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An evidence review

Scientific summary
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Organisational commitment: an evidence review

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Acknowledgements

Publication information

1 Rationale for this review

It is widely believed that employees who are emotionally attached to the organisation (also referred to as affective organisational commitment) will not only be happier, healthier and more fulfilled, but also more likely to deliver better performance, services, and innovation. This assumption is central to what is often referred to as 'employee engagement', a concept that's become mainstream in management thinking over the last decade. Although this assumption appears to make sense from a managerial perspective, it is yet unclear whether it is supported (or contradicted) by scientific evidence. For this reason, the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) approached the Center for Evidence-Based Management (CEBMa) to undertake a review of the research literature to learn more about the evidence on affective organisational commitment.

This report describes how we undertook this review through a rapid evidence assessment (REA) and summarises the findings. It accompanies three other reviews of the scientific literature on:

- performance outcomes of employee engagement

- antecedents and outcomes of organisational identification

- antecedents and outcomes of work motivation.

These scientific summaries and a discussion report are all available at: cipd.co.uk/evidence-engagement

2 What is a rapid evidence assessment?

Evidence reviews come in many forms. One of the best known is the conventional literature review, which provides an overview of the relevant scientific literature published on a topic. However, a conventional literature review's trustworthiness is often low: clear criteria for inclusion are lacking and studies are selected based on the researcher's personal preferences. As a result, conventional literature reviews are prone to bias. To overcome such bias, 'rapid evidence assessments' (REAs) are used. The REA is a specific research methodology that aims to identify the most relevant studies on a specific topic as comprehensively as possible, and to select appropriate studies based on explicit criteria. In addition, the methodological quality of the studies included is assessed by two independent reviewers using explicit criteria. In contrast to a conventional literature review, the REA is transparent, verifiable, and reproducible, and, as a result, the likelihood of bias is considerably smaller.

3 Main question: What does the REA answer?

What is known in the scientific literature about affective organisational commitment?

Sub-questions that form the basis of the update:

1 What constitutes affective organisational commitment (what is it)?

2 How can affective organisational commitment be measured?

3 Does affective organisational commitment affect work-related outcomes?

4 What are the antecedents of affective organisational commitment?

5 What is known about the (positive or negative) effect of possible moderators and/or mediators?

4 Search strategy: How was the research evidence obtained?

Four databases were used to identify studies: ABI/INFORM Global from ProQuest, Business Source Premier from EBSCO, PsycINFO from Ovid, and Google Scholar. Our search applied the following general search filters:

1. scholarly journals, peer-reviewed
2. published in the period 2000 to 2020
3. articles in English.

A search was conducted using combinations of various search terms, including 'organi*ational commitment', 'employee commitment', 'antecedent', and 'workplace'. In addition, the references listed in the retrieved studies were screened in order to identify additional studies for possible inclusion in the REA. We conducted six different search queries which yielded 600+ studies. An overview of all search terms and queries is provided in Appendix 1.

5 Selection: How were studies selected?

Study selection took place in two phases. First, titles and abstracts of the 600+ studies identified were screened for relevance. In case of doubt or lack of information, the study was included. Duplicate publications were removed. This first phase yielded 229 meta-analyses and 123 primary studies. Second, studies were selected based on the full text of the article using these inclusion criteria:

1. type of studies: focusing on quantitative, empirical studies
2. measurement: only studies in which relationships among affective organisational commitment and work-related outcomes were quantitatively measured. Studies that measured only overall commitment were included, as meta-analytic research shows that there is a high correlation (r = .88) between overall commitment and affective commitment (Meyer et al 2002)
3. context: only studies related to workplace settings
4. level of trustworthiness: only studies that were graded level C or above (see below).

The initial number of studies retrieved constituted a very large body of research, and certainly a larger amount of evidence than we can comprehensively review in a rapid evidence assessment. We thus decided to limit our final search to prioritise studies that gave more generalisable findings. Thus, in addition, the following exclusion criteria were applied for meta-analyses and systematic reviews:

*   studies that focus on specific professional groups (for example nurses)

*   studies that focus on specific sectors (for example the North American automotive industry)

*   studies that focus on differences between countries (for example US versus Russian workers)

*   studies on related constructs (for example work-, change-, management-, or goal commitment)

*   studies that focus on specific health outcomes (for example depression or life satisfaction); studies that focus on general wellbeing were included

*   studies that focus on cross-cultural differences (for example whether there are differences in the mediating effect of organisational commitment between Asian and North European companies)

- meta-analyses or systematic reviews that were replicated five years or more after their original study.

Further, the following exclusion criteria were applied for single studies:

- studies that were included in a meta-analysis

- studies on the effect of specific interventions on organisational commitment (for example pay system reform); studies on the effect of mergers, restructuring, or downsizing were included

- studies on the effect of specific events on organisational commitment (for example workplace violence)

- studies on specific associations that are not directly relevant to the REA question or studies with limited actionability (for example whether employees display stronger increases in affective organisational commitment in response to goal progress when they are low rather than high in conscientiousness)

- studies of populations in non-Western countries (for example industrial workers in Bangladesh) in which the development and effects of organisational commitment may differ from populations in Western countries.

This second phase yielded a total number of 56 meta-analyses and 51 primary studies. After critical appraisal, a final sample of 48 meta-analyses were included. To determine the direction of correlations reported in the meta-analyses, 12 primary studies were included that provided additional (longitudinal) evidence to the findings of the meta-analyses. This is a comprehensive review, representing a large body of research on organisational commitment that can be considered a very reliable review of the area. An overview of the selection process is provided in Appendix 2.

