrees had a higher level of normative commitment. In contrast, employees with lower levels of education—primary and high school degrees—had higher continuance commitment. In sum, the study revealed that there were differences between employee education level and organizational commitment. Although the results of Bakan et al.'s (2011) study could not be generalized beyond the single organization from which data were collected, the implication could be of great interest for managers, particularly those involved in recruiting employees.

Gender. The difference in commitment level between male and female employees was examined by Mathieu and Zajac (1990), who found that women tended to be more committed than men. Further, Grusky (1996) explained this difference in relation to the barriers that women faced in getting into an organization as compared to men. However, a stream of literature posits that there is no difference between men and women as related to organizational commitment. According to Marsden, Kalleberg, and Cook (1993), there is no difference between men's and women's levels of commitment when both genders work under similar job conditions. In addition, results from Aven, Parker, and McEvoy's (1993) meta-analysis indicated that there is no significant difference in commitment between men and women in an organization that treats its employees fairly. More recently, other organizational researchers have concluded that there is no correlation between gender and organizational commitment (Al-Ajmi, 2006; Savicki, Cooley, & Gjesvold, 2003).

Research on gender as related to organizational commitment has also focused on each dimension of the construct. J. P. Meyer et al.'s (2002) meta-analysis indicated that there was a small but positive correlation between gender and continuance commitment

and a small but negative correlation between gender and both affective and normative commitment. Further, Khalili and Asmawi (2012) conducted a quantitative study using a random sampling survey design to collect data from employees comprising 54 men and 54 women. The results showed that affective commitment and continuance commitment were similar between men and women. However, employee normative commitment appeared to be different between men and women. Although Khalili and Asmawi's findings advanced the knowledge in commitment research, the single-company informant approach limited generalizability. In addition, the correlational design of the study limited inference of a causal relationship between gender and organizational commitment.

Marital status. Organizational psychologists were also interested in examining the extent to which there were differences in organizational commitment relative to employee marital status. The premise of this attention was that married employees are more committed than unmarried employees because they have a greater responsibility, which might increase their need to maintain employment (Mathieu & Zajac, 1990). Although most scholars found a positive correlation between marital status and commitment, the significance of the impact could not always be asserted. Further, J. P. Meyer et al.'s (2002) meta-analysis studied how marital status was related to each dimension of organizational commitment. The results indicated that there was no relationship between marital status and normative commitment, whereas there were positive but weak relationships with both affective commitment and continuance commitment.

In a recent study, though, Popoola (2009) found that marital status was correlated positively and significantly with organizational commitment ($r = .604, p < .05$), without specifying the influence of this relationship with each dimension of the commitment construct. Further, Gülova and Demirsoy (2012) concluded that organizational commitment varied with regard to employee marital status. Although organizational researchers found that marital status influenced employee commitment, they did not always specify how it predicted each dimension of commitment.

Organizational tenure. Organizational tenure refers to the number of years an employee has worked for a particular organization (McEnrue, 1988; Shirom & Mazeh, 1988). Researchers have long inferred that the longer an employee works in the same company, the better he or she would perform (A. Cohen, 1993; Wagner, Ferris, Fandt, & Wayne, 1987). This assumption was built on G. Becker's (1964) human capital theory, which states that long-tenured employees perform better because of the job-related experience they have accumulated over the course of their employment. More importantly, the nature and level of employee commitment have been found to change over the period of employment (Allen & Meyer, 1993; J. P. Meyer & Allen, 1991). Feldman and Ng (2010) conducted a meta-analytic research in which they collected data from existing literature on the topic. The results indicated that the impact of employees' tenure on job performance declined over time, somewhere between 3 and 6 years, and became null after 14 years. Although these findings were significant, they did not specify the nature of commitment that develops over the course of employee tenure with an organization.

Conversely, prior findings from J. P. Meyer et al.'s (2002) meta-analysis concluded that employee tenure positively correlates with affective commitment, continuance commitment, and normative commitment. In other words, the longer an employee maintains membership with an organization, the more likely he or she is to commit to that particular organization based on his or her emotional attachment, perceived cost of leaving, or feeling of obligation to stay. Besides the few studies that directly examined the predictive nature of organizational tenure, this variable has been generally controlled in the commitment literature (Bozionelos, Bozionelos, Kostopoulos, & Polychroniou, 2011; C. H. V. Chen & Indartono, 2011; J. P. Meyer et al., 1993).

Work Environment Factors

With employee commitment as a stated goal for creating superior value for customers, work environment has been researched as a potential factor that could help achieve this outcome (Mathieu & Zajac, 1990; J. P. Meyer & Allen, 1991). Several studies have focused on job involvement, organizational support, organizational justice, organizational climate, leadership, and human resource management–HRM– practices to understand how these variables could link to organizational commitment. The following sections analyze the studies that have addressed each of these factors and their relationships with organizational commitment.

Job involvement. Job involvement is defined as “the degree to which a person’s work performance affects his self-esteem” (Lodahl & Kejner, 1965, p. 25). Specifically, Lodahl and Kejner (1965) described a job-involved employee as someone for whom the job plays an important part of his or her life and who is personally affected by the job situation. In contrary, a non-job-involved employee is someone whose interests lie

elsewhere and whose self-image or identity is not affected by the nature of the job or how well he or she does it. Previous research suggested a strong correlation between job involvement and organizational commitment (Caykoylu, Egri, & Havlovic, 2007; Fields & Thacker, 1992; T. I. Khan, Jam, Akbar, Khan, & Hijazi, 2011; Knoop, 1995; Mayer & Schoorman, 1998). T. I. Khan, Jam, et al. (2011) found that job involvement has a positive relationship with all three components of organizational commitment (affective commitment, continuance commitment, normative commitment).

Despite the evidence supporting the relationship between job involvement and organizational commitment, Passarelli (2011) cautioned about the distinction between job categories and level of control. Building on the theory of Lincoln and Kalleberg (1990), which states that employees care about the success of their organizations as well as themselves, Passarelli suggested that employees whose jobs involve taking care of sick or elderly people, supervising children, taking care of animals, or providing personal care show higher commitment to their jobs than to their organizations. The study also revealed that professionals and employees in personal service occupations were committed to their jobs but not necessarily to their organizations. These results were supported by job-redesign theorists, who demonstrated that job content and other relevant characteristics encourage higher commitment of employees to their work (Gallie, White, Cheng, & Tomlinson, 1998; Lawler, Mohrman, & Ledford, 1995). Therefore, not only does job involvement influence an employee's commitment to the organization, but also other job-relevant characteristics can potentially influence the commitment behavior as well.

Perceptions of organizational support. Scholars interested in organizational commitment also examined the extent to which perceptions of organizational support

might affect employees' decisions to leave or remain in the organization (O'Donnell et al., 2012; C. L. Wang, Indridason, & Saunders, 2010). The perceptions of organizational support derived from social exchange theory, which postulated that employee–organization relationship emerged from the perceived support that employees receive from supervisors and their willingness to reciprocate with higher levels of commitment (Saks, 2006). Organizational scholars found that perceptions of organizational support increased employees' engagement and strengthened their commitment to the organizations (Camerman et al., 2007; Kuvaas & Dysvik, 2010). According to Saks (2006), perceptions of support could be fostered through job characteristics as well as both procedural and distributive justice in the organization. Empirical evidence showed that organizational support programs affect employee affective commitment (Mutlucan, 2012). Further, J. P. Meyer et al.'s (2002) meta-analysis, on one hand, found positive correlations between organizational support and both affective and normative commitment. On the other hand, organizational support was negatively correlated with continuance commitment, which was consistent with similar findings in more recent studies (Aubé, Rousseau, & Morin, 2007; C. L. Wang et al., 2010).

Organizational justice. Research on organizational practices that affect employee attitude and behavior revealed that perceptions of justice and fairness play a crucial role in employee commitment to an organization (Lambert, 2003; Masterson, Lewis, Goldman, & Taylor, 2000). Particularly with employee customer-oriented behavior becoming a new archetype for competitive advantage (Homburg, Müller, & Klarmann, 2011a, 2011b), it was essential that organizations examine their practices to see whether they supported fairness and equity. Organizational justice was

conceptualized in the literature as having two dimensions: distributive justice and procedural justice (Rebecca & Hausdorf, 2007). According to Brockner and Wiesenfeld (1996), distributive justice refers to the extent to which employees perceive an outcome received as being fair in comparison to someone else's outcomes, whereas procedural justice relates to the evaluation of the process or the mean by which the outcome was reached (Folger & Konovsky, 1989).

For over two decades, researchers have linked organizational commitment to both perceptions of fair outcomes and employees' evaluation of the process of reaching these outcomes. Among other seminal authors, Korsgaard, Schweiger, and Sapienza (1995) dedicated a substantial amount of attention to this topic. However, more detail came from J. P. Meyer et al.'s (2002) meta-analysis, which found that both distributive justice and procedural justice positively and strongly correlated with both affective commitment and normative commitment, while they negatively correlated with the continuance commitment.

Although the perceptions of fairness and justice influence employee desire and feeling of obligation to stay with one's organization, other workplace factors, such as rewards, warmth, and support, could also be influential in explaining the formation of this behavior. In general terms, researchers have used the phrase *organizational climate* to refer to anything that goes on at the workplace that can affect employee behavior and attitude toward the organization (El-Kassar, Chams, & Karkoulian, 2011; Fauziah, Safiah, Syakirarohan, & Shukriah, 2010). Chief among these factors is leadership style.

Transformational leadership. The role of leadership in organizational outcomes has received close attention in the management literature. Among the various styles of

leadership that have been examined, transformational leadership was of great interest because of its popularity and consistent link with superior performance (Dvir, Eden, Avolio, & Shamir, 2002). According to K. L. Lee and Low (2012), transformational leadership refers to a change in employee attitude and behavior as the result of the influence of a leader. In other words, a leader inspires followers to change their value systems and align them with the organizational goals (Emans, Munduate, Klaver, & Van de Vliert, 2003; Shamir, House, & Arthur, 1993). Specifically, Kuhnert and Lewis (1987) argued that transformational leadership “is made possible when a leader’s end values are adopted by followers thereby producing changes in the attitudes, beliefs, and goals of followers” (p. 653). This explanation resonated among early commitment scholars, who found that transformational leadership related to organizational commitment (Barling, Weber, & Kelloway, 1996) in terms of achieving congruence between an employee and the organization’s values.

According to J. P. Meyer et al.’s (2002) meta-analysis, transformational leadership was positively and strongly correlated with both affective and normative commitment, while it was negatively correlated with continuance commitment. These results suggest that a leader who strives to influence employees’ personal values and align them with those of the organization can be rewarded with either affective or normative commitment to the company. However, this effort may undermine the commitment of some employees who already think they are stuck and have no other alternatives. Farahani et al. (2011) conducted a study in which they found that transformational leadership correlated positively and strongly with organizational commitment. Although they did not specify the relationships of the transformational

leadership style with each of the three dimensions of organizational commitment, their study provided evidence that transformational leadership could be a strong predictor of employee commitment.

Human resource management practices. HRM practices refer to a strategy designed to acquire, develop, manage, motivate, and gain the commitment of employees as key resources to the organization (Ahmed, 1999). Abdulkadir, Isiaka, and Adedoyin (2012) conducted an empirical study using a structured questionnaire to collect data at the business-unit level. The results indicated that the HR practices of performance appraisal, career planning, and employee participation significantly correlate with organizational commitment and explain about 63% of the variation in the outcome. Although the results had compelling implications for HR practitioners, the subjective nature of the data presented significant limitations to the generalizability of the conclusions. However, several HRM scholars have similarly found a positive correlation between HRM practices and organizational commitment (Chew & Chan, 2008; Hashim, 2010; Zaitouni, Sawalha, & El Sharif, 2011), confirming that these practices influence employee decisions to stay with or leave the organization.

As has been noted, evidence from the literature reviewed supported the relationships between demographic and work environment factors and employee commitment. For the most part, researchers used samples from foreign countries, which could potentially limit the generalizability of the results to U.S. workers. However, there is widespread agreement in the literature that job involvement, organizational support, organizational justice, organizational climate, leadership, and HR practices influence organizational commitment. These findings imply that organizational scholars and

practitioners seeking to create superior value for customers through a committed work force should examine a variety of factors that could influence the employee commitment process.

Antecedents of organizational commitment and their influence on each dimension of the construct were not always specified in the findings. However, there was a consensus regarding the three-component model of organizational commitment that employees develop, to a varying degree, a sense of obligation to stay with their employers as a result of many factors, including personal characteristics and work environment.

Effects of Organizational Commitment on Job Performance

Employee job performance has been one of the major metrics for assessing the vitality of organizational work force because businesses consider their employees as an essential resource to gain competitive advantage (Crook et al., 2011). Campbell (1990) distinguished two types of job performance: (a) task performance, as a result of individual work, and (b) track performance, as a broader aspect of performance in relation to organizational environment. Therefore, linking employee commitment and performance has been a subject of broad interest for researchers and practitioners (Bernhardt, Donthu, & Kennett, 2000; Mathieu & Zajac, 1990). Although seminal organizational psychologists defined performance in terms of individual productivity and as adding economic value (Brayfield & Crockett, 1955), the major challenge remained the way attitude and behavior affect its management. Among job-related behaviors that

were touted to correlate with individual performance, J. P. Meyer and Allen (1997) attached importance to employee commitment.

