

EXPLORING EMPLOYEES' PERCEPTIONS OF ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT AND PERFORMANCE A QUALITATIVE STUDY TOWARD DEVELOPING A SUSTAINABLE COMMITMENT MODEL

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ABSTRACT

This qualitative research study was conducted in order to determine how employees perceive their commitment to the organization and the effects of this perceived commitment on both individual and group performance. In addition to analyzing the results of a literature review, a sustainable model of commitment is developed to improve an organization's long-term performance. To gather information about employees' perceptions and experiences of their commitment to the organization, semi-structured interviews were conducted with employees from various departments, and focus group discussions were held. Specifically, the research examines how employees define organizational commitment, what meaning organizational commitment has for them in terms of their work performance, and what other aspects of an organization, such as leadership, working conditions, and organizational culture, positively or negatively impact an employee's commitment to the organization. The results show that employees view commitment as multidimensional; therefore, they consider it to have three components (affective, normative, and continuance), which reflect their loyalty, dedication, emotional bond, and sense of 'moral' obligation to their organization. Employees believe that their commitment to the organization improves their work performance through increased levels of intrinsic motivation, dependability, initiative and teamwork. Finally, the researchers used the data to develop a model of sustainable organizational commitment that includes affective, normative, and continuance commitment, as well as support structures and policies that create conditions for well-being, engagement, and high performance among employees. This model demonstrates the relationships among an individual's motivation, the relationships among individuals, and the structural support the organization provides to encourage long-term loyalty and organizational effectiveness. The study provides recommendations for leaders and human resource professionals to develop and implement policies and strategies that will not only foster lasting employee commitment but also enhance employee performance and support the organization's sustainability in an increasingly dynamic and competitive workplace.

Keywords: *Organizational commitment, organizational performance, affective commitment, continuance commitment, normative commitment, organizational commitment, organizational commitment model*

INTRODUCTION

Researchers had long known that employee organizational commitment is a major influencer of employees' job performance, retention, and overall effectiveness of the organization. In highly competitive, dynamic business environments, organizations continue to face challenges in maintaining employees' organizational commitment and performance. As globalization,

technological advancements, and changing attitudes toward the workplace increased, organizations began to see the need to understand their employees' perspectives on their commitment to the organization and how those perspectives influence employee performance.

Many past studies focused mainly on quantity when assessing the impact of employee commitment and performance, and did not necessarily include employees' subjective meanings and lived experiences related to commitment and performance. Employee commitment is often classified into three main categories: affective, continuance, and normative commitments. Previous studies have indicated that employee organizational commitment is statistically related to employee performance, level of engagement, and the behaviors employees demonstrate that benefit their organization (i.e., organizational citizenship behaviors).

While there have been many studies demonstrating the relationship between employee organizational commitment and job performance, there is limited research regarding how employees interpret or view organizational commitment within their organization and how these views or interpretations drive employee's motivation and their jobs. Employee management practices, including the employee's supervisor and the leadership practices of the organization, as well as the culture of the organization, recognition systems, opportunities for career development, and the ability for an employee to balance their work and personal lives, are some of the major influences on how employee's interpret or view their organizational commitment and their performance level, yet these contextual influences are not often appropriately explored in-depth through qualitative research.

The main purpose of this qualitative study was to better understand employees' perceptions of organizational commitment and employee performance, and to identify the underlying factors that drive organizational commitment, both positively and negatively. The research captured employees' narrative experiences and perspectives, with the expectation that their stories would support the development of a sustainable organizational commitment model that reflects their realities and workplace experiences. The study provided extensive insight into employees' perspectives on the relationship between organizational commitment and employee performance, as well as the implications of employees' experiences for developing and sustaining employee performance and workforce stability over time.

Statement of the Problem

This study aimed to explore employees' perceptions and lived experiences of organizational commitment and its influence on performance as a basis for developing a sustainable organizational commitment model.

Specifically, it sought to answer the following questions:

1. How do employees describe their understanding and experiences of organizational commitment within their organization?
2. What meanings do employees attach to organizational commitment in relation to their work performance?
3. What organizational, leadership, and work-related factors do employees perceive as influencing their level of commitment and performance?
4. How do employees perceive the impact of organizational commitment on individual

- and collective performance outcomes?
5. What challenges and facilitating conditions do employees identify in sustaining organizational commitment over time?
 6. Based on employees' shared experiences and perceptions, how can a sustainable organizational commitment model be developed to enhance long-term employee performance and organizational effectiveness?

Scope and Delimitations

This study focuses on employees' perceptions of organizational commitment and how these perceptions may influence their job performance in their respective organizations. The goal of this research was to provide an understanding of the experiences, beliefs, and perceptions employees had concerning the underlying concept of commitment, which may include affective, continuance, and normative types of commitment, as well as how these dimensions manifest themselves in an employee's day-to-day performance, motivation towards their job, and the resulting performance-related outcomes from that commitment. Data collection for this study involved in-depth interviews with participants and theme analysis to provide rich, contextually grounded data, with the goal of developing a sustainable model of commitment based on participants' narratives.

The qualitative study was conducted in a specific organizational setting and involved a purposively selected sample of employees who had sufficient time and experience working with the organization to meaningfully provide their perceptions of commitment and performance. The qualitative study included examining the components of the organization's policies, employees' interactions with their supervisors and/or managers, and the workplace environment and culture related to how employees sustain their commitment and improve performance. The findings of the qualitative research study will add to the body of knowledge and provide an understanding of the perceptions of employees related to sustainable commitment and commitment-related performance outcomes; therefore, the qualitative research study is intended to build a set of theories related to the perceptions of employees rather than generalizing to other employees in different organizations.

The qualitative research study provides delimitations as stated in the text. The qualitative research study used only a qualitative method and did not employ a quantitative measurement tool to assess the actual level of organizational commitment and/or performance. The qualitative research study did not compare organizations across industries or geographies, nor did it include members of upper management or external stakeholders in the sample of participants. The qualitative research study relied solely on employees' self-reported perceptions; therefore, objective performance-related data and organizational database metrics were not analyzed in conjunction with the qualitative research results. Finally, the sustainable model commitment developed from the qualitative study was limited to the themes identified from the qualitative research participants' narratives and has not been subjected to empirical testing or validation within the scope of the qualitative research study.

Review of Related Literature

Many organizations experience problems due to the types of human resources within them. Conversely, when human resources within the organization are engaged and work

collaboratively toward organizational goals, they can give life to the organization and strengthen it. In general, organizations strive to attract the best talent available; however, this is often not easy.