6.1 Critical appraisal: How was the quality of the evidence judged?

In almost any situation it is possible to find a scientific study to support or refute a theory or a claim. Thus, it is important to determine which studies are trustworthy (that is, valid and reliable) and which are not. The trustworthiness of a scientific study is first determined by its methodological appropriateness. To determine the methodological appropriateness of the included study's research design, the classification system of Shadish et al (2002) and Petticrew and Roberts (2006) was used. In addition, a study's trustworthiness is determined by its methodological quality (its strengths and weaknesses). For instance, was the sample size large enough and were reliable measurement methods used? To determine methodological quality, all the studies included were systematically assessed on explicit quality criteria. Finally, the effect sizes were identified. An effect (for example a correlation, Cohen's d or omega) can be statistically significant but may not necessarily be of practical relevance: even a trivial effect can be statistically significant if the sample size is big enough. For this reason, the effect size – a standard measure of the magnitude of the effect – was assessed.

For a detailed explanation of how the quality of included studies was judged, see *CEBMa Guideline for Rapid Evidence Assessments in Management and Organisations* (Barends et al 2017).

6.2 Critical appraisal: What is the quality of the studies included?

Our search yielded 48 relevant meta-analyses. This indicates that the area of organisational commitment is well established and has a large body of research. However, 37 meta-analyses failed to report the design and quality of the included studies. Of the remaining 12 meta-analyses, eight included longitudinal or even experimental studies, and were therefore classified as level B or higher, indicating a high level of trustworthiness.

7 Main findings

Question 1: What is affective organisational commitment?

How employees relate to their organisation is one of the central areas of focus in organisational science. In particular, how – and under what circumstances – employees bond with and attach to an organisation, also referred to as 'organisational commitment', is one of the most widely studied topics. In fact, the first meta-analysis on the antecedents, correlates, and consequences of organisational commitment was published three decades ago (Mathieu and Zajac 1990). At that time, researchers were making a distinction between two forms of commitment: attitudinal and calculative commitment (Meyer et al 2002). The meta-analysis by Mathieu and Zajac found that type of commitment indeed moderated the effect, but these authors noted that there might be other forms of commitment. In the early 1990s, a three-component conceptualisation of organisational commitment was developed by Meyer and Allen (1991) which is still used today. This dominant model distinguishes three forms: affective, continuance, and normative commitment:

- Affective commitment refers to the affective or emotional attachment to the organisation, such that a strongly committed employee identifies with, is involved in, and enjoys being a member of the organisation.

- Continuance commitment is viewed as the employee's perceived costs of quitting.

- Normative commitment is defined as an 'internalised normative pressure to act in a way that meets organisational goals and interests' due to the belief that it is the 'right' and 'moral' thing to do (Allen and Meyer 1990).

Although all three forms of commitment were expected to tie employees to the organisation, it was believed that each had a different impact on employee work behaviour (Meyer and Allen 1991; Meyer et al 2002). In addition, it was believed that each form of commitment represents a different motivation for a particular outcome. In the case of turnover, for example, employees with strong affective commitment remain because they *want* to, whereas those with strong continuance commitment remain because they *need* to, and those with strong normative commitment because they feel they *ought* to do so (Allen and Meyer 1990). Although conceptually different, affective commitment appears closely related to the concept of employee engagement.

Question 2: How can affective commitment be measured?

The two most often used scales that measure affective organisational commitment are the Organisational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ; Mowday et al 1979) and the Affective Commitment Scale (ACS; Allen and Meyer 1990). Several psychometric studies have demonstrated strong evidence for the internal consistency, test-retest reliability, and convergent, discriminant, and predictive validity of both scales (Mowday et al 1979; Allen and Meyer 1996, 2000). Although there is some evidence suggesting that the ACS is preferred to the OCQ (Benkhoff 1997), a comprehensive meta-analysis that included 96 studies found no differences between the two scales when measuring the impact of affective commitment on performance outcomes (Riketta 2005).

Question 3: Does affective commitment affect work-related outcomes?

Research on affective commitment was initially focused on its impact on employee turnover. In the past decades, however, it was found that affective commitment has an impact on a wide range of work-related attitudes (see Appendix 3). Based on the analyses of the 48 included meta-analyses, an overview is provided in Table 1.

Table 1: Impacts of affective commitment on various outcomes (pooled correlations)

Outcome	Mean correlation weighted by sample size	Number of studies	Level of evidence
Absenteeism	−.16	30+	B
Job satisfaction	.60	70+	C
Job involvement	.53	16	C
Performance (task/OCB)	.18/.37	300+/80+	B
Turnover (intentional/actual)	−.55/−.24	60+	B
Psychological wellbeing	.27	5	C

Absenteeism

Two meta-analyses found a small correlation between absenteeism and affective commitment (Harrison et al 2006; Meyer et al 2002). This finding in itself does not tell us whether employees who are often absent from work are less emotionally attached to the organisation, or the other way around. However, longitudinal studies have found that while absenteeism is not a predictor for affective commitment (Cohen and Golan 2007), affective commitment does predict absenteeism (Hausknecht et al 2008; Clausen et al 2015). It should be noted, however, that the effect sizes found were rather small, suggesting that affective commitment has only a small impact on absenteeism, and that other factors such as physical and psychological wellbeing, workload, and social support may be more important.