Mowday, Steers, and Porter (1979) found a positive correlation between organizational commitment and performance. Several researchers thereafter expanded on this result. Kelidbari, Dizgah, and Yusefi (2011) examined the relationship between employee commitment and performance through a quantitative study with a correlational design. Using a linear regression analysis, they found that all three dimensions of employee commitment correlated with job performance. In addition, they found that both affective and normative commitment accounted highly for performance variability, with normative commitment having the strongest influence. Although these findings contributed to the field, the nonrandom sampling survey strategy limited the generalizability of the conclusions.

Mehmud, Ali, Baloch, and Khan (2010) concluded that affective commitment, continuance commitment, and normative commitment accounted for almost 39% of the variability of performance. Specifically, they found a significant correlation between (a) affective commitment and job performance, (b) continuance commitment and job performance, and (c) normative commitment and job performance. In addition, Mehmud et al. compared the correlation coefficients and argued that affective and normative commitment predicted employee performance stronger than did continuance commitment. Even though the study did not mention any limitations inherent to the setting, the findings are noteworthy because they highlight the strength of both affective and normative commitment in predicting employee performance as compared to continuance commitment.

One key meta-analytic study examining the relationship between organizational commitment and overall performance was conducted by Jaramillo, Mulki, and Marshall (2005) among salespersons. Previous studies emphasized that these individuals are self-motivated and work hard to achieve their goals (Borman & Motowidlo, 1997; MacKenzie, Podsakoff, & Ahearne, 1998). Using Lipsey and Wilson's random effect model, Jaramillo et al. found that organizational commitment and job performance were correlated positively and significantly ($r = .21, p < .05$). Later, Landry, Panaccio, and Vandenberghe (2010) cautioned that employees experience stress because of their continuance commitment. N. Khan, Riaz, Bashir, Iftexhar, and Khattak (2011) contrasted this emotional state with the pressure of job performance among salespersons. The results indicated that the more individuals are committed to their company, the more stress they experience, which results in a negative impact on their job performance, consistent with similar findings by Y. Chen (2009). Despite its apparent limitations, N. Khan, Riaz, et al.'s study highlighted the need for researchers to identify the nature of commitment that predicts job performance. As J. P. Meyer and Allen (1997) noted, not all sorts of commitment are positively related to performance.

Furthermore, O. F. Lee et al. (2010) conducted a quantitative survey among hospital employees and examined the relationships between the three components of organizational commitment and job performance—in-role performance and innovative performance. The results indicated that affective commitment and normative commitment correlated positively with the two dimensions of job performance, whereas continuance commitment correlated negatively with both in-role and innovative job performance. These findings were consistent with J. P. Meyer et al.'s (2002) meta-analysis, which

emphasized that employees with continuance commitment are not likely to perform well on the job as compared to others with either affective or normative commitment. This conclusion could explain the way employees perceive customer value creation in their organization.

Organizational Commitment and Superior Customer Value Creation

Customer value creation has become the new strategy for firms' competitiveness (Woodruff, 1997) and a model for getting ahead of rivals (C. Meyer & Schwager, 2007), particularly in the United States where retail consumption alone represents 70% of the gross domestic product (Lewis & Seidman, 2010). Over the years, factors that could lead to creating value for customers have been at the center of various management practices and have presented a series of challenges for both marketing scholars and organizational leaders (Chang & Weng, 2012; Hsin & Hsin-Wei, 2011; Hui-Yao & Shieh, 2012; Leelakulthanit & Hongcharu, 2012; Mathuramaytha & Ussahawanitchakit, 2008). Although researchers generally agreed that organizational commitment has a positive influence on work behaviors, no empirical research has specifically investigated this influence on employee perceptions of superior customer value creation. However, a large body of evidence supports the relationship between organizational commitment and similar outcomes.

Organizational researchers determined that organizational commitment could be a strong source for motivation (J. P. Meyer et al., 2004), which could lead to emotional attachment to an organization (Janet et al., 2008). In addition, commitment has been

found to correlate with organizational citizenship behavior (Huang & You, 2011; Sahertian & Soetjipto, 2011). Further, employees who perceive strong support from their organization tend to be emotionally involved and affectively attached to their organization (Guerrero & Herrbach, 2009). In addition, they reciprocate with positive attitudes and work behaviors (Lew, 2009), including extra-role performance (Z. Chen, Eisenberger, Johnson, Sucharski, & Aselage, 2009), positive mood, and organizational spontaneity (Eisenberger, Armeli, Rexwinkel, Lynch, & Rhoades, 2001). More important, commitment has been determined to influence customer satisfaction (He, Li, & Lai, 2011), which raises the question of whether it also influences employee perceptions of creating a superior value for customers.

In their exploratory study addressing the relationships between marketing and sales, Guenzi and Troilo (2007) defined superior customer value creation as “the ability to creatively, proactively and rapidly create and transfer benefits to customers, as well as to solve customer problems, thus reducing what they perceive as sacrifice” (p. 101). The study conceptualized this construct as (a) “responsiveness to customer needs,” (b) “ability to develop creative solutions,” (c) “speed of action in the market,” and (d) “innovation” (Guenzi & Troilo, 2007 p.101) as compared to prior studies that associated value creation with quality management and process improvement methods (Plaster & Alderman, 2006). As opposed to other marketing scholars who addressed value creation from the customer’s perspective (Bielenberg, 2006; DeHaan, 2005; Khalifa, 2004), Guenzi and Troilo focused on employees’ perspectives of creating customer value.

One of the key findings of Guenzi and Troilo’s (2007) study was the significance of the influence of customer-orientation on employees’ perceptions of superior customer

value creation. According to Liaw, Chi, and Chuang (2010), employee customer orientation, initially coined by Saxe and Weitz (1982), refers to employees' deliberate effort to satisfy the needs of customers, and maintain strong relationships with them. Further, they conducted a survey research and collected data from a random sample of frontline employees. The results showed that transformational leadership enhanced employee customer orientation and was mediated by perceived supervisor support. Remarkably, transformational leadership (Farahani et al., 2011; J. P. Meyer et al., 2002) and perceived support (Kuvaas & Dysvik, 2010; O'Donnell et al., 2012) related to organizational commitment as well. In addition, the relationship between the two variables was supported by early research (Darby & Daniel, 1999; O'Hara, Boles, & Johnston, 1991), and later corroborated by Noor and Muhamad (2005). Therefore, evidence supports the relationship between organizational commitment and customer-orientation, which in turn predicts the creation of superior value for customers (Guenzi & Troilo, 2007).

Although prior research emphasized that customer value is driven by employees (Berghman, Matthyssens, & Vandembemt, 2006), there is no empirical evidence of the direct relationship between organizational commitment and superior customer value creation. However, the literature suggests that this relationship could be mediated by customer orientation. This line of investigation was not the goal of the current study. However, it justified the assumption that a direct relationship could exist between these two variables. This line of research presents a gap in the organizational management literature. This study was conducted to provide empirical evidence to support the

relationships between organizational commitment and perceptions of superior customer value creation and to bridge the existing gap in the literature.

Survey Instruments

This research used a composite of two existing survey instruments: the revised version of the TCM Employee Commitment Survey (J. P. Meyer & Allen, 2004; J. P. Meyer et al., 1993) and the superior customer value creation scale created by Guenzi and Troilo (2007). The following discussion examines the development of each survey instrument and provides evidence of psychometric properties.

TCM Employee Commitment Survey

Scholars have taken various approaches in measuring organizational commitment (Allen & Meyer, 1990). One of the most popular instruments is the OCQ (Mowday, 1979; Porter et al., 1974). However, Allen and Meyer's (1990) organizational commitment scales also have received substantial support in the literature (Dunham et al., 1994; Nazari & Emami, 2012). The current study utilized a revised version of the original TCM Employee Commitment Survey (J. P. Meyer & Allen, 2004). This instrument included the ACS, CCS, and NCS. Each scale had six items, as compared to the original version, which had eight items in each scale. The main difference between the two versions resides in the NCS. While the original version specified the sense of obligation that underlines employees' decision to stay with an organization, the revised version focused on the feeling of the obligation itself (J. P. Meyer & Allen, 2004). Both versions of the TCM Employee Commitment Survey measure the commitment profile of the organization as a level of agreement or disagreement with statements on a 7-point Likert

scale, where 1 = *strongly disagree* and 7 = *strongly agree*. However, the need to modify the original version of the instrument was the result of the generalizability of organizational commitment to occupational commitment (J. P. Meyer et al., 1993).

Affective Commitment Scale (ACS). Prior conceptualization of organizational commitment, as the degree to which individuals are attached to and identify with the organizations' values, led to the development of the OCQ with 15 items (Porter et al., 1974). Although the instrument has been very popular in organizational commitment research (Azeem, 2010), critics argued that there was not a clear demarcation in the three-dimensional construct it intended to measure (WeiBo et al., 2010). Conversely, Allen and Meyer (1990) specified three distinguishable forms of commitment—desire-based, cost-based, and obligation-based—that employees experience to varying degrees within an organization. In addition, scholars continued to believe that employees' decision to stay with an organization was a matter of choice and a guide to their commitment (J. P. Meyer & Allen, 1997).

Building on Becker's side-bet theory, J. P. Meyer and Allen (1984) developed the ACS as an improvement to the OCQ (WeiBo et al., 2010). Further, several researchers reported strong reliability scores for the ACS: $\alpha = .80$ (Elele & Fields, 2010), $\alpha = .82$ (J. P. Meyer et al., 1993), and $\alpha = .84$ (van Dijk, 2004). In addition, Allen and Meyer (1996) reported a median reliability score of .82 and defended that affective commitment items were distinct from other related work attitudes and behaviors. Although the conceptualization of the dimensions of organizational commitment are still being debated, Oehley and Theron (2010) argued that affective commitment is the most widely studied dimension within the three-component model of organizational commitment.

Continuance Commitment Scale (CCS). Continuance commitment is defined as an employee's awareness of the cost that leaving the organization involves (J. P. Meyer & Allen, 1991). This concept was rooted in H. S. Becker's (1960) side-bet theory, which states that individuals are committed to their organization because they accumulate certain investments over time, which they find difficult to abandon.

The first instrument measuring continuance commitment was a scale developed by Ritzer and Trice (1969) and later adjusted by Alutto, Hrebiniak, and Alonso (1973). However, the lack of satisfactory construct validity of these two instruments led to the development of the CCS (J. P. Meyer & Allen, 1991). Not only did the CCS measure the cost-based form of organizational commitment but WeiBo et al. (2010) noted that it also represented a significant improvement for measuring the side-bet conceptualization of organizational commitment. Although A. Cohen (2007) challenged J. P. Meyer and Allen's (1991) measurement of continuance commitment, his new concept of instrumental commitment has not yet been validated. Meanwhile, a wide range of research supports the reliability and validity of the CCS: Elele and Fields (2010) reported a reliability score of .76, J. P. Meyer et al. (1993) reported .74, and van Dijk (2004) reported .81. In addition, Allen and Meyer (1996) reported a median reliability score of .79 and argued that continuance commitment items are distinct from other related work attitudes and behaviors.

Normative Commitment Scale (NCS). The NCS is the most recent component of the TCM Employee Commitment Survey and measures the sense of obligation an employee has to continue membership with the company (J. P. Meyer & Allen, 1991). Research indicates that employees who develop a normative commitment tend to remain

in the organization because they feel obligated to do so (J. P. Meyer et al., 1993). Initially, Allen and Meyer (1990) included normative commitment in measuring organizational commitment because few studies had focused on this construct as compared to the other two forms of commitment. Further, the test of the three-component model of organizational commitment has shown that commitment can be characterized with three distinctive mindsets: desire, cost, and obligation, which employees can experience to varying degrees (Allen & Meyer, 1990; J. P. Meyer & Allen, 1991, 1997). Moreover, research indicates that all three forms of commitment—*affective*, *continuance*, and *normative*—loaded on three factors (J. P. Meyer et al., 1993), and further exploratory factor analyses determined that all three factors were separate (Allen & Meyer, 1996). Although critics suggested a new conceptualization of normative commitment (A. Cohen, 2007; WeiBo et al., 2010), empirical evidence shows that not all forms of commitment are the same (Allen & Meyer, 1996, 2000; J. P. Meyer et al., 2002). The measurement of normative commitment has been consistently reliable throughout the literature. Elele and Fields (2010) reported a reliability score of .79, J. P. Meyer et al. (1993) reported .83, and van Dijk (2004) reported .83. In addition, Allen and Meyer (1996) reported a median reliability score of .73 and concluded that normative commitment items are distinct from other related work attitudes and behaviors.

Superior Customer Value Creation Scale

Guenzi and Troilo's (2007) instrument for measuring superior customer value creation was developed from thorough interviews with business leaders, marketing professionals, and sales managers from various companies and environments.

Respondents identified four main components of superior customer value creation: (a)

“responsiveness to customer needs,” (b) “ability to develop creative solutions,” (c) “speed of action in the market,” and (d) “innovation” (Guenzi & Troilo, 2007 p.101). Each component was measured by the degree to which participants agreed or disagreed with statements on a 7-point Likert scale, where 1 = *much worse* and 7 = *much better*. Although the instrument is relatively new, the concept of customer value itself has been around since the 1990s and it has been defined from varying perspectives (Sánchez-Fernández & Iniesta-Bonillo, 2006).