Research conducted by Professor Allen of the University of Utah on the role of organizational commitment in enhancing organizational effectiveness identified three models of Organizational Commitment developed by Meyer & Allen (1991, 1997): affective, continuance, and normative commitment. These three models were assessed and administered to 266 faculty members to determine the relationships among the three types of organizational commitments and the organization's effectiveness. The results of the multiple regression analysis show that continuance and normative commitment are positively related to organizational effectiveness, whereas affective commitment is not. Furthermore, the separate impact of organizational commitment on organizational effectiveness does not differ significantly across variables such as gender, age, experience, or rank. Based on these results, focusing on continuance and normative commitment will enhance the organization's effectiveness.

In a related article titled "Seven Ways to Increase Organizational Commitment" by Shani Jay, it is noted that higher levels of Organizational Commitment lead to greater employee productivity and dedication. Additionally, when employees feel engaged and connected to the company's vision, their commitment is high, and they express it through their daily work. They feel understood by their direct supervisor or manager and highly valued, respected, and compensated for the work they provide. As a result of Organizational Commitment, employees will exhibit higher levels of productivity and morale, and experience longer tenure within the organization.

According to Dirani and Kuchinke (2011), there is a strong relationship between employees' job satisfaction and their level of organizational commitment. Job satisfaction has been identified as one of the main reasons employees leave organizations; therefore, having happy, satisfied employees should be the highest priority for every organization. Meyer, JP, and Allen, N.J. (1991), performed a study and found that job satisfaction is positively related to a person's level of commitment to their organization. The findings of this study indicate that as a person's level of job satisfaction increases so does their level of organizational commitment.

Furthermore, according to the research conducted by Hansini, H., Dharmadasa, M., and Fernando, M (2023), the impact of organizational culture on employees' commitment: A study conducted on the state banking sector in Sri Lanka indicates that employees' commitment makes a significant contribution to the overall performance of an organization. Employee engagement, teamwork, innovation, and organizational values all contribute positively to employees' commitment to the organization. This emphasizes the importance of limiting the amount of organizational control placed upon employees, encouraging innovation within organizations by developing shared values among employees, and creating environments for employees to work collaboratively with each other.

Affective Commitment

According to McMullan, R., Schwarz, G., Harrison, R., Chauhan, A., and Minbashian, A. (2022) "there is a constant failure of change in Healthcare; due to the number of small mistakes being made with new systems, processes and/or technologies, the breakdown & ultimate collapse of gigantic systems and huge disasters". Although healthcare is continually requiring change and improvement. Despite many years of research funding, consulting, and significant time and effort spent implementing changes, doctors have not become engaged or motivated to help healthcare make the changes needed to have any meaningful impact on how healthcare operates. The affective commitment towards change is driven by the need or desire to assist in making changes that have some usefulness/value, rather than fulfilling an obligation to make changes or to help save money. Affective commitment to change leads to a more improved state of readiness than does self-efficacy regarding one's capacity to manage change. More recent studies regarding the effect of the health care system on the willingness of people involved in Health Care to be prepared to accept & embrace change illustrate that if we want to be able to increase the number of healthcare professionals who are prepared, and willing to accept the changes that will take place in their field of practice, then we may need to change the way we present and conduct the process of managing the change. This can be accomplished, in part, through the application of the principles of developing & managing a change proposal using values-based strategies, when working with clinicians and service users, to enhance their affective commitment to change & enhance their ability/increased state of readiness for the implementation of change.

Grund, C. , and Titz, K. (2022) state that "in contrast to past research, where the individual level focus was mainly directed at the effect of an individual being involved in made available to participatory development or growth opportunities & their affective commitment toward change, i.e., Where the company provides support and encouragement for an employee's involvement in development or growth opportunities; The current study combines both views and evaluates the relationship of an organization's response to the effect that participation in training has on an individual's affective commitment through an organizational lens". Additionally, because of the structure of the current research, we can utilize additional HRM tools to measure the affective commitment of individuals to increase participation in further development/training, that were not previously incorporated into prior studies that had demonstrated a positive correlation between employee's affective commitment to change and their degree of participation in additional development/training opportunities, as well as the organization's support for additional development/training opportunities. However, when HRM measures included as controls, diminishing the reported relationship between an employee's affective commitment to change and their participation in further development/training opportunities. Thus, it may have led to over-inflating the significance of the relationship previously found between further development/training and affective commitment toward change based on prior studies.

Gessesse K. T. & Premanandam, P. (2023) states it this way - "Employee-employer relationship evaluations can help the employer accomplish its objectives, as well as creating a healthy, safe and productive working environment for the employee". In their research they examined the concept of 'Affective Commitment' mediating the relationship between Job Satisfaction and Turnover Intention. Their target population was full-time academics at tertiary

educational institutions. They undertook a correlational research design using a quantitative methodology, with participants selected via a proportionate stratified random sampling technique. They had a total of 319 respondents. The authors utilized self-administered structured questionnaires for data collection, and applied structural equation modelling to conduct their analysis. The findings of this study demonstrated that Affective Commitment completely mediates the relationship between Job Satisfaction and Turnover Intention, because the direct relationship between Job Satisfaction and Turnover Intention became non-significant when they included the Affective Commitment variable in the analysis ($p < 0.05$). Therefore, the authors suggest evidence-based practices and training and development programs should be introduced to support Academic Staff. Salahuddin M. & Khatun M. (2022) reported negative impacts of workplace incivility on Normative Commitment, with Job Satisfaction serving as a mediator. Employees exposed to low levels of civility will not feel obligated to support their organization; however, elevated Job Satisfaction can re-establish their Normative Commitment. A similar finding was reported by Wang Y. & Wei Y. Multicultural teams often have difficulty creating an environment of normative commitment as stated by Herrera (2023), where an employee's home life is respected by their employer through an organization that builds a family-friendly work environment. This would allow an employee to fulfill their commitments outside of work. Creating this family-friendly work culture benefits the employee but also builds a bond of trust among team members. If employees are afraid to talk about their hobbies/interests to their supervisors or are avoiding taking time off, they may not be working in a family-friendly culture.

The organizational commitment is an organization's psychological assessment of an employee's connection to the organization; an employee's view of their relationship with the organization for which they are employed (Bhat, 2025). The degree to which an employee is committed to an organization determines how long they remain with the organization as well as how invested they are in pursuing the organization's goals (Bader, et al., 2023). Therefore, unwavering organizational commitment can allow employers to forecast the following attributes of an employee: satisfaction, engagement, distribution of leadership, job performance, job insecurity and so forth. As a manager, one must understand the level of employee commitment to their job duties to assess the employee's level of devotion to their daily responsibilities.

