

ABSTRACT

BOEHMAN, JOSEPH. *Affective, Continuance, and Normative Commitment among Student Affairs Professionals.* (Under the direction of Duane Akroyd.)

Student affairs professionals generally describe a calling to their work, but attrition statistics indicate that there is a significant personal and professional cost associated with this calling. How do individuals become committed to student affairs, and why do they stay committed? The purpose of this study was to examine the impact of several factors on the development and maintenance of organizational commitment among student affairs professionals. A conceptual framework which includes organizational politics, organizational support, organizational structure, job satisfaction, middle manager status, a work/non-work interaction construct, and three types of organizational commitment was proposed. Data was collected from a national survey of student affairs professionals via a web-based survey.

Results showed partial support for the conceptual framework. Specifically, results indicated that organizational support, overall job satisfaction, and organizational politics are antecedents of affective and normative commitment, and that organizational politics is an antecedent of continuance commitment. Results showed a correlation between work/non-work interaction factors and organizational support. Implications for future research as well as practical implications are discussed.

**AFFECTIVE, CONTINUANCE, AND NORMATIVE
COMMITMENT AMONG STUDENT AFFAIRS PROFESSIONALS**

by
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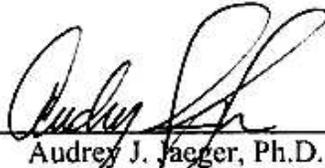
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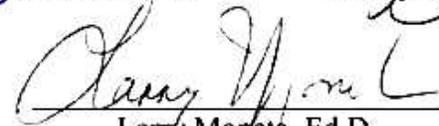
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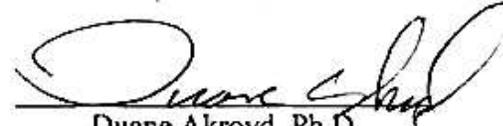
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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my father, Charles Boehman, who has taught me more about commitment than any course I have ever taken or any book or article I have ever read.

This dissertation is also dedicated to my mother, Martha Boehman,
who is sharing this moment with me in spirit.

BIOGRAPHY

Joseph Boehman was born on July 22, 1965 in Geneva, New York. After graduating from Antioch Community High School in Antioch, Illinois in 1983, he attended Ithaca College in Ithaca, New York. He graduated in May of 1987 with a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in Music. In the fall of 1987, he began graduate studies at Michigan State University in East Lansing, Michigan. Boehman received his Master of Arts degree in College and University Administration in June of 1989. Upon completion of his graduate studies, he moved to Cortland, New York, where he worked for two years as a residence hall director at the State University of New York College at Cortland. Boehman moved to Greenville, North Carolina in 1992 to begin his employment with East Carolina University. From 1992-1994, he served as a residence coordinator. In 1994, he was promoted to assistant director for residence life, a position he held until 1998. In August of 1998, Boehman began his service to the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill as an assistant director for housing and residential education. During this period, he began his doctoral studies, formally enrolling in the fall of 2001. He married Jennifer Civill Phillips in April of 1998, and their daughter Sydney Lauren was born in September of 2003. They currently reside in Durham, North Carolina.

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INTRODUCTION

A Systemic View of Commitment

Student affairs work has seen significant changes during the last 15 years. The expectations and demands of student consumers and their parents have led to an increase in services provided by student affairs professionals, while at the same time the appropriations for student affairs has remained at a very small percentage of the typical college or university's operating budget (Thelin, 2003). Concurrently, student affairs professionals have been challenged to demonstrate their ability to assist in student development and learning (Nuss, 2003). The ability to recruit and retain a cadre of committed professionals to meet these increased needs is an essential challenge for the profession.

The attrition of individuals who seem to be committed to the student affairs profession is a persistent enigma among student affairs practitioners and researchers. Even though student affairs professionals report that they are generally satisfied with their jobs, attrition rates as high as 61% belie that perception of satisfaction (Lorden, 1998). It appears that individuals who are satisfied with their jobs are still leaving the profession, which has potential impact for the continued development of the profession through the loss of talented, experienced, and passionate student affairs practitioners.

The issue at the center of this problem is not job satisfaction, or organizational commitment, or even the level of attrition among student affairs professionals. The central issue of the problem of commitment among student affairs professionals is that the profession is looking at the problem with what Wheatley (1999) would define as a "Newtonian" – or mechanistic – point of view. A mechanistic viewpoint posits that if the

appropriate “part” is fixed, such as increasing job satisfaction, then the organization will work smoothly again. This viewpoint is too simplistic for the problem.

In order to adequately address the issue of commitment among student affairs professionals, it is necessary to embrace a systems perspective. Commitment must be viewed in relation to other factors, and commitment itself must be examined as a multidimensional concept. Allen (2002) states that issues can be understood only by examining “different perspectives held in tension long enough to figure out the whole” (p.156). A systems perspective allows for the flexibility in thinking that leads to unconventional solutions to problems. Variables that are seemingly not connected to the problem may provide sufficient leverage to make a difference (Dörner, 1990).

This study proposes that student affairs research is limited when looking at the question of commitment among student affairs professionals. Research to date on satisfaction among student affairs professionals has not connected job satisfaction to commitment. The few studies on commitment among student affairs professionals have examined the degree that someone is committed to the profession, instead of how they become committed or why they stay committed. This study will address the impact of several factors – organizational politics, organizational support, organizational structure, and overall job satisfaction – on organizational commitment among student affairs professionals.

The conceptual framework proposed for this study promotes a systemic view of commitment. Exploring the impact of the perceived influences of organizational politics, support, structure, and job satisfaction on commitment allows for a greater understanding of the nature of commitment. In turn, understanding commitment provides a layer of context that will help address the problem of attrition among student affairs professionals.

The Impact of Perception

Our ability to effectively address concerns within an organization is limited by what we choose to see. We see problems – and solutions to those problems – through the lenses of our own education and experience. We tend to filter out what we see as distractions, even though they may lead us to greater understanding. Looking at situations using new lenses is difficult, as we have to continually challenge our old assumptions and beliefs.

The concept of perception can be difficult to quantify, as it is as much a “feeling” as a reality. Individuals are likely to be influenced to a greater degree by their perceptions rather than by objective reality (Spreitzer, 1996). How an individual perceives the level of politics in his/her organization, for example, may have a significant impact on their level of commitment, regardless of the aggregate level of politics reported by the other members of the organization. In simple terms, perception creates reality. This point was made by Wheatley (1999), who stated that “we cannot know what is happening to something if we are not looking at it, and stranger yet, nothing *does* happen to it until we observe it” (p.61).

Perception is also a reflection of what we want to see. Morgan (1997) observed that “reality has a tendency to reveal itself in accordance with the perspectives through which it is engaged.” Using this context, an individual perceives a politically active environment if he/she is looking for evidence of increased political behavior. This aspect of perception may also serve to magnify the effect of a phenomenon. A professional may have a heightened sensitivity for organizational support. A relatively minor increase or decrease in the aggregate perception of support by all members of a particular unit may be seen as highly significant to the one member of the organization who has a heightened level of perception for support.

A final aspect of perception is that a single perceived change in a dynamic can lead to multiple conclusions. For example, a politically active environment can be seen by some members as a sign of an invigorating, dynamic, and creative workplace. Other members of the same organization could see an increase in political activity as a sign of miscommunication, a lack of trust, and the imminent downfall of the organization. A perceived change in a given dynamic can easily be embraced by some, and attacked by others (Bolman and Deal, 1991).

It is important to understand that while these three aspects of perception – perception creates reality, the reflection of what we want to see, and the multiple conclusions created by perception – can be limiting to a study of organizational commitment, they can also provide a view into the true state of a profession. The attitudes, beliefs, and perceptions of the individuals within an organization tell far more about the culture and long-term health of an organization than a mission statement, organizational chart, or a strategic plan.

The New Concept of Work and the Student Affairs Professional

The concept of work is changing, in exciting and frightening ways. New technologies allow for increased interaction, connectedness, access and depth of information, while creating the ability to work from home, in the coffee shop, or on the university quad. While the freedom offered by this level of flexibility can be seen as a positive outcome, several authors have posited that increased connectivity leads to increased connection to the workplace. Ritzer (2004) sees this “control through non-human technology” as a way for rational, bureaucratic systems to maintain the status quo in a changing world. Work is no longer contained to a 9-to-5, 40-hour workweek. In the corporate world, employees are many times required to be “present” in the work setting, even when they are “off duty” and

away from the office (Casey, 1995). In many organizations, including the population that is the focus of this study, the proliferation of cell phones, pagers, wireless laptop computers, and remote server access is seen more as a way to keep employees productive rather than as an attempt to promote a flexible workplace.

Change is a constant challenge for student affairs professionals. New technologies, a new generation of students, and other external pressures create a sense that the number of change events – events that require an organization to review its purpose and mission – is increasing (Howe & Strauss, 2000; Allen & Cherrey 2003). It also appears that the time between change events is decreasing, a phenomenon that Allen and Cherrey (2003) have described as living in permanent white water. Shrinking budgets, reduced staff, and increased expectations have placed enormous pressures on the student affairs profession to perform, and in effect, to do more with even less than they ever have.

This pressure creates a strain on student affairs professionals at work and at home. There is a constant challenge to “balance” work and non-work interactions, something that many student affairs professionals struggle to do (Belch & Strange, 1995). Work/non-work interaction refers to the extent that work activities conflicts with non-work activities, including family life, social activities, and community involvement (Wallace, 1999). Studies have found the lack of work/non-work interaction, coupled with a stressful job and long hours, is a major contributor to attrition and decreased satisfaction among student affairs professionals (Blackhurst, Brandt, & Kalinowski, 1998b; Lorden 1998).

Middle managers in the student affairs profession may be the most vulnerable for having their work/non-work interactions being “out of balance”. Their role is to be in the middle – both figuratively and literally. Middle managers in student affairs are typically

responsible for the coordination of resources, services, and programs on a college campus (Belch & Strange, 1995). Middle managers are also seen as the individuals within student affairs who have the greatest power and leverage to promote change (Allen & Cherrey, 2003). This responsibility comes with the challenge of promoting the policies of the divisional/departmental leadership while at the same time serving as an advocate for the students and entry level staff of the division/department, a task that may be in conflict more times than not. Westman (1992) posited that middle managers have a less positive view of stressful situations than top managers, suggesting that their position within the hierarchy allows for less autonomous control.

Where senior leaders of a division have a clear purpose of providing vision, direction, and leadership for a division, middle managers by definition manage and are managed at the same time. This duality creates a role conflict that is not seen in senior leaders or in entry level professionals. The experience, technical expertise, and institutional memory that middle managers possess places them in a leadership position, but the status of their position does not generally afford them the latitude and autonomy to make necessary changes independently (Belch & Strange, 1995). For the purpose of this study, a middle manager is a professional that reports to a Chief Student Affairs Officer (CSAO) or other senior leader in the division (e.g. department dean or director), been employed for a minimum of five years in the profession, and supervises at least one professional staff member. Middle managers can take either a “transitory” path – with the intention of moving to a senior position – or a “professional” path, meaning that they may spend the rest of their career as a middle manager (Belch & Strange, 1995).

Middle managers face the prospect of being in the “bottleneck” (Belch & Strange, 1995). Student affairs divisions on most college and university campuses are hierarchical, with a pyramidal structure that does not allow for rapid advancement from middle manager to CSAO. Even though there are potential opportunities at other campuses, the ratio of middle managers to CSAOs makes the prospect of finding promotions extremely difficult. A study by Borg (1991) indicated that mid-level student affairs professionals leave the profession primarily due to a lack of rewarding outcomes such as promotions and salary increases. Middle managers who leave student affairs tend to look to the industry and commerce sector (e.g. management consulting firms) for the types of outcomes that they cannot receive in student affairs such as bonuses and rapid promotions (Borg, 1991).

In addition, middle managers find themselves at a point in their lives where work/non-work interactions lead to difficult career choices. The typical middle manager has worked for many years more concerned about the workplace than for their personal lives. Since graduate school, and certainly during their first few years in the profession, they have placed social, family, and personal wellness second to the job. While this is seen in other professions, notably in the medical profession (Spickard, Gabbe, & Christensen, 2002), it is a major contributor to attrition among student affairs professionals (Lorden, 1998). Studies of women student affairs professionals have indicated that marital and parental status were key variables influencing job stress, a major factor of burnout (Blackhurst, Brandt, & Kalinkowski, 1998a). Changes in the role of men in regard to family responsibilities may indicate that this statistic would apply to male middle managers as well (Lewis & Lewis, 1996). A positive relationship between work and family commitments has been shown to increase retention and satisfaction (Jones, 2002).

The conflict between self and work, as described by Casey (1995), Ritzer (2004), and others, is manifested in increased organizational pressure on the individual. The longer hours and increased demands, coupled with reduced staff, may be a major factor in professional burnout. Lorden (1998), Jones (2002), and others indicate that these factors may be associated with decreased organizational commitment among student affairs professionals. While Lorden does not see attrition among student affairs professionals as completely negative, its impact on the knowledge base of the profession may be a significant problem.

Among student affairs professionals, middle managers are a group particularly vulnerable to attrition. Middle managers indicate that the increased stress and political nature of their jobs negatively influences job satisfaction (Jones, 2001), and they tend to leave the profession because of a lack of reward outcomes such as promotions and salary increases (Borg, 1991). Middle managers possess a large share of the knowledge capital of a student affairs organization. Knowledge workers are defined as those who “are the bearers of the organization’s knowledge” through the use of mental models (Bloch, 2001). The years of experience, technical expertise, and institutional memory of a middle manager can help an organization develop greater meaning and purpose, which could improve organizational commitment throughout the organization. If middle managers are leaving the profession, their knowledge, experience, and perspective are lost, allowing the organization to repeat costly mistakes.

Introduction of Variables in the Study

As has been previously stated, this study will examine the influence of several factors on organizational commitment among student affairs professionals, with a particular interest in middle managers in student affairs. This section will briefly identify the variables to be

used in this study. While the review of the literature in chapter two will examine each of the variables in greater depth, it is important to develop a common frame of reference as the conceptual framework is developed.

Organizational Commitment

Organizational commitment has been generally defined as the degree that an individual in an organization accepts, internalizes, and views his or her role (Jans, 1989). The process of becoming committed to an organization involves internalizing the values and goals of the organization, a willingness to help the organization achieve its goals, and the desire to remain part of the organization (Hunt & Morgan, 1994; Jans, 1989; Mowday, Steers, & Porter, 1982).

The conceptualization that is being utilized in this study proposes that individuals may become committed to an organization for many reasons: a person may stay with an organization because the organization's values, mission, and goals align with their own; another person may stay with the same organization because leaving may impact their prestige, benefits, or social networks; yet another may be committed to the organization due to a sense of obligation. Each of these three commitments – affective, continuance, and normative – are independent types of commitment experienced at different levels by all individuals of an organization (Meyer & Allen, 1997).

Organizational Politics

Organizational politics is a variable that operates at a systemic and an interpersonal level. From a systemic point of view, organizational politics involves the acquisition and use of power to obtain resources (Pfeffer, 1981). At an interpersonal level, organizational politics is defined as “social influence attempts” directed to achieve or protect self-serving

interests (Cropanzano, Kacmar, & Bozeman, 1995). For the purposes of this study, organizational politics is conceptualized in a manner that views the perceived level of political activity present in an organization (Kacmar & Ferris, 1991). This construct looks at organizational politics through the development of coalitions that compete for resources for self-serving goals (Witt, 1995), the development of normative behaviors that creates a strong team at the expense of critical thinking (Janis, 1983), and the use of influence tactics to achieve promotions and increased status through political means (Ashford, Rothbard, Piderit, & Dutton, 1998).

Organizational Support

Organizational support is seen as commitment on the part of the organization toward individuals within the organization, and is manifested in an employee's sense of belonging to the organization (Shore & Shore, 1995; Brown & VanWagoner, 1999). If an employee perceives that the organization is supportive through praise, involvement in decision-making, or promotions, then there is likely to be a sense of obligation on the part of the employee to work harder for the organization (Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchison, and Sowa, 1986; Shore & Shore, 1995; Wayne, Shore, & Liden, 1997). Organizational support is a product of organizational culture – the shared patterns of belief among members of an organization – and influences affective organizational commitment (Bolman & Deal, 1991; Morgan, 1997; Schein, 1985; Stinglhamber & Vandenberghe, 2003; Wheatley, 1999).

Organizational Structure

Organizational structure views two extreme management systems – bureaucratic and process-oriented – on a continuum to address the ways that organizations address change (Burns & Stalker, 1961). Mechanistic structures promote a higher degree of political activity

within an organization due to the emphasis on command and control and completion of specific tasks related to the individual's job. Organic structures promote a supportive organizational climate through an emphasis on collaboration and team learning (Burns & Stalker, 1961). Organic structures are perceived to be best suited for the service domain or for entrepreneurial organizations, while mechanistic approaches are best utilized in conditions of threat or competition (Hage, 1965).

Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction has been defined as an “affective response to specific aspects of the job” (Williams & Hazer, 1986), and as a worker's “overall feelings about the job” (Ironson, Smith, Brannick, Gibson, & Paul, 1989). Although it is a widely-studied variable, there have been relatively few studies of job satisfaction among student affairs administrators (Kinicki, McKee-Ryan, Schriesheim, & Carson, 2002; Tarver, Canada, & Lim, 1999). There is evidence of a causal link between satisfaction and organizational commitment, but there is a debate as to the correct causal ordering of the variables (Brooke, et al., 1988; Farkas & Tetrick, 1989; Shore & Tetrick, 1991). The construct to be used in this study examines an individual's perception of job satisfaction utilizing a global view of satisfaction, providing an “affective judgment” regarding the workplace (Russell, Spitzmüller, Lin, Stanton, Smith, and Ironson, 2004).

Statement of the Problem

Understanding whether a person is committed to an organization – as the conceptualization by Porter and associates (1974) measures commitment – is less important than how an individual becomes committed to an organization. Organizational commitment has been reconceptualized, but most recent studies of organizational commitment among

higher education faculty and administrators have used Porter and associates (1974) conceptualization (Fjortoft, 1993; Niehoff, 1997). In effect, they are looking at the outcome without an understanding of the causes. Research by Meyer and Allen (1997) has shown that organizational commitment is a multi-dimensional construct, and ignoring the many possible reasons why individuals become committed to an organization leads to an incomplete and unclear picture. Using this new conceptualization of commitment opens the door to new insights and possibilities for research on commitment among student affairs professionals.

There is strong evidence of a connection between organizational commitment and job satisfaction (Brooke, Russell, & Price, 1988; Coberly, 2004; Curry, Wakefield, Price, & Mueller, 1986; Farkas & Tetrick, 1989; Williams & Hazer, 1986). Several researchers have concluded that satisfaction leads to commitment (Coberly, 2004; Williams & Hazer, 1986; Yoon & Thye, 2002). Curry and associates (1986) have suggested that a study of either satisfaction or commitment which does not include both variables (in the correct causal order) may lead to erroneous inferences from the findings. Although there have been a number of studies on job satisfaction among student affairs professionals (Bailey, 1997; Blackhurst, 2000; Borg, 1991; Jones, 2002), none of these studies attempted to connect job satisfaction to organizational commitment. Furthermore, the few studies that have addressed organizational commitment among student affairs professionals (Blackhurst, Brandt, & Kalinowski, 1998a; 1998b; Fjortoft, 1993; Niehoff, 1997) have not examined job satisfaction. There is a gap in the research on the impact of job satisfaction on organizational commitment among student affairs professionals, and particularly among middle managers within student affairs.

Understanding the factors that influence organizational commitment among student affairs professionals is an imperative that has been overlooked. In addition, few if any studies have examined the organizational commitment factors of student affairs middle managers as a subset. While organizational commitment is a frequent topic of study (Blackhurst, Brandt, & Kalinkowski, 1998b; Hunt & Morgan, 1994; Jans, 1989; Mayer & Schoorman, 1998; Penley & Gould, 1988), much of the research examines organizational commitment from a macro point of view – being the entire organization. This point of view is simply too broad to provide useful information on any specific subset of the organization, including Chief Student Affairs Officers, middle managers, or entry level professionals. Even if one were to apply the lens of the entire organization to the subset of middle managers, the models that have been used in previous studies lack major components that would have specific bearing on the middle manager. For example, few studies examine work/non-work interaction, which Belch and Strange (1995) indicate is a major factor for middle managers.

There are also indications of several factors that may influence organizational commitment. While there have been many studies that have addressed the individual impact of politics, support, and structure on commitment, there is very little research to examine the aggregate impact of these influences. Few studies have examined the impact of organizational politics and organizational support simultaneously on organizational commitment (Cropanzano, Howes, Grandey, & Toth, 1997). No known studies have examined the influence of organizational structure on commitment among student affairs professionals. Furthermore, no known studies have examined the aggregate impact of politics, support and structure on commitment among student affairs professionals. Again, there is a gap of understanding that needs to be filled.

Context plays an important role in the understanding of organizational commitment. Context is defined as underlying assumptions, myths, routines, and other artifacts that structure the actions of both the organization as a systemic entity and of the individuals within the organization (Gomez & Jones, 2000; Goss, Pascale, & Athos, 1998). Much of the organizational context is deeply ingrained, creating a hidden curriculum that is barely detected as an organizational influence (Casey, 1995; Gomez & Jones, 2000). Goss, Pascale, & Athos (1998) describe context as something that “alters what we see, usually without our being aware of it” (p.89). As individuals in the organization perform their work within the context of the hidden curriculum, the organizational context is reinforced (Gomez & Jones, 2000).

These deeply ingrained contextual elements help create the culture of an organization (Goss, Pascale, & Athos, 1998; Schein, 1985; Senge, 1990). As the review of the literature will demonstrate, organizational culture has a strong bearing on most of the variables in this study, particularly organizational commitment, support, and politics. Organizational context – through the creation of culture – shapes individual perception (Goss, Pascale, & Athos, 1998). By extension, the perceived influence of politics, support, organizational structure and satisfaction on organizational commitment is largely a function of context.

Unfortunately, these deeply ingrained contextual elements have not been fully explored by the research to date. It will be important to develop a contextual framework that will explore student affairs middle managers in specific terms, examines the distinct features of the subset, and develops a vision that will help the profession retain their most valued knowledge workers.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to examine the impact of organizational politics, organizational support, organizational structure, and job satisfaction on organizational commitment among student affairs professionals. This study hopes to contribute to the existing literature on organizational commitment, to add to the understanding of organizational commitment among student affairs professionals, and to establish a baseline for study of organizational commitment among middle managers. This study will address the following five research questions:

Research Question 1: What are the levels of affective, continuance, and normative commitment among student affairs professionals in general?

Research Question 2: Do student affairs middle managers exhibit different levels of affective, continuance, and normative commitment to that of chief student affairs officers or entry-level student affairs professionals?

Research Question 3: What is the predictive value of organizational support, work/non-work interaction, overall job satisfaction, organizational politics, middle manager status, and organizational structure on affective commitment?

Research Question 4: What is the predictive value of organizational politics, middle manager status, organizational support, organizational structure, work/non-work interaction, and job satisfaction on continuance commitment?

Research Question 5: What is the predictive value of organizational support, work/non-work interaction, overall job satisfaction, organizational politics, middle manager status, and organizational structure on normative commitment?

Conceptual Framework

This study contends that several variables may be antecedents for organizational commitment. As Meyer and Allen (1997) point out, a person becomes committed to an organization for many reasons, and it is the combination of the individual's affective, continuance, and normative commitments that makes up a complete picture of commitment to the organization. The influence of the perceived level of organizational politics, the perceived level of organizational support, the structure of the organization, and the global satisfaction of the individual may have a direct affect on that person's overall commitment. This study will attempt to determine how and to what extent politics, support, structure, and satisfaction influence the three types of commitment in Meyer and Allen's (1997) conceptualization.

This study will examine the influence of two additional factors that have been identified in the literature as having a possible impact on organizational commitment. The factor of middle manager status is a construct of student affairs professionals who report to a Chief Student Affairs Officer or other senior administrator, have worked in the profession a minimum of five years, and supervises at least one full-time student affairs professional. The work/non-work interaction factor is a construct that will explore the influence of gender, marital status, and dependent children under the age of 18 living in the respondent's home. Figure 1 illustrates the conceptual model to be used in the present study.

This study will utilize the conceptualization of perceived organizational politics (POP) proposed by Kacmar and Ferris (1991). Support will be examined using Eisenberger and associates (1986) model of perceived organizational support (POS). The theoretical underpinning for the conceptualization of organizational structure comes for the work of

Burns and Stalker (1961), while the conceptualization of global job satisfaction proposed for this study will be the one developed by Ironson, Smith, Brannick, Gibson, and Paul (1989).

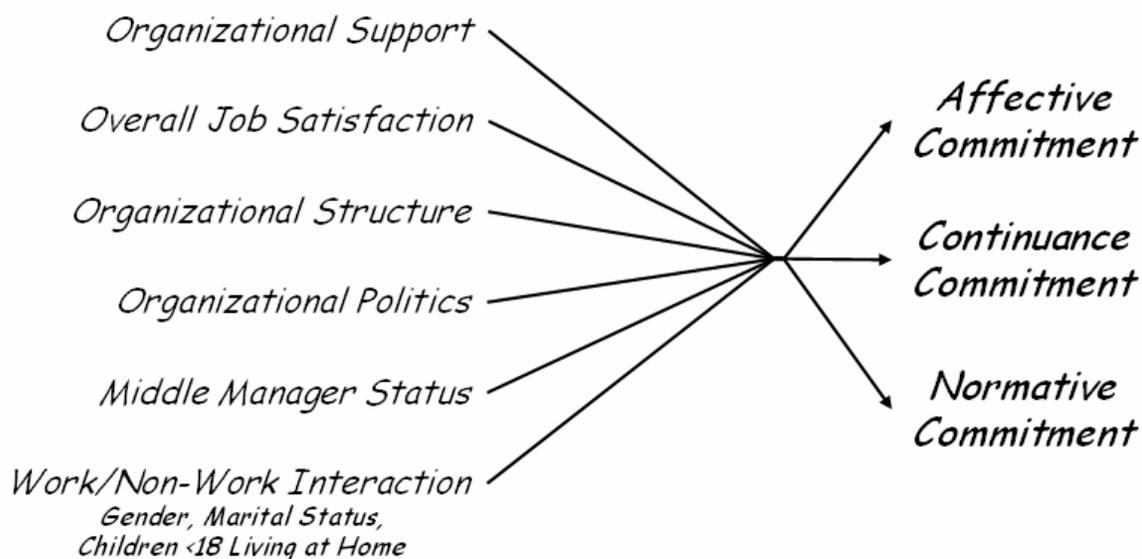


Figure 1

Conceptual Framework for Study of Organizational Commitment among Student Affairs Professionals

Significance of the Study

Student affairs professionals generally feel a sense of calling to their work, but attrition statistics suggest that there is a significant personal and professional cost associated with this calling. The impact of the profession on work/non-work interactions, along with increased pressures of student affairs work, may be negatively influencing commitment to the profession. Are there factors within the student affairs organizations themselves that are impacting attrition? The literature suggests that individuals become committed to organizations for a variety of reasons, including an affective attachment to the values of the organization, a realization of the costs involved with leaving the organization, and a sense of obligation to the organization (Meyer & Allen, 1997). Understanding how student affairs professionals become committed to the profession, and to what degree various factors

contribute to their level of commitment, is an important step in addressing the issue of attrition among student affairs professionals.

The literature also points to various factors that may contribute to affective, continuance, and normative commitment. The perceived amount of organizational political behavior present in an organization may influence the level of commitment an individual feels to the organization. The level of support perceived by the individual on the part of the organization, reflected in ways such as work/non-work interaction and the social contract between the organization and the individual, may also affect commitment. The actual structure of the organization – whether mechanistic or organic – may influence an individual's commitment to the organization.

There are also questions regarding the relationship between job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Does satisfaction lead to commitment, and if so to what degree does satisfaction influence global commitment? This study hopes to provide a clear casual path from satisfaction to a greater understanding of organizational commitment among student affairs professionals.

The conceptual framework proposed in this chapter has not been applied to student affairs professionals to date. No known studies have addressed organizational commitment among student affairs professionals using the conceptualization proposed by Meyer and Allen (1997), nor have any studies examined politics, support, organizational structure, and job satisfaction as contributing factors to organizational commitment among student affairs professionals. This study hopes to add to the body of research on commitment among student affairs professionals, and will create a new framework for understanding the unique commitment to this calling.

In an era of rapid change, knowledge capital must be retained in order for the organization to remain productive and responsive to the needs of its stakeholders (Bloch, 2001). Although the typical student affairs professional represents a great deal of knowledge capital to the organization, their ability to be effective depends largely on their skill to manage the political system that either overtly or covertly runs the organization. The student affairs professional must also have support from the organization in order to be effective. They must feel that they have a sense of control over their work, and they need to be in an organizational structure that takes advantage of their skills and abilities. Given the knowledge capital that is lost if a student affairs professional leaves the field, the study that will lead to a greater understanding of why student affairs professionals become committed – and stay committed – to the organization seems necessary.

Summary

Commitment has generally been defined as “the condition of someone who has made a firm agreement with some other party connected to some future event,” or “the state one arrives at having made a pledge or promise” (Brown, 1996, p.233). For student affairs professionals, this commitment may be best described as a “calling”. Benveniste (1987) defines a calling by describing it as a sense of duty that separates professions from other types of work. Student affairs professionals see their “calling” as promoting student learning, and helping students in their personal development and growth. Although the status of student affairs as a profession has been debated for more than 50 years (Carpenter, 2003), there is a general perception student affairs has many (if not all) of the characteristics of a profession, and that professional behavior is expected of those who choose student affairs as a career (Stamatakos, 1981).

With reported attrition levels from 25% to 61%, it would seem that student affairs is an ailing profession, even though student affairs professionals indicate overall job satisfaction (Jones, 2002; Lorden, 1998). Although student affairs professionals are satisfied with their jobs, something is causing them to leave the profession. Is it possible that there is a significant cost of this “committed calling”? Is there conflict between the rhetoric of the calling (e.g. promoting student development) and the reality of the daily life of the administrator, as suggested by Stamatakos (1978)? Even though student affairs professionals generally report high job satisfaction, it seems that hard work and low pay may be leading some to reconsider their decision to enter the profession (Lorden, 1998). If perception in fact creates reality, then an examination of the factors that contribute to student affairs professionals’ perception of commitment may give a realistic view of the state of student affairs as a profession.

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

As discussed in the previous chapter, student affairs professionals report that they are satisfied with their jobs, but attrition rates belie those reports (Lorden, 1998). New student affairs professionals enter the profession with idealistic goals of a calling, but learn that there is a conflict between the ideal and the day-to-day (Stamatakos, 1978). Although Lorden (1998) and others see attrition as useful to a degree, this author suggests that what is being lost through attrition is some of the best talent in the profession. Our structures, systems, and practices may be influencing commitment in a negative way for many, including middle managers who hold the promise for the future of the profession.