According to Oliva (2000), customer value refers to a low price. For some researchers, it is what customers expect to obtain from a product (Afuah, 2002; van der Haar, Kemp, & Omta, 2001). For others, it is the trade-off between quality and price (Fornell, Johnson, Anderson, Cha, & Bryant, 1996; Sinha & DeSarbo, 1998), the difference between benefits and sacrifices (Walter, Ritter, & Gemunden, 2001), or the difference between perceived beneficence and cost (McDougall & Levesque, 2000). According to Butz and Goodstein (1996), customer value is an emotional bond between a customer and a company, whereas Woodruff and Gardial (1996) argued that value provides a direction for what an organization should do in order to create it. Along the same line of thinking, marketing scholars suggested that organizations’ leaders should focus on strategies that consider value creation as a method for improving customer experience (Bielenberg, 2006; DeHaan, 2005; Khalifa, 2004). In addition, Berghman et al. (2006) argued that customer value is driven by employees, and what they need is organizational support (Slack et al., 2002).

Because of the inconsistency in the definitions of customer value, no consensual instrument has been validated by scholarly research. Therefore, the concept has been

measured in various ways, and practitioners have adopted different metrics that meet their specific needs. From a methodological perspective, value has been translated into economics terms as a rational decision between the perceived beneficence and the associated cost, and is expressed as the economic value for the customer (Woodside, Golfetto, & Gibbert, 2008). According to Forbis and Mehta (1981), economic value for the customer–EVC– is the relative value a specific product offers to a customer and the maximum amount he or she is willing to pay given full knowledge of the product’s attributes and other options available in the market. Later, Woodside et al. (2008) argued that EVC was measured from a management-based perspective as compared to a customer-based perspective. The management perspective focused on the relevant characteristics of the product and the organizational process that could add value to the customer. The customer perspective included field surveys using both quantitative and qualitative research methods to measure customer perceptions of various value components (Woodside et al., 2008).

The EVC measurement has been very popular among management practitioners because it helps firms to decide whether to add value for a higher price or reduce value for a lower price (Capon, 2007). However, its potential limitations include managers’ biases relative to the interpretation of the value components and setting the priorities (Woodside et al., 2008). In addition, EVC failed to link employee behavior and attitude to the way value was perceived within the company. It was pure arithmetic. Therefore, Guenzi and Troilo’s (2007) instrument for measuring customer value creation represents a significant contribution to the literature. From a theoretical perspective, they defined superior customer value creation as the ability to provide benefits to customers at a

minimum perceived sacrifice, through creativity, timely response, and customer problem solving. In addition, there is empirical evidence that supports the psychometric properties of the instrument. Specifically, in addition to the reliability score of .79 that was initially reported, Mathuramaytha and Ussahawanitchakit (2008) found $\alpha = .84$. Recently, Guenzi et al. (2011) reported a reliability score of .80. In each case, the alpha value was above the cutoff suggested by Nunnally (1978). Furthermore, both the convergent and discriminant validity of the instrument were established by Guenzi et al. (2009) and Guenzi et al. (2011), respectively, which suggests that the instrument has strong construct validity.

Summary

Organizational commitment has been influenced by other human behavior theories, including motivation, OCB, and social exchange theory. Over the last five decades, it has been defined and measured from either a one-dimensional perspective or a multidimensional perspective. Although several researchers contributed to advancing the knowledge in the field of organizational commitment (e.g., H. S. Becker, 1960; Mowday et al., 1982; O'Reilly & Chatman, 1986; Porter et al., 1974), the lack of consensual conceptualization led to the three-component model (WeiBo et al., 2010). This model was proposed by Allen and Meyer (1990) and has been used extensively to measure organization commitment. The literature revealed that not all forms of commitment are the same (Allen & Meyer, 1996, 2000; J. P. Meyer et al., 2002). However, Allen and Meyer's conceptualization focused on three distinct components—*affective commitment*, *continuance commitment*, and *normative commitment*—which they defined as

psychological states that are experienced in varying degrees over the course of one's employment.

Furthermore, the factors that contribute to the development of organizational commitment have received particular attention among organizational psychologists. The review of existing literature supported evidence of the influence of demographic and work environment variables in predicting organizational commitment. A significant number of empirical studies supported the impact of commitment on important organizational outcomes, such as customer satisfaction (He et al., 2011), performance (Mathieu & Zajac, 1990), turnover (A. Cohen, 1991), intention to leave (Balfour & Wechsler, 1996), absenteeism, and employee well-being (J. P. Meyer & Maltin, 2010). Although these consequences have been the key drivers of the increasing interest in organizational commitment research, methodological limitations impeded the generalizability of the findings. In general, researchers used correlational designs, which could not allow the inference of causal relationships between organizational commitment and various outcomes.

Marketing scholars acknowledge that the perception of value is a complex concept and it is better understood from the customer's lens. The most common definitions include value as a difference between beneficence and cost (McDougall & Levesque, 2000) or as a trade-off between benefits and sacrifices (Walter et al., 2001). In addition, there is a body of knowledge in the literature that highlights the importance of approaching customer value from employee perspectives and not simply from customers' points of view (Berghman et al., 2006; Butz & Goodstein, 1996; Slack et al., 2002).

The review of the literature showed that organizational commitment is related to customer orientation (Darby & Daniel, 1999; Noor & Muhamad, 2005; O'Hara et al., 1991) and that customer orientation influences employee perceptions of superior customer value creation (Guenzi & Troilo, 2007). Although there is no empirical evidence that organizational commitment could directly influence employee perceptions of superior customer value creation, literature suggests that customer orientation could mediate the relationships between the independent and dependent variables included in this study. Furthermore, the TCM Employee Commitment Survey (J. P. Meyer & Allen, 2004; J. P. Meyer et al., 1993), to measure organizational commitment (as an independent variable), and Guenzi and Troilo's (2007) scale, to measure superior customer value creation (as a dependent variable), are supported in the literature as reliable and valid instruments. Cronbach's reliability coefficient scores are above .70 for each of these instruments. In addition, prior studies determined that the instruments have acceptable construct validity.

In conclusion, this chapter discussed the theory of organizational commitment and its importance in creating superior value for customers at a time when retail consumption accounts for two thirds of the GDP and a weak job market represents a threat to the growth of the U.S. economy. The chapter discussed the three-component model of organizational commitment— affective, continuance, and normative commitment—as independent variables, and the related theories. It highlighted the antecedents and consequences of organizational commitment. The chapter also discussed the theory of superior customer value creation and found no empirical evidence of a direct relationship between commitment and superior customer value. However, the literature review not

only highlighted the current gap in commitment and customer value research but it also presented the theoretical framework of this study. Evidence points toward a possible relationship between organizational commitment and the perceptions of superior customer value creation. The goal of the current study was to assess this relationship objectively using a quantitative research methodology.

CHAPTER 3. METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this quantitative research was to examine the relationship between organizational commitment and employee perceptions of superior customer value creation based on J. P. Meyer and Allen's (1991) three-component model of commitment. This study also examined the significance of the relationship between affective commitment and employee perceptions of superior customer value creation as compared to normative commitment. There is currently a gap in the organizational commitment literature due to a lack of empirical studies addressing superior customer value creation as a potential outcome to organizational commitment. Therefore, the study also bridged this gap by investigating the issue in a meaningful way and providing new insight to both scholars and practitioners in the field of organizational management. For these purposes, the study addressed the following questions and hypotheses.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

Primary Research Question

R₁: To what extent does employee commitment influence employee perceptions of superior customer value creation?

Ha_{1a}: Employee affective commitment significantly influences employee perceptions of superior customer value creation.

Ha_{1b}: Employee continuance commitment significantly influences employee perceptions of superior customer value creation.

Ha_{1c}: Employee normative commitment significantly influences employee perceptions of superior customer value creation.

Secondary Research Question

R₂: Does affective commitment have a stronger overall influence on employee perceptions of superior customer value creation as compared to normative commitment?

Ha₂: Employee affective commitment has a stronger overall influence on employee perceptions of superior customer value creation as compared to normative commitment.

Research Design

This research used a quantitative, nonexperimental methodology with a correlational approach to examine the relationships between affective commitment, continuance commitment, normative commitment, and employee perceptions of superior customer value creation among customer-facing employees in the retail industry. The strength of quantitative research is grounded in its historical contribution to various fields of social sciences and the characteristic traits of its method of inquiry (Duffy, 1986; Meha, 1982). Unlike the qualitative method, quantitative research uses numeric data and statistical analyses to quantify relationships among variables, identify patterns, and make predictions (Bordens & Abbott, 2008). Moreover, this research used a correlational approach because it did not control any behavioral events or manipulate any variable (Creswell, 2009). The aim of the study was to examine the presence and significance of

the relationships between the independent and dependent variables without inferring any causality. Methodologists have found this research approach to be appropriate and particularly strong when there is no intention of inferring a cause–effect relationship between variables (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005; Trochim, 2006).

In addition, this study utilized a cross-sectional web-based survey design to gather the necessary information in order to answer the research questions. According to Judeh (2011), the cross-sectional survey allows researchers to take a snapshot look at a phenomenon that is occurring naturally at a given point in time. Further, methodologists have found this design to be both economical and capable of yielding a quick turnaround in the data collection process (Couper, 2000; Couper & Miller, 2008; Frippiat & Marquis, 2010). Although a longitudinal experimental design could have allowed manipulation of the independent variables in order to observe changes in the dependent variable over a period of time, such design would have been not only costly and time consuming (Bordens & Abbott, 2008) but also inadequate to answer the current research questions. Longitudinal data exist in the commitment research; however, most studies using commitment measures adopted a cross-sectional design (Allen & Meyer, 1996).

In summary, the current study was conducted using a quantitative methodology, a nonexperimental approach, and a cross-sectional survey design. This approach was not adopted because it was preferable to the researcher but because it was the most appropriate for answering the research questions set forth in this study.

Sample

The sampling procedure for scientific research requires the researcher to specify the target population from which the sample is drawn, the criteria and selection procedure of the participants, and the nature and size of the sample (Creswell, 2009). According to Cooper and Schindler (2011), sampling suggests that by selecting a few elements in a population, researchers may be able to draw conclusions that can be generalized to the entire population from which the sample was drawn. Currently, the United States has about 15 million customer-facing employees in the retail industry; about 30,000 of them are registered with SurveyMonkey (M. Benjamin, personal communication, August 27, 2012). According to Cooper and Schindler, a sample frame includes the list of individuals from which the sample is drawn. For this study, the sample included customer-facing employees in the retail industry who identified themselves to SurveyMonkey as adults at least 18 years of age and working at various positions. These criteria of inclusion were, by default, the conditions under which SurveyMonkey recruited this category of participants into the ZoomPanel.

Although it may have been helpful to extend the selection to all customer-facing employees in the retail industry who were registered with SurveyMonkey, it would also have been difficult to manage the data load. Therefore, only the minimum number of participants, enough to achieve statistically significant results, was targeted for this study. A screening question was set up at the beginning of the survey as an additional gatekeeper to limit participation to only individuals who were qualified. Specifically, participants were asked if they were at least 18 years old, customer-facing employees, and working in the retail industry. If they clicked on the “No” button, they automatically

left the survey. If they clicked on the “Yes” button, they continued with the survey. By setting up this screening question, participants were offered the opportunity to confirm that they qualified to be in the study.

Targeted Population

The targeted population of this study was customer-facing employees in the retail industry from all over the United States. This population was estimated at 15 million as of July 2012, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (2012). This sector is one of the fastest growing among U.S. business industries, with over 12 million projected job openings in the next 8 years. This population represents individuals from all over the country who are employed as either customer service representatives, salespeople, marketing associates, frontline supervisors, or retail managers. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the retail industry represents a variety of business sectors, including motor vehicle and parts dealers, electronics and appliance stores, building material stores, general merchandise stores, and nonstore retailers.

The choice of recruiting customer-facing employees in the retail industry was motivated by the fact that these individuals present a unique profile that benefited this research. They represented various business sectors in the retail industry and occupied different positions ranging from frontline employees to managers in their respective organizations. More important, it was essential that participants be involved in any type of work relationships and be familiar with issues related to customer value, customer satisfaction, or customer loyalty. Therefore, the targeted population was relevant and appropriate to understand the survey and respond in a meaningful way.

Furthermore, SurveyMonkey was used to recruit the participants for this study. SurveyMonkey is a privately held company, founded in 1999, with over 8 million registered customers worldwide. The company is known as the world leader in web-based survey solutions for businesses, academic institutions, and organizations that support academic research, business, and nonprofit organizations (SurveyMonkey, 2012). In addition, several colleges and universities have used the services of SurveyMonkey for theses and dissertations. A search of the keyword *SurveyMonkey* in the ProQuest Dissertations & Theses @ Capella University database over the last 2 years generated approximately 280 results, indicating the popularity of the company within the Capella University research community. With the recent acquisition of MarketTools's Zoomerang, ZoomPanel, and TrueSample, SurveyMonkey has gained more legitimacy and is now able to leverage low-cost survey services to its expanded users around the globe (Constine, 2011). All these reasons justified the use of SurveyMonkey to recruit participants and deploy the survey instrument through its web servers.

Recruitment Process

The study's participants were recruited through the following steps. First, the researcher applied and obtained permission to conduct the study from the Capella University Institutional Review Board (IRB) before conducting the study. Second, the researcher set up a Gold professional account with SurveyMonkey and uploaded the informed consent form and survey items. The informed consent form provided sufficient detail about the study, including the purpose of the study, expected outcomes, and risks and benefits. Participants were required to read carefully the informed consent form and provide their consent by clicking on the "Next" button at the bottom of the form.

Participants who clicked on the “Next” button were considered to consent to participate in the survey.