According to Godlewski, C. and Le, H. (2024), family ties, as an element of national culture, play an important part in determining the success of a firm. Family firms that exist in a culture of strong family ties perform better than family firms that exist in a culture of weak family ties. Thus, this research demonstrates a positive relationship between family ties and firm performance.

According to the authors, "family relationships within family firms are the key drivers of performance difference between family and nonfamily firms as well as the source of variation among family firms."

Further, according to Carter, L. (2025), organizational commitment is the psychological attachment of an employee to an organization. This psychological commitment motivates an employee to align their goals with the company's mission and fosters a supportive, cooperative

environment. Organizations that promote employee engagement tend to experience greater workforce belongingness, which increases customer involvement, loyalty, and positive word of mouth.

The findings indicated that an engaged employee would go above and beyond for a customer and express the organization's values and mission, both of which are critical in creating a superior customer experience. Organizations that demonstrate a high level of commitment to employee engagement experience increased customer satisfaction.

Murad, M. et al. (2022) examined the relationships among transformational leadership, positive affective organizational commitment, and job performance, with employee engagement as a mediator. The findings indicated that transformational leadership positively influences employees' affective organizational commitment and job performance, and that employee engagement moderately mediates the relationships among transformational leadership, affective organizational commitment, and job performance.

Continuance commitment

Chegida et al. (2022) found a strong correlation between employees' commitment to their employer and their employer's support for work-life balance. The greater the employer's support for employees' work-life balance, the more likely the employee would see the benefits of continuing employment rather than quitting. Due to many companies in this research had challenges paying employees comparable wages, the companies could offer more work-life balance support through: Annual, Emergency, Paternity/Maternity, Study and/or Sick Leave Policies; Flexible Work Schedules; and Overall Employee Well-Being (Mental Health Initiatives) to encourage employees to develop excellent work habits, while demonstrating to employees that the cost of leaving (compared to continuing employment with their current employer) outweighs any perceived benefits from another employer, regardless of their dedication and confidence in their work environment. Similarly, Sadiq and Surr (2020) identified that organizational justice significantly influenced employee anxiety and commitment to stay with an organization during the COVID-19 pandemic. Similarly, Athira (2025) found that the employee's emotional, professional, and organization-wide commitment influenced their ability to perform their role and support the organization's and its employees' goals. Employee commitment to the workplace provides insight into how an employee views the work environment and contributes to the success of the business. Employees who are committed to their workplace, to their employer, or to the company have a sense of loyalty and a genuine desire to offer support to the business, and they place a greater effort into the work that they complete than would be expected. Committed employees also embrace the values of the company they work for, and they build an environment that allows other employees to feel good about their work.

The way an employee interacts with coworkers, handles challenges, and adapts to change can be greatly influenced by their commitment to the company, resulting in long-term success for both the employee and the company. Employees who are committed to their company are more likely to be engaged with their work, which lays the foundation for both stability and innovation for the organization.

Al Balushi, AK, Thumiki VRR, Nawaz N, Jurcic A, Gajenderan V. (2022) indicate that the study examined "the relationship between career growth and organizational commitment, and how affective commitment, continuance commitment, and normative commitment influence the relationship between career growth and turnover intention of employees from the public sector in the Sultanate of Oman". The study's results indicate that Career Growth is an important factor for motivating employee turnover intention in the public sector of the Sultanate of Oman, and that the majority of findings support that Affective and Continuance (in contrast to Normative Commitment) significantly influence the relationship between Career Growth and employee turnover intention. This research study showed that the employee retention problem in Oman's public sector stems from two interrelated issues: the lack of a specific career program offered by employers and the resulting lack of perceived organizational commitment among employees. This study has provided valuable insights into the relationship between career growth and employee turnover intentions, using four dimensions as second-order factors influencing employees' turnover intentions in the public sector of Oman. Additionally, this research identifies the three dimensions of organizational commitment (affective, continuance, and normative) that mediate the relationship between career growth and employee turnover intentions. The findings of this research confirm that emotional intelligence and continuance commitment mediate the relationship between career growth and employees' turnover intentions in the public sector context of Oman.

Another study by Uğur, N. (2021), entitled "Work-life balance & continuance commitment: The mediating role of job satisfaction", concludes that work-life balance positively correlates with job satisfaction; therefore, organizations could retain employees by promoting work-life balance. Javed, B. et al. (2022), in "The relationship of emotional intelligence, job burnout and continuance commitment", state that emotional intelligence has a negative relationship with job burnout and is associated with increased continuance commitment. High emotional intelligence among employees reduces the feeling of needing to leave a job.

Chen, Y. et al. (2023) investigated the impact of Digital transformation on Employee commitment (Continuance Commitment) and showed evidence of how Digital Transformation initiatives affect the level of employee commitment. Digital Transformation can have a positive impact on Affective Commitment and on employees' perception and adaptability of the Digital Transformation, but may have a mixed impact on Continuance Commitment. Lee, J. & Mitchell, T. R. (2020) noted that employees who demonstrated higher levels of continuance commitment were more likely to demonstrate higher levels of creativity at work. Employees who feel invested in their organization are more likely to engage in innovative behaviors. Another study supports the positive relationship of continuance commitment & employee resilience through job embeddedness. Employees who feel embedded in their workplace are better able to manage stress and challenges; thus, they reinforce their continuance commitment (Zhang, Y., & Liu, Q., 2022). In contrast, Bal, P. M., & De Lange, A. H. (2023) showed that employees with greater Job Demands experience negative effects on employee well-being and subsequently decrease Continuance Commitment; thus, organizations must work to improve employees' well-being and, in turn, their commitment. Nguyen, L. T., and Masood, M. (2024) found that the impact of workplace culture on continuance commitment varies by industry: an inclusive and supportive culture is associated with higher continuance commitment, while a competitive culture is associated with lower commitment.

Normative Commitment

Meyer, J.P., and Allen, N.J. (2019) offer new empirical support for one of the most widely used models of commitment in the workplace, the three-component model of commitment. Through this study, Meyer, J.P., and Allen, N.J. (2019) demonstrated how an organization's culture and leaders' behavior influence employees' normative commitment. Employees with high normative commitment are more likely to remain with organizations for long periods and to support their organizations when they change. In addition, the authors provide evidence to indicate that normative commitment is shaped by an employee's perception of what he/she should do based on the organization's culture, socialization practices and other employees' normative commitments, stating that employees with high normative commitment engage in pro-social behaviors (e.g. helping others) that support their organization's objectives, and have a sense of duty to stay with their employer; thus, improving the organization's overall retention.