Meyer and Allen (1997) point out that commitment can have positive and negative aspects for both the employee and the organization. While the organization wants committed employees, there is a danger of employees being so committed to the status quo that the organization loses its competitive edge. For the employee, an over-commitment to an organization may lead to reduced time for outside activities and diminished marketability for jobs outside the organization (Meyer & Allen, 1997).

Are student affairs professionals committed to their work, and if so, in what ways? What organizational factors influence that commitment? What inferences can be made from the study of organizational commitment that can be utilized to reduce attrition among student affairs professionals, particularly middle managers? This chapter will review the literature related to the constructs that make up the conceptual framework of this study. Particular attention will be paid to the influence of organizational politics, organizational support, and

organizational structure on commitment. In addition, the connection between job satisfaction and commitment will be explored.

Organizational Commitment

There is a general agreement on the characteristics of an organizationally committed individual (Hunt & Morgan, 1994; Jans, 1989), but the method of determining those characteristics has undergone a paradigm shift during the 1990's. The old paradigm assumed that commitment could be measured in a dualistic manner: one was either committed to the organization or not (Mowday, Steers, & Porter, 1982). Several researchers saw the limitations of this paradigm and attempted to provide subtle changes to it (Angle & Perry, 1981; Mayer & Schoorman, 1998; Penley & Gould, 1988). Meyer and Allen (1997) provided the shift of mind when they realized that there are many reasons why an individual may be committed to an organization. This section will define the conceptualization of organizational commitment to be used in this study by exploring the evolution of the conceptualization of commitment over the past quarter century. This section will also review the connection between organizational commitment and organizational culture.

Commitment Defined

Organizational commitment has been defined as the extent that an individual accepts, internalizes, and views his or her role based on organizational values and goals (Jans, 1989). An individual becomes committed to an organization when (a) they internalize the goals and values of the organization, (b) they are willing to exert effort in the attainment of the organization's goals, and (c) they have a strong desire to remain in the organization (Hunt & Morgan, 1994; Jans, 1989; Mowday, Steers, & Porter, 1982). Although there is general agreement on this definition, there is a continual effort to find the best model to represent

organizational commitment (Hunt & Morgan, 1994). The initial “gold standard” model was developed by Porter, Steers, Mowday, and Boulian (1974), which conceptualized an individual’s attachment to the organization in a global sense, and examined attitudinal commitment, or the connection between the individual’s values and that of the organization (Mowday, et al., 1982).

The conceptualization developed by Porter and associates (1974) utilized two factors; attitudinal commitment – the ways in which employees’ values mesh with those of the organization – and behavioral commitment – the ways in which an employee is “locked in” to an organization (Mowday, et al., 1982). While the goal of their conceptualization was to establish casual connections for attitudinal commitment, causality could not be clearly established (Meyer & Allen, 1997). Mayer and Schoorman (1998) went so far as to describe this early conceptualization as a “unidimensional construct”, arguing that it did not fully explain how an individual becomes committed to an organization.

Evolution of the Two-Factor Conceptualization

Hunt and Morgan (1994) posited that the measure of commitment should be a multidimensional construct to reflect both global commitment and commitment to constituency-specific subgroups. They found that global organizational commitment was the key mediating construct to organizational outcomes, but that constituency-specific commitments are important because they “lead to, bring about, or result in” global commitment (Hunt & Morgan, 1994). They found that the constituency-specific commitments to top management and to direct supervisors were the most important factors, suggesting a linkage between organizational support and organizational commitment (Hunt & Morgan, 1994). A study of university faculty conducted by Fjortoft (1993) supported this

finding. Her study discovered that the factors predicting commitment to the department (constituency-specific) were different from the factors that predicted the global commitment to the university (Fjortoft, 1993).

A two-dimensional model of organizational commitment was suggested by several researchers, including Angle and Perry (1981) and Mayer and Schoorman (1998). Using Porter and associates (1974) conceptualization as a starting point, Angle and Perry (1981) discovered two distinct dimensions, which they termed “value commitment” and “commitment to stay”. Value commitment was defined as an affective, positive connection with the organization, while commitment to stay reflected the importance of the economic exchange between the employee and the organization (Angle & Perry, 1981). Mayer and Schoorman (1998) redefined “commitment to stay” as “continuance commitment”, and related the connection between Angle and Perry’s conceptualization and March & Simon’s (1958) concept of employees’ decision to produce (value commitment) and to participate (continuance commitment). This two-factor model was found to be predictive of important behavioral outcomes, and represented two clearly defined dimensions (Mayer & Schoorman, 1998). The study found that increasing one type of commitment would not necessarily affect both commitments (Mayer & Schoorman, 1998).

Three-Factor Models

Several researchers have developed models of commitment that utilize three factors (Penley & Gould, 1988; Jans, 1989; Meyer & Allen, 1997). Penley and Gould (1988) believed that Porter and associates (1974) conceptualization reflected an “instrumental” view of organizational commitment that generally described an exchange relationship between the employee and the organization. Penley and Gould argued that an employees’ behavior also depends on the emotional or affective attachment to the values of the organization (Penley &

Gould, 1988). This reflects the “focus on people” posited by Peters and Waterman (1982), who stated that organizations perform best when there is intense communication, a “family feeling”, open door policies, fluidity and flexibility, and “nonpolitical shifts of resources”. The conflict between instrumental commitment and affective attachment is described as an individual’s “basic need for security versus the need to stick out” (Peters & Waterman, 1982).

Penley & Gould (1988) built on the work of Angle & Perry (1981) in the development of their three-factor model. They utilized Etzioni’s (1975) model of organizational involvement, which utilized instrumental and affective attachment, which is similar to Angle and Perry’s model (Penley & Gould, 1988). Penley and Gould proposed three dimensions of commitment: moral commitment, which is identification with the organization’s goals; calculative commitment, which is seen as the exchange of organizational inducements for employee contribution; and alienative commitment, which is a consequence of a lack of control and a perceived absence of alternatives (Penley & Gould, 1988). The findings from Penley and Gould’s study indicated that commitment does in fact emanate from several different sources, including the individual’s personality-based predispositions, the supervisor’s influence, and the organizational culture (Penley & Gould, 1988).

Jans (1989) also believed that the Porter and associates’ model was limited in its scope. He attempted to develop a model that addressed the “non-work” factors that influence organizational commitment. Jans utilized the conceptual framework of Schein (1978) in the development of his three-factor model, which includes career/life stage factors, work-family interaction, and career prospects/job involvement (Jans, 1989). His findings indicated that

non-work factors had a significant impact on long-term organizational commitment (Jans, 1989).

Several attempts to reconceptualize organizational commitment explored utilizing multiple dimensions, including a two-dimensional model (Angle & Perry, 1981; Mayer & Schoorman, 1998), which highlights continuance and value commitments, and a three-dimensional model, which explores moral, calculative, and alienative commitments (Penley & Gould, 1988). Another three-dimensional construct explores career/life stage factors, work-family interaction, and career prospects/job involvement factors (Jans, 1989). Each of these studies attempted to find the best way to study why employees remain committed to an organization, but they utilized Porter and associates (1974) conceptualization as a starting point. While these reconceptualizations were improvements in comparison to the original paradigm, none of them were able to obtain a complete picture of an individual's commitment to an organization. It became clear that a fresh perspective was needed.

Meyer and Allen (1997) also realized that organizational commitment needed to be observed using a multiple-component model. Individuals become committed to organizations for many different reasons. Some find that the organization's mission, purpose, and goals mesh with their own. Others become committed to an organization because they realize that they may lose prestige, retirement benefits, or social networks if they leave. Still others remain in an organization because they feel it is the right thing to do. Each of these different motivations is valid, but the nuances of the three types of commitment could not be captured by the conceptualization posited by Porter and associates (1974). The three components – affective commitment, continuance commitment, and normative

commitment – form the basis of a new conceptualization of organizational commitment (Meyer & Allen, 1997).

Meyer and Allen's reconceptualization of organizational commitment has produced a model that seems to be a viable alternative to the conceptualization posited by Porter and associates (1974). With over 40 separate studies conducted using their three-construct model, Meyer & Allen's conceptualization is a widely accepted theoretical framework (Allen & Meyer, 1996). Meyer and Allen (1997) have concluded that people become committed to organizations for a variety of reasons, that it is a "multifaceted construct" and that the best approach is to attempt to understand the complexity of this commitment rather than trying to find the best single-dimension model to utilize. The driving force for the development of their model was the changing nature of work, which is requiring companies to find new ways to "organize", leading to more adaptable, flexible organizational forms. These new organizational forms will impact the types and strength of commitments between the organization and its employees (Meyer & Allen, 1997).

Meyer and Allen (1997) define organizational commitment as "reflecting the affective orientation toward the organization, a recognition of costs associated with leaving the organization, and a moral obligation to remain with the organization" (p.11). Their three components of commitment reflect this definition. Affective commitment refers to the employee's "emotional attachment to, identification with, and involvement in the organization" (Meyer & Allen, 1991, p.67). A person with high affective commitment belongs to an organization because they want to. Continuance commitment refers to "an awareness of the costs associated with leaving the organization," such as loss of prestige, status, or monetary incentives (Meyer & Allen, 1991, p.67). An individual who has high

levels of continuance commitment stays with an organization because they need to do so. Normative commitment “reflects a feeling of obligation to continue employment”. Individuals with high levels of normative commitment stay with an organization because they feel it is the “morally right” thing to do for the organization (Meyer & Allen, 1991, p.67).

It is important to point out that Meyer and Allen do not see these three components as separate “types” of commitment, but interconnected in a way that reflects the unique nature of each individual’s level of commitment to an organization (Meyer & Allen, 1997). The model assumes that each individual will have some level of all three commitments. Figure 2 illustrates Meyer and Allen’s conceptual model.

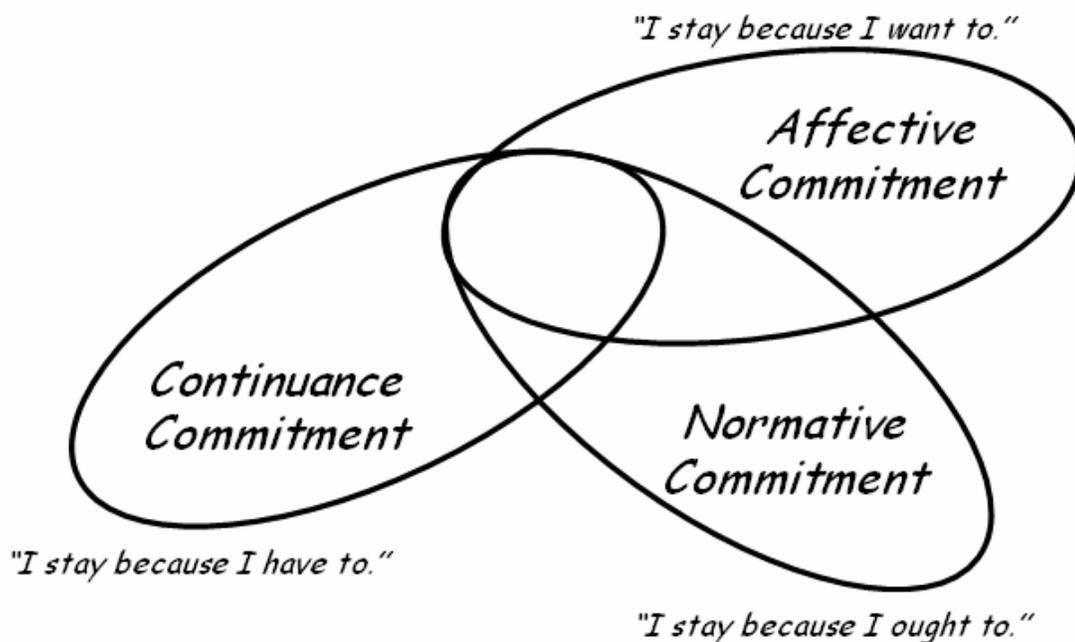


Figure 2

The three components of organizational commitment (affective, continuance, normative) based on Allen and Meyer (1991).

For example, an individual may have a strong affective attachment to the organization (they want to stay), but they may not need to stay, which would imply a low level of

continuance commitment. A second employee may have a strong continuance and normative commitment, but a weak level of affective commitment. A third employee may feel a strong continuance commitment, but weak affective or normative commitment. Meyer and Allen (1997) advise researchers to consider the strength of all three forms of commitment together rather than to assign a specific “type” of commitment to an individual.

Organizational Commitment and Organizational Culture

Organizational commitment has been defined as “an affective attachment to an organization” reflected in shared values, a willingness to work on behalf of the organization, and a desire to remain with the organization (Allen & Meyer, 1990a). The reliance on a collection of shared values between the organization and the individual relates to the generalized definition of organizational culture (Bolman & Deal, 1991; Morgan, 1997; Schein, 1985; Wheatley, 1999). It is important to understand the impact of organizational culture on the development of the three forms of organizational commitment that will be used in this study.

Allen and Meyer (1990b) examined the development of organizational commitment in “newcomers” through the use of organizational socialization tactics. They utilized a socialization continuum that ranged from “institutionalized” – a formal, sequential, common initiation experience – to “individualized” – characterized as an informal, on-the-job training experience. Their findings demonstrated that institutionalized socialization to help the newcomer become part of the organization enhanced affective commitment (Allen & Meyer, 1990b). Meyer, Irving, and Allen (1998) found that positive early work experiences in the organization positively influenced affective commitment. They also found that newcomers who placed value in “comfort experiences” such as job security and availability of

alternatives tended to have higher levels of continuance commitment (Meyer, Irving, & Allen, 1998). These studies indicate that the training and socialization of new employees to an organization (both factors of the organization's culture) have a significant impact on their level of commitment to the organization.

Vandenberg and Scarpello (1994) posited that the value placed on a given occupation or specialty by the organization's culture has an influence on the commitment felt by the occupation's members. For example, the information technology group of a student affairs division may be considered more valuable than the leadership development office. This "value" is translated into the shared values of the organization's culture, and is ultimately reflected in the decision-making policies of the division. The culture would continue to place a higher value on the work of the information technology group, potentially increasing their organizational commitment (Vandenberg & Scarpello, 1994).

Summary

This section has examined the organizational commitment, including its evolution from a measure of global commitment (Porter et al., 1974) to its new reconceptualization that explores the many ways an individual becomes committed to an organization (Meyer & Allen, 1997). Several researchers have attempted to find the best way to measure how and to what extent an individual becomes committed to an organization (Angle & Perry, 1981; Mayer & Schoorman, 1998; Penley & Gould, 1988). Organizational commitment is defined for the purposes of this study as "reflecting the affective orientation toward the organization, a recognition of costs associated with leaving the organization, and a moral obligation to remain with the organization" (Meyer & Allen, 1997, p.11). Organizational culture seems to influence commitment to some degree, especially in light of the shared values necessary for

affective attachment to the organization (Allen & Meyer, 1990a; Bolman & Deal, 1991; Morgan, 1997; Schein, 1985; Wheatley, 1999).

Do student affairs professionals – and middle managers in particular – remain committed to student affairs because they connect with the values of the profession, or because they feel they are too far along a career path to look for something else? Do they stay because they have earned a Master’s degree in student affairs and believe they should earn something from their education, or because they feel that they simply ought to stay in a profession that has given them so much? While the perspective of organizational commitment proposed by Meyer and Allen (1997) gives a more complete view of the challenges affecting organizational commitment among student affairs professionals, the picture is lacking. In order to gain a deeper understanding of why student affairs professionals – particularly middle managers – are leaving the profession, it is necessary to explore how other factors contribute to an individual’s commitment to the organization.

Organizational Politics: How does it contribute to Commitment?

Organizational politics has likely been a factor since the creation of the first business organizations, but it has only received serious attention by researchers in the last twenty-five years (Witt, 1995). The study of organizational politics has its roots in the research on organizational climate, and although it has been perceived as a negative force in organizational climate, it is the matter of perception that makes organizational politics a topic of interest for this study. Although the connection between organizational politics and organizational support is well defined, an examination of the definition, systemic organizational politics, and the role of empowerment in organizational politics will also show a connection to organizational commitment, which is the central topic of this study.

Middle managers, as a subgroup of student affairs professionals, have a highly political position. Organizational politics has been defined as social influence directed at individuals who can promote or protect the self-interests of the individual who is attempting the influence (Cropanzano, Kacmar, & Bozeman, 1995). Middle managers are in a position to influence and to be influenced due to their position on the organizational power chart. They are positioned between senior leadership and entry-level staff, and many times have to balance the interests, desires, and needs of both groups (Neelankavil, Mathur, & Zhang, 2000). They tend to have access to information and resources to a greater extent than entry-level professionals, but they do not have the authority and control that senior level professionals enjoy (Spreitzer, 1996). Looking at college and university housing officers (a subset of student affairs professionals), Jones (2001) found that “political decision-making and power struggles” had a negative impact on job satisfaction among professionals with six or more years of experience. It seems clear that there is a connection between how student affairs professionals in general – and middle managers in particular – perceive political behavior and its impact on their commitment to the organization

Definition

Organizational politics generally consists of two categories. The first category is the macro or systemic view, which involves the acquisition and use of power to obtain scarce resources when those resources are in conflict (Pfeffer, 1981). The second category is a micro or interpersonal view, which focuses on the self-serving tactics employed by individuals within an organization, usually with negative consequences for the organization (Witt, 1995). This interpersonal view is the focus of many of the major studies on

organizational politics (Cropanzano, Howes, Grandey, & Toth, 1997; Ferris & Kacmar, 1992; Kacmar & Ferris, 1991; Nye & Witt, 1993; Witt, 1995).

Kacmar and Ferris (1991) conceptualized organizational politics as a three-dimensional construct. This construct has become popular for measuring the level of perceived organizational politics in organizations (Cropanzano, et al. 1997; Nye & Witt, 1993). The three dimensions of their model are general political behavior, getting along to get ahead, and pay & promotion.

General Political Behavior

General political behavior is associated with the macro view of organizational politics in such that it involves the development of coalitions within a system that compete for scarce resources. The difference between the macro view and general political behavior is that in the macro view the coalitions compete for business issues. In general political behavior, the competition is for self-serving goals (Witt, 1995). This competition underscores the use of power to gain and maintain control of the political system. Power is expressed by who is allowed to participate in decision-making, the relative power of the individuals or groups making the decision, and even the rules of decision-making (Pfeffer, 1981). Kacmar and Ferris (1991) expressed general political behavior in terms of the existence of an “in group”. These groups direct the actions of the organization in a manner that allocates scarce resources to members of the in group, and adjusts policy to favor in group members. Other ways in which an “in group” can utilize general political behavior include controlling information, lines of communication, and the agenda of the organization (Pfeffer, 1981).

Getting Along to Get Ahead

This dimension of Kacmar and Ferris' (1991) construct relates to the existence of “yes men” in an organization. Compliance with group norms is valued, while dissenting opinions are not only discouraged, but met with sanctions (Witt, 1995). Getting along to get ahead is related to the concept of Groupthink (Janis, 1983). In his study of geopolitical and military decision-making bodies, Irving Janis developed the concept of Groupthink, which presents a detailed explanation of how the dark side of group cohesiveness, conformity, can lead policy-making bodies toward normative behaviors that “preserve friendly intragroup relations” at the expense of critical thinking and objections to the majority view (Janis, 1983).

Janis' Groupthink Syndrome is composed of three types: overestimation of the group's power and mortality; closed mindedness; and pressures toward uniformity. These “in group” behaviors were shown to have been major contributors to fiascos such as The Bay of Pigs, Pearl Harbor, and Watergate (Janis, 1983). While conformity in most organizations would not lead to blunders as large in scope as Watergate, it is clear that getting along to get ahead can contribute to poor decisions, or at the very least wasteful allocation of resources (Janis, 1993; Kacmar & Ferris, 1991; Witt, 1995).

Pay and Promotion

The dimension of pay and promotion is linked to the concept that people who are a good “fit” for the organization are likely to be promoted. While the need to find individuals who will be a good fit for the organization should not be overlooked, it is important to recognize that promotions and the pay increases that accompany them is inherently a political process. The ability for individuals to use political means to gain promotion creates an

environment where politically active individuals are promoted at the expense of others in the organization (Witt, 1995). Borg (1991) found that mid-level student affairs professionals who left the profession did so because of the lack of pay and promotions. While he did not specifically draw the conclusion that the political aspect of pay and promotion affected the decision-making process of those who left the profession, it could be implied that the perception of a politicized process could be a factor.

Systemic Organizational Politics

As has been previously discussed, organizational politics can take a macro and a micro level view. While the organizational politics construct posited by Kacmar and Ferris (1991) concentrates on the micro level of the organization, it is important to understand how the micro level of organizational politics interacts with the macro – or systemic – level of organizational politics. Organizational politics at the systemic level can be viewed as either a function of normal organizational activity (Morgan, 1997) or a divisive element that impedes effectiveness (Witt, 1995). In either case, the level of political activity allowed by the system affects the individuals within the organization.

Morgan (1997) posits that systemic organizational politics is best understood by focusing on the interaction of interests, conflict, and power. Interests are seen as areas of concern that members of the organization have predispositions toward, such as a “pet project” or control of certain resources. Conflicts arise when one coalition’s interests interfere with another coalition’s interests. Conflict is generally seen as a destructive force, something that only becomes apparent when there is no rational way to compromise; Morgan however sees conflict as something that is always present in an organization. Conflict can take many forms, pleasant and unpleasant, overt and covert. However they are manifested,

conflicts are resolved or perpetuated through the use of power. Power tactics that can be used by individuals and coalitions include control of scarce resources, use of rules, structures and procedures, control of information, control of boundaries, and the ability to cope with uncertainty.

In Morgan's (1997) view, the political behavior within an organization can be seen as either positive or negative based on how the coalitions and individuals manage conflict. The more positive forms of politics – compromise and collaboration – arise from a moderate to high level of both concern for individual interests and concern for organizational and/or others' interests. Negative politics – such as competitive or accommodating behavior – are a result of an imbalance between concern for self interests and concern of organizational and/or others' interests. Another form of negative politics – avoidance – is present when there is a low level of concern for either group's interests (Figure 3).

Morgan's view of systemic organizational politics focuses on three aspects; interests, conflict, and power. Bolman and Deal (1991), in their conceptualization of the political frame of organizations, also saw interests (described as "differences"), conflict and power as central aspects. In their view, organizational decisions are made as a result of "bargaining, negotiation, and jockeying for position". The political frame suggests that politics is not a vehicle of individual selfishness; rather, politics is present in all organizations due to interdependence, individual and coalition differences, scarcity of resources, and power dynamics. To Bolman and Deal, the most leverage for political action lies in what they termed the *zone of indifference*, or the areas that matter only to the specific coalition. Like Morgan, Bolman and Deal assert that politics can be a positive aspect of organizational life, if employed in an ethical and open manner.

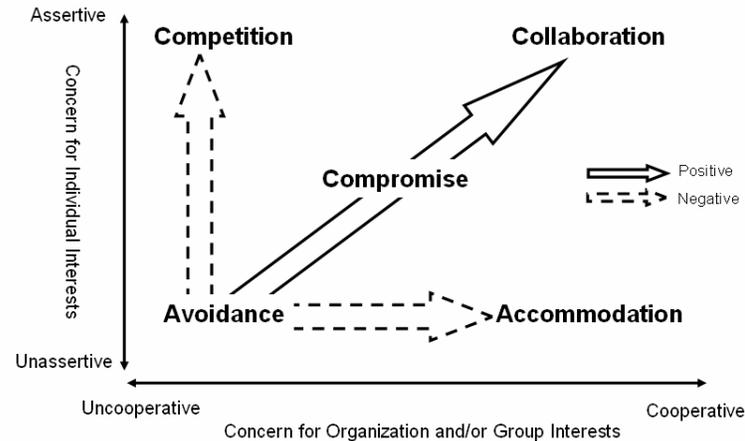


Figure 3

Matrix of Positive and Negative Organizational Political Behavior based on Morgan (1997)

The focus of Birnbaum's (1988) political institution resides in the "loops of interaction" among formal and informal groups. As with other systemic views of organizational politics (Bolman & Deal, 1991; Morgan, 1997) members of various groups form coalitions based on mutual interests. The political institution perspective differs from the previous views in the role of negotiation in the political process. To Birnbaum, coalitions are formed after negotiations among the various groups to determine common interests, potential costs and benefits to each group, the potential power of the coalition, and other factors. The process of forming coalitions happens in larger and larger scales, in order to reach a decision that is designed to benefit either all parties or the coalition that is ultimately the most powerful. A third aspect of Birnbaum's political institution is the role that loose coupling between what is said and what is done almost guarantees incremental change as a result of any "political" decision.

Systemic organizational politics is important to this study for two reasons. First, the climate created in an organization by systemic political activity encourages individuals within the system to act in a political manner. Organizations which make decisions using the

more “negative” forms of politics, such as competition or accommodation, encourage individuals to employ tactics for self-serving political gain (Morgan, 1997). Second, organizations that act in an overtly political way may likely increase the perceived level of organizational politics present in the organization. Although Kacmar and Ferris (1991) have based their construct on the interpersonal level of political behavior, an organization that is political at the systemic level will likely affect the level of political activity perceived by an individual employee.

Empowerment in Organizational Politics

The interpersonal aspects of organizational politics – those behaviors that involve individuals using political tools for self-serving purposes – were the focus of the seminal study on perceived organizational politics (Kacmar & Ferris, 1991). While the three dimensions of Kacmar and Ferris’ model – general political behavior, getting along to get ahead, and pay & promotion – were defined earlier in this section, empowerment is another interpersonal aspect that could contribute to the perceived level of organizational politics present in a given organization. While the role of empowerment could be viewed as an aspect of organizational support, empowerment has its roots in the study of power within a political system. It is for that reason that empowerment should be considered as an aspect of organizational politics.

Empowerment has been defined as intrinsic motivation manifested through meaning, competence, self-determination, and impact (Spreitzer, 1996). This intrinsic motivation is focused on the individual’s relationship with the organization. Spreitzer suggests six characteristics of a work context that facilitates empowerment. These characteristics are low role ambiguity among members, working for a supervisor who has a wide span of control,

sociopolitical support, access to information, access to resources, and a participative unit climate. Several of these characteristics – including sociopolitical support, access to information and resources – relate to the study of power.

Pfeffer (1981) defined power as something that is “context or relationship specific.” A person’s level of power is relative to the person he or she is interacting with. The use of contextual – or social – power is the basis of organizational politics (Pfeffer, 1981). The connection between social power and empowerment is readily apparent. Spreitzer (1996) defines empowerment using terms such as “self-determination” and “impact”, and sees empowerment characterized through access to information and to resources. A person who is “empowered” in an organization is seen as powerful relative to others in the organization, and has the social power to have the autonomy necessary for self-determination. Social power can provide access to information and resources, allowing the “empowered” employee to have an impact on the organization.

The tactics and behaviors used to utilize social power have been grouped in several ways. French and Raven (1959) described five bases of social power which have become the foundation of many subsequent conceptualizations. The five bases include reward power (the ability to either add a positive incentive or to remove a negative consequence), coercive power (the threat of negative consequence), legitimate power (authority granted by position), referent power (also defined as charismatic power), and expert power (power obtained through knowledge of the organization or process). While originally conceived as a tool for top management, it has become clear that social power is something that individuals and coalitions throughout the organization could possess. Bolman and Deal (1991) posited that even though members of an organization may not necessarily have authority, they do have

other sources of power. Their eight forms of organizational power include French and Raven's 5 bases of social power, and add alliance building, control of meaning and symbols, and access to and control of agendas.

The access to and control of agendas appears to be one of the most dynamic points of leverage for empowerment as a political tool. Access to the agenda implies that the individual is involved in the decision-making process (Bolman & Deal, 1991). Control of the agenda involves the process of decision-making, and could include how a decision is made, when a decision should be made, how the decision should be communicated, and even where a discussion of an item should go on a meeting agenda (Morgan, 1997). An individual who has access to and control of an agenda can be very influential in an organization, and as a supervisor has the ability to empower his/her staff. Kanter (1979) suggests that when staff members perceive that their supervisor is influential "upward and outward", their status is enhanced by association. She indicates that supervisors with agenda access and control can empower staff by interceding on their behalf, getting desirable placement of staff on key committees, gain approval for expenditures beyond the budget, and providing advance information on policy shifts and decisions.

A way to gain access and control of the agenda is through issue selling, which involves a discretionary set of behaviors used by individuals to influence top managers to pay attention to issues important to the individual (Ashford, Rothbard, Piderit, and Dutton, 1998). Issue selling is closely connected with impression management, which is defined as how an individual crafts their image (how they are seen by others, particularly powerful others) and what risks they are willing to take within the organizational context to protect their image (Ashford, et al. 1998). If a person "sells" an issue successfully to upper management, their

power within the organization increases by being able to place their issue on the agenda of the organization. Selling an unpopular issue could have a disastrous effect on an individual's image.

As an individual's image to others is contextual and constantly changing, it is important to choose issues wisely (Ashford, et al., 1998). Quinley (1996) cautions middle managers (or any individuals in an organization) to use care in the use of issue selling or other influence tactics, including using them "in appropriate ways, at appropriate times, and toward appropriate targets". Ancona and Caldwell (1992) point out that influence tactics such as issue selling are particularly effective ways for middle managers to gain control of the agenda, and can lead to an increase in organizational power. Ashford and associates (1998) posited that organizational environments that support issue-selling promote appropriate risk-taking behaviors that can lead to innovation and creative, entrepreneurial organizations.

Summary

As demonstrated in this section, organizational politics involves the systemic organization, the supervisor/supervisee relationship, as well as the behaviors of the individuals within the organization. The conceptualization of organizational politics to be used in this study examines three dimensions: general political behavior – the structures and coalitions developed to compete for resources; getting along to get ahead – a concept related to Janis' (1983) Groupthink Syndrome; and pay and promotion – which involves the political tactics employed by individuals to gain promotions and other perks (Kacmar & Ferris, 1991). The type of systemic political activity employed by the organization can have an impact on individuals' perceptions of politics. If an organization lacks concern for the interests of the

individuals who make up the organization, or if individuals lack concern for the organization's interests, then it is likely that the type of politics played in the organization will be negative (Morgan, 1997).

Although organizational politics is usually viewed as a negative influence on an organization (Witt, 1995), in the context of this study political behavior is not being assessed as being good or bad, ethical or unethical. The presence of political activity, or the perception of political activity, is what is important. Does systemic organizational politics and political empowerment influence an individual's commitment to an organization, and in what way?