The survey was open for a few days and automatically closed once the required number of completed responses had been achieved. A SurveyMonkey project manager was in charge of sending a reminder e-mail to participants if necessary (M. Benjamin, personal communication, August 27, 2012). The strategy of sending a reminder has been found to increase response rate in an online survey, according to Braithwaite, Emery, Lusignan, and Sutton (2003). However, it was not necessary to send a reminder in this case because all the data were collected within the projected period. In addition, the use of the online survey method is a successful strategy for data collection (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2003). Further, Sax, Gilmartin, and Bryant (2003) agreed that Internet surveys are suitable for participants because they can complete them at their leisure. Although the Internet survey may present some risk of technological glitches (Sax et al., 2003), it is an effective way to collect a large amount of data in a short period.

Sampling

SurveyMonkey used a random probability sampling to select a sufficient number of participants from its survey panel database—ZoomPanel—who met the criteria of selection. Scientists use random sampling strategies to diffuse selection biases so that the results of the study can be generalized to the population from which the sample was drawn (Watt & van Den Berg, 1995). In this study, it was not possible to control the randomization of the selection procedure because SurveyMonkey would not provide the list of participants. Therefore, all the participants in the study remained anonymous to the researcher. In addition, Cooper and Schindler (2011) argued that “even carefully stated

random sampling procedures may be subject to careless application by the people involved. Thus, the ideal probability sampling may be only partially achieved because of the human element” (p. 384). Under this circumstance, the random selection of the potential participants was based on the good faith of the SurveyMonkey project manager.

Although a true random sampling could not be assured through the recruitment of SurveyMonkey survey panelists, the diversity and widespread of the participants across the country and the variety of retail business sectors ensured that only qualified participants were selected. This strategy could help to mitigate any potential sampling variance (Krotki, 2008). Moreover, SurveyMonkey targeted 4,843 potential participants using a conservative response rate of 5% in order to guarantee the minimum responses contracted (M. Benjamin, personal communication, October 25, 2012). Therefore, the strategy of targeting a large sample, and not just the minimum required, could reduce potential sampling errors (Krotki, 2008) because the larger the sample, the smaller the sampling error (Castillo, 2009). Consequently, by minimizing both sampling variance and sampling error, potential sampling bias could also be reduced (Krotki, 2008). Therefore, the risk of a nonprobability sampling procedure in selecting the sample for this study did not present any potential threat to the validity of the sample in terms of accuracy or precision.

Sample Size and Power Analysis

A sample size of a minimum of 100 participants is sufficient for a study using a multiple regression analysis with a maximum of three predictors (Nunnally, 1978). However, a power analysis calculation using G*Power 3.1.2 software (Faul, Erdfelder, Buchner, & Lang, 2008) yielded a recommended sample size of 119 based on an alpha

value of .05, power of .95, and an effect size of .15. Power plays an important role in calculating the appropriate sample size (Hayes & Preacher, 2010). It refers to the probability of correctly rejecting a false hypothesis (Hoyt, Imel, & Chan, 2008). A power of at least .80 is commonly considered acceptable (Hayes & Preacher, 2010). Therefore, this study met the requirement by using a statistical power of .95. Furthermore, this study provided for potential incomplete responses and data that might have to be excluded from the analysis. Therefore, the sample size was conservatively increased to 158 so that the maximum power could be achieved at the end.

The targeted participants were filtered through a screening question. Participants were asked whether they were at least 18 years or older and working as customer-facing employees in the retail industry, as a way of making sure that the sample truly represented the targeted population. Participants who responded no were eliminated from the survey. Only those who answered yes were directed to the informed consent form and offered the choice to continue with the survey. In summary, both the selection procedure and sampling strategy aligned with the literature and best practices in the quantitative research tradition.

Instrumentation

This study used a composite of two existing instruments, which were administered as a single survey questionnaire. The survey instrument included 18 items from the TCM Employee Commitment Survey (J. P. Meyer et al., 1993) and four items from Guenzi and Troilo's (2007) superior customer value creation scale.

The TCM Employee Commitment Survey includes three scales with six items each: the ACS, CCS, and NCS. This instrument was created by Meyer and Allen in 2004 but is a revised version of the original created by Allen and Meyer in 1990. The three scales have eight items each. The difference between the original and revised versions is in regard to the NCS. Items in the original version specified the basis of obligation upon which an employee decides to stay with an organization. In contrary, items in the revised version focus on the feeling of the obligation itself (J. P. Meyer & Allen, 2004). In this study, the basis of an employee's feeling of obligation to stay with a company was irrelevant in examining the perceptions of superior customer value creation; therefore, the revised version was the most appropriate for this study.

Each item on the TCM Employee Commitment Survey is measured by the degree of agreement or disagreement with statements on a 7-point Likert scale, where 1 = *strongly disagree* and 7 = *strongly agree* (J. P. Meyer et al., 1993). Examples of these statements are "I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career with this organization," "I am not afraid of what might happen if I quit my job without having another one lined up," or "I think that people these days move from company to company too often." The researcher obtained the license to use the TCM Employee Commitment Survey for Academic Users. A copy of the license was kept in a file in compliance with copyright guidelines pertaining to published materials and Capella's IRB policies.

In addition to the TCM Employee Commitment Survey, Guenzi and Troilo's (2007) scale was used to measure employee perceptions of superior customer value creation in relation to their organization's "proficiency in responsiveness to customer needs, creativity in developing solutions to customer needs, speed to market, and

innovation” (Guenzi & Troilo, 2007 p. 101). Each item measures the level of agreement or disagreement with statements on a 7-point Likert scale, where 1 = *much worse* and 7 = *much better*. Examples of these statements include “Responsiveness to customer needs” and “Speed of action in the market.” The researcher did not need permission to use or reproduce Guenzi and Troilo’s superior customer value creation instrument for the purpose of this study (P. Guenzi & G. Troilo, personal communication, July 17, 2012).

Both survey instruments were useful for this study because they had a reasonable length—27 items in total, including five demographic questions. A study by Galesic and Bosnjak (2009) indicated that the longer the length of the survey, the fewer responses and completed surveys would be expected. Therefore, by having a manageable number of survey items, the nonresponse risk could be limited among participants who might be concerned about investing their time in the study. Table 2 provides a summary of the variables that were included in this study. They are identified as independent variable, dependent variable, or control variable. The sources of these variables are also provided in order to support the theoretical relevance of their selection.

Table 2

Study Variables and Their Sources

Name	Type	Sources
Affective commitment	Independent variable	Allen & Meyer (1990); J. P. Meyer & Allen (1991, 1997); J. P. Meyer, Allen, & Smith (1993); J. P. Meyer, Stanley, Herscovitch, & Topolnytsky (2002)

Table 2

Study Variables and Their Sources (continued)

Name	Type	Sources
Continuance commitment	Independent variable	Allen & Meyer (1990); J. P. Meyer & Allen (1991, 1997); J. P. Meyer et al. (1993); J. P. Meyer et al. (2002)
Normative commitment	Independent variable	Allen & Meyer (1990); J. P. Meyer & Allen (1991, 1997); J. P. Meyer et al. (1993); J. P. Meyer et al. (2002)
Superior customer value	Dependent variable	Guenzi et al. (2011); Guenzi & Troilo (2007)
Age	Control variable	Allen & Meyer (1993); Brymer, Carlson, & Kacmar (1999); Buchanan (1974); Mathieu & Zajac (1990); Mayer & Schoorman (1998); J. P. Meyer et al. (2002)
Education level	Control variable	Bakan et al. (2011); Mayer & Schoorman (1998); J. P. Meyer et al. (2002)
Gender	Control variable	Brymer et al. (1999); Mathieu & Zajac (1990); J. P. Meyer et al. (2002)
Marital status	Control variable	Brymer et al. (1999); Mathieu & Zajac (1990); J. P. Meyer et al. (2002)
Organizational tenure	Control variable	Allen & Meyer (1993); Buchanan (1974); Feldman & Ng (2010); Mathieu & Zajac (1990); Mayer & Schoorman (1998); J. P. Meyer & Allen (1991); J. P. Meyer et al. (2002); Schmidt & Hunter (1998); M. Wang et al. (2011)

Data Collection

The researcher obtained approval from Capella's IRB before conducting the study. The permission highlighted the necessary steps to take to protect human participants and to ensure that no participant would be harmed by the study. The researcher collected data by using a self-administered web-based survey by following these steps:

1. The researcher created a professional account with SurveyMonkey, then uploaded the survey items using the professional programming service of SurveyMonkey.
2. Once this process was completed, an electronic web link (URL) was generated and sent to the targeted participants through their e-mail addresses (SurveyMonkey, 2012). The Welcome page of the Web survey invited the participants to confirm that they qualified to be in the study. In addition, they were invited to read carefully the informed consent form to understand it, and electronically sign the form before continuing to the survey page. At no time, did the researcher have any direct contact with the participants. SurveyMonkey does not disclose the contact information of its subscribers, as an additional measure for protecting the privacy of participants.
3. The survey was open for few days and it was automatically closed once the contracted number of completed responses was attained (M. Benjamin, personal communication, August 27, 2012). There was no need to send a reminder to the participants.

4. SurveyMonkey allowed the researcher to view the results in aggregate and generate the reports once participants completed the survey. Throughout the process, participants had the option to edit their responses or come back to complete an unfinished survey.
5. When a participant reached the end of the survey and submitted his or her responses, a “Thank You” page followed to indicate the end of the process.

Data Analysis

SPSS 20 for Windows was used to analyze the data. Before the analysis began, data were exported securely from SurveyMonkey’s web server into SPSS 20 and saved on the researcher’s personal computer. Extra copies of the data were made and saved on a USB flash drive. The device was secured in a password-protected safe, where it was protected against confidentiality breach, damage, fire, and theft. The data analysis process continued with screening, finding, and repairing anomalies in the data. Data analysis included three categories of statistics: (a) descriptive statistics for the demographic variables, (b) reliability scores for the survey, and (c) inferential statistics for the study variables.

First, descriptive statistics for the demographic data included the number of responses collected, mean, median, mode, standard deviation, minimum, maximum, and frequency. Second, Cronbach’s alpha scores were generated for the two survey instruments (Meyer et al.’s TCM Employee Commitment Survey and Guenzi and Troilo’s superior customer value creation scale) in order to support their reliability. Finally, inferential statistics included correlations and multiple regression analysis. J. P.

Meyer and Allen (2004) suggested the use of these statistics to analyze data collected using the TCM survey instrument. According to Portney and Watkins (2003), researchers use Pearson's product-moment correlation to determine the strength, direction, and significance of the relationships between the independent and dependent variables that were measured on an interval or ratio level.

Although both the dependent and independent variables examined in this study were ordinal, they were technically treated with interval procedures. Pett (1997) argued that Likert scales are usually associated with the ordinal level of measurement. However, it is common that these types of variables are technically treated as interval for the purpose of statistical tests (Binder, 1984; Zumbo & Zimmerman, 1993). According to Blaikie (2003), the use of ordinal variables with interval techniques is common among contemporary social scientists. Although T. Wilson (1971) contended that such an approach presents a weak inference, measurement theorists, who support the fit between ordinal variables formulated in terms of interval, argue that (a) the distortion does not meaningfully influence Type I and Type II errors (Jaccard & Wan, 1996), and (b) correlation coefficients and other parametric tests are still strong (Kim, 1975; Labovitz, 1967, 1970).

In addition to Pearson correlation, multiple regression analysis was conducted in order to determine the predictability of the dependent variable (perceptions of superior customer value creation) and test the importance of individual predictors (affective, continuance, and normative commitment) in the variability of the dependent variable. Multiple regression analysis has been widely used as a statistical procedure of choice for both marketing and scholarly research (Bonett & Wright, 2011; Mason & Perreault,

1991). These statistical tests were selected with the assumption that (a) variables were approximately normally distributed, (b) there was a linear relationship between each predictor variable and the dependent variable, (c) there was homoscedasticity of residuals, (d) there was no multicollinearity, (e) there were no significant outliers, (e) and errors were normally distributed.

Validity and Reliability

Validity refers to the true report of the research or the extent to which the measurement is consistent with what was measured (Robson, 2002), whereas reliability is the extent to which measurements can be repeated (Nunnally, 1967). Researchers commonly use Cronbach's alpha to determine the reliability of survey instruments by comparing alpha values to the cutoff of .70 (Cortina, 1993), which was suggested by Nunnally (1978), although some researchers contend that an alpha value as low as .6 is acceptable (Bagozzi & Yi, 1988; Bartee, Grandjean, & Bieber, 2004). In this study, both the validity and reliability of the survey instruments were assessed as follows.

TCM Employee Commitment Survey

Validity. Huang and You (2011) assessed the convergent validity of the three-component model of organizational commitment using the two criteria proposed by Jöreskog and Sörbom (1989). According to these criteria, the factor loadings should exceed .45, and the average variance extracted (AVE) of each construct should be greater than .5. The results of both factor loadings and AVEs exceeded the benchmarks, confirming that the convergence validity of the three-component model of organizational commitment was acceptable. Further, Huang and You evaluated the discriminant validity

of the instrument by using Fornell and Larcker's (1981) method, which states that the square root of the AVE of each construct should exceed the correlation between that construct and any others. The values obtained exceeded the interconstruct correlation of each construct. Therefore, the tests confirmed the discriminant validity of the three-component model of organizational commitment.