Riketta, M., & Latham, G.P. (2020) conducted a meta-analytic review of normative commitment and employee performance; their overall findings indicated a moderate positive relationship between normative commitment and performance. In addition, employees with a strong normative commitment to their organizations will feel morally obligated to contribute significantly to their organization's success, thereby increasing their productivity and enhancing their ability to work together.

A third study conducted by Meyer, J.P., and Herscovitch, L. (2021), addresses the ethical dimensions of commitment. This study demonstrates that organizations with an atmosphere of obligation and shared values tend to have stronger normative commitment among their employees; as a result, they experience greater employee loyalty and lower turnover. In a study by Deng, X., & Huo, Y. (2022), entitled "The Role of Ethical Leadership in Fostering Normative Commitment among Employees," it was found that ethical leadership can be a key factor in fostering normative commitment among employees.

By establishing a moral foundation for behavior and expectations, ethical leaders create a moral obligation for employees to remain in the organization, thereby reducing turnover intentions. Patnaik, A., and Ganguly, A. (2023) conducted research entitled "Impact of Normative Commitment on Employee Engagement: Mediating Role of Trust", which provided additional support to the findings of this study. This research found that normative commitment positively affects employee engagement and that trust mediates this relationship. Therefore, when employees feel a moral obligation to their employer, they are more likely to become actively and enthusiastically engaged in their work. Similarly, Bani-Melhem, S., and Alhrash, S. (2020) published a study that found that transformational leadership positively influences normative commitment among employees. By inspiring and motivating individuals to achieve their full potential, leaders foster strong employee loyalty, which creates a greater sense of moral obligation to contribute to the organization's success. As stated by Fazal, S. and Siddiqui, D. (2020), "This study examined how employee participation in decision making affects the level of productivity in an organization. "This article provided the following three objectives for study: To establish the relationship between employee participation and the impact of employee participation on Organizational Commitment. Employee participation and its effects on organizational performance are studied by documenting, reorganizing, and analyzing the relationship between employees' participation in decisions made regarding the organization

and the factors that influence workers' participation in decision-making. It was determined from the analysis of the aforementioned three objectives that participation in decision-making increased worker performance, thereby increasing overall production, productivity, and worker efficiency in any organization.

Management and employees alike benefited from participating in decision-making processes. Employees could express their opinions about their organization and how their experiences impacted their jobs and the organization as a whole. In addition to improving the relationship between managers and employees, participation in decision-making also fostered a sense of teamwork among the workforce. The researcher concluded that employee development in the decision-making process was vital to an organization's overall growth and success.

In addition, the study conducted by Yadav, R., & Yadav, R. (2021) disclosed that psychological safety within teams was a strong predictor of normative commitment. Creating a trusting and accepting environment in the workplace enables employees to speak freely about their ideas and thoughts without fear. This feeling of safety increases employees' attachment to their organization and, in turn, their engagement and commitment. In particular, the research of Salahuddin, M., and Khatun, M. (2022) shows that workplace incivility negatively impacts normative commitment; however, Job Satisfaction serves as a mediator between workplace incivility and normative commitment. Employees who are subjected to low civility are less likely to feel obligated to remain committed to their organization, but an increase in job satisfaction may restore their normative commitment. In addition, a study conducted by Wang, Y., and Wei, Y. (2024) on "Diversity in the Workplace and Managing it for Organizational Success" states that:

Workplace Diversity can pose challenges for Multicultural teams, but when diversity is managed proactively, it increases employees' identification with the organization and their sense of moral obligation.

The research of Tian, Q., and Li, Y. (2023) on "Organizational Trust as a Mediator to Enhance Employee Normative Commitment through CSR Perceptions." found that an employee's perception of their organization's CSR activities positively increases their normative commitment toward the organization. When employees believe their organization has a fair CSR reputation, it increases their moral obligation to remain with the organization and decreases their turnover intentions. The research of Meyer, J.P., and Allen, N.J. (2019) also supports this, as employees who have high levels of normative commitment actively engage in behaviors that support the organization's goals and therefore have a moral obligation to remain with the organization. This behavior increases employee retention. The findings of the study by Bani-Melhem, S., and Alhrash, S. (2020) on the "Influence of Transformational Leadership on Employee Normative Commitment" reported that transformational leadership has a positive influence on employees' normative commitment. Transformational Leaders create an environment of inspiration and motivation for their followers, which results in a sense of loyalty toward the leader and the organization and, therefore, a moral obligation to contribute to the organization's success. The findings of another study performed by Yadav, R., and Yadav, R. (2021), "Examining the Role of Psychological Safety in Enhancing Normative Commitment", provide another piece of research that supports this conclusion. Psychological Safety serves as a significant predictor of employee morale. The more psychologically safe an

employee feels in their environment, the more likely they are to develop a sense of obligation to the organization.

Theoretical Framework

Meyer and Allen's **Three-Component Model of Organizational Commitment** (1991) provided one of the main theoretical foundations for this project's research. Meyer and Allen's theory states that there are three components of organizational commitment: Affective Commitment is the emotional attachment of employees to the organization; organizational identification with the organization; and the involvement of employees in the organization. Continuance Commitment is the employee's perception of the costs of leaving the organization. Normative Commitment is the employee's obligation to remain with the organization. As such, Meyer and Allen's model has been designed to illustrate the employee's lived experiences and perceptions of why they choose to remain with, perform and have loyalty toward the organization and, hence, to be an effective basis for understanding sustainable organizational commitment.

Social Exchange Theory was originally developed by Blau (1964) and has also been used as one of the theoretical frameworks in this research project. Social Exchange Theory states that social behaviors in organizations result from an "exchange" process, in which people evaluate their relationships with other employees based on perceived relative benefits and costs. In an organization, employees' commitment and performance are shaped by their perceptions of the treatment, support, and reciprocity they receive from their managers. When an employee perceives that the organization values his or her contribution and is concerned about his or her well-being, that employee is likely to respond by having increased commitment and improved performance. The perspective of Social Exchange Theory explains how trust, mutual obligation, and fairness lead to sustainable organizational commitment.

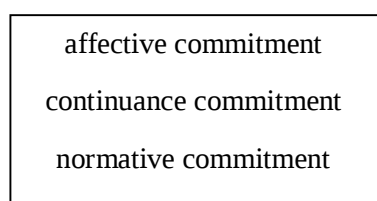
Locke's Goal-Setting Theory (1968) is another supportive framework for this research, helping to understand the relationship between organizational commitment and performance. Locke's Goal-Setting Theory states that when employees are provided with specific, precise, and challenging goals and accept them, their motivation and performance increase. In this research project, employees' perceptions of the organization's commitment have been related to how effectively organizations have communicated their goals, aligned those goals with the personal values of employees, and supported them by their leaders. Locke's Goal-Setting Theory illustrates the importance of meaningful goals and feedback mechanisms in maintaining employee engagement and performance on a sustainable basis.