Organizational Support: How does it contribute to Commitment?

Organizational support takes a different perspective from that of organizational politics. Where organizational politics is generally seen as a strategic, potentially self-serving set of power plays, organizational support is conceptualized as an environment where the needs of the employees takes equal importance to the goals of profit, minimizing the need for organizational politics (Cropanzano, Kacmar, and Bozeman, 1995). This type of environment would naturally lead to increased employee commitment to the organization. Rhoades and Eisenberger (2002) posit that POS should through reciprocity increase affective organizational commitment. In fact, Howes, Citera, and Cropanzano (1995) found in a review of the literature that organizational commitment was positively related to organizational support and negatively related to organizational politics. Shore and Tetrick (1991) suggest that POS may reduce levels of continuance commitment, or the sense of being trapped in an organization.

Organizational support is viewed as the perception that the organization cares about and values individuals within the organization (Howes, Citera, and Cropanzano, 1995).

Organizational support is also seen as employer commitment to the employee (Shore & Shore, 1995). Organizational support could be measured in terms of climate, using terms such as loyalty, involvement, and sense of belonging (Brown & VanWagoner, 1999).

Middle managers, once again, are in a particularly sensitive position in regard to organizational support. They are a lightning rod for efforts to promote organizational support within organizations. Even if senior leadership does not support their efforts to create a supportive environment, middle managers can be seen as the cause for a lack of organizational support (Fenton-O’Creevy, 1998).

As in the case with organizational politics, perception is an important aspect of organizational support. An individual may perceive that his/her work environment is very supportive, despite evidence to the contrary. Individuals develop “global beliefs” in regard to the level of support given them by the organization (Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchison, and Sowa, 1986). This section will support the author’s assertion that work/non-work interaction is an important factor of organizational support, and ultimately a contributing factor in the perceived level of commitment the individual has for the organization. It is believed that if an organization is supportive of its employees, particularly in regard to work/non-work interactions, the employees will feel more committed to the organization. This section will review the definition of organizational support, examine the impact of organizational culture on support, and explore one of the central topics of this study – work/non-work interaction – through the lens of organizational support.

Definition

Organizational support has its roots in social exchange theory, which implies that partners in an exchange relationship (such as between an organization and its employees) seek to have a balance of inputs and outcomes (Blau, 1964). Employees interpret organizational actions – such as praise, participation in decision-making, or promotions – as evidence of support (Shore & Shore, 1995). The employee may then feel obligated to repay the organization by working harder in support of the organization’s goals (Eisenberger, et al. 1986; Wayne, Shore, and Liden, 1997). This behavior becomes reciprocal, as the organization will provide more support when the employee completes work in fulfillment of organizational goals (Shore & Shore, 1995). Eisenberger, Fasolo, and Davis-LaMastro (1990) stated that “positive discretionary activities” taken on the organization’s part would be seen by the employee that the organization cared about them. Wayne, et al. (1997) confirmed this view when they found that perceived organizational support (POS) was related to promotions and informal and formal training (Moorman, Blakely, and Niehoff, 1998). Research conducted by Stinglhamber and Vandenberghe (2003) confirmed Eisenberger and colleagues (1990) contention that POS increases affective attachment to the organization.

The Impact of Organizational Culture on Support

The definition of organizational culture is generally agreed upon as a collection or patterns of beliefs that are shared by the members of an organization (Bolman & Deal, 1991; Morgan, 1997; Schein, 1985; Wheatley, 1999). Beyond that basic definition, however, lays a great deal of nuance. Each author adds a layer of understanding, and as a collective whole the picture of organizational culture becomes somewhat complex – much like the

organizational cultures themselves. An understanding of organizational culture is important for this study because culture influences the context of perceived organizational support (POS).

Schein (1985) sees organizational culture as the basic assumptions and beliefs for the members that operate at an unconscious level. He posits that culture is “a learned product of group experience”, and is found in established groups and units. Culture can develop at several levels of an organization at once; there may be a “corporate culture” as well as a culture for a specific unit within the organization (Schein, 1985). Leaders within an organization are seen as the individuals responsible for the creation and management of culture, and they are able to do this through five primary embedding mechanisms, which include: 1) what leaders pay attention to, measure, and control; 2) leader reactions to critical incidents and organizational crises; 3) deliberate role modeling; 4) criteria for allocation of rewards and status; and 5) criteria for recruitment, selection, promotion, retirement, and excommunication (Schein, 1985). An individual feels support within the organizational culture if three primary needs are met: 1) inclusion and identity – a feeling that they are part of the group; 2) control, power, and influence – a balance between autonomy and still feeling part of the group; and 3) acceptance and intimacy – to be cared about by others in the group and to belong in a “deeper” sense (Schein, 1985).

Bolman and Deal (1991) see organizational cultures as “the patterns of beliefs, values, practices, and artifacts that define for its members who they are and how they do things”. They view organizational culture as both “product and process”; it is a product because it is built up over time by various incarnations of the organization, and it is a process because it evolves as new members join the group and eventually adapt processes to fit the

current situation (Bolman & Deal, 1991). Organizational culture is at the heart of Bolman and Deal's "symbolic frame", which implies that organizations, and people within organizations, will manage culture through the use of symbols. These symbols will bring meaning to situations that may be confusing or seemingly unmanageable. Cultures are managed in the symbolic frame through the use of myth (sagas that reinforce mission, purpose, and pride), fairy tales (stories that provide knowledge and security in an entertaining fashion), ritual (ceremonies that create order and relieve anxiety), metaphor (an expression or way of seeing that puts a situation in context), and humor and play (in order to create solidarity and promote face-saving) (Bolman & Deal, 1991). The use of symbols can reinforce the POS within the organization. For example, the myths, stories, rituals, and metaphors can convey the message that the organization is supportive of work/non-work interaction, or they can convey that the organization expects that work will come first.

Where Bolman & Deal (1991) believe that cultures bring order to chaos, Wheatley (1999) posits that chaos brings an understanding to organizational culture. Her explanation of the chaos theory concept of fractals – an object or form created from repeating patterns evident at many scales – provides insight on how organizational cultures can project POS. Fractals are patterns that take the same shape in larger and smaller forms; an example would be a head of broccoli, which has the same pattern as the smallest floret (Wheatley, 1999). Wheatley explains that organizations are "deeply patterned" with behaviors, such as openness or secrecy, friendliness or hostility, that make up the culture of the organization. For example, if the culture of the top management of an organization is sexist, it is likely that the fractal of sexism would be repeated at all levels of the organization. The connection between this fractal behavior and the development of POS is readily apparent.

Morgan (1997) contends that it is natural for organizational cultures to develop when the reality is that organizational life takes up most of the members' waking hours.

Organizational life is "full of peculiar beliefs, routines, and rituals that identify it as a distinctive cultural life" when compared to "traditional" societies (Morgan, 1997). As with Bolman and Deal (1991), Morgan indicated the use of myth, ritual, and language to shape the culture of the organization. Morgan identifies cultures and subcultures that are at the same time fragmented and integrated, but tied together through a small set of shared values, beliefs, and meanings that create an organizational "reality".

Morgan's cultural metaphor is important because it allows for the understanding of subculture behavior. Where other authors (Schein, 1985; Bolman & Deal, 1991; Wheatley, 1999) tend to view culture as an overlying theme, Morgan explains that subcultures may have different motives or views from the dominant culture of the organization. Smart, Kuh, and Tierney (1997) connected this idea with the concept of equifinality. Equifinality comes from General Systems Theory, and states that while one beginning can have multiple outcomes multiple beginnings can have a single outcome. This concept, while paradoxical, implies that there is no single "best" outcome, nor is there a need for a dominant cultural view (Burr, Day, & Bahr, 1993). Smart, Kuh, and Tierney (1997) applied equifinality to organizational cultures by stating that "members may subscribe to similar goals, but the reasons they desire to achieve such goals and/or how they interpret the goals may vary". For example, one organizational culture within a campus housing operation may see the implementation of educational programming as important for the development of the students, while another culture within the same campus housing operation may see it as important because it increases student satisfaction with housing, so that they will remain on

campus, filling bed spaces. Both cultures see programming as vital, but for entirely different motives.

Smart et al. (1997) utilized an institutional cultural typology developed by Cameron and Ettington (1988). The four cultural types – clan, adhocracy, bureaucracy, and market – differ in the ways that they emphasize the importance of people versus the organization, control versus flexibility, and means versus ends (Smart, Kuh, & Tierney, 1997). Clans encourage member participation in decision making, see professional development as an important goal, and are characterized by staffs that are motivated by trust and organizational commitment. Adhocracies see change as inevitable, adaptive strategies are employed in an effort to acquire necessary resources for survival, and staffs are motivated by the task at hand. Bureaucracies strive to maintain the status quo, with a strong emphasis on rules, order, and predictability. Market cultures thrive on rewards for increased organizational effectiveness, and staffs are generally achievement oriented (Smart, Kuh, & Tierney, 1997).

In their study of four-year colleges, Cameron and Ettington (1988) found that colleges with a dominant clan culture had higher levels of staff commitment, schools with a dominant adhocracy culture promoted academic development more effectively, and schools with a dominant market culture were better at acquiring resources. Smart, Kuh, and Tierney (1997) found in their study of two-year colleges that organizations with a predominant clan culture allowed for greater trust among members, while organizations with an adhocracy culture were seen as entrepreneurial places where staff were more willing to take risks. Both clan and adhocracy cultures were seen as superior to either market or bureaucracy cultures (Smart et al., 1997).

Work/Non-Work Interaction

The concept of work/non-work interaction (sometimes referred to as “balance”) is an important aspect of perceived organizational support (POS) for this study. Blackhurst, Brandt, and Kalinowski (1998b), in their study of women student affairs professionals, indicated that there is a relationship between the quality of non-work life and dissatisfaction at work. They state that the student affairs profession “must be willing to address quality of life issues for members of the profession” (Blackhurst, Brandt, & Kalinowski, 1998b, pg. 31). Lorden (1998) cites burnout – long hours, stressful work conditions, and general work/non-work imbalance – as a “primary cause” of attrition among student affairs professionals. The connection between work/non-work interaction and POS is not an issue that is unique to student affairs professionals. As this section will demonstrate, it is a universal factor in the perception of support felt by individuals in many professions.

Over the past decade, higher education institutions have begun to see the importance of developing policies to address work/non-work interaction (Ward & Wolf-Wendel, 2005). Recent studies have indicated that corporate efforts to improve work/non-work interactions leads to increased employee morale, and is generally seen as a cost effective measure of organizational support (Hollenshead, Sullivan, Smith, August, & Hamilton, 2005).

Part of the issue with work/non-work interaction is that the number of hours spent at work has increased. Philipson (2002), in her research on work/non-work interaction, discovered some disturbing statistics regarding workers in the United States. The average full-time workweek in the United States increased from 43 hours to 47 hours between 1977 and 1997. Free time among workers in the U.S. has decreased almost 40 percent since the early 1970’s, and 46 percent of American workers currently exceed a 40-hour work week.

Workers in the United States average 1,978 working hours per year, which is 260 hours more than British workers and 499 hours more than German workers (Philipson, 2002).

Philipson has found that working longer hours is not the only issue. She has discovered that the “electronic leashes” of email, cell phones, and pagers cut into the reduced number of hours away from the office. Many employees – almost 50 percent of travelers in a recent study – check email or call in to the office while on vacation (Philipson, 2002). Work not only “invades our preoccupations, our daydreams, and emotional lives”, but it also consumes the social agendas of many professionals (Philipson, 2002). As employees spend more and more time at work, they find rich social connections with fellow employees. Many workers find that they have fewer friends outside of the job, and if their connection to the workplace is severed for any reason, it can irreparably damage their social life as well (Philipson, 2002).

Lewis (1996) also found that work is taking an ever-increasing role in the lives of professionals. While many organizations are adopting policies that promote a “family-friendly” position, such as on-site daycare and flexible work hours, few employees, especially male employees, are taking advantage of what they have to offer (Lewis, 1996). Employees apparently still perceive a stigma for attempting to achieve balance between their work and non-work lives. Gonyea and Googins (1996) believe that part of the issue is in how “family-friendly” is defined by the organization. Many corporations in the United States view “family-friendly” in a very narrow sense. Work/non-work interaction is seen as a fringe benefit, or part of the corporate welfare system. Casey (1995) suggests that there is a hidden curriculum in the workplace, socializing employees to behave in a manner determined

by the organization through the use of spoken and unspoken cultural messages, codes, and symbols. It is possible that “family-friendly” is not part of this hidden curriculum.

The changing roles of women and men in society are starting to have an effect on work/non-work interaction. Hollenshead and associates (2005) indicated that women taking an increasingly more prominent role in faculty positions, along with increased male expectations in regard to co-parenting are having a positive impact on “family-friendly” policies in some colleges and universities. However, the literature clearly points out that contextual influences, such as a “workaholic” culture and covert pressure to place work ahead of all other considerations, limits the use of policies that are adopted by institutions (Hollenshead, et al., 2005; Ward & Wolf-Wendel, 2005).

Lewis (1996) believes that the “family-friendly” movement addresses the problem on only a surface level. For the workplace to change, the culture of the organization needs to embrace the idea that both men and women should be able to adapt their work for family reasons, and that the adapted work patterns are valued equally to traditional work patterns. The ability to adapt work patterns to achieve work/non-work interaction reduces the potential for work overload, which implies that the amount of effort required in a job is excessive (Wallace, 1999). Balanced work commitments are seen as less stressful than imbalanced commitments to either work or non-work roles (Lewis, 1996).

Gonyea and Googins (1996) believe that connection between work/non-work interaction and the corporate bottom-line deserves a reconceptualization. Human Resource issues (usually seen as the organizational unit with the most influence to impact work/non-work interaction) are generally not seen as strategically important for the organization, even though senior management believes that “the caliber of the workforce as an important factor

in maintaining a competitive edge” (Gonyea & Googins, 1996). Gonyea & Googins posit that what they call “work-family initiatives” need to be redefined as a strategic tool for gaining competitive advantage. They cite three areas where work/non-work interaction could become a strategic tool. The first area is in recruitment, retention, and performance, where studies have shown that initiatives such as on-site daycare and flexible schedules benefit the organization in regard to lower absenteeism, and leads to increased affective commitment (Gonyea & Googins, 1996).

The second area for strategic redefinition is in valuing employee diversity as a competitive advantage. If organizations can reframe diversity (including individuals who need work-family initiatives) as a competitive advantage rather than an organizational problem, organization leaders will bring issues of diversity and work/non-work interaction to the top of the agenda. Organizations that embrace diversity and work/non-work interaction as a strategic advantage allow employees to bring their full selves (work role, identity, and non-work role) to work, which has been found to increase organizational engagement (Gonyea & Googins, 1996).

The third area for strategic redefinition is as a component of a new employer-employee social contract. As the corporate “safety net” of a job guarantee and pension has diminished, employees do not feel as committed to working increased hours. Gonyea & Googins (1996) suggest that organizations and employees adopt a concept of “mutual flexibility”. For the organization, a “flexible” workforce allows for increased hours of operation which helps the organization maintain a competitive edge for a global economy. For the employee, flexible schedules may provide assistance in managing work/non-work interaction. This type of arrangement increases the sense of mutual obligation between the

organization and the employee. Shore and Shore (1995) found that with the greater degree of mutual obligation, the strength of the social exchange relationship increases, as well as the benefit from the exchange for both parties.

The question of how non-work life impacted organizational commitment is addressed using role theory. Role theory maintains that each individual is engaged in several institutional “spheres”, such as work, family, and religious organizations. Randall (1988) examined the relationship between role involvement and organizational commitment using both an expansion model, which posits that an individual will find an increasing amount of energy to handle additional roles, and a scarcity model, which maintains that an individual has a finite amount of energy which must be “spread out” over increasing numbers of roles. Randall’s study of 455 staff members at a large university in the western United States found that organizational commitment was “relatively immune from the influence of outside work claimants”, indicating weak support for the expansion model (Randall, 1998). This indicates that management can encourage involvement in non-work roles without compromising organizational commitment, although Randall did not specifically connect work/non-work interaction to her study.

The impact of work/non-work stressors on professionals has been demonstrated to be a factor that begins in training and continues to mid-life and mid-career. Spickard, Gabbe, and Christensen (2002) found that symptoms of work overload and work/non-work interaction contributed to what they described as “mid-career burnout” among physicians. They cite increased patient demands, reduced resources, and locus of control as work overload factors for burnout, and indicated that the “unique stressors” of family life as a physician contribute to impaired job performance, health concerns, addictions, and marital

problems. The beginning of the mid-career burnout for physicians is in medical school and during residency, where long hours and hard work are part of the training ritual. This continues into the early and mid-career stages, due to social “support” of the work/non-work imbalance by peers and the general public (Spickard, Gabbe, & Christensen, 2002). Concerns that graduate training promotes “workaholic” tendencies in mid-career is also seen in academia (Hollenshead, Sullivan, Smith, August, & Hamilton, 2005).

The existence of flexible work hour programs may positively effect organizational commitment, particularly among female managers. Scandura and Lankau (1997) cite four possible reasons for this outcome. First, an employee may perceive the existence of a flexible work hour program as a representation of the organization’s concern for the employees. Second, flexible work hours increase “control over their lives”. Third, the existence of a flexible work hour program increases the employees’ perception of the organization, which increases organizational commitment. Fourth, employees often compare their situation to that of colleagues in other organizations, and the existence of a flexible work hour program increases the value of their social contract with the organization (Scandura & Lankau, 1997). It is interesting to note that Scandura and Lankau found that the perception of a flexible work hour schedule increased organizational commitment, even if the employee did not participate in the program.

Shore and Barksdale (1998) found that the level of obligation between the organization and employees impacts perceived organizational support and affective commitment. In their study of 327 part-time MBA students in a large university in the southeastern United States, they discovered that POS and affective commitment was highest

in situations where there were “mutually high obligations” between the organization and its employees.

There are indeed pressures in some work settings that put a strain on work/non-work interaction, but these pressures may be more than a lack of perceived organizational support. Wallace (1999) examined gender differences in married lawyers in regard to work/non-work interactions. She discovered that (a) work overload was a significant indicator of time and strain-based conflicts for both male and female lawyers; (b) the perception of excessive work demands was the most important determinant of work/non-work conflict; and (c) work overload was more of an indication of an external locus of control rather than an indication of work/non-work imbalance.

Summary

As this section has indicated, Perceived Organizational Support (POS) is an important factor in how an employee feels about the organization that he/she belongs to. Although POS relates to the social exchange between the organization and a specific employee, the cultures within the organization may have a significant bearing on how organizational actions may be perceived by the individual. The issue of work/non-work interaction is a major factor of POS, for it has been seen as an indication of organizational support for individual employees, even among those that do not take advantage of balance accommodations (Scandura & Lankau, 1997). It is clear that POS is a major factor in organizational commitment; however, it is also clear that it is not the only factor.

Organizational Structure: How does it contribute to Commitment?

Organizational structure refers specifically to the structural and behavioral characteristics of two extreme management systems (Burns & Stalker, 1961). These

characteristics define an organization as having a tendency toward either a mechanistic structure – the traditional, bureaucratic model – or an organic structure – a more flexible, process-oriented, matrix-type model – particularly in regard to how the organization addresses various conditions (Zanzi, 1987). As noted in Chapter 1, the nature of work is changing. The structure of the organization is also changing in order to keep up with the rapid, entrepreneurial pace of change. Hierarchical, “Newtonian” organizations are giving way to flatter, flexible, more organic structures in order to remain competitive (Wheatley, 1999). These organic structures tend to have shared values, mental models of understanding, and team learning at their core, rather than codified rules and chains of command (Senge, 1990). Meyer and Allen (1997) see the shift in organizational structures having an impact on the types and levels of commitment felt by employees and organizations.

Previously in this chapter, the idea that certain organizational characteristics promote perceptions of organizational political behavior and support has been discussed. Perception of organizational politics (POP) has been connected to networking of coalitions and communication channels (Birnbaum, 1988; Bolman & Deal, 1991). Perception of Organizational Support (POS) has been linked to “cultural” influences such as symbols, rituals, and informal methods of interaction (Bolman & Deal, 1991; Morgan, 1997; Schein, 1985; Smart, Kuh, & Tierney, 1997; Wheatley, 1999). These ideas hint at the potential impact of organizational structure on POP and POS, but in a cursory manner, and there is little evidence that any studies have attempted to connect organizational structure to organizational commitment. This section will review the definition of organizational structure, as well as the characteristics of mechanistic and organic organizational structures, with an emphasis toward its impact on POP, POS, and organizational commitment.

Definition

Burns and Stalker (1961) first outlined the concept of mechanistic and organic structures as “two polar extremities” in the forms which organizations can take to address change. Their contention is that these forms exist objectively, and that they are not contrived by theorists from either school of thought. Mechanistic structures are most suitable for stable conditions, and are characterized by specialization of functions, hierarchical structures and controls, vertical communication, and greater prestige attached to internal – or local – knowledge rather than general knowledge (Burns & Stalker, 1961). Organic structures, by contrast, work best in changing conditions, and are characterized by collaborative effort toward the task at hand, continual redefinition of roles, a network structure and control, lateral communication which is advisory rather than instructional, and prestige attached to external or general knowledge (Burns & Stalker, 1961).

Mechanistic structures promote competition among work units and individual employees, because the emphasis is on doing your job and completing your task. That emphasis promotes a “silo” mentality that ultimately leads to conflicts for scarce organizational resources. Organic structures promote collaborative effort, because the only way to “do your job and complete your task” is done by participating with others in the organization (Burns & Stalker, 1961). By this definition, mechanistic structures would seem to promote a higher level of organizational politics, and organic structures would tend to promote supportive organizational behaviors.

Hage (1965) codified the continuum proposed by Burns & Stalker (1961) into eight separate variables characterized as either organizational means or organizational ends, which are presented in Table 1. Hage believed that the nature of the organization’s output helps to

determine the structure that is most appropriate for the organization. An organic structure is more appropriate in a service domain, because service to clients calls for adaptive behavior. Conversely, a mechanistic approach is best when an organization is competing with another organization or under conditions of extreme threat (Hage, 1965).

Table 1

Characteristics of Organic and Mechanistic Organizations by Variable and Indicators based on Hage (1965)

Variable	Indicators	Organic	Mechanistic
<i>Organizational Means</i>			
Complexity (specialization)	Number of occupational specialties; level of training required	High	Low
Centralization (hierarchy of authority)	Proportion of jobs that participate in decision-making; number of areas in which decisions are made by decision-makers	Low	High
Formalization (standardization)	Proportion of jobs that are codified; range of variation allowed within jobs	Low	High
Stratification (status)	Differences in income and prestige among jobs; rate of mobility between levels of jobs/status	Low	High
<i>Organizational Ends</i>			
Adaptiveness (flexibility)	Number of new programs in a year; number of new techniques in a year	High	Low
Production (effectiveness)	Number of units produced; rate of increase in units produced per year	Low	High
Efficiency (cost)	Cost per unit of output per year; amount of idle resources per year	Low	High
Job Satisfaction (morale)	Satisfaction with working conditions; rate of turnover in job occupants per year	High	Low

Zanzi (1987) posited that the continuum created by Burns & Stalker (1961) contained components of formal structure and mechanisms juxtaposed with components of behavioral aspects, values, and beliefs. Mechanistic structures were described in terms of formal structures and mechanisms, where organic structures were described using values and beliefs (Zanzi, 1987). Zanzi found that the direction of communications, task definition, and job

predictability were the best indicators of mechanistic/organic tendencies. Zanzi also found that the diffuse horizontal communication prevalent in organic structures promotes low trust within the organization. He posits that this low trust promotes a higher level political behavior within organic structures than would be seen in mechanistic structures (Zanzi, 1987).

Zanzi, Arthur, and Shamir (1991) further commented on the connection between POP and organic structures. They hypothesized that because tasks are less clearly defined and authority is less specific in organic structures, employees are less limited in their behavior and in fact may need to politic in order to be recognized. Contrary to their beliefs, the connection between organizational structure and political behavior could not be supported (Zanzi, Arthur, & Shamir, 1991).

Mechanistic Structures

As discussed previously, mechanistic structures are generally defined as traditional, bureaucratic organizations. These organizations are comprised of five basic parts: 1) the operating core, where the basic work involved with the production of goods and services is performed; 2) the strategic apex, which is inhabited by those responsible for the global activities of the organization; 3) the middle line, which is the part of the organization that links the operating core with the strategic apex; 4) the technostructure, which is made up of analysts and others who are not directly responsible for the production of goods and services, but provide support and training for those who do; and 5) the support staff, which is comprised of all functions that are not directly related to the core mission of the organization (Mintzberg, 1979). In a mechanistic structure, the division of labor and chain of command among these five parts is very clear and distinct.

Birnbaum (1988) defines his bureaucratic institution as a mechanistic structure, and sees it as necessary to “efficiently relate organizational programs to the achievement of specified goals”. Organizations are more effective when behavior is standardized, leading to more predictable organizational behavior (Birnbaum, 1988). The bureaucratic institution standardizes behavior through the structure of communication channels, control of information-gathering, codified rules and regulations, emphasis on job descriptions, a systematic division of labor, and hierarchical control. A mechanistic structure is a rational structure, as it attempts to link “means to ends, resources to objectives, and intentions to activities” (Birnbaum, 1988).

The rational structure is at the heart of Bolman & Deal’s (1991) structural frame. They describe structural organizations as relatively closed systems – meaning they are not influenced by outside constituents and variables – pursuing explicit goals. An organization’s structure is determined by the size of the organization, the core technology of the organization, the environment the organization operates in, the strategy and goals of the organization, the information flow and use of technology, and the knowledge and skill of the individuals who make up the work force (Bolman & Deal, 1991). Six core assumptions define the structural frame:

1. Organizations exist to accomplish established goals;
2. A structural form can be designed and implemented to fit a particular set of circumstances for any organization;
3. Organizations work most effectively when environmental turbulence and personal preference is constrained by norms of rationality;
4. Specialization permits higher levels of individual expertise and performance;
5. Coordination and control are essential to effectiveness; and

6. Organizational problems typically originate from inappropriate structures or inadequate systems and can be corrected through re-engineering (Bolman & Deal, 1991).

Mechanistic organizations are not generally seen as interconnected, systemic organisms. Wheatley (1999) used metaphor to describe mechanistic organizations as “Newtonian” organizations (based on the teachings of Sir Isaac Newton). This metaphor provides an image of organizations as machines, with “parts” made up of departments and individuals. When the organization is not operating properly, the organization can be taken apart, the “parts” fixed or replaced, and then the organization can be reassembled without any undo loss (Wheatley, 1999). To Wheatley, a mechanistic organization is focused on parts rather than the whole, and concerned with those things that are “visible and tangible”, such as structures, hierarchies, rules and policies.

Organic Structures

Conversely, Wheatley (1999) sees organic structures (described as “chaotic organizations”) as places where order can be found within disorder. She describes organic structures as organizations that have “faith that they can accomplish their purposes in varied ways”, organizations that focus on mission and intent. In a chaotic organization, relationships are vital, and a single piece is so connected with everything else in the organization that fixing a single “part” is impossible. There is a fluid nature of organizations that promotes loss of equilibrium in order to be more adaptive (Wheatley, 1999).

Organic structures have been described as “learning” organizations (Smart, Kuh, & Tierney, 1997; Wheatley, 1999). A learning organization is defined as an organization where new patterns of thinking are encouraged, “where collective aspiration is set free”, and people “learn how to learn together” (Senge, 1990). The learning organization is comprised of five

distinct disciplines, which include personal mastery (an artistic approach to proficiency), the development of mental models (deeply ingrained generalizations that influence understanding and action), building of shared visions (a unified picture of an end result), team learning (developing the ability to “think together”) and systems thinking (an understanding that organizations are bound by “invisible fabrics of interrelated actions”) (Senge, 1990). To Senge, organic structures provide meaningful interactions between members of an organization that leads to a “shift of mind” that leads to continual group learning and improved effectiveness.

Several authors support the development of organic structures. Smart, Kuh, and Tierney (1997) state that organizations (such as colleges and universities) need to adopt structures that allow for “less autocracy, more flexibility, and greater creativity” in order to deal with turbulent economic times and decreased support from governmental agencies. Organic structures provide a greater ability for an organization to adapt to changing environments (Jennings & Seaman, 1994). Guido-DiBrito (1995) indicated that flatter, horizontal structures promote employee interaction and distribute status evenly, leading to increased loyalty throughout the organization.

Summary

The type of structure employed by an organization may have some bearing on the levels of perceived organizational politics (POP), perceived organizational support (POS), and organizational commitment present within the organization. Organic structures, due to diffuse authority and non-rigid hierarchies, are believed to promote increased political behavior (Zanzi, 1987; Zanzi, et al. 1991). Organic structures also seem to promote behaviors that would increase POS and affective organizational commitment (Guido-DiBrito,

1995; Meyer & Allen, 1997; Wheatley, 1999). Mechanistic structures are characterized by rigid structures and status-driven roles that promote continuance commitment (Burns & Stalker, 1961; Birnbaum, 1988; Bolman & Deal, 1991; Meyer & Allen, 1997). Although there is little direct support that organizational structure influences POP, POS or organizational commitment, there is clearly evidence that it is worthy of further study.

Job Satisfaction: How does it contribute to Commitment?

Job satisfaction is possibly one of the most researched variables in organizational psychology. It is considered a crucial factor in understanding employees' affective reactions to organizations (Levy & Williams, 1998; Williams & Hazer, 1986). Job satisfaction is also the most studied dependent variable in organizational psychology and occupational health, with well over 12,000 studies published by 1991 (Kinicki, McKee-Ryan, Schriesheim, & Carson, 2002). Despite the overwhelming number of studies involving job satisfaction, there has been very little investigation of this topic among student affairs administrators, as the job satisfaction studies in higher education have focused on faculty (Tarver, Canada, & Lim, 1999).

There have been many studies linking job satisfaction to organizational commitment (Brooke, Russell, & Price, 1988; Coberly, 2004; Farkas & Tetrick, 1989; Williams & Hazer, 1986). Satisfaction and commitment have been found to be distinct constructs (Brooke, et al., 1988; Shore & Tetrick, 1991), but there has been some debate on the causal ordering of the two constructs (Farkas & Tetrick, 1989). Does increased job satisfaction lead to increased organizational commitment? This section will examine the definition of satisfaction, satisfaction's connection to politics, support, and structure, and the connection between satisfaction and organizational commitment.