In a large-scale research, Allen and Meyer (1996) examined the body of evidence concerning the construct validity of the three-component model of organizational commitment. Drawing from 40 samples representing over 16,000 employees across a variety of organizations and professions, Allen and Meyer assessed three categories of evidence—estimates of reliability, factor analysis, and patterns of correlations with other variables. The findings indicated that the commitment measures were distinguishable from other measures of work attitude. In addition, the measures correlated differently with other variables and related differently to on-the-job behaviors. Further, J. P. Meyer et al. (1993) argued that the TCM Employee Commitment Survey could be used to determine the commitment profile of an employee toward a specific organization. Allen and Meyer concluded that affective commitment, continuance commitment, and normative commitment were appropriate measures of organizational commitment. Although they acknowledged that the construct validation was an ongoing process, Allen and Meyer argued that the ACS, CCS, and NCS were true measures of organizational commitment, based on employee emotional attachment to the organization, perceived cost of leaving, and feeling of obligation to stay in the organization.

Reliability. Researchers generally use coefficient alpha to estimate the internal consistency of the measures (Allen & Meyer, 1996). As the TCM Employee

Commitment Survey instrument has been justified and become popular, numerous reliability scores have been published in the literature. The following table presents a sample of Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficients of each scale of the TCM Employee Commitment Survey instrument.

Table 3

Sample Reliability Scores for TCM Employee Commitment Survey

TCM Employee Commitment Survey	Cronbach's α	Published in:
Affective Commitment Scale	$\alpha = .80$	Elele & Fields (2010)
	$\alpha = .82$	J. P. Meyer, Allen, & Smith (1993)
	$\alpha = .84$	van Dijk (2004)
Continuance Commitment Scale	$\alpha = .76$	Elele & Fields (2010)
	$\alpha = .74$	J. P. Meyer et al. (1993)
	$\alpha = .81$	van Dijk (2004)
Normative Commitment Scale	$\alpha = .79$	Elele & Fields (2010)
	$\alpha = .83$	J. P. Meyer et al. (1993)
	$\alpha = .83$	van Dijk (2004)

The alpha values of each scale of the TCM Employee Commitment Survey consistently exceed the .70 threshold, which indicates that the instrument is reliable and psychometrically sound (J. P. Meyer et al., 1993). Furthermore, items in these scales were randomized during their deployment to avoid questions biasing one another. A few items were reverse-keyed to avoid agreement response bias, which were recoded before the data analysis (J. P. Meyer & Allen, 2004). For scoring purposes, average scores for

each scale were computed. According to J. P. Meyer and Allen (2004), each average score should range between 1 and 7, with greater scores indicating stronger commitment.

Guenzi and Troilo's (2007) Superior Customer Value Creation Scale

Validity. Both convergent and discriminant validity of the superior customer value creation scale have been tested in several studies. Guenzi et al. (2009) reported that all four items measuring superior customer value creation were “loaded significantly on the hypothesized latent variables” (p. 877), which established the convergent validity of the instrument. Later, Guenzi et al. (2011) determined that the AVE exceeds Fornell and Larcker's (1981) suggested cutoff. Therefore, the discriminant validity of the instrument was considered acceptable. According to Shuttleworth (2009), when a research instrument is determined to possess both convergent and discriminant validity, it can be considered as having a strong construct validity.

Reliability. Guenzi and Troilo's (2007) superior customer value creation scale was also tested in several studies that revealed alpha values consistently far above the .70 cutoff. This instrument is reliable and its use in this study appropriate. Table 4 presents the reliability scores of the instrument.

Table 4

Sample Reliability Scores for Guenzi and Troilo's (2007) Survey Instrument

Item	Cronbach's α	Published in:
Responsiveness to customer needs	$\alpha = .85$	Guenzi & Troilo (2007)
Ability to develop creative solutions to customer needs	$\alpha = .82$	Guenzi & Troilo (2007)
Speed of action in the market	$\alpha = .82$	Guenzi & Troilo (2007)
Innovation	$\alpha = .83$	Guenzi & Troilo (2007)
Overall	$\alpha = .79$	Guenzi & Troilo (2007)
Overall	$\alpha = .80$	Guenzi, De Luca, & Troilo (2011)
Overall	$\alpha = .84$	Mathuramaytha & Ussahawanitchakit (2008)

Ethical Considerations

This study was designed to assure participants that the risk of being involved in this process was not greater than minimal. Minimal risk means that “the probability and magnitude of harm or discomfort anticipated in the research are not greater in and of themselves than those ordinarily encountered in daily life or during the performance of routine physical or psychological examinations or tests” (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2010, 45 C.F.R. 46. 102[i], Subpart A). Prior to data collection, the researcher obtained formal approval from Capella University's IRB. The study was determined to adhere to specific rules, policies, and guidelines protecting human rights.

The study also protected participants' privacy, confidentiality, and anonymity. Special measures were taken for data reporting, safeguarding data, informed consent, and publication of the results. In addition, the researcher was committed to informing the IRB of any change that might occur during the research process that could significantly affect the circumstances under which the agency approved the research. In sum, the ethical consideration given to this study addressed the *Belmont Report's* principles of respect for persons, beneficence, and justice applicable to research involving human subjects (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2010).

Respect for Persons

Participation in this study was voluntary. Each of the participants had the option to opt out at any time during the survey. Before the study began, the researcher provided an informed consent form that explained that participation was voluntary. The form also specified any potential risks and benefits pertaining to the study. Further, participants were required to read the consent form carefully and acknowledge their consent before they could continue with the survey. Throughout the process, participants had the option to withdraw without any consequence if they felt uncomfortable. Furthermore, participants were provided with the necessary information in case they might need to contact the researcher, his mentor, or the institution to discuss any issue related to the survey. There was no attempt to pressure participants to be involved in this study. It should be noted once again that participants were anonymous to the researcher.

Beneficence

There was no risk greater than minimal pertaining to this study. Participants' privacy, confidentiality, and anonymity were protected. Information was kept securely on

a password-protected computer. In addition, participants were not requested to disclose their personal identifiable information, such as name, address, or contact, or their respective organization. As soon as data were collected, they were coded so that they would not allow identification or link to any specific participant. Throughout the research project, all information was kept securely on a password-protected computer at the researcher's home office, and will be maintained for the 7-year minimum requisite period, after which they will be destroyed through electronic data shredding of the hard drive and the USB flash drive copy.

Justice

All participants were adults, at least 18 years of age; their involvement in the study was totally voluntary, and there was no monetary compensation or incentive from the researcher. However, SurveyMonkey runs "Member Rewards" programs that provide noncash rewards to its members in the form of points. Members can redeem the points earned for a variety of merchandise, sweepstakes entries, or gift cards. In general, members have to complete several surveys before earning enough points to qualify for redemption (SurveyMonkey, 2012). Finally, this researcher had no financial, business, personal, or professional relationships with any member of SurveyMonkey's ZoomPanel that could have affected the rights and welfare of any participant in this project.

CHAPTER 4. RESULTS

This study examined the relationships between organizational commitment and employee perceptions of superior customer value creation among U.S. customer-facing employees working in the retail industry. The instruments utilized to collect data included the TCM Employee Commitment Survey (J. P. Meyer & Allen, 2004), comprised of the ACS, CCS, and NCS. The other instrument included the superior customer value creation scale (Guenzi & Troilo, 2007). This chapter presents the survey responses, data screening, and demographic profile of the respondents. The chapter provides a discussion of the reliability scores of the instruments, presents the descriptive statistics, and analyzes the assumptions of using parametric tests. The chapter continues with hypothesis testing and concludes with a summary of the findings.

Survey Responses and Data Processing

G*Power 3.1.2 was used to determine the required sample size of a minimum of 119 participants, which was enough to support this study. However, the researcher requested 158 completed and usable responses with 100% incidence rate from SurveyMonkey. In total, 266 responses were collected. However, 108 responses were screened out because they were incomplete and therefore not useable. Therefore, the adjusted total number of usable responses (N) was 158. According to Nunnally (1978), a

sample size of at least 100 for less than or equal to three predictor variables is sufficient for a multiple regression analysis.

Before the analysis began, the researcher securely exported the raw data from SurveyMonkey's web server into SPSS 20. SurveyMonkey assured that the links to export the data were secured using Secure Sockets Layer. Variables were renamed, measures were adjusted from the defaults to their appropriate levels, and reverse-keyed survey items were recoded. There were no missing items or unusual responses. After the screening process, data were prepared for statistical analysis.

Overview of Demographic Variables and Descriptive Statistics

This research involved organizational commitment and perceptions of superior customer value creation, which were analyzed at the individual level. Therefore, it was necessary to understand the basic demographic characteristics of the respondents. These characteristics included age, education level, gender, marital status, and organizational tenure.

When participants were asked to indicate their demographic characteristics, an overwhelming number of respondents (99, 62.7%), reported that they were more than 33 years old. The majority of the respondents were female (85, 53.8%), not married (84, 53.2%), and had some college education (43.0%). Most had worked less than 5 years in their current organization (64, 40.5%). Table 5 presents the demographic data.

Table 5

Aggregate Demographic Data

Variable	<i>n</i>	%
Age		
18–25	26	16.4
26–33	33	20.9
More than 33	99	62.7
Education level		
High school	28	17.7
Some college	68	43.0
Undergraduate	33	20.9
Graduate	29	18.4
Gender		
Male	73	46.2
Female	85	53.8
Marital status		
Married	74	46.8
Not married	84	53.2
Organizational tenure		
0–5 years	64	40.5
6–10 years	45	28.5
More than 10 years	49	31.0

Note. *N* = 158.

Descriptive statistics were computed for each study variable. The results revealed the means and standard deviations for the three categories of organizational commitment. The comparison of these three categories indicated that continuance commitment had the greatest mean ($M = 4.5390$, $SD = 1.08310$), followed by normative commitment ($M = 4.1656$, $SD = 1.10450$) and affective commitment ($M = 4.0190$, $SD = .82811$). According

to J. P. Meyer and Allen (2004), the mean scores for each commitment type should range from 1 to 7, and the greater the score, the stronger the commitment. Table 6 presents the complete descriptive statistics.

Table 6

Descriptive Statistics for Study Variables

		Affective commitment	Continuance commitment	Normative commitment	Superior customer value creation	Valid N (listwise)
<i>N</i>	Statistic	158	158	158	158	158
Range	Statistic	5.83	5.50	5.50	6.00	
Min	Statistic	1.17	1.50	1.50	1.00	
Max	Statistic	7.00	7.00	7.00	7.00	
Sum	Statistic	635.00	717.17	658.17	751.75	
<i>M</i>	Statistic <i>SE</i>	4.0190 .06588	4.5390 .08617	4.1656 .08787	4.7579 .10764	
<i>SD</i>	Statistic	.82811	1.08310	1.10450	1.35305	
Variance	Statistic	.686	1.173	1.220	1.831	
Skewness	Statistic <i>SE</i>	.378 .193	-.306 .193	.126 .193	-.397 .193	
Kurtosis	Statistic <i>SE</i>	2.101 .384	.150 .384	-.160 .384	.265 .384	

Reliability of Survey Instruments

This study used a composite of two survey instruments: the TCM Employee Commitment Survey and the superior customer value creation scale. Researchers often use Cronbach's alpha to determine the reliability of survey instruments by comparing alpha values to the cutoff of .70 (Cortina, 1993; Nunnally, 1978). Other researchers suggest that an alpha value as low as .6 is acceptable (Bagozzi & Yi, 1988; Bartee et al., 2004). In this study, a Cronbach's alpha reliability score was computed for each survey instrument. The results indicated a Cronbach's alpha of .762 for the TCM Employee Commitment Survey and .933 for the superior customer value creation scale. Both reliability scores were greater than the .70 threshold, consistent with previous studies discussed in Chapter 3. Therefore, both survey instruments were reliable as data collection tools for this study.

Tests of Parametric Assumptions

In order to ensure that a parametric statistical procedure is appropriate to analyze the data, the following assumptions were tested: (a) no significant outliers, (b) linear relationships between the predictor variables and the dependent variable, (c) errors were normally distributed, (d) homoscedasticity of residuals, (e) no multicollinearity, and (f) independence of errors. Each of these assumptions verified the accuracy of the predictions and tested the extent to which the regression model fit the data.

In this study, casewise diagnostics using standardized residuals and studentized deleted residuals were utilized to test potential outliers. Next, data were checked for leverage points. The inspection of the data indicated that all the values were less than .2,

which were considered as *safe*. In addition, data were checked for influential points using Cook's distance. The inspection indicated that there were no Cook's distance values above 1 (R. D. Cook & Weisberg, 1982). Therefore, there were no highly influential points in the data set. In sum, neither casewise diagnostics nor Cook's distance detected significant outliers that could potentially influence the statistical analyses.

Further, the assumption of linearity was assessed by plotting the studentized residuals against unstandardized predicted values. The residuals formed a horizontal band (see Figure 2). In addition, based on Table 7, analysis of variance (ANOVA) for the linear regression ($F[3, 154] = 13.551, p < .001$), there was a statistically significant relationship between perceptions of superior customer value creation and the predictor variables (affective, continuance, and normative commitment) collectively at the significance level of .05. Therefore, the relationship between the independent variables (affective commitment [AC], continuance commitment [CC], and normative commitment [NC]) and the dependent variable (superior customer value creation [SCVC]) was likely to be linear.

Furthermore, the assumption of normal distribution of errors is evidenced when the mean of the residuals equals 0 (see Table 8). In addition, a histogram of regression standardized residuals was generated (see Figure 3). A visual examination indicates that the residuals appear to be normally distributed. Moreover, the normal distribution represents the straight line in the P-P plots around which are the observed residuals (see Figure 4). Altogether, the assumption of normal distribution was met, as assessed by the mean of the residuals, histogram, and P-P plots.