Schein's Organizational Culture Theory (1985) has provided a general reference point for understanding employees' perceptions within the organization's broader cultural environment. According to Schein, an organization's employees' behavior and performance are shaped by the organization's shared values, beliefs, and underlying assumptions. In the research project, culture has been defined as one of the primary factors that determines employees' feelings of belonging, commitment, and motivation to perform. A value-driven culture and a culture that encourages employee development have been linked to stronger organizational commitment and sustainable organizational performance.

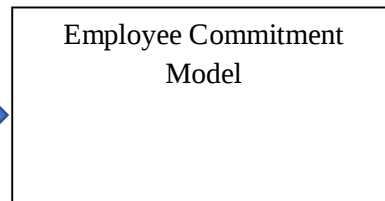
Thus, the combination of these three theoretical frameworks provides a comprehensive set of tools for employees to explore their perceptions of organizational commitment and performance, and to develop a model of sustainable commitment grounded in employees' lived experiences.

Conceptual Framework

INDEPENDENT VARIABLE



DEPENDENT VARIABLE



MODERATING VARIABLES



Fig. 1 The Conceptual Paradigm

The study was based on the premise that how employees view their commitment to an organization affects how they view, interpret, and perform in the workplace. Within the conceptual framework of this study, the independent variable, organizational commitment, comprises three components: emotional attachment to the organization, obligation to the organization, and intention to remain with the organization. These views of the organization were derived from employees' histories, interactions with the organization, and their understanding of its practices, rather than from any numerical measures previously established by the study, as this study is qualitative in nature.

Under the theory, the dependent variable, employee performance, was examined in terms of how employees articulate their effectiveness at work, their productivity, their level of engagement, and whether they go above and beyond their job description. Employees' understanding of performance was not viewed as a static measure or merely a measure of output; rather, it was seen as a social construct derived from employees' narratives about the effects of commitment on their work motivation, behaviors, and overall contributions to organizational goals. The conceptual framework assumed that higher levels of organizational commitment would produce more positive perceptions and descriptions of performance by employees.

The conceptual framework also acknowledged the presence of variables which moderated the relationship between organizational commitment and employee performance. The moderating

variables included organizational culture, leadership styles, communication methods, rewards/recognition systems, and employee characteristics (e.g., length of service) and values. Each of these moderating variables was considered a contextual factor that would influence whether the employee perceived his/her commitment as a facilitator of performance or as distracting or limiting when there was no congruence between the sense of commitment and how the employee's performance was being evaluated. The conceptual framework was therefore intended to inform the development of a commitment model to establish aids and supports that develop a sustainable level of commitment through employee participation in developing support structures and practices based on their experience and understanding of their commitment to the organization.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

To understand employee perceptions of organizational commitment and performance, this study utilized a qualitative research method. Qualitative methods were most suitable because they enable an overall understanding of how employees perceive their commitment and performance within their organizations through an exploration of their lived experiences, the meanings behind those experiences, and their interpretations of them as they relate to organizational constructs. The richness of the narrative data helped researchers to discern patterns, themes, and insights that could not be adequately elicited through quantitative methods.

Population and Sampling Technique

As stated in the objectives, the sample comprised employees who could provide useful input on organizational commitment and performance based on their length of service. A purposive approach was chosen for recruiting employees for this study, since participants had specific qualifications, ranging from length of service and current employee status to direct involvement in business processes at their respective organizations, all of which were necessary for meeting the research goals. When selecting a sample size, the final number of participants selected was based on the point at which all themes of interest were expressed to the point of saturation.

Data Gathering Procedure

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, which allowed for open-ended discussion of topics related to the research questions of this study. A semi-structured interview guide was developed that included questions to assess organizational commitment, performance, and sustainability practices. Before commencing with data collection, permission was received from the organization's management team, and participants provided signed consent prior to participating in an interview. The interviews were scheduled at times and locations agreed upon by both the participant and the researcher, and were conducted either face-to-face or via a virtual platform, with audio recordings made of each interview with the participant's permission to ensure the accurate representation of their responses. Additionally, field notes were taken during the interview process to document any additional observations (e.g., body language and environmental factors).

Data Analysis

Using thematic analysis, we analyzed the data we collected. In addition, we transcribed audio recordings verbatim and reviewed the transcripts multiple times until we became familiar with the data. From the data, we generated initial codes based on significant statements and common ideas that appeared repeatedly, then grouped them into categories and overarching themes. We followed a systematic procedure for coding, categorizing, and interpreting the data to maintain the consistency and credibility of our analysis. The themes were used to develop the sustainable commitment model.

Limitations and Ethical Considerations

The researcher of this study acknowledged and documented limitations associated with the findings because of the limited number of participants and limited context (organization) the results were obtained from, thereby potentially limiting the ability to generalize the findings. Additionally, the self-reported information used in the study is subject to personal bias and/or social desirability. All ethical standards were met in the execution of the research study. Participation was completely voluntary, and all participants were made aware they could withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. The study was conducted to ensure confidentiality and anonymity by using pseudonyms and maintaining all data files in password-protected formats. The authors also ensured that all data obtained would only be used for academic purposes and maintained a conflict of interest free zone during the research.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

SOP 1. How do employees describe their understanding and experiences of organizational commitment within their organization?

Employees interpret their commitment to an organization as the result of a variety of factors, which include loyalty, dedication, and responsibility to that organization. The majority of the participants in this study believe that commitment to an organization is not only contractual; it is a matter of personal connection between an employee and the organization's values, mission, and goals. Committed employees see their connection to the organization as more than a job description; it involves an emotional and psychological attachment that motivates them to make meaningful contributions to the success of the organization that go beyond the job requirements. Many employees express the view that their connection to the organization is strengthened through their experiences of being recognized, supported, and trusted by management. This suggests that there are many internal and external factors, including culture and leadership within an organization, that contribute to employees' feelings of being committed to their organizations.

In terms of employee experiences, they state that organizational commitment appears in the form of behaviors such as participation in team projects, willingness to do additional work, and the desire to meet or exceed expectations on performance evaluations. Employees frequently express pride in being part of an organization and willingness to persevere through difficulties, because of their sense of connection to both their team and to the overall mission of the organization. However, some employees state that their perception of commitment can change depending on management support, opportunities for advancement or development, and perceived fairness in the workplace. This suggests that while organizational commitment is a

personal experience for employees, it is affected considerably by the environment and relational dynamics of the organization.