Definition

Job satisfaction is generally defined as “an affective response to specific aspects of the job” (Brooke, Russell, & Price, 1988; Farkas & Tetrick, 1989; Williams & Hazer, 1986). As with commitment, satisfaction has been conceptualized in many ways. Job satisfaction grew from the study of worker motivation (Jones, 2002). Worker motivation involves the processes used by the organization (usually by a supervisor) that encourage actions or behaviors by “means of manipulating outcomes that are made contingent on the actions of individuals” (Sussmann & Vecchio, 1982). Workers are “motivated” on an individual level, “influenced” by organizational culture and norms on an interpersonal level, and coerced through the use of power on an organizational level (Sussmann & Vecchio, 1982).

Maslow (1943) posited that individuals have a complex set of needs that must be met in a hierarchical manner. His five types of needs include physiological (the need for food, water, and shelter), security (the need for safety, stability and absence of pain), affiliation (the need for love and a feeling of belonging), esteem (the need for self-worth and recognition), and self-actualization (the need for self-fulfillment). Maslow believed that these five needs had to be met in a sequential, or hierarchical, fashion. For example, physiological and security needs had to be sufficiently met before the individual could strive to meet affiliation or esteem needs (Maslow, 1943). Maslow’s needs hierarchy, although popular, has not been well supported by research, particularly because of Maslow’s failure to adequately define self-actualization (Jones, 2002).

Another early theory on job satisfaction was developed by Herzberg (1966). His two-factor theory built on Maslow’s work, but departed from the idea that motivation was a hierarchical process. Herzberg stated that some factors lead to job satisfaction, while other

factors lead to dissatisfaction. The central point of the two-factor theory is that satisfaction and dissatisfaction cannot be measured on the same continuum (Herzberg, 1966). The factor that measures job satisfaction is the motivator continuum, and is related to Maslow's esteem and self-actualization needs. When motivators such as advancement and personal development are present, the employee is satisfied with his or her job. The hygiene factor is the continuum that measures job dissatisfaction, and is related to Maslow's physiological, security, and affiliation needs. When an employee feels that they have appropriate job security, salary, and working conditions, they do not feel dissatisfaction with their job. The prevention of dissatisfaction does not necessarily lead to job satisfaction (Herzberg, 1966). Herzberg's two-factor theory has been called a pioneering theory of job satisfaction, as it looked at intrinsic and extrinsic factors and went beyond the study of motivation (Jones, 2002).

Locke (1969) believed that the concept of job satisfaction needed further refinement. He believed that Herzberg's two-factor theory had not been empirically proven. Locke posited that an individual's values were the central factor in whether they were satisfied or dissatisfied in their job. Ultimately, Locke defined job satisfaction as "the pleasurable emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job as achieving or facilitating the achievement of one's job values" (Locke, 1969). This definition can be applied to short-term satisfaction by examining the individual's goals, and can be applied to long-term satisfaction by examining the individual's values.

Locke described three elements that were central to the appraisal process that an individual uses to determine the level of satisfaction he or she has with a particular job. The first is the perception of some aspect of the job, the second is an implicit or explicit value

standard, and the third is a conscious or subconscious judgment of the relationship between one's perceptions and one's values (Locke, 1969). Locke determined that "man's biological nature", or the need and ability to take action when alternatives are available, is central to the understanding of job satisfaction. In Locke's view, an individual's judgments – the estimate of the "significance of perceived facts" against the individual's value standards – assists the individual in knowing when to take action. The inclusion of an individual's values, as well as the acknowledgement that the individual's perception is a factor in satisfaction, was a major step forward in understanding exactly what job satisfaction is (Locke, 1969).

Smith, Kendall, and Hulin (1969) sought to develop a construct that measured "the feelings a worker has about his job". As with the other variables in this study, Smith et al. saw job satisfaction as a measure of an individual's perception. A worker's experiences, expectations, and available alternatives make up a perceived level of satisfaction. The frames of reference that build an individual's perception contain two features: general adaptation level – which looks at all the possible alternatives and previous work experience of the individual – and anchor points – described as "the best and worst jobs conceivably available" to the individual (Smith, et al., 1969).

The frame of reference for the individual is also relative to three dimensions that could be placed on continuum. The first dimension is a time perspective, which implies that a person may respond to inquiries about their satisfaction either from the point of view of comparing their current job to all past jobs, or from the point of view of the work he or she is doing that day. The second dimension is absolute versus relative measures, which relates to an internal or external view of the job. Absolute measures are based on cultural or internal standards, where relative measures are based more on similar jobs or alternatives (Smith, et

al., 1969). A good example of a relative measure for the population of this study is when a student affairs professional compares their pay and benefits to a friend working in a private sector company such as a management consulting firm. The third dimension involves descriptive versus evaluative measures. Descriptive measures are made up of questions that ask specific information about the job, where evaluative measures such as, “how fairly are you treated by management?” (Smith et al., 1969).

Smith et al. determined that it was important to view satisfaction through multiple dimensions in order to gain a complete understanding of an individual’s perceived level of satisfaction. Their final model examines satisfaction using five dimensions: work, pay, promotions, supervision, and coworkers (Smith et al. 1969). A reconceptualization in the 1980’s refined the model to include an overall satisfaction dimension (Kinicki et al., 2002). Smith et al.’s conceptualization of job satisfaction is used more frequently than any other conceptualization (Kinicki et al., 2002), indicating that it is a reliable model for this study.

Politics, Support, and Structure and their Relationship to Satisfaction

Previously in this chapter, the constructs of organizational politics, organizational support, and organizational structure were identified as potential antecedents of organizational commitment. There seems to be support for the conceptualization of organizational politics, support, and structure as antecedents of job satisfaction as well. Several studies have shown a causal link between these constructs and satisfaction. Harrell-Cook, Ferris, and Dulebohn (1999) found a negative correlation between the perception of organizational politics and job satisfaction. This supported the assertion by Ferris and Kacmar (1992) that the perception of a politically active work environment leads to reduced job satisfaction.

Contrary to the connection between politics and satisfaction, a supportive work environment has been demonstrated to lead to increased job satisfaction. Williams and Hazer (1986) found that leadership consideration (defined as “the consideration for subordinate’s feelings, problems, and input for decisions, as assessed by subordinate”) was an antecedent of job satisfaction. The definition of “leadership consideration” is similar to definitions of organizational support (Shore & Tetrick, 1991). Shore and Tetrick (1991) found partial support for the idea that organizational support was an antecedent of satisfaction. Kinicki et al. (2002), in their construct validity study of the Smith et al. (1969) model, found several concepts of organizational support (including leader consideration and leader-member exchange) that were antecedents of job satisfaction.

There is not a large body of support for the connection between organizational structure and job satisfaction, but what does exist is intriguing. Kinicki et al. (2002) found nine separate characteristics in their meta-analysis that relate to organizational structure, such as group integration, participative involvement, and organizational climate. These characteristics were found to be antecedents of job satisfaction as well.

There is evidence that politics, support, and organizational structure could be viewed as antecedents for both satisfaction and commitment. With that in mind, it is important to understand why this study is looking at commitment as a dependant variable and not satisfaction. As the following section will illustrate, there is support in the literature for the inclusion of satisfaction as an independent variable in this study.

The Connection between Satisfaction and Commitment

There has been a good deal of debate on the casual ordering of the constructs of job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Does commitment lead to satisfaction, or does

satisfaction lead to commitment? Williams and Hazer (1986) in framing the discussion on the causal ordering of satisfaction and commitment, distinguished satisfaction from commitment by stating that satisfaction represents an “affective response to specific aspects of the job”, while commitment is an affective response to the entire organization.

An understanding of the correct causal ordering of these two constructs has theoretical as well as practical implications. From a theoretical standpoint, Curry, Wakefield, Price, and Mueller (1986) saw two implications. First, as both variables have been widely used as dependent variables, models that did not include satisfaction and commitment in the correct causal order have made erroneous inferences. Second, in studies where either satisfaction or commitment have been used as determinants of various outcomes, such as absenteeism, an understanding of the causal ordering of the two factors would be crucial for a complete understanding of the model. From a practical standpoint, Curry and associates contend that supervisors need to understand the correct causal ordering of satisfaction and commitment in order to employ the correct tactics to get the most from their staff (Curry et al., 1986).

Williams and Hazer (1986) were concerned with the antecedents and consequences of satisfaction and commitment in turnover models. Their findings indicated that personal and organizational characteristics – including a characteristic strongly related to organizational support – influenced satisfaction directly, and only influenced commitment through their impact on satisfaction. This finding led them to conclude that there was a direct link from satisfaction to commitment (Williams & Hazer, 1986).

Kacmar, Carlson, and Brymer (1999) examined the antecedents and consequences of commitment as measured by two different scales. They initially hypothesized that

satisfaction would be a consequence of organizational commitment. The study found a strong positive correlation between satisfaction and commitment, but could not determine specifically if satisfaction was a consequence of commitment. They were able to determine that leader-member exchange – another characteristic strongly related to support – was an antecedent of commitment (Kacmar et al., 1999).

One approach to the correct causal ordering of satisfaction and commitment included organizational support as a factor. Yoon and Thye (2002) posited that job satisfaction and perceived organizational support (POS) were “dual pathways to commitment” in order to explore the emotional and cognitive aspects of commitment. Their study found that both satisfaction and POS “significantly enhance organizational commitment”. The results of the study indicated that satisfaction and POS played equal mediating roles on commitment (Yoon & Thye, 2002). Coberly (2004) found that satisfaction had a mediating effect on commitment as well, and reported a strong causal relationship from satisfaction to commitment.

Several studies provided inconclusive results for causal ordering. Brooke, Russell, and Price (1988) in their study of the relationship between satisfaction, commitment, and job involvement, found that the three factors strongly correlated for one another. Furthermore, they found that any model that attempted to force a one-factor construct lacked discriminant validity. Farkas and Tetrick (1989) attempted to discover the causal ordering of satisfaction and commitment on turnover intentions. While their findings did indicate the necessity of some link between satisfaction and commitment, they were unable to find a model that favored one direction of the relationship over another. The conclusion of the study was that the relationship between satisfaction and commitment may be cyclical or possibly reciprocal

(Farkas & Tetrick, 1989). Curry, Wakefield, Price, and Mueller (1986) also attempted to determine the causal ordering of satisfaction and commitment. Their findings could not support a causal link in either direction.

Summary

This section reviewed the evolution of the study of job satisfaction, the relationship of the other independent variables in this study to satisfaction, and the connection between satisfaction and organizational commitment. Job satisfaction theory grew out of the study of motivation theory, and draws on the works of noted scholars such as Maslow, Herzberg, and Locke (Jones, 2002). Job satisfaction is one of the most studied variables in organizational psychology and occupational health (Kinicki et al., 2002), and a review of the literature indicated that its inclusion in the present study is a necessity. Satisfaction, which measures the affective response to aspects of the individual's job, has been shown to be distinct from organizational commitment, which is concerned with the individual's affect to the organization as a whole (Shore & Tetrick, 1991).

A selected review of the literature on satisfaction and its connection with commitment indicated that there is in fact a link between the two constructs (Brooke, Russell, & Price, 1988; Coberly, 2004; Curry et al., 1986; Farkas & Tetrick, 1989; Williams & Hazer, 1986). Although the direction of the causal link has not been definitively proven, there is evidence to support the belief that satisfaction with aspects of an individual's job can lead to overall organizational commitment (Coberly, 2004; Williams & Hazer, 1986; Yoon & Thye, 2002). Even if commitment leads to satisfaction, as suggested by Curry et al. (1986) or if the relationship is cyclical, as Farkas and Tetrick (1989) posit, it is evident that any study of organizational commitment should include job satisfaction as a variable of study.

Chapter Summary

Organizational commitment cannot be studied as phenomenon unto itself. As with any systemic process, commitment is driven by the culmination of factors, including the levels of political activity present in the organization, the level of support an individual feels from his or her supervisor, the fit between the organization and the individual, and the level of satisfaction the individual feels for various aspects of the job. A researcher can understand why someone becomes committed to an organization and to what extent that individual is committed only after gaining insight to the influences of politics, support, structure and satisfaction on him or her.

Attrition among student affairs professionals – particularly among middle managers in student affairs – is seen by many researchers to be a problem (Blackhurst, Brandt, & Kalinkowski, 1998a, 1998b; Borg, 1991; Jones, 2002; Lorden, 1998). The studies of these researchers have addressed parts of the problem, such as pay and promotion (Blackhurst, Brandt, & Kalinkowski, 1998b; Borg, 1991) and work/non-work interaction (Blackhurst, Brandt, & Kalinkowski, 1998a), but the studies have not looked at commitment from a systemic point of view. As stated in the introduction to this study, their focus determines not only what is seen, but what is not seen as well.

Senge (1990) writes, “The systems perspective tells us that we must look beyond individual mistakes or bad luck to understand important problems. We must look beyond personalities and events. We must look into the underlying structures which shape individual actions and create the conditions where types of events become likely.” To Senge, “structures” refers to the organizational structures as defined in this chapter, as well as the interrelationships between factors that influence behavior and actions. For the purpose of

this study, how do the interrelationships of politics, support, organizational structure, and satisfaction influence commitment? The perspective needs to be a systemic one in order to draw any meaningful conclusions regarding the health of student affairs as a profession.

This chapter reviewed the literature related to the major components of this study. The literature clearly suggests that there is a connection between organizational politics, organizational support, organizational structure, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment. The author posits that the systemic interrelationship of politics, support, structure, and satisfaction influence commitment among student affairs professionals. What is still to be determined is to what degree, and in what ways.

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This chapter will outline the methodological procedures that were employed in this study. Attention will be given to the survey, the population sample, the instrumentation, data analysis, and data collection. The goal of this study was to examine the levels of affective, continuance, and normative organizational commitment among student affairs professionals, with particular attention to the impact of perceived organizational politics (POP), perceived organizational support (POS), organizational structure, and job satisfaction on commitment. To accomplish this goal, a survey consisting of several existing instruments was developed and employed in a manner to ensure a sufficient return.

Research Design

This was a cross-sectional study of practitioners in their work setting. The study attempted to find the relationship between perceived organizational politics, perceived organizational support, organizational type, and job satisfaction, on organizational commitment. As such, this study employed explanatory nonexperimental research (Johnson, 2001). A quantitative study was chosen over a qualitative study for reasons of efficiency, cost, and the ability to make inferences of a large population by using a relatively small sample population (Creswell, 2003). It would be extremely difficult, not to mention cost prohibitive, to attempt to measure the level of organizational commitment for every student affairs professional in the United States. The use of a quantitative survey, with appropriate sampling procedures, allows the researcher to make inferences about all student affairs professionals using a smaller representative sample of the entire population (O'Sullivan, Rassel, and Berner, 2003). Using a quantitative approach allows the researcher to test

hypotheses, relate variables, and use an unbiased approach with standards of validity and reliability (Creswell, 2003). This approach was the best approach for identifying the factors related to commitment among student affairs professionals.

Web-based Survey Instrument

The data were collected using a self-administered questionnaire, which was distributed using a web-based survey. This collection method was chosen for reasons of efficiency, potential return rate, and cost. Compared to a paper survey, which must be completed, placed into an envelope, and then taken to a mail box, a web-based survey requires little effort on the part of the respondent other than completing a series of questions and hitting a “send” button. Web-based surveys provide the potential for a large return rate. In his study of housing professionals, a subset of student affairs professionals, Jones (2002) surveyed 3,995 housing professionals using a web-based survey, and had a usable response rate of 39 percent ($n = 1,560$). In addition, developing a web-based survey is less expensive and more environmentally sensitive than producing and mailing a paper survey.

Population Sample

The population sample was drawn from the membership of the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA), one of two national professional associations for student affairs professionals. With a membership of over 8,000 student affairs professionals that represents all 50 states, public and private institutions, and small and large schools, this organization provided a reasonable opportunity to create a representative population (NASPA, 2004).

The sample was developed through systematic random sampling. The random sample was developed by dividing the total population by the intended size of the sample

population, which provided a skip point. The first name selected was chosen through the use of a random number generator from within the first skip point in the sampling frame (Agresti & Finlay, 1997). Using a total of 17 independent variables, it is important to obtain a large sample in order to have sufficient statistical power. A sample of $n = 340$ should be sufficient to make inferences at the 95% confidence level about student affairs professionals who choose to belong to NASPA. In order to ensure a sample size of $n = 340$, a sample population of $N = 1,450$ NASPA members was developed utilizing systematic random sampling. Using a sample population of $N = 1,450$, a 24% return rate would ensure the necessary sample size of $n = 340$.

Instrumentation

Seven previously established instruments were used in this study: organizational politics was measured using the Perceptions of Organizational Politics Scale (POPS) developed by Kacmar and Ferris (1991) and refined by Kacmar and Carlson (1997); organizational support was assessed using the Survey of Perceived Organizational Support (SPOS), which was developed by Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchison, and Sowa (1986); Organizational Structure was measured using a six-item scale developed by Zanzi (1987); overall job satisfaction was examined using the Abridged Job In General scale (AJIG), developed by Russell, Spitzmüller, Lin, Stanton, Smith, & Ironson (2004); and organizational commitment was studied using the Affective, Continuance, and Normative Commitment Scales (ACS, CCS, and NCS, respectively) (Allen & Meyer, 1996; Meyer & Allen, 1984; 1997, 2004). In addition, two constructs were developed from a selection of the demographic questions that were used in the study. For the seven previously established instruments, necessary permission was obtained from the authors.

Affective, Continuance, and Normative Commitment Scales (ACS, CCS, NCS)

Meyer and Allen (1984) developed the Affective, Continuance, and Normative Commitment Scales (ACS, CCS, and NCS, respectively) to study the multi-dimensional aspects of an individual's commitment to an organization. The ACS, CCS, and NCS are each operationalized using a six-item scale which utilizes a 7-point, Likert-type scale (1 = strongly disagree and 7 = strongly agree). Several items in each scale are negatively worded to control for agreement response bias, and will need to be recoded for analysis. A sum of the scores for each scale will provide the level of employee commitment to the organization (Meyer & Allen, 2004).

Validity and Reliability

Affective Commitment Scale (ACS)

There have been tests of validity and reliability for the ACS performed by Allen and Meyer (1990a), Clugston (2000), Coleman, Irving, and Cooper (1999), Meyer, Irving, and Allen (1998), Randall, Cropanzano, Bormann, and Birjulin (1999), and Shore and Tetrick (1991). In addition, Allen and Meyer (1996) performed a meta-analysis of 44 studies utilizing the ACS. Allen and Meyer (1990a) studied links between newcomers' commitment and role orientation, and found alpha coefficients for the ACS between .83 and .85. Clugston (2000) found a reliability estimate of .85 for the ACS. Coleman, Irving, and Cooper (1999) reported a coefficient alpha of .84 for the ACS. Meyer, Irving, and Allen (1998) used the ACS to examine the combined effects of work values and early work experiences on commitment. This study produced a coefficient alpha of .85 in two separate administrations of the ACS. Randall, Cropanzano, Bormann, and Birjulin (1999) reported an internal reliability of .84 for the ACS. Shore & Tetrick (1991) in their construct validity study of the

SPOS determined that the ACS had a coefficient alpha of .90. Allen and Meyer's (1996) meta-analysis of the ACS found a median reliability of .85. Various exploratory factor analyses found that the ACS items are distinct from related measures for career, job, and work value constructs (Allen & Meyer, 1996).

Continuance Commitment Scale (CCS)

Validity and reliability of the CCS have been performed by Coleman, Irving, and Cooper (1999), Meyer, Irving, and Allen (1998), Shore and Tetrick (1991), Randall, Cropanzano, Bormann, and Birjulin (1999), and in 39 studies examined through the meta-analysis by Allen and Meyer (1996). Coleman, Irving, and Cooper (1999) reported a coefficient alpha of .82 for the CCS. Meyer, Irving, and Allen (1998) found reliability estimates of .69 and .75 in two separate administrations of the CCS. Shore and Tetrick (1991) reported a coefficient alpha of .83 for the CCS in their study. Randall, Cropanzano, Bormann, and Birjulin (1999) reported an internal reliability of .70 for the CCS. Allen and Meyer's (1996) meta-analysis found reliability estimates between .69 and .85, with a median reliability of .79. The CCS items are distinct from the items in the ACS (Allen & Meyer, 1996).

Normative Commitment Scale (NCS)

The NCS is not used as frequently as either the ACS or the CCS. Allen and Meyer (1996) reported only 20 studies in their meta-analysis that utilized the NCS. They reported reliability estimates between .52 and .83, with a median reliability of .73. Clugston (2000) found a reliability estimate of .80 for the NCS. Meyer, Irving, and Allen (1998) reported reliability estimates of .74 and .85 for their two administrations of the NCS. While factor analyses have indicated that the NCS is distinct from the ACS and CCS, there is some

concern that the NCS overlaps the measure of the ACS (Allen & Meyer, 1996). Allen and Meyer's (1996) meta-analysis indicates that the ACS, CCS, and NCS are indeed distinct constructs, and are distinguishable from career-job-work values, career commitment, and occupational commitment. The three forms of commitment are also distinguishable from measures of job satisfaction and perceived organizational support (Shore & Tetrick, 1991).

Perception of Organizational Politics Scale (POPS)

The Perception of Organizational Politics Scale (POPS) was developed to assess "the factors that contribute to employees perceiving a work environment as political in nature and the consequences of forming such perceptions on individual attitudes and behavior" (Ferris & Kacmar, 1992, p.93). The POPS instrument was designed to measure three factors: general political behavior, getting along to get ahead, and pay and promotion. However, confirmatory factor analysis has found that the POPS may be a unidimensional construct (Nye & Witt, 1993).

The POPS in its current form is a 15-item scale with responses presented using a 5-point, Likert-type scale, with 1 = strongly disagree and 5 = strongly agree. Most of the scores are coded to indicate that high scores reflect greater levels of political behavior in the organization (Kacmar & Carlson, 1997). Two items are coded in a manner that reflects a high score indicating perceived fairness. POPS is operationalized through a sum of the 15 items. A high total score indicates a high level of perceived organizational politics.

Validity and Reliability

Validity and reliability have been tested on POPS by Andrews and Kacmar (2001), by Kacmar and Ferris (1991), by Nye and Witt (1993), and by Randall, Cropanzano, Bormann, and Birjulin (1999). Andrews and Kacmar (2001) performed a study to determine the

discriminant validity between POP, POS and organizational justice. They found that POPS had an internal reliability estimate of .87. Kacmar and Ferris (1991) used factor analytic and classical test procedures in the development of POPS. During the first of two separate administrations of the instrument with very different population samples, they found several two-item factors and concerns with internal reliability. After modification of the instrument, a second administration revealed a single-factor structure, with an internal reliability of .87 for the 12-item scale.

Nye and Witt (1993) duplicated the factor analytic method used by Kacmar and Ferris (1991), using a principal components analysis with a varimax rotation. Nye and Witt performed one analysis on the entire 12-item construct, and then forced them into the three factors determined by Kacmar and Ferris (1991). Next, a confirmatory factor analysis utilizing the LISREL VI program was performed on both the 3-dimensional and the unidimensional constructs. The confirmatory factor analysis found extremely high correlations between the three latent factors, as well as low parsimony, thus they concluded that POPS should be considered a unidimensional construct. Randall, Cropanzano, Bormann, and Birjulin (1999) reported an internal reliability of .87 for the POPS in their study of politics and support as predictors of work attitudes, job performance, and organizational citizenship behavior.

Survey of Perceived Organizational Support (SPOS)

The Survey of Perceived Organizational Support (SPOS) was designed to measure the employee's perception of employer commitment. Developed by Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchison, and Sowa (1986), the SPOS is grounded in Social Exchange Theory, which posits that the level of relationship between the employer and the employee has an effect on the

level of the employee's commitment to the organization. The original SPOS is a single-factor construct, which uses the sum of the scores of a 17-item instrument that utilizes a 7-point Likert-type scale (1 = strongly disagree and 7 = strongly agree). 7 of the items are negatively worded in order to control for agreement response bias, and will need to be recoded for analysis. A high total score indicates a high level of perceived organizational support. The instrument to be utilized in this study is an abridged version of the scale, which is made up of the 8 high loading items from the original scale, as recommended by Rhoades and Eisenberger (2002) that "as the original scale is unidimensional and has high internal reliability, the use of shorter versions of the scale does not appear to be problematic" (p.699). The abridged scale is consists of eight items, with four of the items negatively worded.

Validity and Reliability

Eisenberger, Fasolo, and Davis-LaMastro (1990) conducted the initial factor analysis of the SPOS. Their study found a single factor that accounted for 48 percent of the variance with a Cronbach's alpha of .97 (Eisenberger, Fasolo, & Davis-LaMastro, 1990). Construct validity of the SPOS have been performed by Andrews and Kacmar (2001), by Eisenberger, et al. (1990), by Randall, Cropanzano, Bormann, and Birjulin (1999), by Shore and Tetrick (1991), and by Rhoades, Eisenberger, and Armeli (2001). Andrews and Kacmar (2001) performed a study to determine the discriminant validity between POP, POS and organizational justice. They found that the SPOS had an internal reliability estimate of .93.

Eisenberger et al. (1990) performed two studies, one using SPOS to determine the relationship between support and employee absenteeism and performance, and the second using SPOS to determine the relationship between support and employee innovation and affective attachment. Both studies found high internal reliability for the SPOS, with alpha

coefficients ranging from .81 to .89 (Eisenberger, et al., 1990). Randall, Cropanzano, Bormann, and Birjulin (1999) reported an internal reliability of .94 for the SPOS in their study of politics and support as predictors of work attitudes, job performance, and organizational citizenship behavior.

Shore and Tetrick (1991) performed a confirmatory factor analysis to determine if the SPOS is indeed distinguishable from similar constructs. In the confirmatory factor analysis, the SPOS returned an alpha coefficient of .95 (Shore & Tetrick, 1991). Their study confirmed that SPOS was distinguishable from the Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ) (Mowday *et al.*, 1982), and the Affective Commitment Scale (ACS) (Meyer & Allen, 1984). Shore and Tetrick demonstrated that SPOS is strongly correlated to Affective Commitment, but could not demonstrate a strong correlation between SPOS and Continuance Commitment.

Rhoades, Eisenberger, and Armeli (2001) studied the contribution of POS on affective organizational commitment. Their first study consisted of 367 alumni of a university in the eastern United States and utilized the 8-item SPOS. POS returned an alpha coefficient of .90, and strongly correlated to affective commitment ($r = .63$). In three additional samples ($n = 333, 226, \text{ and } 1,124$) utilizing a 7-item SPOS, there was again a strong correlation to affective commitment ($r = .69-.70$) and alpha coefficients between .86 and .89 (Rhoades et al., 2001).

Rhoades and Eisenberger (2002) performed a meta-analysis of the studies which utilized the SPOS. They found a total of 58 research reports (including 11 unpublished dissertations and theses), which resulted in a total of 73 independent studies. Their findings indicated that SPOS was most strongly linked to affective commitment. SPOS had high internal reliability

with alpha coefficient ranges from .67 to .98 (average alpha coefficient = .90). A total of 11 studies in the meta-analysis utilized the 8-item SPOS, seven of which were studies related to organizational commitment. In those 11 studies, the alpha coefficient for the abridged SPOS was between .89 and .94 (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002).

Organizational Structure Scale (OSS)

Zanzi (1987) developed a six-item scale to measure the mechanistic-organic characteristics of an organization using Burns and Stalker's (1961) classifications. Eight bipolar questions measure the following classifications: (1) goal definition; (2) definition of lines of authority; (3) direction of communication; (4) task definition; (5) routine/innovative solutions; (6) job predictability; (7) level of trust; and (8) level of internal competition (Zanzi, 1987). The Zanzi Organizational Structure Scale (OSS) is operationalized using a 7-point, Likert-type scale (1 = mechanistic orientation and 7 = organic orientation). A sum of the scores for the scale provides mechanistic/organic orientation of the organization.

Validity and Reliability

The initial study utilizing the OSS by Zanzi (1987) was validated by comparing an audit group and a consulting group in a large CPA organization. Zanzi (1987) found that direction of communication, task definition, and job predictability were the best predictors of mechanistic/organic orientation. A study by Zanzi, Arthur, and Shamir (1991) reported an alpha coefficient of .79. No other studies have been found that utilized the OSS.

Abridged Job In General (AJIG) Scale

The Abridged Job In General (AJIG) scale (Russell, Spitzmüller, Lin, Stanton, Smith, & Ironson, 2004) is part of a family of measures of individual attitudes of satisfaction on the job. This family includes the Job Descriptive Index (JDI) (Smith, Kendall, & Hulin, 1969),

which is a facet measure of the level of satisfaction within five distinct areas of the work environment, the Job In General (JIG) scale (Ironson, Smith, Brannick, Gibson, & Paul, 1989), which is a global measure of the evaluative or affective judgment on an individual's job, and the Abridged Job Descriptive Index (AJDI) (Stanton, Balzer, Smith, Parra, & Ironson, 2001), which was developed to reduce the size of the original JDI while maintaining the validity and psychometric properties of the original. The AJIG was developed utilizing the same reduction method used by Stanton and colleagues (2001) (Russell et al., 2004).

One of the first questions to address in studying job satisfaction is to determine whether a facet or global scale is the most appropriate. Ironson, Smith, Brannick, Gibson, and Paul (1989) explored this question in depth. The JDI consists of five sub-domains or facets of job satisfaction; work, pay, promotions, supervision, and co-workers (Smith, et al., 1969). The JDI was not designed to create a composite measure of satisfaction, but to provide a comparison of the sub-domains. Ironson and colleagues (1989) argued that while the sub-domains of the JDI could be combined to give a composite score, the composite measure would be unable to reflect a frame of reference in a global sense. The Job In General (JIG) scale was developed to provide a global measure of job satisfaction. This scale has been widely used in research applications since its development (Russell et al., 2004).

A second question to address when considering an appropriate instrument for studying job satisfaction is whether to use a single-item measure. This question has particular relevance to this study. Several researchers have commented on the increased use of multiple constructs in studies of organizational behavior (Russell et al., 2004; Stanton, Sinar, Balzer, & Smith, 2002). This is done for reasons of ease of construction, scoring, and internal consistency (Stanton et al., 2002). Studies made up of several constructs result in lengthy

surveys, which may contribute to “survey fatigue” and present challenges in the development of web-based surveys (Stanton et al., 2002). The current study certainly faced these challenges. With four other scales consisting of 54 items, as well as 13 demographic questions, inclusion of either the 72-item JDI or the 18-item JIG would add to an already lengthy survey. Nagy (2002) argues that a single-item measure of job satisfaction is more useful than a multi-item scale. Wanous, Reichers, and Hudy (1997) found that a single item measure of global satisfaction was inferior to the JIG, but also argued for the use of single-item measures where appropriate.