Job satisfaction

Job satisfaction is defined as the sense of enjoyment employees derive from their experiences on the job. A large number of meta-analyses have consistently demonstrated that job satisfaction and affective commitment are closely related (Boer et al 2016; Meyer et al 2002; Shahjehan et al 2019; Clarke 2010). However, there is no consensus concerning causal ordering, as the research findings are mostly inconsistent and sometimes contradictory (for a summary of conflicting findings, see Meyer 1997). In fact, some studies found no evidence to support that either construct was causally related to the other (see, for example, Curry et al 1986). Our review did not find any longitudinal studies that provided new evidence on this matter. A possible explanation for this finding is that the two constructs share the same antecedents – if present, both job satisfaction and affective commitment increase.

Job involvement

Job involvement refers to the *'degree to which an employee psychologically relates to his or her job and to the work performed therein'* (Cooper-Hakim and Viswesveran 2005). The relationship between job involvement and affective commitment is frequently studied. Like job satisfaction, the construct has an 'affective' tone and is closely related to affective commitment (Meyer et al 2002). In fact, there is a considerable conceptual overlap between the two constructs, and as a result, it is unclear whether affective commitment drives job involvement, or the other way around (Lee et al 2015).

Task performance

Both academics and business leaders have emphasised the importance of affective commitment based on the belief that organisations with highly committed employees are more effective and employees who exhibit high levels of affective commitment are more productive (Morrow 2011; Pfeffer 1994). Our review found seven meta-analyses with a combined sample size of more than 300 studies on the commitment–performance relationship. In the research literature, a distinction is made between task performance and extra-role performance, also referred to as contextual performance or organisational citizenship behaviour. Task performance, also referred to as in-role performance, is typically defined as the degree to which a person meets or exceeds their prescribed work goals.

In the research literature on affective commitment, task performance is the most frequently studied work-related outcome. This is not surprising, as task performance is the most commonly assessed aspect of employees' work. However, what may be surprising is that the research literature demonstrates that the affective commitment–task performance relationship is rather small, explaining less than 4% of the variance (Harrison et al 2006; Meyer et al 2002; Riketta 2002). This indicates that affective commitment is not a (or only a weak) predictor of task performance.

Contextual performance

Nowadays, most jobs have become less routinised, less unidimensional, and less strictly defined (Harrison et al 2006). Especially when it concerns knowledge workers, it is often difficult to measure task performance, as they seldom have one single 'correct' or standard outcome. For this reason, research on affective commitment often focuses on what is referred to as 'contextual' performance: extra-role behaviours in which employees go beyond their formal job requirements, such as taking on non-required tasks, showing initiative, or helping colleagues. Although several labels for this type of performance exist (for example organisational citizenship behaviour or extra-role performance), all refer to types of behaviour that go beyond the formally prescribed work goals (Koopmans et al 2011). Since going beyond the call of duty is largely left to the discretion of the workers themselves, this is where affective commitment is expected to have the biggest impact. Indeed, a large number of studies have consistently demonstrated a stronger relationship with contextual performance than with task performance (see, for example, Riketta 2002; Meyer et al 2002; Cetin et al 2015). In addition, a meta-analysis of longitudinal studies has indicated that affective commitment is a predictor for contextual performance, rather than the other way around (Riketta 2008).

Turnover

Although for most organisations performance remains the most important outcome, today managers and business leaders emphasise the importance of attracting, motivating and retaining key talent (Morrow 2011). Scholars who first examined the construct of organisational commitment assumed that highly committed employees were less likely to quit their job (Meyer and Allen 1991). Employees with high continuance commitment intend to remain with their employer to avoid costs associated with leaving, whereas employees with high normative commitment feel that it would be morally inappropriate to leave the company. Likewise, employees that are emotionally attached to the organisation enjoy being an organisational member and are thus less likely to quit. Indeed, a large number of studies have demonstrated that affective commitment is a strong predictor for employees' turnover intentions: the subjective probability that an individual will leave their organisation within a certain period of time (Fisher and Mansell 2009; Ng 2015; Ozkan et al 2020). It should be noted, however, that the relationship with actual turnover is weaker (Harrison et al 2006; Meyer et al 2002; Zhao et al 2007). Nonetheless, affective commitment and turnover intention are important indicators of employees' cognitive withdrawal (Cohen and Golan 2007).

Wellbeing

Finally, there is some evidence that affective commitment may be related to psychological wellbeing, and reduce sleep complaints, symptoms of stress, burnout and fatigue (Clarke 2010). In addition, a longitudinal study demonstrated that affective commitment most likely

precedes psychological wellbeing (Panaccio and Vandenberghe 2009). A possible explanation for this finding is that employees who experience identification and emotional attachment to their organisation may cope better with stress than others because they can make sense of why they are facing high demands (Kobasa 1982). By enjoying their organisational membership, they function at lower energy costs, which translates into greater wellbeing.

Question 4: What are antecedents of affective commitment?

In the past three decades, a large number of studies have been published on the predictors or antecedents of affective commitment. These give especially useful insights for managers as they can inform practices or interventions to increase commitment. Based on the analyses of the 48 included meta-analyses, an overview of the most impactful and relevant antecedents is provided in Table 2. Although the theory explaining the impact on affective commitment may be different for each antecedent, many authors assume that the underlying motivational mechanism is based on social exchange theory. According to this theory, people make attributions regarding the extent to which the favourable treatment they receive from others reflects a concern for their wellbeing; such 'benefactors' are considered more trustworthy and likely to provide valued resources in the future (Gouldner 1960; Greenberg 1980; Eisenberger et al 2019). Thus, employees who have had satisfying experiences with their organisation are more likely to develop a psychological attachment with that organisation. In the next section, a short explanation of each antecedent and its effect on affective commitment is provided.