Based on these employee accounts, there is a cognitive and affective nature to an employee's commitment to an organization. It is an employee's motivation, as well as the experiences he/she has at work that determine the employee's level of commitment. Therefore, employees' commitment to their organizations depends on a combination of how they feel about their jobs, the workplace culture, and organizational practices. Understanding how employees perceive organizational commitment is necessary to create strategies that will improve employee engagement and loyalty, and ultimately result in long-term organizational performance and commitment.

SOP 2. What meanings do employees attach to organizational commitment in relation to their work performance?

From the interviews and focus group discussions with employees from all departments, a multi-dimensional definition of commitment to the organization was created. Employees indicated that they define commitment to the organization through loyalty and dedication, and they see this commitment as a personal obligation to positively impact the company's objectives. Committed employees were often described as intrinsically motivated to exceed job expectations, which is associated with improved productivity and quality of work.

Another theme was that employees who are committed are emotionally tied to their organization and that feeling valued and appreciated by their employer has a positive impact on their performance as well as their emotional connection to the organization. Employees reported that when there is a clear alignment of personal values with the company's mission statement, they are more likely to be engaged in their work, to take responsibility for their actions and to demonstrate the initiative needed to contribute to the success of the organization. Specifically, employees who show commitment to the organization through their behaviors will help to achieve the organization's goals.

Equally important was the link employees made between commitment and stability and reliability in work performance. The employees described committed employees as being more consistent, dependable and responsible than non-committed employees, which is critical to promoting a culture of teamwork and mitigating conflict in the workplace. Commitment is seen not only as fulfilling one's duties but also as an investment in one's future career development, where high performance reflects the company's individual values and represents a loyal commitment to the organization.

In summary, employees view commitment to the organization as an integrative concept that includes an emotional bond to the organization, an ethical responsibility toward the organization and a commitment to their profession, all of which impact an employee's work performance positively and directly. The findings of the study indicate that in order for companies to develop and sustain commitment among their employees, they must provide opportunities for psychological engagement, as well as support for performance through practical systems.

SOP 3. What organizational, leadership, and work-related factors do employees perceive as influencing their level of commitment and performance?**Organizational Factors**

- The employees believe that a work environment that fosters mutual respect, collaboration, and a common sense of values is critical to maintaining engagement and performance over time.
- Employees feel a high level of trust in their organization when policies and procedures for promotion, compensation, and allocation of workload are perceived to be fair and transparent.
- Features of career development, such as training opportunities, mentoring, and developmental pathways, enhance employees' desire to be engaged in and contribute to the organization through their actions and performance.
- Employees also report that the support from their organization, such as access to resources, recognition programs, and welfare programs, creates a sense of community and enhances motivation.

Leadership Factors

- Employees indicate that leaders who demonstrate supportive and transformational leadership styles provide employees with the guidance and inspiration necessary to achieve the organization's goals together.
- Employees believe that when leaders communicate openly and consistently, they help to create an environment of clarity by reducing uncertainty, as well as building trust and increasing employee engagement.
- The qualities of the leaders that employees value the most in relation to their emotional commitment to and discretionary effort towards the organization include fair treatment, integrity, and empathy.
- The ability of the leaders to recognize the contributions of the employees and provide constructive feedback to employees has a direct and positive impact on employee morale, commitment, and performance.

Work-Related Factors

- The two most important job characteristics to employees are ability to manage their workload effectively and to clearly understand their job responsibilities in order to be motivated and avoid burnout.
- Job security and stability are perceived by employees as important factors influencing their willingness to exert effort and be committed to the organization over the long term.
- Employees perceive that flexibility in their work schedules and other work–life balance arrangements enhances their job satisfaction and supports their sustained job performance.
- Employees believe they are intrinsically motivated to be committed to the organization when they perform meaningful and engaging work, in which their responsibilities align with their skills and personal values.

SOP 4. How do employees perceive the impact of organizational commitment on individual and collective performance outcomes?

In many businesses, employees see Organizational Commitment (OC) as one of the most powerful motivators for performing well individually and as a group. Employees view OC as their emotional connection to their organization, which encourages them to go beyond the minimum required for their jobs. When employees form an emotional bond with their employer, they are likely to show greater loyalty and responsibility, leading to improved productivity and efficiency. The emotional connection to their organization motivates employees to put forth their best effort into their work and provides a higher quality of work and greater performance during difficult times. Therefore, OC is an integral component of improving individual employee performance based on energy that is derived from intrinsic motivation and work engagement.

On the group level, OC binds employees together through shared objectives, teamwork, and collective effort. Employees also felt that employees who have OC are more inclined to assist other employees (to share information) and to coordinate their efforts with others to maximize their shared goal. This level of commitment among employees creates a positive work environment, where there is an absence of conflict; working together improves the cooperative efforts within the organization, resulting in greater productivity.

Furthermore, employees view OC as one of the key contributors to the development of an organization that will create long-term continuous performance. Employees view OC as a way of providing stability to an organization, as it reduces the turnover intentions of employees and builds a culture of continual improvement. They perceive that employees with OC will be more adaptable and open to change in their organization. Therefore, all employees with OC will have comparable individual and organizational goals, which will provide a structure for what is expected of them both individually and as part of a group. The model they have created as an underpinning aspect of a model of sustainable Commitment to the employee performance at all levels substantiates the employee perceptions of OC.

SOP 5. What challenges and facilitating conditions do employees identify in sustaining organizational commitment over time?**A. Challenges in Sustaining Organizational Commitment**

- **Perceived lack of organizational support and recognition**
- **Inequitable leadership practices and inconsistent management decisions**
- **Limited career growth and professional development opportunities**
- **Work overload, role ambiguity, and work–life imbalance**
- **Poor communication and lack of employee voice**
- **Organizational instability and frequent policy changes**
- **Mismatch between personal values and organizational culture**

Employees identify a number of obstacles that undermine their ability to sustain commitment to their organization over time. Commonly noted issues included the lack of perceived support from the organization in the form of a lack of recognition for one's efforts and/or contributions; this was viewed as a form of 'disengagement' for many participants. Many of the participants

noted that continual hard work without any form of recognition would slowly diminish the participants' identification with and loyalty towards their employer.

Leadership related challenges were also consistently noted as major factors. Many participants indicated that inconsistency with regard to management decisions, employee favoritism, and a lack of clear expectations led to a perception of unfairness and led to employees feeling disengaged. Employees reported that as leaders did not act fairly or consistently, the employees found it difficult to maintain their lifetime commitment to the organization.