However, it is clear that a representative of the JDI family should be present in a study of job satisfaction. Kinicki, McKee-Ryan, Schriesheim, and Carson (2002) used a meta-analysis to assess the construct validity of the JDI. They identified 152 studies containing 267 individual samples that utilized the JDI between 1975 and 1999. Within this collection, they discovered 3,453 separate correlations between a JDI dimension and 487 different correlates. Internal consistencies ranged from .68 to .95 for the five sub-domains.

Kinicki et al.’s (2002) construct validity study uncovered several interesting connections between the variables in the present study. Identified antecedents to job satisfaction included organizational support traits of leader-member exchange, leader consideration, and climate (a function of culture), and organizational structure. Work/non-work interaction and life satisfaction, two other components of organizational support, were identified as correlates to job satisfaction. Interestingly, Kinicki et al. determined that organizational commitment is a correlate of satisfaction, lending another voice to the debate on the causal ordering of satisfaction and commitment.

As the JDI is one of the most widely-used instruments to measure job satisfaction (Kinicki, et al., 2002), attention was given to studies that showed any attempt to correlate job satisfaction through the use of the JDI with any of the other instruments to be utilized in this study. Levy and Williams (1998) utilized five-items from the JDI that measured overall job satisfaction with Meyer and Allen's (1997) Affective Commitment Scale (ACS). The subscale of the JDI had an alpha coefficient of .74, and had a significant correlation with the ACS (Levy & Williams, 1998).

Harrell-Cook, Ferris, and Dulebohn (1999) utilized the supervision subscale of the JDI and a general job satisfaction subscale of the revised JDI along with the Perception of Organizational Politics Scale (POPS) in their study of the relationship between POP and work outcomes. The supervision scale of the JDI had an alpha coefficient of .82, and was found to be highly correlated with POP among employees ($p < .01$). This study confirmed the negative influence of political behavior on job satisfaction (Harrell-Cook, Ferris, & Dulebohn, 1999).

Jung, Dalessio, and Johnson (1986) conducted a study to determine the stability of the factor structure of the JDI. They collected responses to the JDI from 11 different groups from a diverse range of populations and professions over a period of 9 years. They found that the five dimensions of the JDI (supervision, co-workers, pay, promotion, and work) were very stable, confirming the appropriateness of using the JDI in a wide variety of research settings (Jung, Dalessio, & Johnson, 1986).

There is a total of eight items in the AJIG, with each item containing an adjective that refers to an individual's feeling about their job in a global sense. The raw scores range from 0 to 24, with higher scores indicating a higher degree of global satisfaction (Russell et al.,

2004). For all of the JDI-family scales, the scoring of the individual items is accomplished in an unconventional manner; rather than having a traditional Likert-type scale, respondents are asked to answer “Y” if they agree with the statement, “N” if they disagree with the statement, and “?” if they are not sure or if they are neutral. For the AJIG, 5 items are positively worded and 3 items negatively worded. The weight of the scoring is unique as well. Items that indicate satisfaction (“Y” to a positive item or “N” to a negative item) are scored a 3, Items that are neutral (“?”) are scored a 1, and items that indicate dissatisfaction (“Y” to a negative item or “N” to a positive item) are scored a 0. Initial studies indicated that a neutral response is more indicative of dissatisfaction, which led to the weighted scoring (Smith, et al., 1969).

Validity and Reliability

The 18-item JIG was originally tested by Ironson, Smith, Brannick, Gibson, and Paul (1989) utilizing three large heterogeneous samples ($N = 1,149, 3,566, \text{ and } 4,490$). Alpha coefficients ranged from .91 to .95 on these studies. The initial study on the AJIG yielded an alpha coefficient of .87 and had a strong correlation with the JIG ($r = .97$) (Russell, Spitzmüller, Lin, Stanton, Smith, & Ironson, 2004). Alpha coefficients for two follow-up studies were equally impressive, .85 and .87 respectively. These findings led the developers to conclude that the AJIG could indeed be used in place of the original JIG (Russell et al., 2004).

The AJIG also continued to provide useful information on the relationship between overall job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Meyer, Stanley, Herscovitch, and Topolnysky (2002) found that overall job satisfaction was strongly correlated to affective organizational commitment ($r = .65$) and was also correlated to normative commitment ($r =$

.31). This meta-analysis also found that correlations between affective commitment and facet measures of job satisfaction were considerably weaker than measures of global satisfaction (Meyer et al., 2002). Russell and colleagues (2004) found that the AJIG had reproduced these results, with a correlations of $r = .48$ and $.59$ with affective commitment and a correlation of $r = .21$ with normative commitment. In addition, this study found a slight negative correlation between overall job satisfaction and continuance commitment ($r = -.24$) (Russell et al., 2004).

Demographic Questions

In order to gain a more complete perspective on the population sample, a number of demographic questions were included in the survey instrument. Questions included in this section are outlined in Table 2.

The demographic questions were grouped into three distinct subsets for the purpose of clarity. The first subset consisted of characteristics which made up the Work/Non-Work Interaction Factor of the conceptual framework (Figure 1), gender, marital status, and number of children under the age of 18 living in the household (provider role). The specific question regarding provider role was chosen to determine if there is the particular non-work stress factor of children at home for the respondent (Scandura & Lankau, 1997).

The second subset consisted of work identity characteristics, including position level, supervisory role, professional experience, functional area, educational level, salary, type of institution, and the state where the institution is located. The Middle Manager Status Factor of the conceptual framework was a construct developed from the questions on position level, professional experience, and supervisory role. The third subset consisted of affiliation

characteristics, including racial/ethnic identity and generational affiliation, which was developed using strata identified by Howe and Strauss (2000).

Table 2

Demographic Characteristic Questions and Range of Responses

Work/Non-Work Interaction Characteristics

Question	Responses
01. Gender	Male/Female/Transgender
02. Marital Status	Single, Married/Partnered, Divorced, Widowed
03. Number of Children under the age of 18 in Household	Enter Number

Work Identity Characteristics

Question	Responses
<i>Middle Manager Construct</i>	
04. Position Level	Chief Student Affairs Officer, Dean/Director, Associate Dean/Director, Assistant Dean/Director, other.
05. Full-Time Professional Experience	Enter Number of Years
06. Do you supervise at least one full-time professional staff member (not including support/administrative staff)?	Yes/No
07. Number of full-time professional staff member (not including support/administrative staff) you supervise	Enter Number of Staff Supervised
08. Functional Area	Taken from CAS Standards (Miller, 2001)
09. Highest Education Level Completed	High School, Associates Degree, Bachelors Degree, Masters Degree, Law Degree, ABD/actively pursuing doctorate, ABD/not pursuing doctorate, Ed.D., Ph.D.
10. Current Salary	Enter Salary (round to the nearest dollar)

Affiliation Characteristics

Question	Responses
11. Ethnicity	Taken from US Census Classifications
12. Year of Birth	Enter Year
12. Type of Institution	4-year/2-year; public/private; scope of institution
13. State of Employment	Enter State Abbreviation

Variables

With a study that incorporated seven distinct instruments, as well as a series of demographic questions, it was important to clearly identify the independent variables and the dependent variables. Table 3 provides the definition and measurement of each variable. The Affective, Continuance, and Normative Commitment Scales (ACS, CCS, and NCS) served as

the dependent variables. The Perception of Organizational Politics Scale (POPS), the Survey of Perceived Organizational Support (SPOS), the Zanzi Organizational Structure Scale, and the Abridged Job In General (AJIG) scale provided the independent variables. The Work/Non-Work Interaction construct and the Middle Manager Status construct were taken from the demographic questions.

Table 3

Study Variables, Definition of Variables, and Variable Measurement

Variable Type	Definition	Measure	Quantification
<i>Dependent Variables</i>			
Affective Commitment	"I stay in the organization because I want to."	ACS: 6-item scale; 7-point Likert-type measure; 1=strongly disagree, 7=strongly agree.	Mean sum of scores indicates level of affective commitment on the part of the participant.
Continuance Commitment	"I stay in the organization because I have to."	CCS: 6-item scale; 7-point Likert-type measure; 1=strongly disagree, 7=strongly agree.	Mean sum of scores indicates level of continuance commitment on the part of the participant.
Normative Commitment	"I stay in the organization because I ought to."	NCS: 6-item scale; 7-point Likert-type measure; 1=strongly disagree, 7=strongly agree.	Mean sum of scores indicates level of normative commitment on the part of the participant.
<i>Independent Variables</i>			
Organizational Politics	Perceived level of political behavior in the organization; single-factor construct	POPS: 15-item scale, 5-point Likert-type measure; 1=strongly disagree, 5=strongly agree.	Sum of scores indicates degree of perceived political behavior.
Organizational Support	Perceived level of employer commitment to the employee; single-factor construct	SPOS: 8-item scale; 7-point Likert-type measure; 1=strongly disagree, 7=strongly agree.	Sum of scores indicates degree of perceived organizational support.
Organizational Structure	Continuum measuring mechanistic versus organic orientation	Zanzi Organizational Structure Scale; 8 bipolar, 7-point scales; 1=mechanistic, 7=organic.	Sum of scores indicates level of mechanistic/organic orientation (high scores indicate organic orientation).
Overall Job Satisfaction	Construct to measure how a worker feels about his/her job	AJIG: 8-item scale; 3-point scale (Y-?-N); some items negatively weighed.	Sum of scores indicates level of satisfaction (high scores indicates satisfaction)
<i>Demographic Characteristics</i>			
Work/Non-Work Interaction	Demographic Questions	See Table 2	See Table 2
Work Identity	Demographic Questions	See Table 2	See Table 2
Affiliation	Demographic Questions	See Table 2	See Table 2

Data Analysis

Research Question 1: What are the levels of affective, continuance, and normative commitment among student affairs professionals in general? This question was addressed by comparing the mean scores of the three types of commitment, as well as by using an analysis of the Pearson correlation statistics for the three types of commitment.

Research Question 2: Do student affairs middle managers exhibit different levels of affective, continuance, and normative commitment to that of chief student affairs officers or entry-level student affairs professionals? This question was studied through the use of MANOVA technique. This technique is used to study the significance of differences among multiple continuous variables (affective, continuance, and normative commitment) with a single categorical independent variable (position level) (Field, 2005).

Research Question 3: What is the predictive value of organizational support, work/non-work interaction, overall job satisfaction, organizational politics, middle manager status, and organizational structure on affective commitment? This question was addressed using multiple regression technique, which examines the degree that a continuous dependent variable (affective commitment) is related to a combined set of continuous independent variables (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2001).

Research Question 4: What is the predictive value of organizational politics, middle manager status, organizational support, organizational structure, work/non-work interaction, and job satisfaction on continuance commitment? This question was addressed using multiple regression technique, which examines the degree that a continuous dependent variable (continuance commitment) is related to a combined set of continuous independent variables (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2001).

Research Question 5: What is the predictive value of organizational support, work/non-work interaction, overall job satisfaction, organizational politics, middle manager status, and organizational structure on normative commitment? This question was addressed using multiple regression technique, which examines the degree that a continuous dependent variable (normative commitment) is related to a combined set of continuous independent variables (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2001).

Data Collection

As discussed previously, the membership of the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA) was the population of interest for this study. Due to a particularly large number of requests for a list of members' email addresses, NASPA does not allow the release of member email addresses to researchers. The author was able to obtain the names and addresses of NASPA members from the organization, and clarified with the organization's Associate Executive Director that email addresses could be looked up from the information provided, as long as there was no indication that the study was sponsored or endorsed by NASPA (K. Kruger, personal communication, July 7, 2005). A team of students at the author's institution were contracted to assist in finding email addresses for the participants through campus directories and search engines.

Study participants were contacted initially by email. This email briefly explained the purpose of the study, and provided the location of the web-based survey as well as hyperlinked text that directed them to the web-based survey. The participants were given 15 business days to complete the survey.

When a participant accessed the online survey, they were taken directly to an informed consent page, which provided an overview of the study, as well as a confidentiality

and consent statement that needed to be confirmed before continuing on to the web-based survey instrument. The survey instrument itself was designed in such a way that the participant did not have to “scroll” the page to complete questions. The participant clicked a radio-type button under the statement that best described their response to the questions on the page, and then clicked on a “continue” button that took them to the next set of questions. When the survey instrument was complete, the participants were taken to a page which thanked them for their participation in the study, and provided information on the availability of the executive summary of the research.

Low response rates impact the statistical power and potential credibility of a study (Rogelberg, Conway, Sederburg, Spitzmüller, Aziz, & Knight, 2003). To bolster the response rate as much as possible, non-respondents were addressed through follow-up emails, which were sent on the sixth and eleventh work day that the survey was active. The follow-up emails again explained the purpose of the study, and asked the participants to access the online survey if they had not already done so.

RESULTS

Introduction

This chapter presents the results of the data analysis of the study of affective, continuance, and normative commitment among student affairs professionals. The purpose of this study was to determine the impact of organizational support, organizational politics, organizational structure, and overall job satisfaction on affective, continuance, and normative commitment. This chapter is comprised of three main sections. The first section will provide a profile of the respondents included in the study. The second section will address the first two research questions of the study by providing information regarding the levels of affective, continuance, and normative commitment present among student affairs professionals in general, as well as by position level. The third section will provide the analysis research questions three, four, and five by providing the analysis of the data regarding the effect of support, politics, structure, and satisfaction on each of the three forms of commitment. The combination of these three sections will be essential to understanding how student affairs professionals become committed and stay committed.

Profile of the Respondents

1,450 student affairs professionals were sent an email requesting their participation in the study. At the end of the collection period, 644 surveys had been returned, for a return rate of 44.4%. A number of demographic questions were asked in order to a context of the participants in the study. The profile of the respondents will examine the demographic questions in three main subsets. The first subset will describe the work/non-work interaction variables of gender, marital status, and children under the age of 18 living at home. The second subset will describe work identity factors, including position level, education, salary,

and institutional type. The third subset will be comprised of the affiliation factors of ethnicity and generational membership. The relationships within the subsets will be examined using Pearson's chi-square, utilizing SPSS CROSSTABS.

Work/Non-Work Interaction Variables

Marital Status

The survey question of marital status allowed for four responses: *Single*, *Married/Partnered*, *Divorced*, and *Widowed*. Of the 553 respondents who answered the question, 369 (67%) indicated that they were married/partnered, 156 (28%) indicated that they were single, 24 (4%) indicated that they were divorced, and 4 (>1%) indicated that they were widowed. In order to create a categorical variable for analysis of the work/non-work interaction construct, the responses of *Single*, *Divorced*, and *Widowed* were collapsed into a single variable of *Single*. This led to final frequencies of 369 (67%) married/partnered respondents and 184 (33%) single respondents.

Table 4^a

Distribution of Marital Status by Children under the Age of Eighteen in the Household of Responding Student Affairs Professionals

		Marital Status			
		Single	Married	Total	
Children >18	No	Count	159	191	350
		Row %	45.4%	54.6%	100.0%
		Column %	94.1%	52.6%	65.8%
	Yes	Count	10	172	182
		Row %	5.5%	94.5%	100.0%
		Column %	5.9%	47.4%	34.2%
Total	Count	169	363	532	
	Row %	31.8%	68.2%	100.0%	
	Column %	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	

Cases Missing: N = 112, 17.4%

^a In order to understand the characteristics of the sample, the demographic characteristics are explored through the use of bi-variate tables. There will be a variance in the total population for each table, as some respondents did not respond to various demographic questions.

Table 4 reports the contingency table showing the relationship between marital status and the presence of children under the age of eighteen living in the household. There was a significant association between marital status and children under the age of eighteen living in the household $\chi^2 (1) = 88.09, p < .001$. Based on the odds ratio, married respondents are 15 times more likely to have children under the age of eighteen living in the household than single respondents.

Table 5

Distribution of Marital Status by Position Level of Responding Student Affairs Professionals

		Marital Status		Total	
		Single	Married		
Position Level	CSAOs	Count	10	47	57
		Row %	17.5%	82.5%	100.0%
		Column %	5.5%	13.1%	10.6%
	Mid Managers	Count	89	205	294
		Row %	30.3%	69.7%	100.0%
		Column %	48.9%	57.3%	54.4%
	Entry Level	Count	83	106	189
		Row %	43.9%	56.1%	100.0%
		Column %	45.6%	29.6%	35.0%
Total	Count	182	358	540	
	Row %	33.7%	66.3%	100.0%	
	Column %	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	

Cases Missing: $N = 104, 16.1\%$

Table 5 presents the contingency table showing the relationship between marital status and the position level. The position level variable was developed through the definition of the middle manager construct. A middle manager is defined for the purposes of this study as a student affairs professional who reports to a Chief Student Affairs Officer (CSAO) or other senior student affairs administrator, has worked as a full-time professional for at least five years, and supervises at least one full-time student affairs professional. The position level variable was divided into three categories: Chief Student Affairs Officer (CSAO), middle manager, and entry level. There was a significant association between

marital status and position level $\chi^2 (2) = 17.03, p < .001$. Based on the odds ratios, CSAOs were 2.04 times more likely to be married than middle managers, and 3.67 times more likely to be married than entry level professionals. Middle managers were 1.80 times more likely to be married than entry level professionals.

Based on the review of the literature, two of the factors that could lead to work/non-work interaction stress are marital status and children under the age of eighteen living in the household. According to information provided in tables five and six, 34.2% of the respondents reported having at least one child under the age of eighteen living in the household, and 66.3% reported being married or partnered. Table 6 presents the contingency table for children in the household by position level, which provides further insight on potential work/non-work interaction stressors for each position level.

Table 6

Distribution of Children under the Age of Eighteen in the Household by Position Level of Responding Student Affairs Professionals

		Children >18		Total	
		Yes	No		
Position Level	CSAOs	Count	16	41	57
		Row %	28.1%	71.9%	100.0%
		Column %	8.9%	12.1%	11.0%
	Mid Managers	Count	114	170	294
		Row %	40.1%	59.9%	100.0%
		Column %	63.3%	50.0%	54.6%
	Entry Level	Count	50	129	179
		Row %	27.9%	72.1%	100.0%
		Column %	27.8%	37.9%	34.4%
Total	Count	180	340	520	
	Row %	34.6%	65.4%	100.0%	
	Column %	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	

Cases Missing: N = 124, 19.3%

There was a significant association between position level and presence of children under the age of eighteen in the household $\chi^2 (2) = 8.44, p < .05$. This seems to represent the

fact that based on the odds ratios middle managers are 1.72 times more likely to be have children under the age of eighteen than either CSAOs or entry level professionals.

In summary, middle managers are more likely to have the dual work/non-work interaction stressors of being married and having children under the age of eighteen in the household than their entry level counterparts. Intuitively, this aligns with the life stages of entry level and middle level professionals. Middle managers are at the points in their lives where they have to balance their work life with their family life, something that entry level professionals generally do not yet have to manage (Belch & Strange, 1995). While CSAOs are more likely to be married than middle managers, they are less likely to have children in the household. This may be explained by their life stage as well, for it is possible that the children of CSAOs have grown and left the household.

Gender

The survey question of gender allowed for three responses: *Male*, *Female*, and *Transgender*. Of the 555 respondents who answered the question, 340 (61%) indicated that they were female, and 215 (39%) indicated that they were male. None of the respondents indicated that they were transgender. Table 7 presents the contingency table showing the relationship between gender and marital status.

There was a significant association between the gender and marital status of the respondents $\chi^2(1) = 6.40, p < .05$. This seems to represent the fact that based on the odds ratio males are 1.62 time more likely to be married than females.

Table 7

Distribution of Gender by Marital Status of Responding Student Affairs Professionals

			Gender		Total
			Female	Male	
Marital Status	Single	Count	126	58	184
		Row %	68.5%	31.5%	100.0%
		Column %	37.4%	27.0%	33.3%
	Married	Count	211	157	368
		Row %	57.3%	42.7%	100.0%
		Column %	62.6%	73.0%	66.7%
Total	Count	337	215	552	
	Row %	61.1%	38.9%	100.0%	
	Column %	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	

Cases Missing: N = 92, 14.3%

The literature review indicated that women may feel more work/non-work interaction stress due to parenting responsibilities than men. Table 8 presents the contingency table of gender to presence of children under the age of eighteen in the household in order to examine the impact of children in the household on gender among student affairs professionals in the study.

Table 8

Distribution of Gender by Children under the Age of Eighteen in the Household of Responding Student Affairs Professionals

			Gender		Total
			Female	Male	
Children > 18	Yes	Count	100	84	184
		Row %	54.3%	45.7%	100.0%
		Column %	30.4%	41.0%	34.5%
	No	Count	229	121	350
		Row %	65.4%	34.6%	100.0%
		Column %	69.6%	59.0%	65.5%
Total	Count	329	205	534	
	Row %	61.6%	38.4%	100.0%	
	Column %	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	

Cases Missing: N = 110, 17.2%

There was a significant association between the gender and the presence of children under the age of eighteen in the households of the respondents $\chi^2 (1) = 6.26, p < .05$. Based

on the odds ratio males are 1.57 time more likely to have at least one child under the age of eighteen in the household than females.

Table 9 presents the contingency table for the distribution of gender by position level. There was a significant association between gender and position level $\chi^2 (2) = 12.07, p < .05$. According to the odds ratios CSAOs are 1.28 times more likely to be male than female. Middle managers are 1.53 times more likely to be female and entry level professionals 2.22 times more likely to be female.

Table 9

Distribution of Gender by Position Level of Responding Student Affairs Professionals

			Gender		Total
			Female	Male	
Position Level	CSAOs	Count	25	32	57
		Row %	43.9%	56.1%	100.0%
		Column %	7.5%	15.5%	10.5%
	Mid Managers	Count	178	116	294
		Row %	60.5%	39.5%	100.0%
		Column %	53.3%	56.0%	54.3%
	Entry Level	Count	131	59	190
		Row %	68.9%	31.1%	100.0%
		Column %	39.2%	28.5%	35.1%
Total	Count	334	207	541	
	Row %	61.7%	38.3%	100.0%	
	Column %	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	

Cases Missing: N = 103, 16%

The information presented in table nine seems to indicate that the higher paying jobs in student affairs are more likely to be held by males than by females. Table 10 presents the contingency table for the distribution of gender by salary. There is a significant association between gender and salary $\chi^2 (13) = 29.70, p < .05$. According to the odds ratios, males are 1.11 times more likely to make \$80,000 per year or greater than females. On the other end of the salary scale, females are 1.70 times more likely to make under \$40,000 per year than males.

In summary, male student affairs professionals in this respondent group are more likely to be married than female student affairs professionals, and are more likely to have at least one child under the age of eighteen living in their household. Males in this population are more likely to hold higher level positions, and are more likely to earn more money.

Table 10

Distribution of Gender by Salary of Responding Student Affairs Professionals

		Gender		Total	
		Female	Male		
Salary	\$19,000 - \$39,999	Count	73	43	116
		Row %	62.9%	37.1%	100.0%
		Column %	22.0%	20.2%	21.3%
	\$40,000 - \$59,999	Count	124	55	179
		Row %	69.3%	30.7%	100.0%
		Column %	37.3%	25.8%	32.8%
	\$60,000 - \$79,999	Count	69	42	111
		Row %	62.2%	37.8%	100.0%
		Column %	20.8%	19.7%	20.4%
	\$80,000 and higher	Count	66	73	139
		Row %	47.5%	52.5%	100.0%
		Column %	19.9%	34.3%	25.5%
Total	Count	332	213	545	
	Row %	60.9%	39.1%	100.0%	
	Column %	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	

Cases Missing: N = 98, 15.2%

Table 10: Distribution of Gender by Salary of Responding Student Affairs Professionals

Work Identity Factors

The central work identity factor for the purposes of this study is position level (Chief Student Affairs Officer, Middle Manager, and Entry Level Professional). Although the factor of functional area was not explored through SPSS CROSSTABS, it is important from a contextual viewpoint to understand the functional area of the respondents. Table 11 presents the frequency table for the factor of functional area. Not surprisingly, the highest number of respondents came from housing, which tends to employ a higher number of student affairs professionals than any other single office. The functional areas of academic advising, career

services, judicial affairs / Dean of Students, student leadership, and student union / campus activities were also represented appropriately for their relative size. The Office of the Vice President appeared to be over represented in this table. This could be explained by the nature of the question, which asked respondents to select the choice that best describes their functional area. In some colleges and universities, particularly smaller campuses, many of the smaller functions are combined, and housed in the Vice President's office.

Table 11

Frequency Distribution of Responding Student Affairs Professionals by Functional Area

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative %
Academic Advising	29	5.3	5.3
Admissions	6	1.1	6.3
Career Services	22	4.0	10.3
Counseling Services	10	1.8	12.1
Disability Services	6	1.1	13.2
Financial Aid	2	0.4	13.6
Greek Affairs	13	2.4	15.9
Housing	143	25.9	41.8
International Student Programs	2	0.4	42.2
Judicial Affairs / Dean of Students	50	9.1	51.3
LGBT Office	2	0.4	42.2
Minority Student Programs	17	3.1	54.7
Orientation Programs	17	3.1	57.8
Recreational Services	4	0.7	58.5
Student Health	7	1.3	59.8
Student Leadership	34	6.2	65.9
Union / Campus Activities	42	7.6	73.6
Women's Programs	5	0.9	74.5
Office of the Vice President	141	25.5	100.0
Total	552	100.0	

Cases Missing: N = 92, 14.3%

Position Level

As explained earlier in this chapter, the question of position title was combined with years of experience and supervision of at least one full time professional to create the

position level construct. From the perspective of understanding the work identity factors, the relationship between position level and education level, salary level, and institution type was examined using Pearson's chi-square utilizing SPSS.

The question in the survey regarding education level allowed for responses of *Associate's Degree, Bachelor's Degree, Master's Degree, ABD / not actively pursuing doctorate, ABD / actively pursuing doctorate, Law Degree (JD), Ph.D. and Ed.D.* None of the respondents selected *Associate's Degree* as a choice, and only twenty-three respondents (4% of the total) selected *Bachelor's Degree*. For the purposes of developing a categorical variable with two choices, the category of *Bachelor's Degree* was eliminated, and the remaining categories were collapsed into Master's Degree, which consisted of respondents who indicated *Master's Degree* and *ABD / not actively pursuing doctorate*, and Doctorate Degree, which contained *ABD / actively pursuing doctorate, Law Degree (JD), Ph.D. and Ed.D.* This provided two categories which were fairly equal in size. Of the total number of 532 respondents in the two categories, 291 (54.7%) are in the Master's Degree category, and 241 (45.3%) are in the Doctorate category. The decision to include *ABD / actively pursuing doctorate* in the *Doctorate* category was based on the active intent to complete the degree. The decision to exclude the *Bachelor's* category from further consideration was to focus the results of this study for potential use for graduate preparation programs.

Table 12 presents the contingency table for position level by education level for respondents of the survey. There is a significant association between position level and education level $\chi^2 (2) = 64.59, p < .001$. According to the odds ratios, middle managers are 3.19 times more likely to have a terminal degree than an entry level professional. CSAOs are 4.61 times more likely to have a terminal degree than a middle manager. This seems to

support the conclusion that a terminal degree is extremely important for a student affairs professional who desires a career as a chief student affairs officer.

Table 12

Distribution of Level by Education of Responding Student Affairs Professionals

		Level			Total	
		CSAO	Mid Manager	Entry Level		
Education	Masters	Count	10	144	129	283
		Row %	3.5%	50.9%	45.6%	100.0%
		Column %	17.5%	49.5%	75.4%	54.5%
	Doctorate	Count	47	147	42	236
		Row %	19.9%	62.3%	17.8%	100.0%
		Column %	82.5%	50.5%	24.6%	45.5%
Total	Count	57	291	171	519	
	Row %	11.0%	56.1%	32.9%	100.0%	
	Column %	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	

Cases Missing: N = 125, 19.4%

Institutional Type

More respondents work at four-year, public doctoral (research I) institutions (40.4%) than any other single institutional type. The next highest category was four-year, private liberal arts institutions (16.6%), followed by four-year, public masters (comprehensive) institutions (14.1%) and by four-year, private doctoral institutions (12.1%).

Table 13

Frequency Distribution of Responding Student Affairs Professionals by Institutional Type

Type	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative %
4-year public doctoral	224	40.4	40.4
4-year private doctoral	67	12.1	52.5
4-year public masters	78	14.1	66.6
4-year private masters	49	8.8	75.5
4-year public liberal arts	29	5.2	80.7
4-year private liberal arts	92	16.6	97.3
2-year colleges	7	1.3	98.6
other	8	1.4	100.0
Total	554	100.0	

Cases Missing: N = 90, 14%

Research I institutions (public and private) employ 52.5% of the respondents, comprehensive institutions employ 22.9%, and liberal arts institutions employ 21.8%. Table 13 presents the frequency distribution for the respondents of the survey based on institutional type.

Affiliation Factors

Racial/Ethnic Identification

Respondents were asked to select their racial/ethnic identification, based on US Census Bureau categories. Respondents who identified themselves as White totaled 80.3% of the total population. 9.4% of the respondents identified themselves as Black or African American, 4.2% identified themselves as Hispanic or Latino, and 2.5% identified themselves as Asian. Table 14 presents the frequency distributions for racial/ethnic identification of the respondents.

Table 14

Frequency Distribution of Responding Student Affairs Professionals by Racial/Ethnic Identification

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative %
White	445	80.3	80.3
Black/African American	52	9.4	89.7
American Indian or Alaska Native	4	0.7	90.4
Asian	14	2.5	93.0
Race Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	2	0.4	93.3
Hispanic or Latino	23	4.2	97.5
Two or More Races	10	1.8	99.3
other	4	0.7	100.0
Total	554	100.0	

Cases Missing: N = 90, 14%

It is interesting to note that according to Pearson's chi-square analysis of the demographic variables, racial/ethnic identification was not significantly associated to work/non-work interaction variables of gender, marital status, or children under the age of

eighteen in the household, or to work identity factors of position level, salary level, education level, or by institutional type.

Generational Affiliation

The survey asked respondents to enter the year of their birth in order to group the population into generational categories. Generational categories were determined using terminology and birth years from Howe and Strauss (2000). 63 percent of the respondents indicated that they were born between 1961 and 1981 which are the designated birth years of Generation X. Respondents who indicated that they were born between 1943 and 1960 – the birth years of the Baby Boom Generation – made up 34.9% of the population. Table 15 presents the frequency distribution of generational affiliation among student affairs professionals who were respondents to the survey.

Table 15

Frequency Distribution of Responding Student Affairs Professionals by Generational Affiliation				
	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative %	
	Silent Generation (1925-1942)	6	1.2	1.2
	Baby Boom Generation (1943-1960)	182	34.9	36.1
Age	Generation X (1961-1981)	328	63.0	99.0
	Millennial Generation (1982-2000)	5	1.0	100.0
	Total	521	100.0	

Cases Missing: N = 123, 19.1%

As members of the Silent Generation (birth years between 1925 and 1942) and the Millennial Generation (birth years between 1982 and 2000) were represented by 1.2% and 1% of the population respectively, the analysis of the relationships using Pearson's chi-square focused on the members of the Baby Boom Generation and the members of Generation X.