Table 2: Antecedents of affective commitment (pooled correlations)

Antecedent	Mean correlations weighted by sample size	Number of studies
Social support	.70	100+
Empowerment	.63	30+
Job characteristics	.51, .44, .45, .28	100+
Organisational justice	.55, .35	100+
Recognition and rewards	.49	15+
Leadership (LMX, style, satisfaction)	.50, .45, .42	100+

Social support

One of the earliest meta-analyses on organisational commitment found that, of all the work experience variables included, perceived organisational support had the strongest correlation with affective commitment (Meyer et al 2002). Perceived social support is often referred to as *'the extent to which a job provides opportunities for getting assistance and advice from either supervisors or co-workers'* (Karasek et al 1998). Some authors prefer a broader definition that includes *'the extent that employees perceive that their organisation values their contributions and cares about their wellbeing'* (Eisenberger et al 1986). Regardless of the definition used, in the past two decades, several meta-analyses confirmed that when employees feel the organisation supports them in times of need, gives them honest and relevant feedback, praises them for a job well done, and recognises them for their contribution, their affective commitment will increase (Ahmed et al 2015; Humphrey et al 2007; Riggle et al 2009; Ng 2015). Although all these meta-analyses are based on cross-sectional studies, reverse causation seems unlikely: that is, it is not likely that employees who are psychologically attached with the organisation will develop perceptions of greater social support. Indeed, a two-year longitudinal study confirmed that organisational support is one of the strongest predictors for affective commitment (Panaccio and Vandenberghe 2009).

Empowerment

The scientific literature differentiates empowerment as either structural or psychological. Structural empowerment refers to the delegation of authority and responsibility to employees, whereas psychological empowerment refers to employees' perceptions that they have autonomy to decide how to do their jobs and that their beliefs and behaviour make a difference (Thomas and Velthouse 1990). Meta-analyses consistently found that empowerment, in particular psychological empowerment, is strongly associated with affective commitment (Seibert et al 2011; Humphrey et al 2007; Kooij et al 2010). Although this review did not find longitudinal studies demonstrating the direction of the association, we consider it more likely that empowerment drives commitment, rather than the other way around.

Job characteristics

In the past decades, numerous studies have found that job characteristics are strongly associated with affective commitment. In particular, it was found that if employees feel their jobs are clearly defined, make full use of their skills, are rich and challenging, and are considered meaningful, this will have a positive effect on their psychological commitment with the organisation (Humphrey et al 2007; Kooij et al 2010; Meyer et al 2002). Unsurprisingly, of all the related characteristics, job security was found to have the strongest positive correlation with affective commitment (Ng 2015).

Organisational justice

For decades scholars have studied perceived organisational justice as a predictor of work-related attitudes and behaviours. In the scientific research, a distinction is made between three types of organisational justice: distributive (outcomes), procedural (process) and interactional justice. Several meta-analyses found that, in particular, perceived procedural justice – *'the perceived fairness of decision-making processes and the degree to which they are consistent, accurate, unbiased, and open to voice and input'* (Colquitt 2008) – is strongly associated with affective commitment (Cohen-Charash and Spector 2001; Meyer et al 2002; Colquitt 2008; Van Dierendonck and Jacobs 2012; Viswesvaran and Ones 2002). Recent longitudinal studies have confirmed that perceived organisational justice is indeed a strong predictor for employees' affective commitment (see, for example, El Akremi et al 2018).

Recognition and rewards

Recognition is generally defined as *'the assignment of personal – often non-monetary – rewards for individual efforts and work accomplishment to recognize and reinforce the desired behaviours displayed by an employee'* (Brun and Dugas 2008). There are several ways in which organisations can recognise outstanding performers, for example through compliments, gratitude, private notes or emails, public awards, or publication of their achievements in company newsletters. These recognitions are sometimes symbolic and come with no corresponding financial rewards (Wang 2017). Rewards and recognition are usually regarded as synonyms. Behavioural psychologists, however, make an important distinction between the two terms: *rewards* are tangible, transactional, conditional and expected, whereas *recognition* is intangible, relational, unconditional and unexpected. Several meta-analyses, however, have demonstrated that both recognitions and rewards are strongly associated with affective commitment. For example, a meta-analysis found that employees who are satisfied with their pay display higher levels of affective commitment (Meyer et al 2002). Likewise, a meta-analysis found that when employees feel they are recognised for the amount of effort that they put in and rewarded fairly for their contribution, they are more likely to display high affective commitment (Kooij et al 2010).

Leadership

In the domain of management, the term, 'leadership' is popular. In fact, both scholars and practitioners view leadership as an important driver of work-related outcomes. Despite its popularity, however, there is no consensus of what 'leadership' entails. As a result, many definitions exist. However, irrespective of how leadership is defined, it is clear that the way employees are led and managed profoundly impacts their work attitudes. This is certainly true for affective commitment. After all, many of the mechanisms associated with affective

commitment work through company leadership: managers can support employees in times of need, praise them for a job well done, and grant them autonomy to decide how to do their jobs. In addition, it is the company's leadership that shapes what their jobs entail, whether that job makes full use of their skills, whether they are assigned challenging and meaningful goals, and whether the organisation will fairly recognise and reward them for the work they do. However, leadership is not only about the 'what' (content) but also about the 'how' (style). Given the central role of leaders, it is no surprise that several meta-analyses have consistently found that leaders who build positive interpersonal relations with their employees (also referred to as leader–member exchange, or LMX), have a transformational (rather than a laissez-faire) style of leadership, and are trusted and appreciated by their employees, engender higher levels of employee affective commitment (Banks et al 2014; Boer et al 2016; Rockstuhl et al 2012; Jackson et al 2013; Meyer et al 2002; Zhang et al 2019).