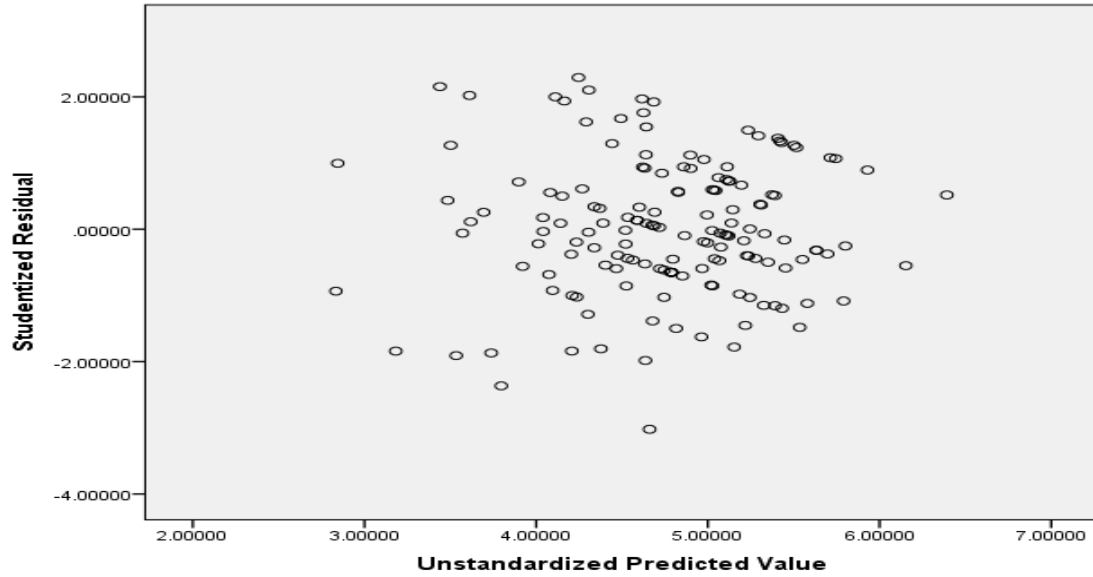


Figure 2. Bivariate scatterplot of unstandardized predicted value with studentized residual.

Table 7

ANOVA Summary for Prediction of SCVC Based on AC, CC, and NC

ANOVA ^a						
Model	SS	df	MS	F	Sig.	
1	Regression	60.028	3	20.009	13.551	.000 ^b
	Residual	227.400	154	1.477		
	Total	287.428	157			

^aDependent variable: SCVC. ^bPredictors: (Constant), AC, CC, NC.

Table 8

Residual Statistics of the Regression Model

Residuals statistics ^a					
	Min	Max	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>
Predicted value	2.8337	6.3922	4.7579	.61834	158
Std. predicted value	-3.112	2.643	.000	1.000	158
SE of predicted value	.098	.385	.182	.065	158
Adjusted predicted value	2.7331	6.3495	4.7551	.61940	158
Residual	-3.66049	2.75319	.00000	1.20350	158
Std. residual	-3.012	2.266	.000	.990	158
Stud. residual	-3.022	2.291	.001	1.005	158
Deleted residual	-3.68442	2.81569	.00283	1.24054	158
Stud. deleted residual	-3.106	2.324	.001	1.012	158
Mahalanobis distance	.026	14.788	2.981	3.035	158
Cook's distance	.000	.103	.008	.015	158
Centered leverage value	.000	.094	.019	.019	158

^aDependent variable: SCVC.

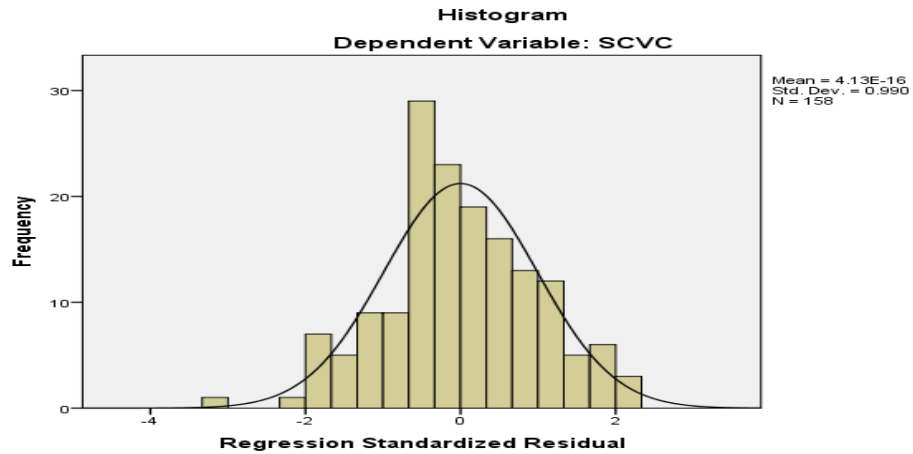


Figure 3. Histogram of normally distributed residuals.

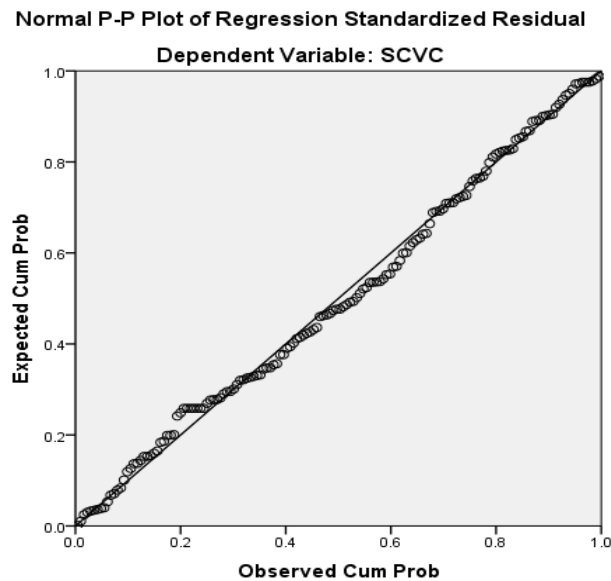


Figure 4. Normal P-P plot of regression standardized residual.

More important, the assumption of homoscedasticity was assessed by the scatterplots of the studentized residuals against unstandardized predicted values. As was

shown in Figure 2, the residuals were equally spread over the predicted values of the dependent variable. This pattern supported the assumption of homoscedasticity; thus, the researcher proceeded to check for absence of multicollinearity, which occurs when two or more independent variables are highly correlated with each other. The test to identify multicollinearity was conducted by inspecting the tolerance/variance inflation factor (VIF) values. As illustrated in Table 9, there were no tolerance values less than .1 or VIF greater than 10 ($VIF = 1/\text{tolerance}$). Therefore, there was no multicollinearity in this particular data set.

Next, the researcher tested the assumption of independence of errors using the Durbin–Watson statistic. The Durbin–Watson statistic usually ranges from 0 to 4, and the closer the value gets to 2, the greater the indication of no correlation between residuals, so it can be accepted that there is independence of errors. As illustrated in Table 10, the Durbin–Watson statistic was 2.080. Therefore, there was independence of residuals.

Altogether, the assumptions supporting the multiple regression analysis were tested, and the results indicated there was no violation. Therefore, data appropriately appeared to support the accuracy of the hypothesis tests on the regression equation.

Hypothesis Testing

Considering that all the parametric assumptions were met, the research hypotheses were tested using Pearson correlations, ANOVA, and multiple regression, as they were determined to be sound statistical procedures to answer the research questions. The significance level of $p < .05$ was retained for rejecting the null hypotheses.

Table 9

Beta Weights of Predictor Variables in the Model

		Coefficients ^a			
		Model			
		1			
		(Constant)	AC	CC	NC
Unstandardized coefficients	<i>B</i>	4.069	-.243	-.253	.676
	SE	.555	.132	.103	.106
Standardized coefficients	β		-.149	-.203	.552
<i>t</i>		7.330	-1.844	-2.458	6.366
Sig.		.000	.067	.015	.000
95.0% confidence interval for B	Lower bound	2.973	-.503	-.457	.466
	Upper bound	5.166	.017	-.050	.886
Correlations	Zero-order		.026	.012	.390
	Partial		-.147	-.194	.456
	Part		-.132	-.176	.456
Collinearity statistics	Tolerance		.790	.754	.684
	VIF		1.265	1.326	1.462

^aDependent variable: SCVC.

Table 10

Model Summary for Prediction of SCVC Based on AC, CC and NC

Model summary ^b					
Model	<i>R</i>	<i>R</i> ²	Adjusted <i>R</i> ²	<i>SE</i> of the estimate	Durbin–Watson
1	.457 ^a	.209	.193	1.21516	2.080

^aPredictors: (Constant), AC, CC, NC. ^bDependent variable: SCVC.

While Pearson correlations (*R*) were used to determine the direction as well as the strength of the relationships between the independent variables and the dependent variable, the coefficient of determination (*R*²) was utilized to measure the proportion of variance that two variables shared (Howell, 2007). In addition, ANOVA provided the statistical significance of the relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable, both collectively and individually, whereas the regression equation examined the degree to which each commitment category contributed to predicting the perceptions of superior customer value creation. The following sections present the findings for each research question and its subsequent hypothesis.

Primary Research Questions and Hypotheses

*R*₁: To what extent does employee commitment influence employee perceptions of superior customer value creation? Based on the three-component model of organizational commitment (affective commitment, continuance commitment, and normative commitment), this question was divided into subquestions with corresponding null hypotheses.

R_{1a}: To what extent does affective commitment influence employee perceptions of superior customer value creation?

H_{1a}: Employee affective commitment does not significantly influence employee perceptions of superior customer value creation.

The multiple correlation coefficient R was utilized to test the null hypothesis of no significant influence of affective commitment ($M = 4.0190$, $SD = .82811$) on perceptions of superior customer value creation ($M = 4.7579$, $SD = 1.35305$). The value of R ranged from 0 to 1, with higher values indicating that better affective commitment predicted the perception of superior customer value creation. A value of $R = .026$ indicated a small positive correlation between affective commitment and superior customer value creation (see Table 17). In addition, the coefficient of determination R^2 indicated that only 0.1% of variability in perceptions of superior customer value creation could be explained by the affective commitment (see Table 11). However, this value was based on the sample that could have produced an inflated estimate. The computed adjusted $R^2 = -.006$ and showed that the model included a term that could not help to predict the dependent variable.

Further, affective commitment did not statistically significantly predict perceptions of superior customer value creation ($F[1, 156] = .103$, $p = .749$; see Table 12). Therefore, the results did not warrant the rejection of the null hypothesis of no significant influence of affective commitment on employee perceptions of superior customer value creation.

Table 11

Model Summary for Prediction of SCVC Based on AC

Model summary ^b					
Model	<i>R</i>	<i>R</i> ²	Adjusted <i>R</i> ²	<i>SE</i> of the estimate	Durbin–Watson
1	.026 ^a	.209	–.006	1.35693	2.282

^aPredictors: (Constant), AC. ^bDependent variable: SCVC.

Table 12

ANOVA Summary for Prediction of SCVC Based on AC

ANOVA ^a						
Model	<i>SS</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>	Sig.	
1						
	Regression	.190	1	.190	.103	.749 ^b
	Residual	287.238	156	1.841		
	Total	287.428	157			

^aDependent variable: SCVC. ^bPredictors: (Constant), AC.

*R*_{1b}: To what extent does continuance commitment influence employee perceptions of superior customer value creation?

*H*_{1b}: Employee continuance commitment does not significantly influence employee perceptions of superior customer value creation.

The multiple correlation coefficient R was utilized to test the null hypothesis of no significant influence of continuance commitment ($M = 4.5390$, $SD = 1.08310$) on perceptions of superior customer value creation ($M = 4.7579$, $SD = 1.35305$). The higher the value of R , the better continuance commitment predicted the perception of superior customer value creation. An $R = .012$ indicated a small positive correlation between continuance commitment and superior customer value creation (see Table 17). In addition, the coefficient of determination R^2 indicated that no variability (0.00%) in perceptions of superior customer value creation could be explained by continuance commitment (see Table 13). However, this value was based on the sample that could have produced an inflated estimate. The computed adjusted $R^2 = -.006$ and showed that the model included a term that could not help to predict the dependent variable.

Table 13

Model Summary for Prediction of SCVC Based on CC

Model summary ^b					
Model	R	R^2	Adjusted R^2	SE of the estimate	Durbin–Watson
1	.012 ^a	.000	-.006	1.35729	2.291

^aPredictors: (Constant), CC. ^bDependent variable: SCVC.

Further, continuance commitment did not statistically significantly predict perceptions of superior customer value creation ($F[1, 156] = .022$, $p = .884$; see Table 14). Therefore, results did not warrant the rejection of the null hypothesis of no

significant influence of continuance commitment on employee perceptions of superior customer value creation.

Table 14

ANOVA Summary for Prediction of SCVC Based on CC

Model		<i>SS</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>	Sig.
	Regression	.040	1	.040	.022	.884 ^b
1	Residual	287.388	156	1.841	1.842	
	Total	287.428	157			

^aDependent variable: SCVC. ^bPredictors: (Constant), CC.

R_{1c} : To what extent does normative commitment influence employee perceptions of superior customer value creation?

H_{1c} : Employee normative commitment does not significantly influence employee perceptions of superior customer value creation.