Table 16 presents the contingency table for generational affiliation by marital status for respondents of the survey. There is a significant association between generational affiliation and marital status $\chi^2 (1) = 15.00, p < .001$. According to the odds ratios, members of the Baby Boom Generation are 2.26 times more likely to be married than members of Generation X.

Table 16

Distribution of Generational Affiliation by Marital Status of Responding Student Affairs Professionals

		Generational Affiliation			
		Baby Boom	Generation X	Total	
Marital Status	Single	Count	39	125	164
		Row %	23.8%	76.2%	100.0%
		Column %	21.5%	38.3%	32.3%
	Married	Count	142	201	343
		Row %	41.4%	58.6%	100.0%
		Column %	78.5%	61.7%	67.7%
Total	Count	181	326	507	
	Row %	35.7%	64.3%	100.0%	
	Column %	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	

Cases Missing: N = 137, 21.3%

Table 17 presents the contingency table for generational affiliation by gender. There is a significant association between generational affiliation and gender $\chi^2 (1) = 14.33, p < .001$. This seems to represent the fact that based on the odds ratios females are 2.04 times more likely to belong to Generation X than to the Baby Boom Generation. Males are 2.02 times more likely to belong to the Baby Boom Generation than females.

The finding from Table 17 seems to support the conclusion that the younger segment of the population is more female than male. The following tables present generational affiliation in relation to work identity factors of position level and education level, which may provide additional insight on the differences between the Baby Boom Generation and Generation X.

Table 17

Distribution of Generational Affiliation by Gender of Responding Student Affairs Professionals

		Generational Affiliation		Total	
		Baby Boom	Generation X		
Gender	Female	Count	92	221	313
		Row %	29.4%	70.6%	100.0%
		Column %	50.5%	67.6%	61.5%
	Male	Count	90	106	196
		Row %	45.9%	54.1%	100.0%
		Column %	49.5%	32.4%	38.5%
Total	Count	182	327	509	
	Row %	35.8%	64.2%	100.0%	
	Column %	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	

Cases Missing: $N = 135$, 21.0%

Table 18 presents the contingency table for generational affiliation by position level. There is a significant association between generational affiliation and position level $\chi^2 (2) = 86.60$, $p < .001$. It is not surprising that based on the odds ratio that members of the Baby Boom Generation are 30.26 times more likely to be a Chef Student Affairs Officer than an entry level professional.

Table 18

Distribution of Generational Affiliation by Position Level of Responding Student Affairs Professionals

		Generational Affiliation		Total	
		Baby Boom	Generation X		
Level	CSAOs	Count	46	8	54
		Row %	85.2%	14.8%	100.0%
		Column %	26.1%	2.5%	10.9%
	Mid Managers	Count	102	168	270
		Row %	37.8%	62.2%	100.0%
		Column %	58.0%	52.5%	54.4%
	Entry Level	Count	28	144	172
		Row %	16.3%	83.7%	100.0%
		Column %	15.9%	45.0%	34.7%
Total	Count	176	320	496	
	Row %	35.5%	64.5%	100.0%	
	Column %	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	

Cases Missing: $N = 148$, 23.0%

The critical juncture of the generations is at the middle manager level, where based on the odds ratio a middle manager is 1.64 times more likely to be a member of Generation X than to be a member of the Baby Boom Generation.

Table 19 presents the contingency table for generational affiliation by education level. There is a significant association between generational affiliation and education level $\chi^2(1) = 30.71, p < .001$. Based on the odds ratio, members of the Baby Boom Generation are 2.91 times more likely to have earned a terminal degree than members of Generation X.

Table 19

Distribution of Generational Affiliation by Education Level of Responding Student Affairs Professionals

		Generational Affiliation		Total	
		Baby Boom	Generation X		
Education	Masters	Count	68	202	270
		Row %	25.2%	74.8%	100.0%
		Column %	38.4%	64.3%	55.0%
	Doctorate	Count	109	112	221
		Row %	49.3%	50.7%	100.0%
		Column %	61.6%	35.7%	45.0%
Total	Count	177	314	491	
	Row %	36.0%	64.0%	100.0%	
	Column %	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	

Cases Missing: $N = 153, 23.8\%$

Summary of Respondent Profile

The demographic variables have provided a great deal of information regarding the respondents to the survey, particularly to the segment of the population described as middle managers. Middle managers are more likely to be female, married and to have at least one child under the age of eighteen in their household than either entry level professionals or Chief student Affairs Officers. Middle managers are more likely to be members of Generation X; and are more likely to have a terminal degree.

There was also information provided on the impact of the work/non-work interaction variables on student affairs professionals. The impact of children under the age of eighteen in the household is less significant for CSAOs and for entry level personnel than for middle managers, but the potential impact of marital status increases as a professional rises from entry level through middle manager status to the level of a CSAO. Male student affairs professionals are more likely to be married than female student affairs professionals

The next section will address the level of commitment among the respondents of the survey. The context of the respondent profile will be helpful in understanding how various segments of the population become and stay committed.

Analysis of Commitment among Student Affairs Professionals

The first two research questions for this study address the levels of affective, continuance, and normative commitment in student affairs professionals in general, and specifically the differences between middle managers, Chief Student Affairs Officers, and entry level professionals. This section of the chapter will report the findings of the analysis of these two questions, in order to provide context for the analysis of the factors that contribute to commitment.

Analysis of Research Question One: General Commitment Levels

The first research question is concerned with the overall levels of affective, continuance, and normative commitment among student affairs professionals. The most direct method of determining the levels of commitment present among the population is to look at the mean scores of commitment. It is also useful to look at the correlations between the three types of commitment in order to observe the interactions between them. A correlation analysis was performed using SPSS.

Table 20

Mean Scores of Affective, Continuance, and Normative Commitment of Responding Student Affairs Professionals

		Mean	Std. Dev.	Score Range		N
				Min.	Max.	
Commitment Type	Affective	5.35	.99	1.00	7.00	556
	Continuance	3.71	1.32	1.00	7.00	556
	Normative	4.55	1.19	1.00	7.00	556

Table 20 presents the mean scores, standard deviations and sample population for each of the three types of commitment among student affairs professionals. Affective commitment has the highest score, with a 5.35 out of a total possible score of seven. Normative commitment had the next highest score with a 4.55 out of a total possible score of seven, and continuance commitment had a mean score of 3.71 out of a total possible score of seven.

These scores indicate that student affairs professionals would generally agree that they are affectively committed, meaning that they stay in the organization because they want to stay. The mean scores also indicate that student affairs professionals would generally agree that they are normatively committed, meaning that they stay in the organization because of a sense of obligation to the organization. Student affairs professionals would generally disagree with the statements that make up continuance commitment, meaning that they do not perceive a lack of alternatives to their present organizational affiliation.

Table 21 presents the Pearson correlation statistics of the three types of commitment among the respondents of the current study, along with the weighted average corrected correlation for the scales as reported in the meta-analysis by Meyer, Stanley, Herscovitch, and Topolnytsky (2002).

Table 21^b

Pearson Correlation Statistics of Affective, Continuance, and Normative Commitment for the Current Study and for Meta-Analysis by Meyer and Associates (2002)

	Current Study			Previous Studies		
	ACS	CCS	NCS	ACS	CCS	NCS
ACS	1.00			1.00		
CCS	-.23 (.000)	1.00		.05	1.00	
NCS	.52 (.000)	-.10 (.016)	1.00	.63	.18	1.00

Note: ACS, Affective Commitment Scale; CCS, Continuance Commitment Scale; NCS, Normative Commitment Scale.

^b For all tables where significance will be reported, the significance will be listed in parenthesis underneath the statistic.

There is a positive relationship between affective and normative commitment, $r = .52$, $p < .001$. A negative relationship exists between affective commitment and continuance commitment, $r = -.23$, $p < .001$, as well as between continuance commitment and normative commitment, $r = -.10$, $p < .05$. The relationship between affective and normative commitment in the current study is consistent with the coefficients reported by Meyer and associates (2002). The direction of the relationship between continuance commitment and affective commitment, as well as the direction of the relationship between continuance commitment and normative commitment, is different between the current study and the meta-analysis of Meyer and associates (2002), although the magnitude of the relationships are similar. This difference may indicate that student affairs professionals perceive continuance commitment more negatively than other groups who participated in studies using the continuance commitment scale.

These correlation coefficients indicate that as a student affairs professional exhibits increased affective commitment, their normative commitment – or obligation to the

organization – also increases. Conversely, as a student affairs professional exhibits increased affective commitment, their continuance commitment – or the feeling that they stay because they have to – decreases.

Analysis of Research Question Two: Commitment by Position Level

The second research question examined if the levels of affective, continuance, and normative commitment were different for middle managers in student affairs, compared to the levels of commitment exhibited by Chief Student Affairs Officers (CSAOs) and entry level student affairs professionals. The analysis of the levels of affective, continuance, and normative commitment by level was performed utilizing SPSS MANOVA, which is the most appropriate method for analyzing a single categorical independent variable with three categories against multiple continuous dependent variables (Field, 2005).

The development of the categorical variable of *Level* involved a three-step process. First, respondents who identified themselves as Chief Student Affairs Officers (CSAOs) were separated from the other respondents and were assigned to the *CSAO* category. Second, respondents that indicated that they had worked professionally for at least five years and supervised at least one full-time student affairs professional were placed in the *middle manager* category. Third, all remaining respondents (those who did not select CSAO, who have worked for less than five years, and/or did not supervise at least one full-time student affairs professional) were assigned to the *entry level* category.

Table 22 presents the mean scores, standard deviations, and sample sizes for each of the three types of commitment by position level. Chief Student Affairs Officers report the highest levels of affective commitment, more than a point higher than the mean scores of entry level professionals. For continuance commitment, CSAOs report the lowest score,

again nearly an entire point lower than entry level professionals. CSAOs report the highest level of normative commitment.

Table 22

Mean Scores of Affective, Continuance, and Normative Commitment by Position Level of Responding Student Affairs Professionals

	Position Level	Mean	Std. Dev.	N
Affective Commitment	CSAOs	6.14	.79	57
	Middle Managers	5.38	.95	292
	Entry Level	5.04	.95	189
	Total	5.34	.99	538
Continuance Commitment	CSAOs	3.04	1.21	57
	Middle Managers	3.67	1.32	292
	Entry Level	3.94	1.29	189
	Total	3.70	1.32	538
Normative Commitment	CSAOs	5.18	1.05	57
	Middle Managers	4.53	1.67	292
	Entry Level	4.36	1.21	189
	Total	4.54	1.19	538

Middle managers report levels that are near the mean for the entire population in all three types of commitment. This data supports the conclusion that affective and normative commitment increases as a student affairs professional progresses from entry level through middle management to becoming a CSAO, and that continuance commitment decreases as a student affairs professional moves up the career ladder.

Table 23

Mean Differences and Effect Sizes of Position Level by Type of Commitment of Responding Student Affairs Professionals

Commitment	Position Level (a)	Position Level (b)	Mean Difference		Effect Size	
			(a-b)	<i>p</i>	<i>d</i>	<i>r</i>
Affective	CSAO	Middle Manager	0.77	.000	0.87	.40
		Entry Level	1.10	.000	1.26	.53
	Middle Manager	Entry Level	0.34	.000	0.36	.18
Continuance	CSAO	Middle Manager	- 0.64	.001	- 0.50	- .24
		Entry Level	- 0.90	.000	- 0.72	- .34
	Middle Manager	Entry Level	- 0.26	.032	- 0.21	- .10
Normative	CSAO	Middle Manager	0.65	.000	0.47	.23
		Entry Level	0.83	.000	0.72	.34
	Middle Manager	Entry Level	0.18	.107	0.12	.06

Note: *p* = significance; *d* = Cohen's *d*; *r* = Pearson's Correlation Coefficient.

Table 23 presents the mean differences and effect sizes for the comparisons of each position category for affective, continuance, and normative commitment. For affective commitment, there is a significant difference between all three position categories ($p > .001$). The magnitude of the difference is readily apparent when effect size is considered. The difference between CSAO and middle manager has a Cohen's d of 0.87, which is considered a large effect (Becker, 2000), and a Pearson's r of .40, which is considered a medium effect (Field, 2005). The difference between CSAO and entry level professionals is even greater, with a Cohen's d of 1.26, and a Pearson's r of .53, which is also considered a large effect (Field, 2005). The difference between middle manager and entry level for affective commitment, although significant, is considered a small effect when examined using Cohen's d (0.36) and Pearson's r (.18). This data supports the conclusion that as position level increases, so does affective commitment, which is expressed by the statement "I stay because I want to stay".

For continuance commitment, the difference between the mean level of commitment among CSAOs and entry level professionals is significant to the .001 level. Measures of effect size indicate that the magnitude of the difference is medium, as the Cohen's d is - 0.72 and the Pearson's r is - .34. The difference in the mean level of commitment between CSAOs and middle managers is significant to the .05 level with effect size measures indicating a medium strength (Cohen's d of - 0.50, Pearson's r of - .24). The difference between middle managers and entry level professionals is also significant to the .05 level, but effect size measures indicate a small magnitude of difference (Cohen's d of - 0.21, Pearson's r of - .10). The negative scores indicate the direction of the relationship. This data supports the conclusion that as position level increases, levels of continuance commitment decreases. A

CSAO will be less likely to say that she/he has limited alternatives compared to an entry level professional.

For normative commitment, there is a significant difference in mean levels of commitment between CSAOs and the other two position levels ($p > .001$). The magnitude of the difference was at a medium level for both comparisons. Between CSAOs and entry level professionals, the Cohen's d measure was 0.72, and the Pearson's r was .34. The effect size measures for the relationship between CSAOs and middle managers were lower (Cohen's d of 0.47 and Pearson's r of .23), but still in the range of medium effect size (Becker, 2000). There was not a significant difference between the mean levels of commitment between middle managers and entry level professionals. The results indicate that normative commitment, or the feelings of obligation to the organization, increases as a student affairs professional becomes a CSAO. While there seems to be a relationship between position level and normative commitment, it is unclear if middle managers feel stronger normative commitment than entry level professionals.

Multivariate analysis, utilizing Wilks' Lambda, confirm that position level does have a significant effect on commitment ($p > .001$). In order to confirm the findings of the mean difference comparisons, a simple contrast was performed between middle managers and CSAOs as well as between middle managers and entry level professionals. This contrast produces a similar result to that which would have been obtained from univariate ANOVA tests (Field, 2005).

Table 24 presents the contrast estimate comparisons for the three types of commitment, contrasting middle managers to both CSAOs and entry level professionals. The comparison between middle managers and CSAOs demonstrates that there is a significant difference

between the two levels for all three types of commitment (affective, $p = .000$; continuance, $p = .001$; normative, $p = .000$). The 95% confidence interval boundaries provide further support for the conclusion that there is a significant difference in commitment levels between middle managers and CSAOs. As the confidence interval does not include zero for any of the three types of commitment, it can be concluded that position level impacts commitment between the middle manager and CSAO levels.

Table 24

Contrast Estimate Comparisons of Position Level by Type of Commitment of Responding Student Affairs Professionals

Contrast		Commitment Type		
		Affective	Continuance	Normative
CSAO to Mid Manager	Contrast Estimate	0.77	- 0.64	0.65
	Significance	.000	.001	.000
	95% Confidence Lower	0.50	- 1.01	0.32
	Upper	1.03	- 0.27	0.98
Entry Level to Mid Manager	Contrast Estimate	- 0.34	0.26	- 0.18
	Significance	.000	.032	.107
	95% Confidence Lower	- 0.51	0.02	- 0.39
	Upper	- 0.17	0.50	0.04

The comparison between middle managers and entry level professionals demonstrates that there is a significant difference between the two position levels for affective and continuance commitment (affective, $p = .000$; continuance, $p = .032$), which is also supported by the ranges of the 95% confidence intervals. For normative commitment, the contrast results indicate that the difference between middle managers and entry level professionals is not meaningful, because the difference is not significant ($p = .107$), and the range of the 95% confidence interval includes zero.

Summary of Commitment Level

This section explored the levels of affective, continuance, and normative commitment among student affairs professionals in general, as well as the commitment levels of Chief Student Affairs Officers (CSAOs), middle managers, and entry level professionals. The

findings indicate that in general student affairs professionals are affectively and normatively committed to their student affairs organizations. This means that student affairs professionals exhibit an emotional attachment to their organization, and feel an obligation or loyalty to the organization as well.

Additionally, student affairs professionals exhibit lower levels of continuance commitment, which indicates that they are not compelled to stay with their organization due to a lack of alternatives. Correlation analysis of the three types of commitment indicates that there is a negative correlation between affective commitment and continuance commitment, and a positive correlation between affective and normative commitments. The findings indicate that as a student affairs professional's emotional attachment to the organization increases, their feelings of obligation or loyalty to the organization also increases, and their feelings of being "trapped" in the job decrease.

The results clearly indicate that position level does have an effect on commitment. CSAOs exhibit a significantly higher level of affective and normative commitment than middle managers and entry level professionals. Analysis of effect size confirms that the difference between the levels of affective commitment for CSAOs and the other position levels are large, while the difference between CSAOs and the other position levels of normative commitment were slightly lower. CSAOs also exhibited a significantly lower level of continuance commitment than the other two position levels, with the magnitude of the difference found to be moderate. The results indicate that CSAOs exhibit a stronger emotional attachment, have greater feelings of loyalty to the organization, and perceive more alternatives than middle managers and entry level professionals.

Although there is a significant difference in levels of affective and continuance commitment between middle managers and entry level professionals, the magnitude of the difference is generally seen as small. There is no significant difference in levels of normative commitment between middle managers and entry level professionals. These results indicate that middle managers may feel a stronger emotional attachment to the organization and perceive more alternatives than entry level professionals, but the feelings of obligation or loyalty to the organization does not increase as a student affairs professional moves from entry level to middle management.

The next section of this chapter will examine the impact of the dependent variables on the three types of commitment. As this section has demonstrated that student affairs professionals are generally committed to their organization, the next section will provide important context on why they are committed and how they stay committed.

Analysis of Conceptual Framework

This section addresses the final three research questions, which were concerned with the contribution of the independent variables of organizational politics, organizational support, organizational structure, and overall job satisfaction on affective, continuance, and normative commitment. In addition, the impact of the work/non-work interaction variables (gender, marital status, and children under the age of eighteen in the household) and middle manager variable will also be addressed in the analysis.

Results of Research Question Three: Regression Analysis of Affective Commitment

The third research question addresses the predictive value of organizational support, work/non-work interaction, overall job satisfaction, organizational politics, middle manager status, and organizational structure on affective commitment. A forced entry multiple

regression was performed between affective commitment as the dependent variable and organizational support, the work/non-work interaction variables (gender, presence of children under the age of 18 in the home, and marital status), overall job satisfaction, organizational politics, middle manager status, and organizational structure as the independent variables. Analysis was performed using SPSS REGRESSION and SPSS FREQUENCIES for evaluation of assumptions.

Results of the evaluation of assumptions indicated no outliers, good linearity and homoscedasticity, and normal distributions of the continuous variables with the exception of one independent variable. Overall job satisfaction was negatively skewed; however logarithmic and square root transformations did not significantly reduce skewness, so it was not transformed. The overall mean for affective commitment was 5.35 out of 7, with an $N = 476$.

Table 25 displays the Pearson correlations between the variables. The table indicates that positive correlations exist between organizational support and affective commitment ($p < .001$), between overall job satisfaction and affective commitment ($p < .001$), and between marital status and affective commitment ($p < .05$). Negative correlations exist between organizational politics and affective commitment ($p < .001$), and between children and affective commitment ($p < .05$).

With one exception, these correlations are consistent with expectations. The review of the literature suggested that as organizational support and job satisfaction increase, affective commitment should increase. Similarly, as organizational political behaviors increase, the level of affective commitment should decrease. Although there has not been a significant level of study on the impact of children on affective commitment, it is intuitive to assume

that the presence of children in the household may negatively impact affective commitment due to an increased struggle to balance work/non-work conflicts. The only exception to expectations was the correlation between marital status and affective commitment. Again, there has not been a significant level of study on this relationship, but the author predicted that being married would negatively impact affective commitment, as did children, because of the conflict that this creates on the employee's ability to balance work/non-work conflicts.

Table 25

Pearson Correlation Statistics of Affective Commitment on Support, Gender, Children, Marital Status, Satisfaction, Politics, Mid Manager Status, and Structure

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1 Affective Commitment	1.00	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
2 Org Support	.64 (.000)	1.00	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
3 Gender	.03 (.296)	.09 (.021)	1.00	--	--	--	--	--	--
4 Children	-.08 (.046)	-.12 (.005)	-.12 (.004)	1.00	--	--	--	--	--
5 Marital Status	.11 (.009)	.10 (.012)	.11 (.009)	-.40 (.000)	1.00	--	--	--	--
6 Overall Job Satisfaction	.49 (.000)	.59 (.000)	.00 (.482)	-.06 (.095)	.03 (.295)	1.00	--	--	--
7 Org Politics	-.52 (.000)	-.63 (.000)	-.13 (.003)	.02 (.329)	-.06 (.091)	-.47 (.000)	1.00	--	--
8 Mid Manager	.02 (.297)	.01 (.451)	.01 (.444)	-.14 (.001)	.07 (.074)	.02 (.308)	-.02 (.356)	1.00	--
9 Org Structure	-.06 (.112)	-.08 (.034)	.04 (.202)	.01 (.426)	-.08 (.041)	-.08 (.052)	.01 (.423)	-.03 (.230)	1.00

Correlations between predictors were examined for evidence of collinearity. There were no substantial correlations ($R > .9$) between predictors, indicating that there is no evidence of collinearity (Field, 2005). Tolerance and VIF statistics were within acceptable parameters, further ruling out concerns for collinearity (See Appendix D). Based on the Pearson

correlation statistics, the variables of gender, middle manager, and organizational structure were removed from the model, and the other variables were included in a forced entry regression analysis in descending order based on their correlation coefficients.

Table 26

Multiple Regression of Affective Commitment on Support, Politics, Satisfaction, Marital Status, and Children.

	<i>b</i>	<i>SE b</i>	β	<i>p</i>
Model 1 ($R^2 = .45$; $F = 75.94$; $p < .001$)				
Organizational Support	0.06	0.01	0.45	.000
Overall Job Satisfaction	0.04	0.01	0.15	.001
Organizational Politics	- 0.02	0.01	- 0.16	.000
Marital Status	0.11	0.08	0.05	.164
Children	0.02	0.08	0.01	.803

Table 26 displays the beta values, the standard errors, and the standardized betas for the regression model utilized in this analysis. R was significantly different from zero (0.67). The R^2 score of .45 indicates that the model accounts for 45 percent of the variance in affective commitment, while the adjusted R^2 score of 0.44 indicates that the results could be generalized for the population as a whole ($p < .001$). Organizational support, job satisfaction, and organizational politics each made significant contributions to the variance in affective commitment ($p < .001$). The variables of marital status and children did not contribute to the variance in affective commitment. Model statistics produced an F ratio of 75.94, which indicates that the improvement from this model is greater than the probability of obtaining the same improvement by chance ($p < .001$).

Results of Research Question Four: Regression Analysis of Continuance Commitment

Research question four explores the predictive value of organizational politics, middle manager status, organizational support, organizational structure, work/non-work interaction, and job satisfaction on continuance commitment. A forced entry multiple regression was performed between continuance commitment as the dependent variable and organizational

politics, middle manager status, organizational support, organizational structure, the work/non-work interaction variables (marital status, presence of children under the age of 18 in the home, and gender), and overall job satisfaction as the independent variables. Analysis was performed using SPSS REGRESSION and SPSS FREQUENCIES for evaluation of assumptions.

Results of the evaluation of assumptions indicated no outliers, good linearity and homoscedasticity, and normal distributions of the continuous variables with the exception of one independent variable. Overall job satisfaction was negatively skewed; however logarithmic and square root transformations did not significantly reduce skewness, so it was not transformed. The overall mean for affective commitment was 3.67 out of 7, with an $N = 476$.

Table 27 displays the Pearson correlations between the variables. The table indicates that a positive correlation exists between organizational politics and continuance commitment ($p < .001$). Negative correlations exist between organizational support and continuance commitment ($p < .001$), between overall job satisfaction and continuance commitment ($p < .001$), and between gender and continuance commitment ($p < .05$). These correlations are consistent with expectations. The review of the literature indicated that as the perception of organizational politics increased in an organization, the levels of continuance commitment would also increase. At the same time, perceived decreases in organizational support and job satisfaction would promote increased levels of continuance commitment. Although there has not been a great deal of study on the impact of gender on continuance commitment, the literature suggests that men would exhibit lower levels of continuance commitment than women.

Table 27

Pearson Correlation Statistics of Continuance Commitment on Politics, Mid Manager Status, Support, Structure, Marital Status, Children, Gender, and Satisfaction

		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1	Continuance Commitment	1.00	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
2	Org Politics	.44 (.000)	1.00	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
3	Mid Manager	-.03 (.286)	-.02 (.356)	1.00	--	--	--	--	--	--
4	Org Support	-.35 (.000)	-.63 (.000)	.01 (.451)	1.00	--	--	--	--	--
5	Org Structure	-.04 (.223)	.01 (.423)	-.03 (.230)	-.08 (.034)	1.00	--	--	--	--
6	Marital Status	.06 (.089)	-.06 (.091)	.07 (.074)	.10 (.012)	-.08 (.041)	1.00	--	--	--
7	Children	-.07 (.060)	.02 (.329)	-.14 (.001)	-.12 (.005)	.01 (.426)	-.40 (.000)	1.00	--	--
8	Gender	-.12 (.005)	-.13 (.003)	.01 (.444)	.09 (.021)	.04 (.202)	.11 (.009)	-.12 (.004)	1.00	--
9	Overall Job Satisfaction	-.29 (.000)	-.47 (.000)	.03 (.308)	.59 (.000)	-.08 (.052)	.03 (.295)	-.06 (.095)	.00 (.482)	1.00

Correlations between predictors were examined for evidence of collinearity. There were no substantial correlations ($R > .9$) between predictors, indicating that there is no evidence of collinearity (Field, 2005). Tolerance and VIF statistics were within acceptable parameters, further ruling out concerns for collinearity (See Appendix E).

Based on the Pearson correlation statistics, the variables of marital status, children, middle manager and organizational structure were removed from the model, and the other variables were included in a forced entry regression analysis in descending order based on their Pearson correlation coefficients.

Table 28

Multiple Regression of Continuance Commitment on Politics, Support, Satisfaction, and Gender

	b	SE b	β	p
Model 1 ($R^2 = .22$; $F = 33.599$; $p < .001$)				
Organizational Politics	0.05	0.01	0.36	.000
Organizational Support	- 0.02	0.01	- 0.09	.120
Overall Job Satisfaction	- 0.02	0.02	- 0.06	.197
Gender	- 0.16	0.11	- 0.06	.145

Table 28 displays the beta values, the standard errors, and the standardized betas for the regression model utilized in this analysis. R was significantly different from zero (0.46). The R^2 score of .22 indicates that the regression model accounts for only 22 percent of the variance in continuance commitment, while the adjusted R^2 score of 0.21 indicates that the results could be generalized for the population as a whole ($p < .001$). Of the variables included in the regression model, only organizational politics made a significant contribution to the variance in continuance commitment ($p < .001$). Model statistics produced an F ratio of 33.599, which indicates that the improvement from this model is greater than the probability of obtaining the same improvement by chance ($p < .001$).

Results of Research Question Five: Regression Analysis of Normative Commitment

The fifth research question explores the predictive value of organizational support, work/non-work interaction, overall job satisfaction, organizational politics, middle manager status, and organizational structure on normative commitment. A forced entry multiple regression was performed between normative commitment as the dependent variable and organizational support, the work/non-work interaction variables (gender, presence of children under the age of 18 in the home, and gender), overall job satisfaction, organizational politics, middle manager status, and organizational structure as the independent variables. Analysis

was performed using SPSS REGRESSION and SPSS FREQUENCIES for evaluation of assumptions.

Table 29

Pearson Correlation Statistics of Normative Commitment on Support, Marital Status, Children, Gender, Satisfaction, Politics, Mid Manager Status, and Structure

		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1	Normative Commitment	1.00	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
2	Org Support	.49 (.000)	1.00	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
3	Marital Status	.02 (.297)	.10 (.012)	1.00	--	--	--	--	--	--
4	Children	.04 (.168)	-.12 (.005)	-.40 (.000)	1.00	--	--	--	--	--
5	Gender	.09 (.020)	.09 (.021)	.11 (.009)	-.12 (.004)	1.00	--	--	--	--
6	Overall Job Satisfaction	.43 (.000)	.59 (.000)	.03 (.295)	-.06 (.095)	.00 (.482)	1.00	--	--	--
7	Org Politics	-.38 (.000)	-.63 (.000)	-.06 (.091)	.02 (.329)	-.13 (.003)	-.47 (.000)	1.00	--	--
8	Mid Manager	-.11 (.406)	.01 (.451)	.07 (.074)	-.14 (.001)	.01 (.444)	.02 (.308)	-.02 (.356)	1.00	--
9	Org Structure	-.02 (.346)	-.08 (.034)	-.08 (.041)	.01 (.426)	.04 (.202)	-.08 (.052)	.01 (.423)	-.03 (.230)	1.00

Results of the evaluation of assumptions indicated no outliers, good linearity and homoscedasticity, and normal distributions of the continuous variables with the exception of one independent variable. Overall job satisfaction was negatively skewed; however logarithmic and square root transformations did not significantly reduce skewness, so it was not transformed. The overall mean for normative commitment was 4.57 out of 7, with an $N = 476$.

Table 29 displays the Pearson correlations between the variables. The table indicates positive correlations exist between organizational support and normative commitment ($p < .001$), between overall job satisfaction and normative commitment ($p < .001$), and between gender and normative commitment ($p < .05$). A negative correlation exists between organizational politics and normative commitment ($p < .001$). These correlations are consistent with expectations. The review of the literature indicated that perceived increases in organizational support or job satisfaction should result in higher levels of normative commitment. Additionally, an increase in the perceived level of organizational political behavior will likely lead to decreased levels of normative commitment. Little study has been conducted on the impact of gender on normative commitment, and the author made no prediction on the relative levels of normative commitment between men and women.

Correlations between predictors were examined for evidence of collinearity. There were no substantial correlations ($R > .9$) between predictors, indicating that there is no evidence of collinearity (Field, 2005). Tests for Tolerance and VIF were within acceptable parameters, ruling out concerns for collinearity (See Appendix F). Based on the Pearson correlation statistics, the variables of marital status, children, middle manager and organizational structure were removed from the model, and the other variables were included in a forced entry regression analysis in descending order based on their Pearson correlation coefficients.