8 Conclusion

The studies included in this review consistently demonstrate that affective commitment – employees' psychological attachment to an organisation – has a small to moderate impact on a wide range of work-related attitudes and behaviours. In addition, the review indicates that employee perceptions of social support, empowerment, recognition, justice, enriched job characteristics and transformational leadership promote affective commitment with the organisation. The 'best bets' for management practices or interventions that effectively increase commitment are to prioritise social support and autonomy.

9 Limitations

This REA aims to provide a balanced assessment of what is known in the scientific literature about organisational commitment by using the systematic review method to search and critically appraise empirical studies. To be 'rapid', concessions were made in relation to the breadth and depth of the search process, such as the exclusion of unpublished studies, the use of a limited number of databases and a focus on empirical research published in the past 20 years. As a consequence, some relevant studies may have been missed.

A second limitation concerns the critical appraisal of the studies included, which did not incorporate a comprehensive review of the psychometric properties of their tests, scales and questionnaires.

A third limitation concerns the focus on meta-analyses and longitudinal studies. For this reason, cross-sectional studies were excluded. As a consequence, new, promising findings relevant for practice may have been missed.

Given these limitations, care must be taken not to present the findings presented in this REA as conclusive.

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Appendix 1: Search terms and results

ABI/Inform Global, Business Source Elite, PsycINFO, peer-reviewed, scholarly journals, May 2020			
Search terms	**ABI**	**BSP**	**PSY**
S1: ti(commit*) OR ab('organi?ational commitment') OR ab('employee* commitment')	12,491	16,069	11,469
S2: S1 AND filter meta-analyses or systematic reviews	**142**	**125**	**165**
S3: ti(commitment) OR ab('organi?ational commitment') OR ab('employee* commitment')	8,998	9,652	9,179
S4: ab(antecedent*) OR ab(predict*)	129,046	165,204	357,563
S5: ab(longitudinal) OR ab(panel)	58,103	63,334	filter
S6: S3 AND S4 AND S5 < past 20 years	**59**	**45**	**77**

Appendix 2: Study selection

Meta-analyses or Systematic Reviews

| ABI Inform n = 142 | BSP n = 125 | PsycINFO n = 165 |

duplicates *n* = 203 ← Articles obtained from search n = 432

excluded *n* = 173 ← Titles and abstracts screened for relevance n = 229

excluded *n* = 8 ← critical appraisal & text screened for relevance n = 56

included studies *n* = 48

Single studies

| ABI Inform n = 59 | BSP n = 45 | PsycINFO n = 77 |

duplicates *n* = 58 ← Articles obtained from search n = 181

excluded *n* = 72 ← Titles and abstracts screened for relevance n = 123

excluded *n* = 39 ← critical appraisal & text screened for relevance n = 51

included studies *n* = 12

Appendix 3: Overview pooled zero-order correlations

Construct	Mean r weighted by sample size	Nr of studies (k)	Combined sample size (n)	Included studies	Comments	1st author & year
Absenteeism	−.16	30	5,748	unclear	–	Harrison 2006
	−.15	10	3,543	cross-sectional and longitudinal studies	–	Meyer 2002
Affect – trait and state (positive vs negative)	.35/−.27	15/27	4,873/8,040	not reported	–	Thoresen 2003
Age	.15	53	21,446	cross-sectional and longitudinal studies	–	Meyer 2002
	ns	34	8,282	not reported	–	Riketta 2002
Climate (affective; cognitive; instrumental)	.34; .28; .26	18; 10; 10	6,240; 3,856; 3,891	not reported	–	Carr 2003
Climate (safety)	.49	5	6,038	not reported	–	Clarke 2010
Cross-cultural differences (Hofstede, GLOBE)	ns	215	105,335	non-experimental studies	–	Fischer 2019
	ns	966	433,129	not reported	a positive association was found with Schwartz's embeddedness orientation (.37) and affective autonomy (−.45)	Meyer 2012
Economic conditions	0	383	116,766	not reported	–	Eisenberger 2019
Educational level	0	32	11,491	cross-sectional and longitudinal studies	–	Meyer 2002
Employment type (full-time vs part-time)	d = 0	38	51,231	not reported	not moderated by type of job	Thorsteinson 2003
Empowerment (particularly decision-making)	.52	18	8,566	not reported	not moderated by age or tenure	Kooij 2010
Empowerment (individual level, psychological)	.63	31	14,344	not reported	–	Seibert 2011
Empowerment (autonomy)	.37	15	6,420	not reported	–	Humphrey 2007

Fit (person–organisation)	.31	15	18,776	not reported	(perceived and subjective: .37 and .59)	Verquer 2003
Flexible work arrangements	.35	9	5,677	not reported	moderated by age (young- vs old+)	Kooij 2010
Gender	0	32	11,764	cross-sectional and longitudinal studies	–	Meyer 2002
Generational differences	0	20	19,961	cross-sectional studies	–	Costanza 2012
Integrity (perceived integrity of managers)	.48*	12	3,026	not reported	*A composite measure was used: job satisfaction, organisation communication, leader satisfaction, affect to the organisation	Davis 2006
Information-sharing (organisation/manager > employee)	.40	10	5,749	not reported	–	Kooij 2010
Job satisfaction	.56	26	11,037	cross-sectional studies	–	Boer 2016
	.65	69	23,656	cross-sectional and longitudinal studies	–	Meyer 2002
	.55	70	21,628	cross-sectional and longitudinal studies	–	Shahjehan 2019
	.40	15	6,753	not reported	–	Clarke 2020
Job variety (skills)	.28	9	4,799	not reported	–	Humphrey 2007
Job enrichment	.48	4	2,149	not reported	not moderated by age or tenure	Kooij 2010
Job involvement	.53	16	3,625	cross-sectional and longitudinal studies	–	Meyer 2002
Job level (supervisor/non-supervisor)	.17/.13	9/44	1,774/11,272	not reported	–	Riketta 2002
Job security	.51	53	22,188	not reported	–	Ng 2015 (Brown 1996)
	.33	11	3,774	not reported	not moderated by age or tenure	Kooij 2010
Justice (distributive/procedural)	.37/.43	27/52	20,257/27,432	field (correlational) studies and lab exp	–	Cohen-Charash 2001