Participants also indicated that the lack of opportunities for career advancement and/or professional development had a significant effect. The absence of a defined career path leading to promotions, as well as the shortage of skills development programs, training programs or etc., resulted in stagnation which, in turn, impacted motivation and their ability to be committed to the organization long-term. Participants also described excessive workloads, unclear job duties, and poor work/life balance as sources of stress that would erode commitment over time.

In addition, employees also indicated that difficulties in communication were a contributing factor to their declining commitment. Employees indicated that a lack of formal feedback mechanisms as well as solutions for lacking in employee engagement during the decision making process resulted in employees feeling as if they were not heard or valued. As a result of these two main factors (frequent changes in the organization's policies, leadership, or strategic directions) there were no longer assurances to employees leading to a weakening of trust towards their organization. Finally, the gap between employee personal values and the organizational culture also decreased emotional attachment and therefore lessened their commitment to the organization.

B. Facilitating Conditions for Sustaining Organizational Commitment

- **Supportive, transparent, and ethical leadership**
- **Recognition, appreciation, and fair reward systems**
- **Opportunities for career development and continuous learning**
- **Positive organizational culture and shared values**
- **Open communication and participative decision-making**
- **Work-life balance initiatives and employee well-being support**
- **Job security and organizational stability**

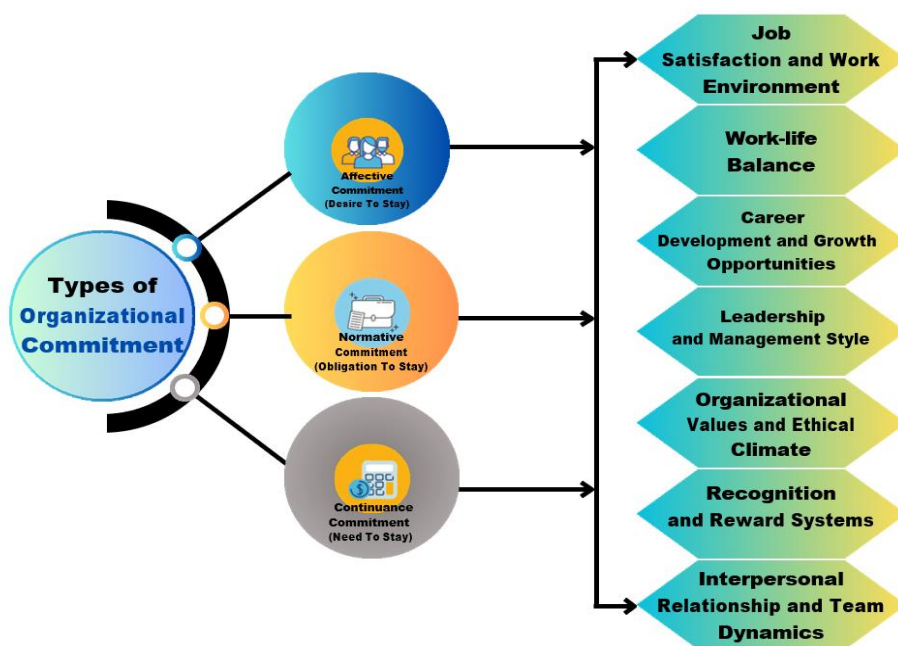
By contrast, some of the factors identified by employees that facilitated and maintained their commitment to the organization included supportive leadership. All participants remarked on how critical their leaders' behavior, demonstrating transparency, integrity, and concern for employees' well-being, had been. As a means of fostering both trust and long-term commitment, a number of participants viewed leaders who clearly lead through their actions (i.e., by example) as essential.

In addition to supportive leadership, participants identified recognition and an equitable system of rewards as strong motivators. Through their experiences, they indicated that when they received recognition in a timely manner for their achievements, they were compensated fairly and equitably, and that they received performance bonuses, the prospects of remaining loyal to and engaged with the organization remained viable.

Consistent with the above, participants described a workplace culture that was characterized by respect, collaboration, and shared values as a principal facilitator of commitment. Employees reported greater commitment when their personal values aligned with the organization's mission and when they felt a sense of belonging in the workplace. Further, open channels of communication and opportunities to participate in decision-making were added, enhancing employees' sense of ownership and responsibility for achieving organizational goals.

Additionally, participants noted that work-life balance initiatives (e.g., flexible work arrangements and wellness initiatives) supported an employee's ability to maintain their commitment to the organization. Participants also cited job security and organizational stability as providing them reassurance about their continued attachment to the organization.

SOP 6. Based on employees shared experiences and perceptions, how can a sustainable organizational commitment model be developed to enhance long-term employee performance and organizational effectiveness?



Combining the three interrelated types of organizational commitment—affection, normative, and continuance—with the key organizational aspects that employees have indicated consistently positively correlate to job performance and long-term effectiveness creates a means for building and developing a sustainable organizational commitment model based on what has been learned through employees' common narratives and experiences.

The employees showed that their desire to remain with the employer grows when the organization provides an environment where they feel happy at work and where there is a culture of support. Employees report being motivated and productive when they perceive their workplace as being supportive, collaborating and psychologically safe. Good interpersonal relationships, healthy/positive team dynamics, and leaders who operate in an approachable, supportive manner reinforce employees' desire to feel emotionally connected to the employer.

In the sustainable commitment model, affective commitment is the emotional foundation of discretionary effort, excitement, and sustained high performance.

Employees' common experiences illustrate the impact of normative commitment (the obligation to remain with the organization). Normative commitment is built through organizations' values, ethical climate, and leadership practices. Employees frequently demonstrate loyalty when they believe that there is fairness, integrity, and consistency in management's decisions. Leadership and management approaches characterized by transparency, participative decision-making, and ethical practice further strengthen an employee's moral obligation, or "responsibility," to the organization. Recognition and rewards systems provide another avenue for developing normative commitment by establishing that the organization values its employees' contributions, thereby reinforcing employees' sense of duty to perform to the best of their ability and remain committed.

In addition, practical reasons or needs create a sense of continued commitment (the perceived obligation to remain with the employer). Continuance commitment develops through career development, opportunities for advancement/growth, work-life balance, and long-term benefits. Organizations that focus on career development and clear career advancement paths, aligned with work and personal life, often lead employees to associate long-term performance with a committed employer. When employees believe that leaving the organization would result in them losing valuable growth and continuity opportunities (stability), they often maintain high performance to retain their positions. In the sustainable commitment model, continuance commitment serves as a stabilizing factor for retention and continuity, especially during organizational change.