Table 30

Multiple Regression of Normative Commitment on Support, Satisfaction, Politics, and Gender

	<i>b</i>	<i>SE b</i>	β	<i>p</i>
Model 1 ($R^2 = .28$; $F = 47.626$; $p < .001$)				
Organizational Support	0.05	0.01	0.30	.000
Overall Job Satisfaction	0.06	0.01	0.22	.000
Organizational Politics	- 0.01	0.01	- 0.10	.054
Gender	0.11	0.09	0.04	.263

Table 30 displays the beta values, the standard errors, and the standardized betas for the four regression models utilized in this analysis. R was significantly different from zero (0.53). The R^2 score of .28 indicates that the regression model accounts for 28 percent of the variance in normative commitment, while the adjusted R^2 score of 0.27 indicates that the results could be generalized for the population as a whole ($p < .001$). Model statistics produced an F ratio of 47.626, which indicates that the improvement from this model is greater than the probability of obtaining the same improvement by chance ($p < .001$). Organizational support ($p < .001$), job satisfaction ($p < .001$), and organizational politics ($p = .05$) all significantly contributed to the variance in normative commitment. The variable of gender did not significantly contribute to the variance in normative commitment.

Summary of Conceptual Framework Analysis

The regression analyses of affective, continuance, and normative commitment provides a better understanding of the variables that influence affective, continuance, and normative commitment. The third research question explored the predictive value of the independent variables on affective commitment. The results indicated that organizational support, overall job satisfaction, and organizational politics accounted for 45% of the variance in affective commitment. Although marital status and children under the age of eighteen in the household did correlate with affective commitment, their inclusion in the regression model did not have a direct bearing on affective commitment. The variables of gender, middle manager status, and organizational structure did not significantly impact affective commitment. These findings indicate that organizational support, overall job satisfaction, and organizational politics are antecedents for affective commitment.

The fourth research question examined the predictive value of the independent variables on continuance commitment. Organizational politics contributed to only 22% of the total variance in continuance commitment. Although organizational support, job satisfaction, marital status and children under the age of eighteen in the household did correlate with continuance commitment, their inclusion in the regression model did not have a direct bearing on continuance commitment. The variables of middle manager status and organizational structure did not contribute to the variance in continuance commitment. The results indicate that although factors other than those studied were responsible for over 75% of the total variance in continuance commitment, the variable of politics is an antecedent of continuance commitment.

For the fifth research question, the predictive value of the independent variables on normative commitment was examined. The variables of organizational support, overall job satisfaction, and organizational politics accounted for 28% of the total variance in normative commitment. Although the gender variable correlated with normative commitment, it did not contribute to the total variance of normative commitment. The variables of marital status, children, middle manager status, and organizational structure did not significantly correlate with normative commitment. The results indicate that organizational support, organizational politics, and overall job satisfaction are antecedents of normative commitment, although over 70% of the total variance is attributable to factors other than the variables included in this study.

Clearly, the variables of support, politics, and overall job satisfaction have an influence on affective and normative commitment. The influence of these variables on affective commitment appears to be stronger than on normative commitments. In addition, the variable

of politics has an influence on continuance commitment, which is characterized by a perception of decreased alternatives to the employee. As conclusions and recommendations are discussed, particular attention must be given to the variables of organizational support, organizational politics, and job satisfaction due to their influence on commitment levels among this population.

Chapter Summary

The results of this study indicate that student affairs professionals generally exhibit moderately high levels of affective and normative commitment to their organization, in other words, they stay with the student affairs organization they are employed by because they want to stay there and they feel that they owe something to the organization. Student affairs professionals generally display low levels continuance commitment, or the feeling that they do not have alternatives. This study found a negative correlation exists between affective and continuance commitment in the profession as a whole, as well as a positive correlation between affective and normative commitment. These results indicate that student affairs professionals have generally developed an emotional attachment to the organization. This attachment is associated with two additional outcomes. First, they will have a decreased perception of a lack of alternatives, or costs associated with leaving the organization. Second, their obligation to the organization increases.

This study also provided a better understanding of the different commitment levels between middle managers, Chief Student Affairs Officers, and entry level professionals. Each of the levels exhibit different levels of affective, continuance, and normative commitment, although the difference in the level of normative commitment displayed by middle managers and entry level professionals is not significant. Generally speaking, as a

professional moves from entry level to middle management and on to senior leadership, affective and normative commitment increases while continuance commitment decreases. These results indicate that CSAOs have a stronger emotional attachment and increased obligation to their organizations than middle managers and entry level professionals, and believe that they have sufficient alternatives to their present situation.

The constitution of the middle manager cohort has been better defined by this study. Student affairs middle managers are more likely to be a member of Generation X, female, married, and have at least one child under the age of eighteen. It is reasonably clear to conclude that the effects of the work/non-work interaction variables are more of a factor for this population than for CSAOs or entry level professionals.

Although this study did provide support for the assertion that organizational support, organizational politics, and job satisfaction are antecedents of affective and normative commitment, there was little support for the inclusion of other factors in the conceptual framework related to these two types of commitment. Organizational politics has been found to be an antecedent of continuance commitment. The regression analysis clearly showed that the variables of organizational structure and middle manager status should not be considered as direct antecedents to the three types of commitment.

This study has provided additional context as to how a student affairs professional becomes committed to the profession, and why they may stay committed. What is left to determine is what to do with the information provided by this study.

CONCLUSIONS, DISCUSSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

The intention of this dissertation was to examine commitment among student affairs professionals through a systemic lens, in order to understand why individuals become committed to student affairs, and more importantly why they stay committed to the profession. As stated in the first chapter, the idea of commitment must be examined in relation to the factors that contribute to it, and that commitment itself must be seen for what it is: a multidimensional construct. As we gain a deeper understanding of the nature of commitment, it may be possible to minimize attrition among student affairs professionals. This chapter will focus on the conclusions and implications drawn from the analysis of the research findings, and will provide recommendations for future research as well as for practical application.

Conclusions

Commitment in General

The examination of the levels of affective, continuance, and normative commitment present among student affairs professionals – and specifically among middle managers as compared to Chief Student Affairs Officers (CSAOs) and entry level professionals – was the focus of the first two research questions. This section will present the conclusions for each of the three types of commitment, first with respect to the population in general and secondly taking position level into consideration.

Affective Commitment

Meyer and Allen (1991) define affective commitment as “the employee’s emotional attachment to, identification with, and involvement in the organization” (p. 67). This is

generally seen as a positive form of commitment, meaning that the individual stays with the organization because they want to stay. The findings of this study produced a mean score of 5.35 ($SD = .99$), slightly above the base score of “slightly agree” (5.00 – 5.99) of the seven-point scale. Thus, student affairs professionals would slightly agree with the statement, “I am affectively committed to my organization”. This shows that while student affairs professionals should not be perceived as being uncommitted, there is certainly room for concern regarding their level of affective commitment.

The focus for this concern becomes clear when affective commitment is examined by position level. Entry level professionals reported the lowest levels of affective commitment, with a mean score of 5.04 ($SD = .95$), which is very close to the base score for “slightly agree”. This would indicate that entry level professionals do not have a high level of affective commitment. This could be due to the fact that they have not been in the organization long enough to develop affective attachment, but reduced attachment may be more of an issue of socialization than time in service. As this study demonstrates, organizational support positively correlates with affective commitment. Woodard and Komives (2003) suggest that the combination of low wages, a lack of developmental supervision, and other practices demonstrate that the profession is not supportive to new professionals. They state that “most of the practices that devalue entry-level student affairs employees come from the culture of student affairs itself” (Woodard & Komives, 2003, pg. 652). Student affairs must pay more attention to promoting the development and retention of new professionals, which will increase the perception of a supportive work environment and thereby increasing affective commitment.

Middle managers reported a mean score of 5.38 ($SD = .95$) for affective commitment, which is very close to the overall mean score of 5.35. Middle managers generally have a higher level of affective commitment than entry level professionals, perhaps because they have had the time to become affectively attached to the organization. CSAOs as a group reported a higher level of affective commitment than middle managers and entry level professionals. The CSAO mean score was 6.14 ($SD = .79$), which is slightly above the base score of “agree” (6.00 – 6.99). This indicates that CSAOs would generally agree with the statement “I am affectively committed to my organization”. Intuitively, CSAOs would be the most likely to be affectively committed, as they have the greatest stake in the development of the vision and direction of the organization. It is a bit surprising that the mean score is not higher for this group, given the context of their leadership role in the organization.

Continuance Commitment

Continuance commitment is defined as the employee’s “awareness of the costs associated with leaving the organization” (Meyer & Allen, 1996, p. 67). A person who states that they stay with an organization because they “need” to or that they feel they have no alternatives would be expressing a high level of continuance commitment. Of the three types of commitment, this is the type that is less positive, implying less of a commitment than a compulsion to stay. The findings of this study presented an overall mean score of 3.71 ($SD = 1.32$), which is slightly below the base score for “undecided” (4.00 – 4.99) for the seven-point scale. Thus, student affairs professionals would state that they slightly disagree with the statement “I stay in my organization because I need to”. Student affairs professionals seem to perceive that they have alternatives, but with the overall score being close to the “undecided” category, perhaps suggesting a perception of great cost to leaving the organization.

For entry level professionals, a mean score of 3.94 ($SD = 1.29$) suggests that they are less confident in their ability to leave the organization without cost. Middle managers reported a mean score of 3.67 ($SD = 1.32$), again very close to the overall mean score. CSAOs once again reported a vastly different score from the other two groups. Their mean score of 3.04 ($SD = 1.21$) indicates that they exhibit lower levels of continuance commitment than either middle managers or entry level professionals. Typically, a CSAO has developed a strong professional network on the campus and throughout the profession. The lower levels of continuance commitment may indicate that the CSAOs in this study are not concerned about a loss of prestige or other costs associated with leaving their current job due to their strong professional connections.

Normative Commitment

A high level of normative commitment indicates that the employee feels a sense of obligation to the organization, and would be reflected by the belief that the employee “ought” to remain with the organization (Meyer & Allen, 1991). In general, student affairs professionals reported a neutral response to this construct. The mean score was 4.55 ($SD = 1.19$), which is moderately above the base score of “undecided” (4.00 – 4.99) for the seven-point scale. This indicates that there is not a strong feeling of obligation to the organization among student affairs professionals, although individuals may be more likely to say they do feel obligation than not.

When the scores are examined by position level, there is again a slight difference between middle managers and entry level professionals, but a large difference between CSAOs and the other two groups. Entry level professionals reported a mean score of 4.36 ($SD = 1.21$) while middle managers reported a mean score of 4.53 ($SD = 1.67$). It is clear that

these two groups are ambivalent regarding their sense of obligation to the organization. CSAOs reported a mean score of 5.18 ($SD = 1.05$), slightly above the base score of “slightly agree” (5.00 – 5.99). As normative commitment is a measure of loyalty to the organization, the comparison of mean scores for normative commitment indicate that CSAOs exhibit a higher level of loyalty to the organization than that of middle managers or entry-level professionals. This is somewhat intuitive, as the CSAO is responsible for the development of the vision and values of the organization. Sullivan and Harper (1996) posit that shared organizational values build loyalty within the organization. It is easier to align personal values with organizational values if you have been directly involved in the development of the organizational values, as most CSAOs have been.

General Commitment among Student Affairs Professionals

Meyer and Allen (1991, 1997) posit that commitment is best understood when the varying degrees of all three commitments are viewed in a systemic manner. From a systemic perspective, it is clear that the primary link to the organization for student affairs professionals is affective commitment, followed by normative commitment, and finally by continuance commitment. This indicates that student affairs professionals stay in the organization because they want to stay.

Figure 4 illustrates the degree that each form of commitment impacts the overall commitment of student affairs professionals in general, as well as of each position level. It is interesting to note the gap of more than three points between affective and continuance commitment for the CSAO group. Clearly, affective commitment is the primary link for CSAOs. For entry level professionals, the gap is not wide at all, with little over one point separating affective and continuance commitment. This indicates that entry level

professionals are feeling nearly similar levels of commitment based on affect, compulsion, and obligation.

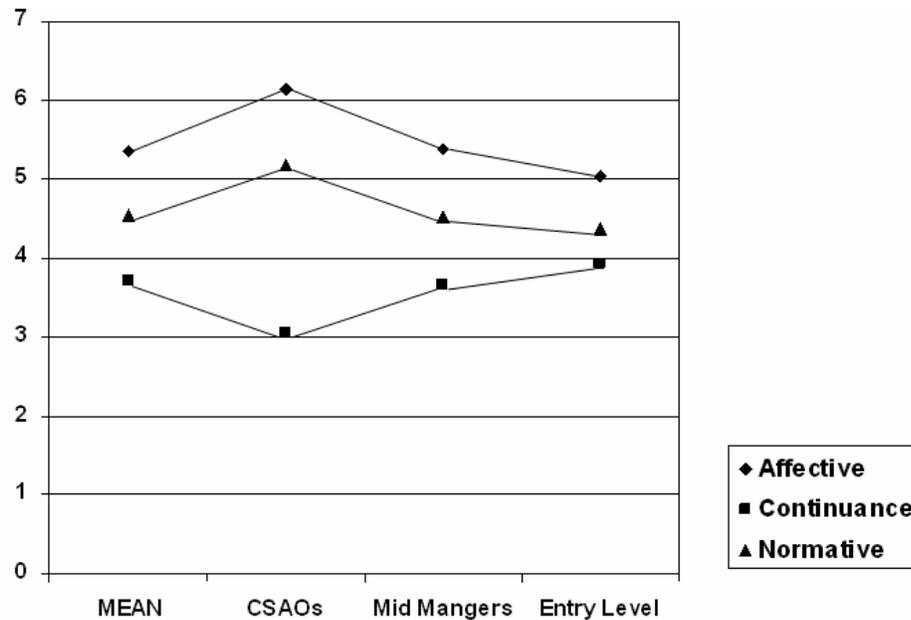


Figure 4

Comparison of Mean Scores of Affective, Continuance, and Normative Commitment

Do middle managers exhibit different levels of affective, continuance, and normative commitment to that of Chief Student Affairs Officers and entry level professionals? Stated simply, yes they do. Middle managers exhibit a slightly higher level of affective commitment than entry level professionals, but they report a moderately lower level of affective commitment than CSAOs. This could be a direct result of position level. It is posited in this study that affective commitment is a result of organizational support, which is manifested in part through empowerment given by the supervisor. A middle manager will feel a greater sense of empowerment than an entry level professional, due to increased leadership expectations. In a similar manner, a CSAO will have a greater sense of empowerment due to his or her role as the leader of the student affairs division.

The differences in continuance commitment are more pronounced, with CSAOs exhibiting a much lower level of commitment than middle managers, who show a similar level of commitment to entry level professionals. It is likely that middle managers demonstrate a lower level of continuance commitment than CSAOs due to their non-work commitments of raising a family, which puts a different emphasis on needing to stay in a location for the benefit of keeping the children in a particular school district or neighborhood. The difference between middle managers and entry level professionals may be best explained by entry level professionals not having enough work experience to successfully move to another job or occupation without serious loss of prestige or benefits.

From the perspective of normative commitment, middle managers again exhibit a slightly increased level of commitment from entry level professionals, but exhibit a moderately lower level of commitment from CSAOs. Normative commitment could be perceived as a measurement of loyalty to the organization. Some of the differences in the normative commitment scores could be a result of time in service to the organization. Loyalty, or a sense of obligation, is developed over time. An entry level professional by definition has been employed for less than five years, so it is unlikely that they have developed the sense of loyalty to the organization that a middle manager or a CSAO would have developed.

Could normative commitment be influenced by generational membership? Howe and Strauss (2000) indicate that different generations view concepts of loyalty in different ways. As nearly all of the entry level professionals are members of Generation X, and a vast majority of the CSAOs are members of the Baby Boom Generation, generational membership may have some influence on the levels of continuance commitment exhibited by

those groups. As the middle manager cadre is closer to an even distribution between the generations, it is difficult to know the influence of generational membership on the level of normative commitment exhibited by the group. With time, it will be interesting to see how the influence of the Millennial Generation will impact organizational loyalty. Howe and Strauss (2000) posit that the Millennials will be “loyal, group-oriented, achievement-minded order-takers” (pg. 352). The Millennial Generation may likely exhibit a higher level of normative commitment than either the Baby Boomers or Generation X.

Antecedents of Affective Commitment

The third research question examined the influence of several independent variables on affective commitment. A regression analysis provided evidence to determine the predictive value of organizational support, work/non-work interaction factors, job satisfaction, organizational structure, organizational politics, and middle manager status on affective commitment. The results of the current study found that organizational support, overall job satisfaction, and organizational politics were correlated to affective commitment, and significantly contributed to the variance in affective commitment among student affairs professionals.

The impact of the work/non-work interaction factors on affective commitment was negligible. Although marital status and the presence of children under the age of eighteen were correlated with affective commitment, they did not significantly contribute to the variance in affective commitment in the regression analysis. Gender did not significantly correlate to affective commitment.

Two variables had no impact whatsoever on affective commitment. Middle manager status did not produce a significant correlation with affective commitment. Likewise,

organizational structure did not produce a significant correlation with affective commitment. It is safe to conclude from the findings that work/non-work interaction factors, middle manager status, and organizational structure are not antecedents of organizational commitment.

The conclusions from the regression analysis indicate that organizational support may have the best predictive value for affective commitment. The standardized beta coefficient of $\beta = 0.45$ was larger than those of overall job satisfaction or organizational politics (see Table 26). This supports the findings of Howes, Citera, and Cropanzano (1995), Shore & Tetrick (1991), and Rhodes, Eisenberger, and Armeli (2001).

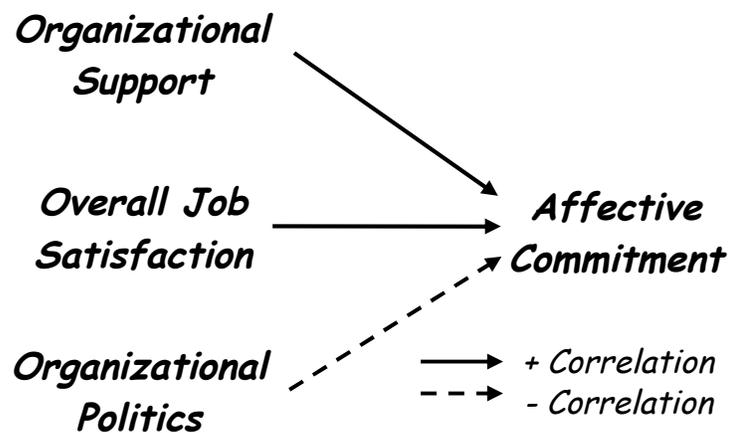


Figure 5

Antecedents of Affective Commitment

Figure 5 illustrates the systemic perspective of the antecedents of affective commitment. Organizational support and job satisfaction positively influence affective commitment, while organizational politics negatively correlates with affective commitment. From a systemic perspective, organizational behaviors that increase the employee's feelings that the organization is supportive of her/him, increase the employee's overall job satisfaction, and

reduce the effects of organizational politics will likely increase the employee's affective commitment to the organization.

Antecedents of Continuance Commitment

The focus of the fourth research question was the predictive value of organizational politics, middle manager status, organizational support, structure, work/non-work interaction factors, and job satisfaction on continuance commitment. The results of the regression analysis provided evidence to support the conclusion that although organizational support, overall job satisfaction, and gender were correlated with continuance commitment, only organizational politics was found to be an antecedent of continuance commitment. The regression model only accounted for 22 percent of the variance in continuance commitment among student affairs professionals, meaning that 78 percent of the variance was the result of factors that were not included in this study. Although the regression analysis supports the conclusion that organizational politics has the best predictive value for continuance commitment ($\beta = 0.36$, Table 28), the perceived influence of political behavior on continuance commitment among student affairs professionals was not as strong as originally hypothesized. The review of the literature led to the hypothesis that the perception of political activity would lead to increased levels of continuance commitment (Randall, Cropanzano, Bormann, & Birjulin, 1999).

Although gender was correlated with continuance commitment, the other work/non-work interaction variables did not correlate with continuance commitment. Thus, the analysis supports the conclusion that work/non-work interaction factors did not influence continuance commitment in this study. The regression analysis supports the conclusion that the variables

of middle manager status and organizational structure had no significant influence on continuance commitment.

Antecedents of Normative Commitment

The final research question examined the predictive value of organizational support, work/non-work interaction, overall job satisfaction, organizational politics, middle manager status, and organizational structure on normative commitment. The analysis of the regression model provides support for the contention that organizational support, overall job satisfaction, and organizational politics are antecedents of normative commitment. Examination of the standardized beta coefficients support the findings that organizational support ($\beta = 0.30$) and overall job satisfaction ($\beta = 0.22$) are the best predictors of normative commitment (see Table 30).

Gender is correlated with normative commitment, but did not significantly contribute to the variance in normative commitment. It is interesting to point out that the Pearson correlation coefficients between the work/non-work interaction variables and organizational support did correlate significantly (see Table 29). Work/non-work interaction may have a systemic effect on normative commitment, but it may be more significant for its effect on support, which is an antecedent of normative commitment. Meyer, Stanley, Herscovitch, and Topolnytsky (2002) found that the variables of gender, marital status, and work/family conflict each significantly correlated with normative commitment, leading to the hypothesis that the work/non-work interaction variables would have a stronger influence on normative commitment. The lack of a direct influence of these variables on normative commitment was unexpected.

Figure 6 illustrates the antecedent of normative commitment. Organizational support and overall job satisfaction positively correlate with normative commitment. Organizational politics negatively correlates with normative commitment. The regression analysis provides support for the conclusion that two of the variables – middle manager status and organizational structure – did not influence normative commitment in any way.

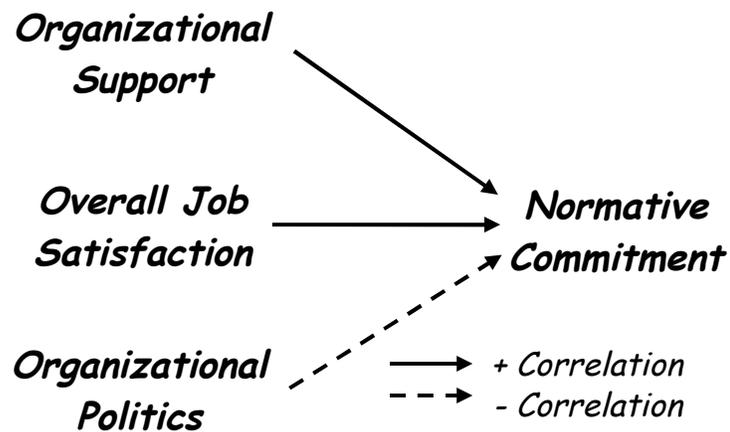


Figure 6

Antecedents of Normative Commitment

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to determine the impact of organizational support, organizational politics, organizational structure, and job satisfaction on organizational commitment among student affairs professionals. In addition, the study intended to contribute to the existing knowledge base on organizational commitment, add to the understanding of commitment among student affairs professionals, and to establish a baseline for study of organizational commitment among middle managers. This section will discuss the implications of the conclusions reached in the previous section, including the realization of the purpose of this study, the impact on the conceptual framework, and the significance of the findings related to points discussed in chapter one.

Purpose of the Study Examined

The conclusions of this study did in fact help determine the impact of the independent variables on the three types of commitment. Organizational support had a significant influence on the variance of affective and normative commitment. Organizational politics had the most significant influence on the variance of continuance commitment, and also produced negative correlations with affective and normative commitments. Overall job satisfaction was correlated to all three types of commitment, but it only influenced the variance of affective and normative commitment. Organizational structure had no impact whatsoever on affective, continuance, or normative organizational commitment.

The significant correlation between organizational support and affective commitment confirms the work of Shore and Tetrick (1991) and Rhoades, Eisenberger, and Armeli (2001). Although the current study found a negative correlation between organizational support and continuance commitment, the fact that organizational support did not significantly contribute to the variance in continuance commitment confirms the findings of Shore and Tetrick (1991). Meyer, Stanley, Herscovitch, and Topolnytsky (2002) cited eight studies that attempted to correlate support and normative commitment in their meta-analysis of antecedents, correlates, and consequences of the three types of commitment. The weighted average corrected correlation was .47, while this study found a correlation of .49 ($p < .001$), supporting the findings of the meta-analysis.

The current study also contributed to the existing literature on commitment by exploring the correlations between organizational politics and the three types of commitment. No studies were cited in either the construct validity analysis of Allen and Meyer (1996), or the meta-analysis by Meyer and associates (2002). Organizational politics produced significant

correlations to affective commitment ($r = -.52, p < .001$), continuance commitment ($r = .44, p < .001$), and normative commitment ($r = -.38, p < .001$), and significantly contributed to the variance of each type of commitment.

As stated in chapters one and two, there has been a great deal of study on the relationship of job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Allen and Meyer (1996) reported nine studies that attempted to link job satisfaction to at least one of the three types of commitment. Meyer and associates (2002) cited a total of 50 studies of job satisfaction and affective commitment, 31 studies of job satisfaction and continuance commitment, and 17 studies of job satisfaction and normative commitment. The significant correlation between job satisfaction and affective commitment in the current study ($r = .49, p < .001$) confirms the findings reported by Allen and Meyer (1996) (average correlation = .56) and by Meyer and associates (2002) (average corrected correlation = .65). The current study found a larger negative correlation between job satisfaction and continuance commitment ($r = -.29, p < .001$) than either the studies cited by Allen and Meyer (average correlation = -.11), or by Meyer and associates (average corrected correlation = -.15). The correlation between job satisfaction and normative commitment ($r = .43, p < .001$) found in this study are larger than the findings reported by Allen and Meyer (1996) (average correlation = .23) as well as those reported by Meyer and associates (2002) (average corrected correlation = .26).

The current study provides to two new insights in regard to the connection between satisfaction and commitment. First, this study provides support for the conclusion that increased job satisfaction leads to a significant decrease in continuance commitment, meaning that an individual who is satisfied with their job is less likely to feel compelled to stay with their organization. Second, this study found that increased job satisfaction led to

significant increases in normative commitment, or increased feelings of loyalty to the organization. These results could indeed be generalized for many work environments, as the previous studies cited by Allen and Meyer (1996) and by Meyer and associates (2002) were conducted in a wide variety of work settings.

Although the work/non-work interaction variables did not make a significant impact on the three types of commitment, the three variables (gender, marital status, and children in the household) have been the focus of previous studies on commitment. Gender produced a negative correlation with continuance commitment ($r = -.12, p < .05$), and a positive correlation with normative commitment ($r = .09, p < .05$) in the present study. These findings, although slightly higher than the average corrected correlations reported (.01 and -.02, respectively), are consistent with the findings of the meta-analysis of Meyer and associates (2002). The difference in the direction of the correlation could be attributed to the coding of the variable. Gender did not produce a significant correlation with affective commitment in the current study. Meyer and associates (2002) reported an average corrected correlation of -.03 between gender and affective commitment in their meta-analysis of 32 studies on those variables.

Marital status produced a positive correlation with affective commitment in the current study ($r = .11, p < .05$). This confirms the report of Meyer and associates (average corrected correlation = .09) in their meta-analysis. The current study was unable to produce a significant correlation between marital status and normative commitment, again confirming the report of Meyer and associates (2002). Finally, the current study did not produce a significant correlation between marital status and continuance commitment. Meyer and

associates (2002) reported an average corrected correlation of .04 between marital status and continuance commitment in their meta-analysis.

Allen and Meyer (1996) indicated that children in the household (termed “provider role”) may have a positive correlation with continuance commitment. In the current study, children in the household did not produce a significant correlation with either continuance or normative commitment. Children in the household did however produce a negative correlation with affective commitment ($r = -.08, p < .05$).

As this section has demonstrated, the findings of the current study have contributed to the existing literature on organizational commitment, either through confirmation of earlier findings, or through the discovery of new insights. This study has also added to the understanding of organizational commitment among student affairs professionals, as this is the first known study of affective, normative, and continuance commitment on this population. As stated in chapter one, the conceptualization utilized in the current study promotes a systemic view of commitment, one that will produce a greater understanding of how a student affairs professional becomes committed, and why they stay committed to the organization. As there have been no known quantitative studies of organizational commitment among middle managers in student affairs, the current study has indeed set a baseline for further study. The findings presented in this dissertation found that middle managers report a moderately high sense of affective commitment, a moderate sense of normative commitment, and a low sense of continuance commitment. There is much that can still be discovered about commitment among middle managers, which will be discussed in the recommendations section.

Conceptual Framework Revisited

The analysis of the data in the current study has provided insight on the conceptual framework proposed in chapter one. Clearly, organizational structure, middle manager status, and work/non-work interaction factors did not have a direct impact on affective, continuance, or normative commitment. Thus, the conceptual framework could be reduced to three antecedent variables: organizational support, overall job satisfaction, and organizational politics.

However, the results of the findings of the current study provide some insights on the factors that influence the antecedents, particularly organizational support. Pearson correlation statistics report correlations between gender and organizational support ($r = .09, p < .05$), as well as between marital status and organizational support ($r = .10, p < .05$). Negative correlations were found to exist between children under the age of eighteen in the household and organizational support ($r = -.12, p < .05$) as well as between organizational structure and organizational support ($r = -.09, p < .05$). A negative correlation exists between gender and organizational politics ($r = -.13, p < .05$). A revised conceptual framework should include the factors known to influence the antecedents as a guide to future study.

Figure 7 illustrates the revised conceptual framework for the study of organizational commitment among student affairs professionals. The revised conceptual framework includes the influence of organizational structure (mechanistic versus organic), marital status, presence of children under the age of eighteen in the household (renamed “provider role”), and gender on organizational support. The revised framework also includes the influence of gender on organizational politics.