	.40/.38	14/14	3,426/4,384	cross-sectional and longitudinal studies	–	Meyer 2002
	.49/.53	77/105	41,773/43,723	not reported	–	Colquitt 2013
	.31/.41	16/27	6,430/8,449	not reported	context: downsizing	Van Dierendock 2012
	.43/.54	6/7	1,399/2,112	not reported	–	Viswesvaran 2002
Leader effectiveness	.27	3	2,047	cross-sectional studies	mediated by transformational leadership	Boer 2016
Leader–member exchange	.49	8	2,294	cross-sectional and longitudinal studies	–	Banks 2014
	.40	33	7,489	cross-sectional studies	–	Boer 2016
	.50	92	23,381	not reported	no difference between national cultures (horizontal-individualistic = .48 vs vertical-collectivistic = .52)	Rockstuhl 2012
Leadership style: Transactional (contingent reward)	.37	51	19,015	not reported	not moderated by cross-cultural differences (Hofstede, GLOBE)	Jackson 2013
Leadership style: Transformational	.40	32	10,426	cross-sectional studies	mediated by leader–member exchange	Boer 2016
	.46	4	2,361	cross-sectional and longitudinal studies	–	Meyer 2002
	.45	102	33,246	not reported	not moderated by cross-cultural differences (Hofstede, GLOBE)	Jackson 2013
Leadership style: Laissez-faire	−.30	15	6,404	not reported	not moderated by cross-cultural differences (Hofstede, GLOBE)	Jackson 2013
Leadership style: Servant	.30	7	2,059	not reported	–	Zhang 2019
Locus of control (external)	−.29	4	1,010	cross-sectional and longitudinal studies	–	Meyer 2002

Marital status	0	9	2,239	cross-sectional and longitudinal studies	–	Meyer 2002
Occupational commitment	.51	13	3,599	cross-sectional and longitudinal studies	–	Meyer 2002
Organisation-based self-esteem	.60	12	2,152	not reported	–	Bowling 2010
Organisational climate (fav vs unfav)	.57 vs –.40	89, 40	53,865; 66,318	cross-sectional and longitudinal studies	moderated by tenure, educational background, age and org type	Arora 2012
Organisational identification	.64	12	2,929	cross-sectional and longitudinal studies	–	Lee 2015
	.78	16	4,262	not reported	no difference between scale used (AOC, Mael, OIQ, OCQ)	Riketta 2005–2
Organisational Politics (perceived)	–.41	25	7,237	not reported	–	Miller 2008
Overqualification (perceived)	–.38	14	3,645	not reported	moderated by power distance (–high vs +low)	Harari 2017
Performance (task/contextual)	.18/.25	312/32	54,471/16,348	unclear	–	Harrison 2006
	–/.37	–/84	–/27,640	not reported	moderated by organisation type (public– vs private+)	Cetin 2015
	–/ .23*	–/40	–/11,416	not reported	moderated by tenure (curve-linear, increases before 10 years, decreases after) * objective measures	Ng 2011
	.18/.25	87/42	20,973/10,747	not reported	–	Riketta 2002
	–/.37	–/70	–/ 21,628	cross-sectional and longitudinal studies	–	Shahjehan 2019
	.16/.32	25/22	5,938/6,277	cross-sectional and longitudinal studies	OCB moderated by location (US = .26 vs non-US = .46)	Meyer 2002
	–/.28	–/32	–/16,348	not reported	–	Zhao 2007 (Lepine 2002)

Personality traits (Es; Ex; Op; Agr; Cons)	.24*; .28; .09; .31; .24	50	18,262	not reported	*concerns emotional stability	Choi 2015
	−.19* ; .24; .11; .29; .25	46 to 67	11,000 to 23,000	not reported	*concerns neuroticism	Rubenstein 2019
Political skills	.28	8	1,818	not reported	−	Munyon 2015
Psychological capital (hope, resilience, optimism, efficacy)	.48	9	2,072	experimental, quasi-experimental, and correlational studies	moderated by type of industry (manufacturing– vs service+)	Avey 2011
Psychological contract breach	−.39	39	19,407	not reported	moderated by age (R^2 = .05) (younger+ vs older workers–)	Bal 2008
	−.38	20	12,523	not reported	−	Zhao 2007
Rewards & recognition	.49	11	2,491	not reported	not moderated by age or tenure	Kooij 2010
	.35	9	1,931	cross-sectional and longitudinal studies	−	Meyer 2002
Role ambiguity	−.39	12	3,774	cross-sectional and longitudinal studies	−	Meyer 2002
Role conflict	−.30	9	3,225	cross-sectional and longitudinal studies	−	Meyer 2002
Self-efficacy	.11	3	580	cross-sectional and longitudinal studies	−	Meyer 2002
Stress	−.21	5	2,189	cross-sectional and longitudinal studies	−	Meyer 2002
	−.43	39	13,244	not reported	−	Podsakoff 2007
hindrance stress/challenge stress	−.52/.04	32/7	11,063/2,181	not reported	−	Podsakoff 2007
Supervision satisfaction	.42	4	987	cross-sectional and longitudinal studies	−	Meyer 2002