Collectively, the sustainable commitment model represents an overall holistic and interactive perspective; the three types of commitment act together, and all three types of commitment can be developed and supported by various factors in the workplace (job satisfaction, supportive leadership, established ethical values, means for recognition, career development, balance of work and life, good interpersonal relationships). Employees' perceptions demonstrate that when organizations focus on developing and supporting all the factors that create sustained commitment, the organization's long-term effectiveness and employees' long-term performance are synergistically influenced. By developing a sustainable commitment model grounded in employees lived experiences, organizations can create a system that fosters appropriate, lasting commitment to maximize performance, employee well-being, and organizational success.

SUMMARY

This qualitative study found that employees view organizational commitment as a multidimensional, dynamic, and complex construct informed by emotional/cognitive, practical, and ethical obligations. Employees described commitment across all Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) as more than a contractual obligation, closer to a personal connection to values, leadership practices, and experiences associated with work. They viewed commitment as feeling a part of an organization and as making a conscious choice to put forth effort, loyalty, and responsibility to it.

Employees' narratives indicate that an employee's commitment is primarily based on positive affective experiences such as recognition, trust, and psychological safety, which, in turn, develop emotional attachments and intrinsic motivation. These affective components lead to observable behaviors, such as exceeding job demands, remaining engaged, participating in team-building, and persevering through difficult times. Employee commitment was also described as not stagnant; rather, it fluctuates based on the level of support from management, perceived fairness of treatment, opportunities for advancement, and the general organizational climate.

Employees were able to relate their level of commitment to increased levels of productivity, consistency, reliability, and quality in the workplace. Employers' perceptions of employees' commitment directly impact individual and team performance by fostering dependability and shared accountability. Employees view commitment to an organization as a stabilizing force against turnover, strengthening teamwork, and allowing the organization to remain adaptable to change, thereby supporting long-term organizational effectiveness.

Additionally, the study identified a number of factors at the organizational, leadership, and work-related levels that contribute to or detract from employees' levels of commitment and performance. Supportive and ethical leadership, transparent processes, opportunities for career development, meaningful jobs, and work-life balance are identified as facilitators of sustainable commitment levels. Conversely, a lack of recognition for an employee's contributions, inequitable leadership practices, unclear roles, excessive workload, limited development opportunities, poor communication, and a mismatch between personal and organizational values were identified as barriers to sustaining employee commitment over time.

Based on employees' experiences, the study developed a Sustainable Organizational Commitment Model by combining employees' Affective, Normative, and Continuance commitment. Affective commitment is based on the emotional attachment that develops engagement and discretionary effort; Normative Commitment reflects an employee's moral obligation created through the fair and ethical treatment of the employee, and Recognition; and Continuance Commitment provides the employee with a level of stability through career advancement and job security, and benefits associated with long-term employment. These commitment dimensions interact holistically to support organizational effectiveness, employee productivity, and well-being.

The findings indicate that sustaining organizational commitment depends on the creation and ongoing support of purposeful, consistent organizational strategies, aligned with organizational culture, leadership practices, and employee support systems. Grounding these strategies in employees' lived experience of commitment can help organizations develop a resilient, sustainable commitment framework to build a long-term, performance-based culture of shared success.

CONCLUSION

- Employee commitment results from cognitive experiences and emotional experiences. It encompasses much more than a mere contractual agreement; it is based on the

employee's emotional attachment to the organization, their alignment with the organization's values and principles, and their experiences that have meaning to them. As these experiences continue to shape an employee's daily relationships with their superiors, the organization's culture, and interactions with other employees, employee commitment will continue to grow.

- There is a strong correlation between employee commitment to the organization and improved individual employee performance, as evidenced by the employee being motivated and dependable, exhibiting a strong sense of initiative, and demonstrating a willingness to do more than is required of them in their job. Committed employees view themselves not just as loyal to the organization but also as having a moral obligation to perform to the best of their ability and to contribute positively to the organization's productivity, work quality, and professional growth.
- There are a variety of organizational, leadership, and job-related factors that work together to develop and enhance commitment, performance, and satisfaction among employees. Fairness and transparency, opportunity for career development, supportive leadership, and meaningful work are all important factors that contribute to employee commitment. Employees tell their stories to illustrate that the organizations in which they work build and sustain their levels of commitment through equitable work environments, open and consistent communication from their supervisors, and environments that support both employee performance and the health and well-being of employees.
- Organization commitment is believed to significantly increase the collective performance and effectiveness of an organization over the long term. It fosters teamwork, collaboration, and adaptability, and helps reduce turnover. Employees believe that when there is a shared commitment to an organization, individual and organizational goals are aligned, creating an environment in which a durable, adaptable workforce can sustain high levels of employee performance during times of stress and change.
- A sustainable model of organizational commitment will fully integrate and align the three types of commitment: affective, normative, and continuance. This will be supported/encouraged by the organization practicing ethical leadership, rewarding deserving employees, providing opportunities for career development and work-life balance, and being a stable organization. Employees have indicated that when these elements are strategically aligned, organizational commitment becomes a powerful mechanism for promoting long-term organizational loyalty, employee performance, and organizational effectiveness.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the results of this study, it is recommended to:

1. Company commitment is both personal and comprised of several components. Therefore, in order for an employee engagement strategy to be effective, it must include

both the emotional and cognitive components of company commitment. A company may engage its employees in the process of aligning their values with those of the organization, promoting a psychologically safe environment, and creating meaningful job experiences. Companies may also provide employees with regular opportunities to connect with the company through initiatives such as reflective feedback sessions and values-based workshops.

2. Company management should use indicators of company commitment, such as initiative, reliability, and discretionary effort, as part of their overall performance management systems. In order to accomplish this goal, management must link the recognition of commitment behaviors and the provision of feedback and development opportunities towards achieving high levels of employee performance to those organizational commitment indicators.
3. Conclusion 3- Company leadership should strengthen its capacity through ongoing development efforts, which focus on ethical, transparent, and supportive leadership practices. Companies should also provide their employees with fair organizational policies, manageable workloads, and clearly defined roles within the organization to enhance employee commitment and performance.
4. In enhancing the performance of the organization as a collective entity, organizations should develop structures that encourage teams to work collaboratively towards a common set of objectives, and establish accountability mechanisms for team members to foster collaboration, knowledge sharing, and accountability for organizational goals. This type of structure will support employees' commitment to their teams.
5. In order to enhance the sustainability of an organization's long-term employee commitment, organizations are encouraged to implement an integrated sustainable organizational commitment model, which is a combination of three types of commitment: affective, normative, and continuance commitment. A holistic, sustainable organizational commitment model includes the alignment of human resource practices (i.e., recognition systems, career development pathways, work-life balance initiatives, and long-term organizational stability) with the above-mentioned three types of commitment in order to maintain long-term employee performance and organizational effectiveness.

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