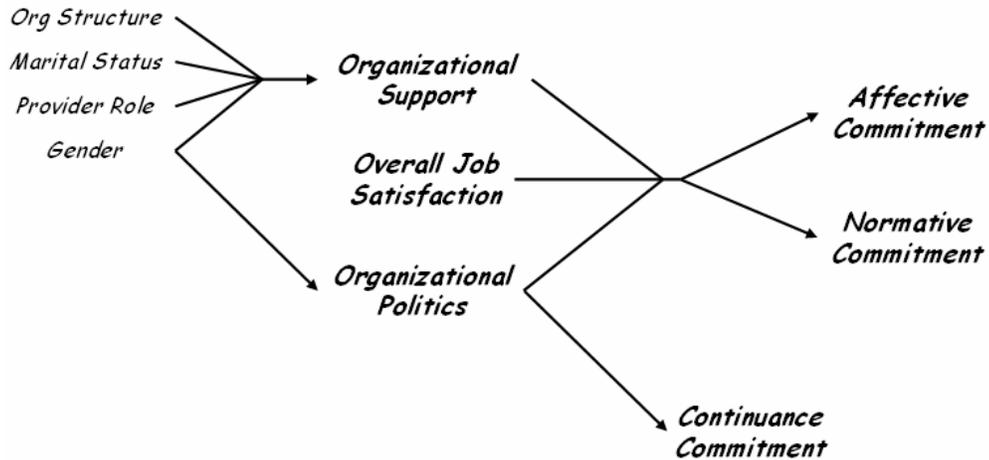


Figure 7

Revised Conceptual Framework for the Study of Organizational Commitment among Student Affairs Professionals

Discussion of Significance

The significance of the current study was presented in chapter one. The central issue was the impact of various factors on commitment among student affairs professionals, and how commitment is affecting attrition among student affairs professionals. It is essential to evaluate if this study did in fact lead to new insights on the topic of commitment among student affairs professionals.

As a result of this study, it is clear that student affairs professionals do indeed feel a sense of affective attachment to the organization. In general, student affairs professionals are ambivalent regarding the normative form of commitment, which could be indicative of organizational loyalty. Finally, student affairs professionals generally do not feel compelled to stay with their organization, as indicated by the continuance commitment scores. It is safe to conclude that student affairs professionals remain in the profession because they want to stay more than for any other reason. To date, there has not been a standardized mean score developed for any of the three forms of commitment, so it is impossible to safely conclude how the results for student affairs professionals compare to other professions.

The study also provided clear evidence that a supportive work environment is an important factor for increasing affective and normative commitments. In other words, if a student affairs professional feels that the organization cares about her/him, then the professional will (a) be more likely to stay with the organization and (b) will feel a greater sense of loyalty to the organization. There is also evidence to support the contention that work/non-work interaction factors influence the perception of support felt by the student affairs professional.

This study supported the assertion that overall job satisfaction is an antecedent of affective and normative commitment. A student affairs professional's level of satisfaction with their job in general will positively impact their affective attachment and loyalty to the organization.

The current study also demonstrated that organizational politics helped to decrease affective and normative commitment, and increased continuance commitment to the organization. Essentially, a politically charged environment can cause a student affairs professional to feel less committed to the organization, and in turn be less likely to work hard for the organization.

To summarize, a student affairs professional will remain committed to the profession if there is evidence of a supportive work environment, if the professional's satisfaction with the job in general remains high, and if the level of political activity within the organization is diminished. Unfortunately, the literature suggests that the culture of the student affairs profession is not conducive to increased organizational support, job satisfaction or decreased organizational politics. Jones (2002) cited increased political activity as a reason why middle managers were not satisfied with their jobs and posited this as a reason for attrition among

student affairs professionals. This contention echoes other points of view (Blackhurst, 2000; Borg, 1991; Lorden, 1998). Woodard and Komives (2003) indicate that the culture of the profession devalues entry-level professionals. If the literature describes the current state of the profession, there is certainly cause for alarm.

In order to increase affective and normative commitment, while decreasing continuance commitment, student affairs practitioners need to pay attention to the culture that has been created. Wheatley (1999) posits that organizations are “deeply patterned”, meaning that cultural behaviors that are present in the larger profession are also exhibited in smaller units, such as campus divisions and departments. If that is the case, there is a need to transform the culture from one that devalues to one that increases affective attachment and loyalty.

Mentoring, the promotion of mutually high obligations between the organization and its employees, and supervision that focuses on development of the professional have all been cited as methods to transform the culture to one that promotes a supportive work environment (Blackhurst, 2000; Woodard & Komives, 2003; Shore and Barksdale, 1998).

In addition, attention should be paid to the socialization and early work experiences of student affairs professionals. Meyer, Irving, and Allen (1998) found that individuals who had “positive early work experiences” exhibited increased levels of affective and normative commitment. Allen and Meyer (1990b) reported that structured, “institutionalized” socialization of new employees led to increased levels of affective commitment. These studies, when paired with the results of the current study, indicate that a point of leverage for changing the culture of student affairs may be in the graduate preparation programs and in the entry-level experiences of student affairs professionals. Graduate students in student affairs should be given specific training and ongoing mentoring in how to maintain

work/non-work balance, how to determine if a student affairs organization is a supportive one, and how to align personal values with organizational values.

Recommendations

As a result of this study, practitioners and researchers alike have a better understanding as to why student affairs professionals stay in the profession. This understanding is only an initial step toward addressing the issue of attrition of student affairs professionals. If the profession is to retain valuable knowledge capital in order to meet the needs of the new era of work, additional steps must be taken. This section will discuss the limitations of the current study, as well as provide recommendations for research and practical applications to extend the value of this dissertation.

Limitations of the Study

Before a discussion on recommendations can begin, it is important to acknowledge that limitations in design and application of the current study, as well as the influence of external factors, may have an impact on the findings. The author attempted to minimize the impact of limitations as much as possible, but it is necessary from a contextual perspective to realize that some issues were unavoidable.

The response rate to the survey was only 44.4%. While this response rate produced sufficient statistical power to make reasonable inferences, the return rate was lower than anticipated. The survey was sent out in October, which is typically a month when student affairs professionals are attending conferences and/or taking vacations from a hectic opening period. If the author had been able to send the survey out in January, at the beginning of the spring semester, or in June, a period when most offices are not as busy, return rate may have been higher.

Even though 644 student affairs professionals responded to the survey, approximately 90 respondents did not complete the entire survey. Many chose to leave the demographic questions unanswered, but several did not answer the questions related to one or more of the major variables in the study. Although every attempt was made to make the instrument as brief and simple as possible, the length of the survey may have impacted the return rate of the respondents.

An outside factor which had major implications for the result of the current study was the individual campuses themselves. There are, undoubtedly, many similarities in the work life of a typical student affairs professional, regardless of the size, type, and location of the campus. Each campus, however, has its own unique structure, cultural image of the role of student affairs, and political environment. The unique nature of the individual campuses created a great deal of challenge for the author.

The issue of structure created an awkward demographic question for functional area. Although the author utilized the list of functional areas proposed by The Book of Professional Standards for Higher Education (Miller, 2001), several respondents emailed the author to explain that their particular functional area was not represented. Further, there is no standardization of the alignment of offices within a division of student affairs. For example, a counseling center may be a stand-alone office which reports to the CSAO, or it could be under the student health center.

The impact of the particular campus on the level of commitment reported by the respondents cannot be overlooked. Although the survey asked for the respondents' views of the political activity within the student affairs organization, the systemic view of student affairs within the political structure of the campus could perhaps be a more telling perceptual

influence. If the student affairs organization is perceived as being unimportant to senior campus administrators, faculty, and others, the members of the student affairs organization may feel less committed to the campus in general, and to the student affairs organization in particular.

Finally, the lack of standardization in position titles, functions, and reporting lines created a challenge in the definition of the middle manager cohort. The review of the literature, as well as discussion with several professionals and faculty, led the author to conclude that a combination of years of experience and supervisory role were necessary to determine a “middle manager” in student affairs. This determination led to some respondents with more than five years of experience, or respondents who have titles of “director” or even “associate vice president”, being listed as “entry level” because of they did not supervise a full-time student affairs professional. Although the method employed for the current study allowed more researcher control than having respondents self-identify if they were a middle manager, it is not the most accurate measurement. Clearly, there needs to be a more consistent definition of a middle manager employed for the benefit of future research on this subgroup.

Recommendations for Research

This was the first known study of commitment among student affairs professionals utilizing the conceptualization proposed by Meyer and Allen (1997), as well as the first to study the impact of organizational support and organizational politics on commitment among student affairs professionals. While this study made significant findings, there were simply too many potential factors to be studied in one dissertation study. The study of commitment

among student affairs professionals could create a substantial research agenda for several researchers. To that end, the author proposes several areas for future research on this topic.

As this was the initial study utilizing this conceptual framework, replication of the study could provide useful confirmatory information. Further regression analysis would be useful, but an analysis utilizing structural equation modeling (SEM) or a path analysis may provide greater insights on the relationship between support, satisfaction, and commitment. There may also be benefit to approaching the study through a different statistical method. Qualitative or mixed methods studies could provide different contextual factors than the current study was able to do.

A major area of study would have to be the factors leading up to the antecedents of commitment. The current study has found that organizational support, organizational politics, and job satisfaction impact affective and normative commitment among student affairs professionals. Additionally, this study found that organizational politics is an antecedent to continuance commitment. While determining the antecedents of commitment was a major finding of this study, the next step is to determine what factors lead to increased organizational support, increased job satisfaction, and decreased organizational politics. The results of this study have identified some of the factors that lead to increased organizational support, specifically marital status, gender, provider role, and organizational structure. Research that would identify specific factors that influence the antecedents of commitment would be beneficial to an increased understanding of commitment from a research as well as a practical viewpoint.

Another focus area for future study is the consequences of commitment. In order to understand the impact that commitment has on attrition among student affairs professionals,

it is necessary to determine the specific factors that affective, continuance, and normative commitment lead to. Meyer and associates (2002) point to several possible factors, such as turnover and withdrawal cognition, absenteeism, job performance, organizational citizenship, and stress. Interestingly, Meyer and associates posited that work/non-work interaction factors (labeled “work-family conflict”) could be a consequence of commitment.

The impact of many of the demographic factors on commitment, including race, gender, generational membership, institutional type, geographic location, and functional area, were not explored in the current study’s research questions. It is logical to hypothesize that these factors influence affective, continuance, and normative commitment in some manner. Certainly, the current study did not find the factor that produced the most variance in the regression model for continuance or normative commitment.

One aspect of a student affairs professional’s job that was not explored is the impact of students on the respondents’ levels of commitment. The focus of this study was on the organizational dynamics that influence commitment, but it is clear that a student affairs professional’s view of students, parents, and other job-related factors may be affecting their satisfaction, as well as their level of affective, continuance, or normative commitment. Study of these factors could provide useful context to the current study.

Recommendations for Practice

This study found that a supportive work environment most likely increases affective commitment and increases normative commitment. In other words, if a student affairs professional feels support from their organization, they will enjoy working there and will likely work harder for the organization. While this finding is somewhat intuitive, organizational support is at times overlooked in the quest to provide efficient services in an

era of rapid change. The following are recommendations for practical applications of the findings of this study.

The concept of “mutually high obligations” between the organization and its employees should be accepted and liberally applied. Shore and Barksdale (1998) found that the sense of obligation on the part of the organization toward its employees had a reciprocal effect. This study confirms their findings, as organizational support was found to be an antecedent of normative commitment. Student affairs organizations need to develop a sense of obligation for their employees, as it will increase the employee’s affective attachment and loyalty to the organization. In other words, if the student affairs professional is treated as an important member of the team, she/he will contribute like an important member of the team. As discussed in chapter two, support is most often equated within the bounds of the supervisory relationship. If a supervisor wants the members of his/her team to be committed to the organization, then the supervisor must demonstrate that he/she is supportive of the team members.

As discussed in chapter two, it is important to look at the impact of work/non-work interaction variables on support, and ultimately on commitment. Where possible, attention should be given to flexible schedules, reflective time at work, and other steps to promote “balance” for the individual employee. The current study found that middle managers are the most likely to feel the work/non-work stressors of being married and having to serve in a provider role. Clearly, supervisory support for middle managers as they address issues of work/non-work interaction is necessary.

In addition, attention needs to be paid to the development of the “workaholic” culture that takes place in graduate and entry-level positions. Professors in graduate preparation

programs, and supervisors of graduate and entry-level staff need to set realistic expectations, discuss strategies for developing balance between work, school, and personal commitments, and role model effective work/non-work balance.

It is important to point out, however, that the perception of a supportive work environment impacts commitment. Entry level professionals need to see that student affairs is committed to their well-being at every step of their professional lives, not just when they are a middle manager with outside attachments to balance. Entry level professionals had the lowest level of affective commitment, and the highest level of continuance commitment. CSAOs and middle managers need to demonstrate to entry level professionals that the student affairs workplace is in fact a supportive environment, one worthy of their commitment.

This study has shown that reducing the perception of organizational politics leads to increased affective attachment and loyalty to the organization. As discussed in chapter two, politics is usually characterized by its negative aspects of competition, accommodation, or avoidance. Morgan (1997) posits that organizations that promote the more positive political aspects of collaboration and compromise handle conflict over scarce resources in a manner that is direct, open, and ultimately supportive to the interests of the organization and its employees. Organizations that promote collaboration and compromise may find that its employees do not recognize these behaviors as “political” at all.

Student affairs organizations should work to create organizational cultures that promote collaboration and compromise in order to reduce the perception of political activity and to increase the perception of a supportive work environment. Wheatley (1999) posits that information should be shared as much as possible to promote a common point of reference.

Senge (1990) states that shared visions and team learning promote fluid organizational cultures. Student affairs professionals at all levels should work to develop positive organizational cultures that promote collaboration, compromise, and focus competition toward beneficial ends.

The development of organizational commitment is a process. The literature points to the importance of early work experiences and institutionalized socialization tactics in the development of affective commitment (Allen & Meyer, 1990b; Meyer, Irving, & Allen, 1998). Graduate students and entry-level professionals in student affairs are socialized into the profession in many ways, including the theory and history behind the profession, the theory-to-practice training, and the infusion of the “student affairs culture”. However, this culture may in fact contribute to reduced affective attachment, through the expectations of a workaholic lifestyle, low wages, and greater demands for “off-hour” work brought on by technological advances (Casey, 1995, Philipson, 2002; Woodard & Komives, 2003).

Ultimately, commitment is made up of a compendium of influences. For the individual, the reality of commitment is grounded in a combination of expectations, perceptions, and experiences. It is possible that the attrition of student affairs professionals is not just a factor of the individual not feeling committed to the organization, but also the individual not feeling valued by the organization. For the organization, it is important to provide an environment where the individual employee can find support and to develop a “committed calling”, however that is defined.

As current student affairs practitioners and graduate faculty train and socialize the next generation of student affairs professionals, the consistency between the ideal culture of student affairs and the actual culture of student affairs needs to be examined. To students

entering graduate preparation programs, student affairs work is about making a difference in the lives of college students, and working in the vibrant atmosphere of a college campus. Student affairs practitioners and graduate faculty cultivate this ideal, but at the same time begin the socialization of the workaholic culture by creating expectations that long hours, low pay, and other sacrifices are the norm. This devaluation can in no way help in the formation of affective attachment, and leads entry level professionals to question their commitment to a profession they see as a calling.

This study has demonstrated that increased affective and normative organizational commitment is the product of a supportive work environment. The literature suggests that a supportive work environment is created when employees are empowered, mentored by supervisors, and shown that they are valued. Student affairs work can be very empowering. As Allen and Cherrey (2003) suggest, the rapid changes facing the profession should lead to the adoption of an entrepreneurial spirit within divisions of student affairs. Within this type of culture, empowerment of all levels of staff is a necessity, with clearly defined parameters – or “degrees of freedom” – for decision making (Allen & Cherrey, 2003). Blackhurst (2000) points to the importance of mentoring, while Woodard and Komives (2003) argue for the importance of valuing entry level professionals. Student affairs practitioners and graduate faculty need to explore organizational models and conceptualizations of work that foster commitment among student affairs professionals, including methods that promote work/non-work balance, collaboration, and empowerment. If successful, the new culture of student affairs will not only improve commitment among student affairs professionals, but will also bring a new energy to the committed calling which is student affairs work.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Institutional Review Board Approval

North Carolina State University is a land-grant university and a constituent institution of The University of North Carolina

**Office of Research
and Graduate Studies**

NC STATE UNIVERSITY

Sponsored Programs and
Regulatory Compliance
Campus Box 7514
1 Leazar Hall
Raleigh, NC 27695-7514

919.515.7200
919.515.7721 (fax)

From: Debra A. Paxton, IRB Administrator
North Carolina State University
Institutional Review Board

Date: October 10, 2005

Project Title: Affective, Continuance, and Normative Commitment among Student Affairs Professionals

IRB#: 219-05-10

Dear Mr. Boehman;

The project listed above has been reviewed in accordance with expedited review procedures under Addendum 46 FR8392 of 45 CFR 46 and is approved for one year. **This protocol expires on October 10, 2006, and will need continuing review before that date.**

NOTE:

1. This board complies with requirements found in Title 45 part 46 of The Code of Federal Regulations. For NCSU the Assurance Number is: FWA00003429; the IRB Number is: IRB00000330.
2. The IRB must be notified of any changes that are made to this study.
3. Your approval for this study lasts for one year from the review date. If your study extends beyond that time, including data analysis, you must obtain continuing review from the IRB.

Please provide a copy of this letter to your faculty sponsor. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Debra Paxton
NCSU IRB

Appendix B: Text for Participant Solicitation Email

From: Joseph Boehman [<mailto:boehman@unc.edu>]
Sent: Monday, October 10, 2005 3:26 PM
Subject: doctoral research study - your help needed

Dear Student Affairs Professional:

I am a graduate student at North Carolina State University working on my doctoral degree in Higher Education Administration. I am also a full-time student affairs professional at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. As such, I am particularly interested in how student affairs professionals become committed to the profession, and why they stay committed. I am looking at a number of factors that may contribute to commitment among student affairs professionals, including job satisfaction, organizational support, organizational politics, and organizational structure.

You have been selected as part of a national sample of student affairs professionals. I respectfully ask for your participation in what will be the first study of its kind among student affairs professionals. Participants' anonymous responses will be collected and analyzed using a quantitative statistical approach to determine the factors that contribute to commitment among student affairs professionals.

If you are interested in participating in this study, please go to the following web address: <http://www.questionpro.com/akira/TakeSurvey?id=270655&rd=3020405>. After reading and agreeing to a consent form, you will be asked to complete a short survey. If you are unable to complete the survey electronically, but still wish to participate in the study, please contact me at the phone number or email address listed below.

Please contact me (Joseph Boehman, 919-962-1588) or my dissertation advisor (Dr. Duane Akroyd, 919-515-1745) if you have any questions or concerns about this study. Thank you for your time and dedication.

Respectfully,
Joseph Boehman
919-962-1588
boehman@unc.edu

Appendix C: Survey Instrument

A National Study of Affective, Continuance, and Normative Organizational Commitment among Student Affairs Professionals

This research is being conducted by Joseph Boehman (boehman@unc.edu), graduate student in Higher Education Administration at North Carolina State University, supervised by Dr. Duane Akroyd (duane_akroyd@ncsu.edu), North Carolina State University.

Dear Student Affairs Professional,

Thank you for your time and effort in helping me complete this study. You are participating in a study which will provide greater insight as to how individuals become committed to this profession, and why they stay committed. Your input is important to this study because I am attempting to make inferences about student affairs as a profession, and you have been selected as part of a national sample. The total survey time is approximately 15 minutes.

I will be happy to send you an executive summary of the survey results, if you wish to receive them. After completing the survey, you will have an opportunity to request this summary. Thank you for your time and attention.

Sincerely,
Joseph Boehman

- (1) Listed below are statements that represent possible opinions that **YOU** may have about working in your student affairs organization. Please indicate the degree of your agreement or disagreement with each statement by selecting the number that best represents your point of view about your student affairs organization. Please choose from the following answers:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Slightly Agree	Moderately Agree	Strongly Agree

The organization values my contribution to its well-being.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
The organization fails to appreciate any extra effort from me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
The organization would ignore any complaint from me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
The organization really cares about my well-being.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Even if I did the best job possible, the organization would fail to notice.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
The organization cares about my general satisfaction at work.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
The organization shows very little concern for me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
The organization takes pride in my accomplishments at work.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

(2) Think of your job in general. All in all, what is it like most of the time? For each of the following words or phrases, select:

	Yes	No	?
Good.....	1	2	3
Undesirable.....	1	2	3
Better than most.....	1	2	3
Disagreeable.....	1	2	3
Makes me content.....	1	2	3
Excellent.....	1	2	3
Enjoyable.....	1	2	3
Poor.....	1	2	3

(3) Listed below are statements that represent possible opinions that **YOU** may have about working in your student affairs organization. Please indicate the degree of your agreement or disagreement with each statement by selecting the number that best represents your point of view about your student affairs organization. Please choose from the following answers:

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Slightly Agree	Strongly Agree

- People in this organization attempt to build themselves up by tearing others down. 1 2 3 4 5
- There has always been an influential group in this organization that no one ever crosses. 1 2 3 4 5
- Employees are encouraged to speak out frankly even when they are critical of well-established ideas. 1 2 3 4 5
- There is no place for yes-men and yes-women in this organization; good ideas are desired even if it means disagreeing with superiors. 1 2 3 4 5
- Agreeing with powerful others is the best alternative in this organization. 1 2 3 4 5
- It is best not to rock the boat in this organization. 1 2 3 4 5
- Sometimes it is easier to remain quiet than to fight the system. 1 2 3 4 5
- Telling others what they want to hear is sometimes better than telling the truth. 1 2 3 4 5
- It is safer to think what you are told than to make up your own mind. 1 2 3 4 5
- Since I have worked for this organization, I have never seen the pay and promotion policies applied politically. 1 2 3 4 5
- I can't remember when a person received a pay increase or promotion that was inconsistent with the published policies. 1 2 3 4 5
- None of the raises I have received are consistent with the policies on how raises should be determined. 1 2 3 4 5
- The stated pay and promotion policies have nothing to do with how pay and promotions are determined. 1 2 3 4 5
- When it comes to pay raise and promotion decisions, policies are irrelevant. 1 2 3 4 5
- Promotions around here are not valued much because how they are determined are so political. 1 2 3 4 5

(4) The following questions relate to your opinions on how you perceive the characteristics of your organization. Looking at your student affairs organization, how would you say it can be rated on the following continuum?

Goals are well defined for the total unit	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Goals are not very well defined for the total unit
Lines of authority are precisely drawn	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Lines of authority are not precisely drawn
Communication on job related matters are predominantly vertical, up and down the organization	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Communication on job related matters are going in all directions
Most tasks performed at the lower levels of the total unit are well defined	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Most tasks at the lower levels of the total unit are not well defined
Routine solutions exist to perform many tasks	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	New solutions must be continuously found for each job
It is relatively easy to predict in advance how each job is to be performed	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	It is difficult to predict in advance how each job is to be performed
People tend not to trust each other	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	People trust each other a lot
People compete a lot on the job	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Competition on the job is not very high

(5a) Listed below is a series of statements that represent feelings that individuals might have about the company or organization for which they work. With respect to your own feelings about the student affairs organization for which you are now working, please indicate the degree of your agreement or disagreement with each statement by selecting a number from 1 to 7 using the scale below.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
strongly disagree	disagree	slightly disagree	undecided	slightly agree	agree	strongly agree

I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career with this organization.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
I really feel as if this organization's problems are my own.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
I do not feel a strong sense of "belonging" to my organization.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
I do not feel "emotionally attached" to this organization.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
I do not feel like "part of the family" at my organization.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
This organization has a great deal of personal meaning for me.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Right now, staying with my organization is a matter of necessity as much as desire.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
It would be very hard for me to leave my organization right now, even if I wanted to.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Too much of my life would be disrupted if I decided I wanted to leave my organization now.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7

(5b) Listed below is a series of statements that represent feelings that individuals might have about the company or organization for which they work. With respect to your own feelings about the student affairs organization for which you are now working, please indicate the degree of your agreement or disagreement with each statement by selecting a number from 1 to 7 using the scale below.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
strongly disagree	disagree	slightly disagree	undecided	slightly agree	agree	strongly agree

- I feel that I have too few options to consider leaving this organization. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- If I had not already put so much of myself into this organization, I might consider working elsewhere. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- One of the few negative consequences of leaving this organization would be the scarcity of available alternatives. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- I do not feel any obligation to remain with my current employer. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- Even if it were to my advantage, I do not feel it would be right to leave my organization now. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- I would feel guilty if I left my organization now. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- This organization deserves my loyalty. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- I would not leave my organization right now because I have a sense of obligation to the people in it. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- I owe a great deal to my organization. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Slightly Agree	Strongly Agree

- I intend to be a student affairs professional 2 years from now 1 2 3 4 5
- I intend to be a student affairs professional 5 years from now 1 2 3 4 5
- I feel like checking employment ads 1 2 3 4 5
- I think about other types of work 1 2 3 4 5
- I think about changing jobs 1 2 3 4 5

Please take a few moments to answer the following questions that will assist in making inferences regarding the population of this study:

What year were you born?

What is your gender? Male Female Transgender

Using the US Census categories, what is your racial or ethnic identification? (Fill in all that apply)

- White Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander
- Black or African American Hispanic or Latino
- American Indian or Alaska Native Two or more races
- Asian Other

What is your marital status? Single Married/Partnered Divorced Widowed

How many children under the age of 18 live in your household?

What is your functional area? (please check response that most closely matches your functional area)

- | | | |
|--|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Academic Advising | <input type="checkbox"/> Housing and Residential Life | <input type="checkbox"/> Recreational Sports |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Admissions | <input type="checkbox"/> International Student Programs | <input type="checkbox"/> Student Health Services |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Career Services | <input type="checkbox"/> Judicial Programs / Dean of Students Office | <input type="checkbox"/> Student Leadership Programs |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Counseling / Psychological Services | <input type="checkbox"/> Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Programs | <input type="checkbox"/> Union / Campus Activities |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Disability Services | <input type="checkbox"/> Minority Student Programs | <input type="checkbox"/> Women's Programs |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Financial Aid | <input type="checkbox"/> Orientation Programs | <input type="checkbox"/> Office of Vice President |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Greek Affairs | | |

Position Level (please check response that most closely matches your title)

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Vice President | <input type="checkbox"/> Associate Vice President |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Assistant Vice President | <input type="checkbox"/> Dean / Director |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Associate Dean / Director | <input type="checkbox"/> Assistant Dean / Director |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Program Specialist | <input type="checkbox"/> Residence Director |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other | |

How many years have you worked as a full-time student affairs professional?

Highest education level completed

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Associate's Degree | <input type="checkbox"/> Bachelor's Degree |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Master's Degree | <input type="checkbox"/> Law Degree (J.D.) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ABD / actively pursuing doctorate | <input type="checkbox"/> ABD / not pursuing doctorate |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ph.D. | <input type="checkbox"/> Ed.D. |

Please select your current salary range.

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$19,999 or less | <input type="checkbox"/> \$50,000 – \$54,999 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$20,000 – \$24,999 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$55,000 – \$59,999 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$25,000 – \$29,999 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$60,000 – \$64,999 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$30,000 – \$34,999 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$65,000 – \$69,999 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$35,000 – \$39,999 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$70,000 – \$74,999 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$40,000 – \$44,999 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$75,000 – \$79,999 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$45,000 – \$49,999 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$80,000 or more |

Do you supervise at least one full-time professional staff member (not including administrative or support staff)? Yes No

Number of full-time professional staff you supervise (not including administrative or support staff):

Which statement best describes your institution?

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 4-year public, doctoral/research | <input type="checkbox"/> 4-year private, doctoral/research |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 4-year public, masters/comprehensive | <input type="checkbox"/> 4-year private, masters/comprehensive |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 4-year public, liberal arts | <input type="checkbox"/> 4-year private, liberal arts |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2-year college | <input type="checkbox"/> other |

State of employment (enter two-letter state abbreviation)

Appendix D: Additional Regression Analysis: Affective Commitment

Table 31

Results of t-tests and Correlations of Affective Commitment on Support, Satisfaction, Politics, Marital Status, and Children

	<i>t</i>	Correlations			Collinearity Statistics	
		Zero-order	Partial	Part	Tolerance	VIF
Model 1						
Organizational Support	9.07	.64	.39	.31	0.49	2.06
Overall Job Satisfaction	3.49	.49	.16	.12	0.64	1.57
Organizational Politics	- 3.58	- .52	- .16	- .12	0.59	1.71
Marital Status	1.39	.11	.06	.05	0.83	1.20
Children	0.25	- .08	.01	.01	0.83	1.21

Table 32

Collinearity Statistics of Affective Commitment on Support, Satisfaction, Politics, Marital Status, and Children

	Eigenvalue	Condition Index	Variance Proportions				
			Org Support	Job Sat	Org Politics	Marital Status	Children
Model 1							
Organizational Support	.46	3.38	.00	.00	.00	.25	.34
Overall Job Satisfaction	.15	5.92	.01	.02	.01	.71	.58
Organizational Politics	.07	8.79	.02	.08	.22	.00	.01
Marital Status	.01	19.80	.33	.89	.05	.02	.00
Children	.00	39.25	.65	.01	.72	.01	.05

Appendix E: Additional Regression Analysis: Continuance Commitment

Table 33

Results of t-tests and Correlations of Continuance Commitment on Politics, Support, Satisfaction, and Gender

	<i>t</i>	Correlations			Collinearity Statistics	
		Zero-order	Partial	Part	Tolerance	VIF
Model 1						
Organizational Politics	6.81	.44	.29	.29	0.59	1.71
Organizational Support	- 1.56	- .35	- .07	- .07	0.50	2.00
Overall Job Satisfaction	- 1.29	- .28	- .06	- .06	0.64	1.56
Gender	- 1.46	- .11	- .07	- .07	0.99	1.02

Table 34

Collinearity Statistics of Continuance Commitment on Politics, Support, Satisfaction, and Gender

	Eigenvalue	Condition Index	Variance Proportions			
			Org Support	Org Politics	Job Sat	Gender
Model 1						
Organizational Support	.54	2.84	.00	.00	.00	.96
Organizational Politics	.07	7.94	.21	.02	.10	.01
Overall Job Satisfaction	.01	17.59	.06	.32	.89	.01
Gender	.00	34.77	.73	.66	.01	.00

Appendix F: Additional Regression Analysis: Normative Commitment

Table 35

Results of t-tests and Correlations of Normative Commitment on Support, Satisfaction, Politics, and Gender

	<i>t</i>	Correlations			Collinearity Statistics	
		Zero-order	Partial	Part	Tolerance	VIF
Model 1						
Organizational Support	5.49	.49	.24	.21	0.50	2.00
Overall Job Satisfaction	4.48	.44	.20	.17	0.64	1.56
Organizational Politics	- 1.93	- .39	- .09	- .07	0.59	1.70
Gender	1.12	.09	.05	.04	0.98	1.02

Table 36

Collinearity Statistics of Normative Commitment on Support, Satisfaction, Politics, and Gender

	Eigenvalue	Condition Index	Variance Proportions			
			Org Support	Job Sat	Org Politics	Gender
Model 1						
Organizational Support	.54	2.84	.00	.00	.00	.96
Overall Job Satisfaction	.07	7.94	.02	.10	.21	.01
Organizational Politics	.14	17.66	.32	.89	.07	.01
Gender	.00	34.75	.66	.01	.72	.00