Variable	r	k	N	Study type	Moderation	Source
Support (supervisor & co-workers)	.77	12	69,313	not reported	–	Humphrey 2007
Support, (organisational)	.67	66	15,760	not reported	not moderated by organisation type	Ahmed 2015
	.63	18	7,128	cross-sectional and longitudinal studies	–	Meyer 2002
	.71	112	42,874	not reported	–	Riggle 2009
	.73	42	11,706	not reported	–	Ng 2015 (Rhoades 2002)
Team–member exchange	.45	9	2,630	cross-sectional and longitudinal studies	–	Banks 2014
Tenure (organisation/position)	.16/0	51/14	18,630/6,796	cross-sectional and longitudinal studies	–	Meyer 2002
	ns/–	24/–	8,282/–	not reported	–	Riketta 2002
Time period (past three decades)	0	383	116,766	not reported	–	Eisenberger 2019
Training opportunities	.42	22	19,006	not reported	moderated by tenure	Kooij 2010
Trust (organisational)	.57	20	3,831	not reported	–	Ng 2015 (Dirks 2002)
Turnover (intention/actual)	−.59/–	74/–	19,992/–	non-experimental studies	–	Fischer 2019
	−/−.22	–/66	–/26,296	not reported	not corrected for base rate	Harrison 2006
	−.58/–	97/–	41,002/–	not reported	–	Ng 2015 (Cooper 2005)
	−.55/–	29/–	13,502/–	not reported	not moderated by type of worker or industry	Ozkan 2020
	−.58/−.19	88/–	35,494/–	not reported	–	Zhao 2007 (Tett 1993)
	−/−.27	–/67	–/26,540	not reported	–	Ng 2015 (Griffeth 2000)
	−.51/−.17	24/8	8,724/2,636	cross-sectional and longitudinal studies	–	Meyer 2002
Voice (constructive; prohibitive)	.14; .03ns	14; 12	11,248; 3,431	not reported	–	Chamberlin 2017

Wellbeing (psychological)	.27	5	3,161	not reported	–	Clarke 2010
Work–family conflict	–.20	10	3,210	cross-sectional and longitudinal studies	–	Meyer 2002
Work–life policies	.08	5	2,020	not reported	–	Kooij 2010
Workload	–.11	15	22,695	not reported	–	Bowling 2013
Work meaningfulness (task significance)	.44	6	39,463	not reported	–	Humphrey 2007

Overview of excluded studies

1	Ahmed 2015 II	Same samples as Ahmed 2015.
2	Bauer 2007	Too granular and specific: examines the relationship between newcomers' information-seeking behaviour and organisational socialisation tactics and organisational commitment, moderated by newcomer adjustment (role clarity, self-efficacy/task mastery, and social acceptance).
3	Chiaburu 2013	Examines whether the influence of leader support, co-worker support, and organisational support on change-oriented citizenship holds over and above job satisfaction, organisational commitment, and intention to quit.
4	Riketta 2005–1	No separate correlations on organisational commitment are reported (only composite score: organisational attachment).
5	Saks 2007	Concerns new employees.
6	Tahjono 2014	Primary study.
7	Wright 2002	No differentiation between type of performance.
8	Wu 2019	Examines the antecedents of 'psychological capital': a positive psychological state including the four capacities of self-efficacy (or self-confidence), hope, optimism and resilience > no separate correlations with organisational commitment are reported.

Appendix 4: Measures of organisational commitment

Organisational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ) (Mowday et al 1979)

'Listed below are a series of statements that represent possible feelings that individuals might have about the company or organisation for which they work. With respect to your own feelings about the particular organisation for which you are now working (company name) please indicate the degree of your agreement or disagreement with each statement by checking one of the seven alternatives below each statement.'

1. I am willing to put in a great deal of effort beyond that normally expected in order to help this organisation be successful.

2. I talk up this organisation to my friends as a great organisation to work for.

3. I feel very little loyalty to this organisation. (R)

4. I would accept almost any type of job assignment in order to keep working for this organisation.

5. I find that my values and the organisation's values are very similar.

6. I am proud to tell others that I am part of this organisation.

7. I could just as well be working for a different organisation as long as the type of work was similar. (R)

8. This organisation really inspires the very best in me in the way of job performance.

9. It would take very little change in my present circumstances to cause me to leave this organisation. (R)

10. I am extremely glad that I chose this organisation to work for over others I was considering at the time I joined.

11. There's not too much to be gained by sticking with this organisation indefinitely. (R)

12. Often. I find it difficult to agree with this organisation's policies on important matters relating to its employees. (R)

13. I really care about the fate of this organisation.

14. For me this is the best of all possible organisations for which to work.

15. Deciding to work for this organisation was a definite mistake on my part. (R)

Responses to each item are measured on a seven-point scale with scale point anchors labelled: (1) strongly disagree: (2) moderately disagree; (3) slightly disagree: (4) neither disagree nor agree: (5) slightly agree: (6) moderately agree: (7) strongly agree. An 'R' denotes a negatively phrased and reverse scored item.

Affective Commitment Scale (ACS; Allen and Meyer 1990)

As well as the ACS measure for affective commitment, we also present below Allen and Meyer's scales for continuance and normative commitment. Responses to all items are on seven-point scales ('strongly disagree' to 'strongly agree').