The multiple correlation R was utilized to test the null hypothesis of no significant influence of normative commitment ($M = 4.1656$, $SD = 1.10450$) on perceptions of superior customer value creation ($M = 4.7579$, $SD = 1.35305$). The higher the value of R , the better normative commitment predicted the perception of superior customer value creation. Although there is no standard rule for the strength of the relationship, a value of R between .3 and .5 indicates a moderate correlation (J. Cohen, 1988). Therefore, the calculated $R = .390$ indicated that there was a moderate positive correlation between

normative commitment and superior customer value creation (see Table 17). In addition, the coefficient of determination R^2 indicated that approximately 15% of the variability in perceptions of superior customer value creation was explained by normative commitment (see Table 15). However, this value was based on the sample that could have produced an inflated estimate. The computed adjusted $R^2 = .147$ and showed that the model included a term that could help to predict the dependent variable.

Table 15

Model Summary for Prediction of SCVC Based on NC

Model summary ^b					
Model	R	R^2	Adjusted R^2	SE of the estimate	Durbin–Watson
1	.390 ^a	.152	.147	1.25001	2.075

^aPredictors: (Constant), NC. ^bDependent variable: SCVC.

Further, normative commitment statistically significantly predicted perceptions of superior customer value creation ($F[1, 156] = 27.951, p < .001$; see Table 16). Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternative hypothesis of the significant influence of normative commitment on perceptions of superior customer value creation was accepted.

Table 16

ANOVA Summary for Prediction of SCVC Based on NC

ANOVA ^a						
Model	SS	df	MS	F	Sig.	
1	Regression	43.674	1	43.674	27.951	.000 ^b
	Residual	243.753	156	1.563		
	Total	287.428	157			

^aDependent variable: SCVC. ^bPredictors: (Constant), NC.

Table 17 presents the Pearson correlations of the study variables.

Table 17

Pearson Correlation Coefficients for SCVC, AC, CC, and NC

		SCVC	AC	CC	NC
Pearson correlation	SCVC	1.000	.026	.012	.390
	AC	.026	1.000	.329	.437
	CC	.012	.329	1.000	.478
	NC	.390	.437	.478	1.000
Sig. (1-tailed)	SCVC	.	.374	.442	.000
	AC	.374	.	.000	.000
	CC	.442	.000	.	.000
	NC	.000	.000	.000	.
N	SCVC	158	158	158	158
	AC	158	158	158	158
	CC	158	158	158	158
	NC	158	158	158	158

Note. SCVC = superior customer value creation, AC = affective commitment, CC = continuance commitment, NC = normative commitment.

In addition to the assessment of the individual influence of the predictors on the dependent variable, the overall significance of the entire model was tested. Table 10 presented a model summary for predicting perceptions of SCVC based on affective commitment (AC), continuance commitment (CC), and normative commitment (NC). The coefficient of determination R^2 represented the proportion of variance in perceptions of SCVC that could be explained by AC, CC, and NC altogether. As illustrated in Table 10, the R^2 value of .209 indicated that AC, CC, and NC explained approximately 21% of the variability in employee perceptions of superior customer value creation. However, this value was based on the sample that could have produced an inflated estimate. The computed adjusted $R^2 = .193$ and showed that the model included the terms that could help to predict the dependent variable. Further, AC, CC, and NC statistically significantly predicted perceptions of SCVC ($F[3, 154] = 13.551, p < .001$). The ANOVA summary for prediction of SCVC based on AC, CC, and NC was shown in Table 7.

The estimated model coefficients presented in Table 18 helped to express the model equation $Y = a + bX_1 + cX_2 + dX_3$, where $Y =$ predicted SCVC, $a = 4.069$, $b = -.243$, $c = -.253$, $d = .676$, and $X_1, X_2,$ and $X_3 =$ AC, CC, and NC, respectively. Therefore, the model equation could be expressed as follows:

$$\text{Predicted SCVC} = 4.069 - (.243 \times \text{AC}) - (.253 \times \text{CC}) + (.676 \times \text{NC}).$$

Table 18

Parameter Estimates

		Coefficients ^a			
		Model			
		1			
		(Constant)	AC	CC	NC
Unstandardized coefficients	<i>B</i>	4.069	-.243	-.253	.676
	SE	.555	.132	.103	.106
Standardized coefficients	β		-.149	-.203	.552
<i>t</i>		7.330	-1.844	-2.458	6.366
Sig.		.000	.067	.015	.000
95% confidence interval for <i>B</i>	Lower bound	2.973	-.503	-.457	.466
	Upper bound	5.166	.017	-.050	.886
Correlations	Zero-order		.026	.012	.390
	Partial		-.147	-.194	.456
	Part		-.132	-.176	.456
Collinearity statistics	Tolerance		.790	.754	.684
	VIF		1.265	1.326	1.462

^aDependent variable: SCVC.

Unstandardized coefficients were examined in order to determine how much of perceptions of superior customer value creation varied with one commitment type, when all other commitment types were held constant. The unstandardized coefficients were

equal to $-.243$, $-.253$, and $.676$ for affective commitment, continuance commitment, and normative commitment, respectively. These results indicated that if both continuance and normative commitment were held constant, each 1-point increase in affective commitment could result in a $.243$ -point decrease in perceptions of superior customer value creation. Similarly, each 1-point increase in continuance commitment could result in a $.253$ -point decrease in perceptions of superior customer value creation. However, for each 1-point increase in normative commitment, there is a $.676$ -point increase in employee perceptions of superior customer value creation.

Summary of Findings for Primary Research Question

The primary research question asked, To what extent does employee commitment influence employee perceptions of superior customer value creation? In addition to the measurement of relationships between the study variables, as assessed by multiple correlation coefficients R , a multiple regression equation determined how much of the variability in the dependent variable could be explained by the three commitment categories individually and overall. The results indicated that employee commitment, as measured by the three-component model of organizational commitment, was positively related to perceptions of superior customer value creation. In addition, affective commitment, continuance commitment, and normative commitment, overall, statistically significantly predicted perceptions of superior customer value creation ($F[3, 154] = 13.551, p < .001$). However, these variables, when considered together, explained only approximately 21% of variability in employee perceptions of superior customer value creation. Further, the analysis indicated that both affective and continuance commitment had a negative influence on employee perceptions of superior customer value creation,

whereas normative commitment strengthened these perceptions. Altogether, these three variables added statistically significantly to the prediction, $p < .05$. Regression coefficients and standard errors can be found in Table 19.

Table 19

Regression Coefficients

Coefficients			
Variable	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i> ^a	β
(Constant)	4.069	.555	
AC	-.243	.132	-.149
CC	-.253	.103	-.203
NC	.676	.106	.552

Note. $p < .05$. *B* = unstandardized regression coefficients; *SE*^a = standard error of the coefficient; β = standardized coefficient.

Secondary Research Question and Hypothesis

R₂: Does affective commitment have a stronger overall influence on employee perceptions of superior customer value creation as compared to normative commitment?

H₂: Employee affective commitment does not have a stronger overall influence on employee perceptions of superior customer value creation as compared to normative commitment.

The null hypothesis of no stronger overall influence of affective commitment ($M = 4.0190$, $SD = .82811$) on perceptions of superior customer value creation ($M = 4.7579$, $SD = 1.35305$) as compared to normative commitment ($M = 4.1656$, $SD = 1.10450$) was tested by comparing the mean scores between the two groups of the independent variables. The results indicated that affective commitment had a lower mean score ($M = 4.0190$, $SD = .82811$) as compared to normative commitment ($M = 4.1656$, $SD = 1.10450$). In addition, affective commitment did not statistically significantly predict perceptions of superior customer value creation ($F[1, 156] = .103$, $p = .749$). Further, affective commitment explained only 0.1% of the variability of employee perceptions of superior customer value creation, whereas normative commitment statistically significantly predicted perceptions of superior customer value creation ($F[1, 156] = 27.951$, $p < .001$) and explained approximately 15% of the variability of employee perceptions of superior customer value creation. Therefore, the combination of findings did not warrant the rejection of the null hypothesis of no stronger overall influence of affective commitment on perceptions of superior customer value creation as compared to normative commitment. Thus, the results failed to reject the null hypothesis.

Summary of the Hypothesis Testing Results

Both primary and secondary research questions were answered based on the findings from the hypothesis testing. The results are summarized in Table 20 and illustrated in Figure 5. Chapter 5 further discusses these results and provides the conclusions and implications of the study.

Table 20

Summary of Hypotheses Testing

Null hypothesis	Finding	Determination
H _{1a} : Employee affective commitment does not significantly influence employee perceptions of superior customer value creation.	Weak calculated correlation R and regression model was not significant.	Failed to reject
H _{1b} : Employee continuance commitment does not significantly influence employee perceptions of superior customer value creation.	Weak calculated correlation R and regression model was not significant.	Failed to reject
H _{1c} : Employee normative commitment does not significantly influence employee perceptions of superior customer value creation.	Moderate calculated correlation R and regression model was significant.	Rejected
H ₂ : Employee affective commitment does not have a stronger overall influence on employee perceptions of superior customer value creation as compared to normative commitment.	Lower mean score, lower correlation R , less variability explained R^2 , and regression model was not significant.	Failed to reject

The outcomes of this study are illustrated in Figure 5, as follows.

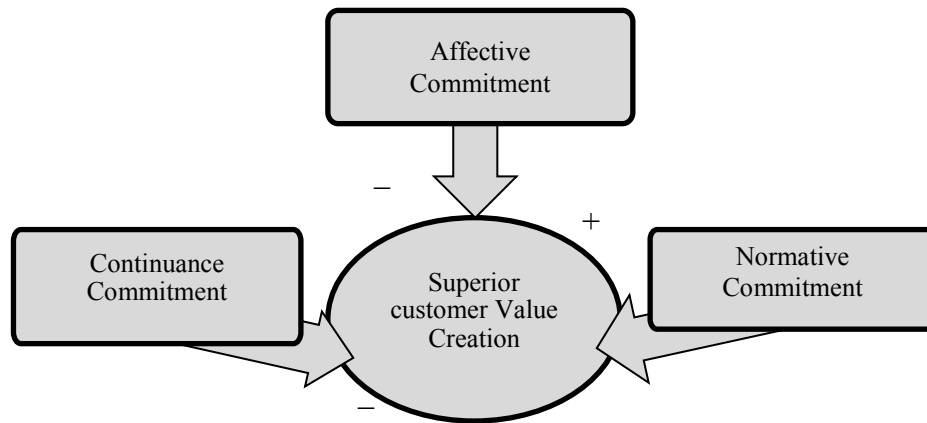


Figure 5. Organizational commitment model for predicting superior customer value creation.

CHAPTER 5. DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS

The reason employees hold onto their jobs or decide to leave their organizations has been a topic of interest among organizational researchers for many decades. As the nature of employee–organization relationships became influential in creating favorable conditions for gaining a competitive advantage (N. G. Ansari, 2011; Lichtenstein, Netemeyer, & Maxham, 2010; Mollahosseini, Karnama, & Mahtab, 2012), the theory of organizational commitment became successful in providing insight to both theoreticians and practitioners. The goal of this study was to assess the influence of organizational commitment on employee perceptions of superior customer value creation based on the three-component model of organizational commitment (J. P. Meyer & Allen, 1991; J. P. Meyer et al., 1993). This study also was intended to investigate whether affective commitment had a stronger overall influence on employee perceptions of superior customer value creation as compared to normative commitment. This chapter discusses the results, implications, and limitations of the study. The chapter concludes with recommendations for future research.

General Discussion

The questions addressed in this study highlighted a distinctive line of research that contributed to advance the knowledge in the field of organizational management.

Although previous studies examined the consequences of commitment (Barber et al., 1999; A. Cohen, 1991, 1993; Mathieu & Zajac, 1990) and antecedents of superior customer value creation (Guenzi & Troilo, 2007), no research had linked the two constructs together.

This research used a quantitative, nonexperimental methodology with an online survey design to examine the research questions. This methodological approach was determined appropriate for this study. The targeted population was customer-facing employees working in the retail industry in the United States, and SurveyMonkey was used to collect the data. Although it should be emphasized that the results of this study are specific to SurveyMonkey's ZoomPanel participants, it should also be noted that the findings discussed in this chapter were based on a rigorous data set. One characteristic of the data is related to the reliability of the survey instruments as measured by their Cronbach's alpha scores above .70. In addition, the assumptions supporting the statistical analyses of this study were met. Therefore, the strength of the data set supported the generalization of the findings.

Most participants in this study were over the age of 33. Previous studies found that age was related to organizational commitment (A. Cohen, 1993; Mathieu & Zajac, 1990; J. P. Meyer & Allen, 1984). In addition, research indicated that employees tend to develop a stronger commitment to their organizations as they get older (Dunham et al., 1994), and older employees are less likely to leave their current organizations compared to younger employees (Chawla & Sondhi, 2011). Further, the majority of the respondents in this study were female. While some scholars suggest that women tend to be more committed than men (Grusky, 1996; Mathieu & Zajac, 1990), others argue that there is

no difference in the level of commitment between men and women (Al-Ajmi, 2006; Marsden et al., 1993; Savicki et al., 2003).

The majority of the respondents in this study were not married. Scholars have found a positive relationship between marital status and organizational commitment (Gülova & Demirsoy, 2012; Popoola, 2009), and it has even been suggested that unmarried employees are less committed than married employees (Mathieu & Zajac, 1990). Regarding level of education, the study found that the majority of respondents had some college education. In a recent study, Bakan et al. (2011) found that there were statistically significant differences between education level and organizational commitment. Further, participants in the current study had worked less than 5 years in their current organizations. Prior studies found that the nature and level of commitment changed over the period of one's employment (Allen & Meyer, 1993; J. P. Meyer & Allen, 1991). Although the demographic variables were not included in this study, they provided the context that could help explain the results.