Affective Commitment Scale items

1. I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career with this organisation.

2. I enjoy discussing my organisation with people outside it.

3. I really feel as if this organisation's problems are my own.

4   I think that I could easily become as attached to another organisation as I am to this one. (R)

5   I do not feel like 'part of the family' at my organisation. (R)

6   I do not feel 'emotionally attached' to this organisation. (R)

7   This organisation has a great deal of personal meaning for me.

8   I do not feel a strong sense of belonging to my organisation. (R)

Continuance Commitment Scale items

1   I am not afraid of what might happen if I quit my job without having another one lined up. (R)

2   It would be very hard for me to leave my organisation right now, even if I wanted to.

3   Too much in my life would be disrupted if I decided I wanted to leave my organisation now.

4   It wouldn't be too costly for me to leave my organisation now. (R)

5   Right now, staying with my organisation is a matter of necessity as much as desire.

6   I feel that I have too few options to consider leaving this organisation.

7   One of the few serious consequences of leaving this organisation would be the scarcity of available alternatives.

8   One of the major reasons I continue to work for this organisation is that leaving would require considerable personal sacrifice – another organisation may not match the overall benefits I have here.

Normative Commitment Scale items

1   I think that people these days move from company to company too often.

2   I do not believe that a person must always be loyal to his or her organisation. (R)

3   Jumping from organisation to organisation does not seem at all unethical to me. (R)

4   One of the major reasons I continue to work for this organisation is that I believe that loyalty is important and therefore feel a sense of moral obligation to remain.

5   If I got another offer for a better job elsewhere I would not feel it was right to leave my organisation.

6   I was taught to believe in the value of remaining loyal to one organisation.

7   Things were better in the days when people stayed with one organisation for most of their careers.

8   I do not think that wanting to be a 'company man' or 'company woman' is sensible anymore. (R)
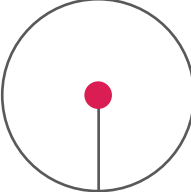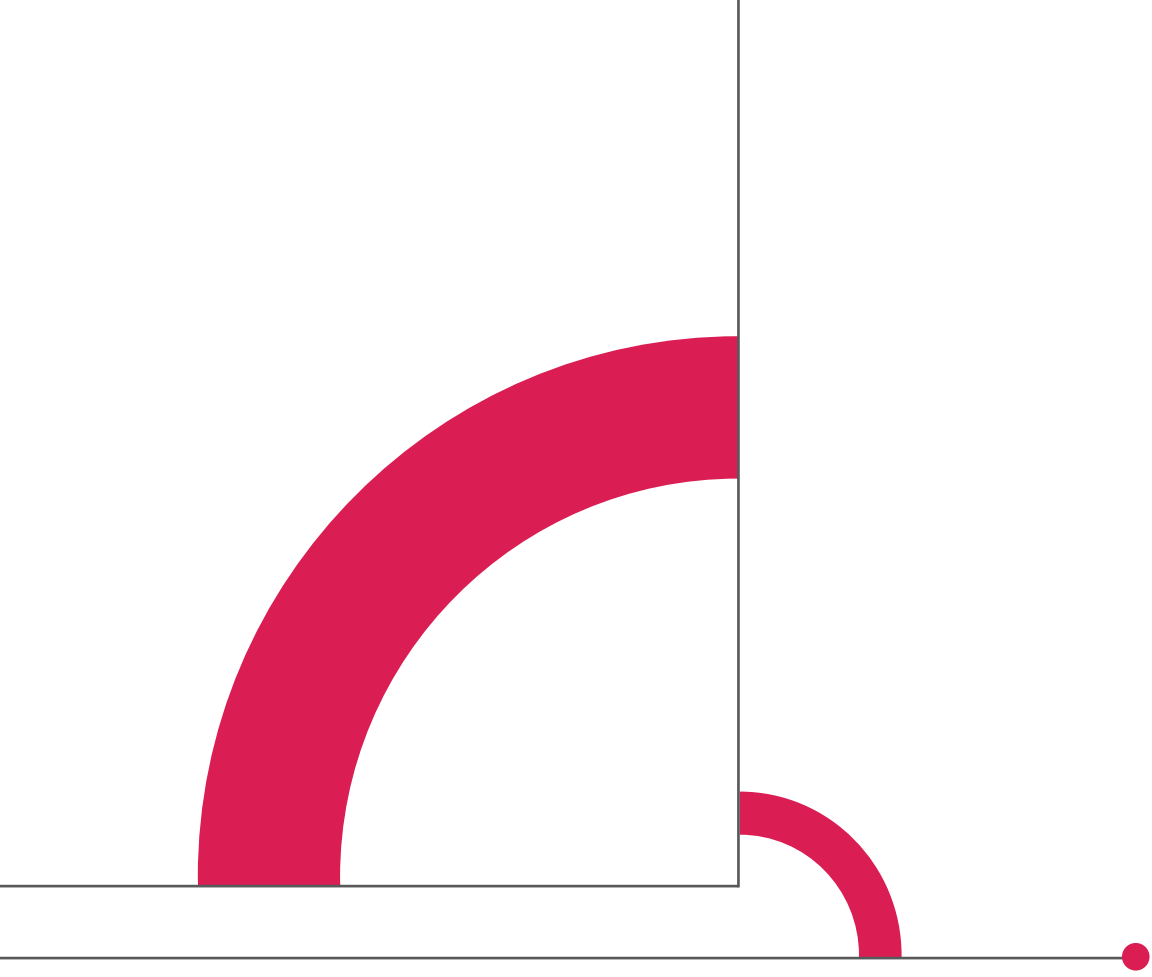
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