Affective Commitment and Superior Customer Value Creation

The first null hypothesis postulated that affective commitment does not significantly influence employee perceptions of superior customer value creation. The findings indicated that affective commitment ranked lowest among the participants ($M = 4.0190$, $SD = .82811$). Further, the results showed a weak positive correlation between the two variables. However, affective commitment did not statistically significantly influence these perceptions ($F[1, 156] = .103$, $R = .026$, $R^2 = 0.1\%$, $Adj. R^2 = -.006$, $p = .749$). In addition, the unstandardized coefficient for affective commitment was equal to $-.243$, which indicated that an increase in affective commitment could result in a decrease

in employee perceptions of superior customer value creation, when other variables are held constant. This result suggests that an organization cannot expect its employees to have strong perceptions of customer value creation when they have a low level of affective commitment. Allen and Grisaffe (2001) emphasized that a high level of affective commitment correlates with positive customer-related behavior among employees. Therefore, the low level of affective commitment observed in this study may explain why this variable had a small effect on the dependent variable.

Continuance Commitment and Superior Customer Value Creation

The second null hypothesis postulated that CC does not significantly influence employee perceptions of superior customer value creation. The findings indicated that continuance commitment ranked highest among the participants ($M = 4.5390$, $SD = 1.08310$). Further, the results showed a weak positive correlation between the two variables. However, continuance commitment did not statistically significantly influence these perceptions ($F[1, 156] = .022$, $R = .012$, $R^2 = 0.00\%$, $Adj. R^2 = -.006$, $p = .884$). In addition, the unstandardized coefficient for continuance commitment was equal to $-.253$, which indicates that an increase in continuance commitment could result in a decrease in employee perceptions of superior customer value creation, when other variables are held constant.

Furthermore, the high level of continuance commitment within the participants is an indication that the majority of them were committed to their jobs due to lack of alternatives and their awareness of the cost that their leaving could involve (J. P. Meyer & Allen, 1991). It should be noted that the negative effect of continuance commitment in predicting perceptions of superior customer value creation was consistent with earlier

studies, which associated continuance commitment with unfavorable organizational outcomes. Some of the negative impacts include turnover intention (Labatmediene et al., 2007; O'Donnell et al., 2012), lack of motivation (J. P. Meyer et al., 2002), and no willingness to exert discretionary effort (Shore & Wayne, 1993). Further, Allen and Grisaffe (2001) found that the higher the continuance commitment, the less likely an employee is to engage in a productive customer-relevant behavior.

Normative Commitment and Superior Customer Value Creation

The third null hypothesis postulated that normative commitment does not have a significant influence on employee perceptions of superior customer value creation. The findings indicated that normative commitment ranked second highest among the participants ($M = 4.1656$, $SD = 1.10450$). Further, the results showed a moderate positive correlation between the two variables. In addition, normative commitment statistically significantly influenced these perceptions ($F[1, 156] = 27.951$, $R = .0390$, $R^2 = .152\%$, $Adj. R^2 = .147$, $p < .001$). In addition, the unstandardized coefficient for normative commitment was equal to $.676$, which indicates that an increase in normative commitment could also result in an increase in employee perceptions of superior customer value creation, when other variables are held constant.

The positive influence that normative commitment had on employee perceptions of superior customer value creation could be explained by the congruence, to some extent, between employees' values and those of their organizations (O'Reilly & Chatman, 1986). Further, J. P. Meyer and Allen (1991) argued that normative commitment reflects a feeling of obligation toward the company, which could also

explain the favorable perceptions employees had about creating superior value for customers.

Organizational Commitment and Superior Customer Value Creation

The results of testing the hypotheses answered the primary research question and provided empirical evidence that employee commitment influences perceptions of superior customer value creation. All three categories of employee commitment— affective commitment, continuance commitment, and normative commitment—positively correlated with employee perceptions of superior customer value creation. More important, all three categories of commitment statistically significantly predicted perceptions of superior customer value creation ($F[3, 154] = 13.551, R = .475, R^2 = .209, \text{Adj. } R^2 = .193, p < .001$).

It should be noted, though, that the strength of the relationships between the independent variables and the dependent variable was different from one commitment to another when they were tested individually. Particularly, the relationship with the perceptions of superior customer value creation was weak for affective and continuance commitment and moderate for normative commitment. These results support J. P. Meyer and Allen's (1991) position that the phenomenon of commitment is a complex psychological state that people experience to varying degrees.

In this study, although affective commitment, continuance commitment, and normative commitment had varying effects on employee perceptions of superior customer value creation, the three categories of commitment contributed to predicting these perceptions when they were included together in the regression model. Thus, an increase in affective, continuance, and normative commitment seemed to reinforce

perceptions of superior customer value creation. These findings support the original conceptualization of the theory of organizational commitment that states that all three components of commitment must interact together in order to accurately influence employee behaviors (J. P. Meyer & Allen, 1991, 2004; J. P. Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001). Similarly, Somers (2009) found that the influence of commitment on organizational outcomes was greater when multiple forms of commitment were combined compared to a single form. This study appeared to support the multidimensional approach to organizational commitment theory.

Affective Commitment Compared to Normative Commitment

The final null hypothesis postulated a stronger overall influence of affective commitment on employee perceptions of superior customer value creation as compared to normative commitment. Evidence supported the rejection of this hypothesis. Specifically, affective commitment had a lower mean score ($M = 4.0190$, $SD = .82811$) as compared to normative commitment ($M = 4.1656$, $SD = 1.10450$). Results also indicated that affective commitment did not statistically significantly predict perceptions of superior customer value creation ($F[1, 156] = .103$, $p = .749$) as opposed to normative commitment ($F[1, 156] = 27.951$, $p < .001$). In addition, affective commitment explained much less of the variability in employee perceptions of superior customer value creation ($R^2 = 0.1\%$) as compared to normative commitment ($R^2 = .152\%$). Contrary to these findings, previous studies showed that affective commitment had the most positive impact on organizations' outcomes (Allen & Meyer, 1990; J. P. Meyer & Allen, 1991, 1997). For example, employees who had affective commitment could be thought to have a stronger customer-relevant behavior than those with normative commitment (Allen &

Grisaffe, 2001). However, previous research also found that affective commitment developed as a result of various factors, including Perceptions of Organizational Support–POS– (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2001) and job involvement (O. U. Khan, Jam, et al., 2011; Passarelli, 2011). The lack of these factors in the participants’ organizations could explain the current findings.

Implications

This study contributes to the field of organization management by bridging the existing gap in the literature. Although previous studies linked employee commitment to various organizational outcomes (Barber et al., 1999; Mathieu & Zajac, 1990; Vandenberg & Lance, 1992), no specific study had examined the relationship between commitment and superior customer value creation. While the three-component model of organizational commitment was useful in examining these relationships, the inference that emerged from the results has implications for both organizational researchers and managers.

Theoretical Implications

First and foremost, this study sheds light on a potential consequence of organizational commitment by finding evidence that this construct is positively, albeit moderately, related to employee perceptions of superior customer value creation. In addition, organizational commitment statistically significantly predicted perceptions of superior customer value creation. By using a correlational approach and predictive modeling, this study excluded any presumption of causality between the independent and dependent variables. This research focused on determining the presence of association,

direction, strength of relationships, and prediction of the outcome. Meanwhile, the design of this study remained consistent with the methodological tradition of investigating organizational commitment (J. P. Meyer et al., 2002). Therefore, the main implication for scholars is to use a different methodological approach that could further help understand these relationships.

Furthermore, the weak influence of affective commitment on employee perceptions of superior customer value creation as compared to normative commitment does not support the commonly accepted position in the commitment literature that states that affective commitment has a higher impact on organizational outcomes as compared to other forms of commitment (Allen & Meyer, 1990; Fu et al., 2009; J. P. Meyer & Allen, 1991, 1997). However, this study attempted to respond to J. P. Meyer and Allen's (2004) suggestion by testing for interaction through a multiple regression analysis. As a result, the study found empirical evidence that affective commitment interacts simultaneously with both continuance and normative commitment to strengthen employee perceptions of superior customer value creation.

By finding that the three forms of organizational commitment together explained, to a certain degree, the variability in perceptions of superior customer value creation, the present study extends the research on the relationship between employee commitment and customer-relevant behavior proposed by Allen and Grisaffe (2001). Though previous studies generally discussed value creation from the customer's perspective (Grönroos, 2007; Huber, Herrmann, & Morgan, 2001; Spiteri & Dion, 2004), there has been a growing interest in the literature about the way employee behavior could affect customer outcomes (Carlos & Coelho, 2011; Elmadag, Ellinger, & Franke, 2008; Guenzi et al.,

2011). This study contributes to the same line of research and, further, provides support to the view that employees drive value creation (Berghman et al., 2006) and play an essential role in delivering it to customers (Harris, 2007).

Managerial Implications

In addition to the theoretical implications, findings from the current study have implications for organizational managers. Primarily, this study sheds light on the commitment profile of a company, which could help to predict employee perceptions of creating a higher value for customers. The overall implication is that managers should encourage a work environment, which supports employee commitment. Focus should be directed to those who commit themselves out of a feeling of obligation toward the organization. According to O'Reilly and Chatman (1986), employees establish normative commitment when there is congruence between organizational values and their own. This characteristic was found in this study to predict perceptions of customer value creation more so than the other forms of commitment.

Another managerial implication of this study relates to the changes that need to occur in the organization's marketing strategy in order to create better value for customers. In keeping with Guenzi and Troilo (2007), the results of this study suggest that committed employees are expected to contribute to a company's responsiveness to customer needs, ability to develop creative solutions, ability to respond quickly to the market dynamics, and ability to innovate. Consequently, job design, recruitment, orientation, and career development programs should aim at strengthening organizational commitment in order to create a superior value for customers. This strategy of gaining a

competitive advantage could be hard for competitors to duplicate and allow companies to achieve their long-term performance goals.

Limitations

While this study was an attempt to generalize the results to U.S. customer-facing employees in the retail industry, the following limitations need to be taken into consideration. This research was largely confirmatory. It used a correlational approach with a cross-sectional design and included a sample drawn from a specific industry. Hence, the ability to generalize the results is limited. Specifically, no inference can be made about the cause–effect relationship between employee commitment and perceptions of superior customer value creation. In addition, pertinent information may have been excluded because the research was a snapshot of a behavior at one point in time. Furthermore, sampling bias may present a threat to this study in relation to the cost of having access to a substantial portion of the targeted population. Thus, the external validity of the results could be compromised. In keeping with Ihantola and Kihn (2011), external validity refers to the generalizability of the results of a study to other samples, other times, and beyond the initial setting. Therefore, caution is required in attempting to generalize the results of the current study beyond its scope.

The interpretation of the results that emerged from this study should be limited only to the variables included in the predictive model. Although commitment is known as a complex phenomenon, and does not necessarily develop separately from other factors, this research selected to control for both demographic and work environment variables. The inclusion of these additional variables in the regression model might have produced different results. For example, age (Chawla & Sondhi, 2011; Popoola, 2009) and

organizational climate (El-Kassar et al., 2011; Fauziah et al., 2010) positively affect employee commitment.

Another limitation of this study is related to the recruitment of participants who were drawn from SurveyMonkey's ZoomPanel. Therefore, the results could not be generalized beyond the subscribers of this single organization. Finally, even though all necessary measures were taken to ascertain the quality of the data, the extent to which responses were honest could still influence the results. According to Hartman, Forsen, Wallace, and Neely (2002), biases are a threat to the external validity of a survey study and could come from various sources. While most of these biases were addressed through statistical analyses, some could not because they might be the result of the complexity of human factors.

Recommendations for Future Research

Avenues for future research include the use of a different methodological approach in examining the relationship between organizational commitment and employee perceptions of superior customer value creation. Research using the experimental, quasi-experimental, or longitudinal approach is recommended to identify causal effects, if any, between these two constructs. In addition, this study could be replicated by using a sample across various industries in order to examine differences and generalize the results to the entirety of U.S. customer-facing employees.

Based on the relatively weak relationships between the three-component model of organizational commitment and employee perceptions of superior customer value creation, it is recommended that future research consider including additional variables in

the regression model to see whether different results could be achieved. Another direction for future research includes testing whether customer orientation mediates the relationship between commitment and superior customer value to explicate further the relationship between the two constructs. However, this approach should be balanced with the complexity of the nature of organizational commitment. Despite focusing on a simplified model of superior customer value creation, this study achieved limited variability in the outcome; the value resides in providing a basis for in-depth future research. Moreover, the current trend of global competition puts pressure on organizational leaders to reach a diverse market. Therefore, it is recommended that future research examine whether organizational commitment influences perceptions of superior customer value creation in a cross-cultural environment.

In conclusion, this study presented a working framework for both scholars and practitioners by providing empirical evidence that a positive relationship exists between organizational commitment and employee perceptions of superior customer value creation. The study also found that the three-component model of organizational commitment could predict employee perceptions of superior customer value creation. Despite the limitations that could restrict the generalizability of the results, this research adds to the ongoing discussion about the way firms could gain a competitive edge. As organizations continue to face the challenge of creating superior value and predicting customer behaviors, employee commitment could also be instrumental in providing insight in management practices. This study presented several opportunities for future research.

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