

LEARNING TO COMMIT: EXAMINING THE PREDICTIVE RELATIONSHIP OF  
LEARNING CULTURE UPON EMPLOYEE COMMITMENT

by

Timothy Russell Shives

Liberty University

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

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## ABSTRACT

This quantitative, correlational study investigated if a predictive relationship exists between an organization's learning culture and organizational commitment. The research design for this quantitative study was three bivariate linear regressions as the statistical tool to test three null hypotheses ( $p < 0.017$ ). The predictor variable for this study were the organization's learning culture scores, as measured by the Dimensions of the Learning Organization Questionnaire-Abbreviated (DLOQ-A), and the criterion variables for this study was the organization's employee commitment profile, comprising (1) affective commitment scores, (2) normative commitment scores, and (3) continuance commitment scores, as measured by the Revised Version of the Three Component Model (TCM) of the Employee Commitment Survey. The population for this study was a diverse, cross-functional employee workforce at a medium-sized, information technology-centered public-sector organization numbering 430 employees. Data collection occurred through asynchronous virtual interaction through web survey methodology during the Coronavirus/COVID-19 global pandemic. The results demonstrate a positive predictive relationship between learning culture scores and affective and normative commitment, respectively; and a negative predictive relationship between learning culture scores and continuance commitment. More research is needed to investigate other factors that may account for the remaining variability in predicting learning cultures and employee commitment. Furthermore, research needs to be done to explore how the learning organization impacts employee commitment.

*Keywords:* Learning organization, learning culture, organizational learning, learning structure, DLOQ/DLOQ-A, organizational commitment, affective commitment, normative commitment, continuance commitment, employee commitment, TCM

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### **Dedication**

To my love and my partner in life's journey, Fanny. As with everything I do, this is dedicated to you... And for Gabriel and Eleanor, I hope that one day you will learn of the sacrifices that your mother endured so that your dad could complete this work. I hope that you will also learn the lessons of patience, dedication, and serenity your mother taught me during this time as you begin your own journey into the great adventure of lifelong learning. May you both "grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." - 2 Peter 3:18, *NIV*.

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### **List of Abbreviations**

Affective Commitment Score (ACS)

Continental United States (CONUS)

Continuance Commitment Score (CCS)

Dimensions of the Learning Organization Questionnaire-Abbreviated (DLOQ-A)

Information Technology (IT)

Institutional Review Board (IRB)

Learning Culture Score (LCS)

Learning Organization (LO)

Normative Commitment Score (NCS)

Organizational Commitment Profile (OCP)

Outside the Continental United States (OCONUS)

Three Component Model of Employee Commitment Survey (TCM)

## **CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION**

### **Overview**

Thousands of years ago, the wise King Solomon wrote, “Listen to advice and accept instruction, that you may gain wisdom in the future” (Proverbs 19:20, ESV). With that perspective in mind, generations of educators have attempted to instruct their pupils in all manner of subjects for the betterment of society. This has led to Western society’s focus on the development of the individual scholar. However, in the course of the late twentieth century and particularly in the past few decades, academics began to explore the possibility that organizations may learn similarly to the way that people learn. This exploration forms the foundation of the learning organization, and it is this phenomenon that will be compared with the related phenomenon of organizational commitment through the course of this paper. This first chapter will briefly explore the backgrounds of both phenomena, discuss the problem and purpose of this research, explain the significance of the study, and then introduce several terms that will assist in understanding both the learning organization and organizational commitment.

### **Background**

As employees enter and leave the various organizations in the course of their career, they are enriched and grow through their expanding knowledge. However, is it possible for an organization to also grow and learn as individuals do? The possibility that organizations can learn and, therefore, maintain a collective consciousness of knowledge, has developed into a concept called “the learning organization,” which went against the grounded epistemology (Agrys, 1973; Odor, 2019). This is because Classical Management Theory saw the organization as a collective machine of moving parts, and therefore unable to develop and learn since it does not have the capacity to develop holistically, or with a collective consciousness or memory

(Rocha Araújo, Correia Sampaio, Costa Castro, Vieira Pinheiro, & Macedo, 2014). As organizational experts began to see trends within the walls of organizations, they observed that there are often shared cultures and behaviors among the people who make up these organizations. Therefore, the concept of the learning organization led many experts in the organizational and educational leadership field to espouse the belief that organizations learn in a similar fashion as the people who compose the workforce within these organizations (Agrys & Schon, 1978; Odor, 2019).

During the same time period, as the learning organization was introduced as a multi-disciplinary phenomenon, multiple studies in the field of organizational behavior and management began to analyze the various reasons why employees leave their place of employment (Odor, 2019; Valaski, Malucelli, & Reinehr, 2012). Consequentially, the phenomenon of organizational commitment was also studied. While many of the factors that comprise the conceptual framework of the learning organization appear to be related to those that comprise organizational commitment's framework, there has been little academic research that has analyzed both phenomena to determine if there is any relationship between the learning organization and organizational commitment (Balay, 2012; Erdem & Uçar, 2013; Odor, 2019).

The concept of the learning organization has been thoroughly established in recent literature. In developing a conceptual framework of the learning organization, Klinge (2015) argued that it is feasible for organizations to be mentored, much like people are taught, and that organizations can develop and learn based on the lessons experienced by their collective workforce. In another analysis that compared the learning organization to stakeholder theory, it has been argued that stakeholder-focused organizational learning drives organizations to respond to their sponsors and workforce (Mena & Chabowski, 2015).

In a similar fashion to Klinge's (2015) study, Desai (2014) suggested that organizations can improve by investigating and learning from failures, while also discussing in juxtaposition how poor organizational performance can influence illegal activity. Schilling and Fang (2014) stated that the interpersonal network structure of an organization directly affects the diffusion and recombination of ideas and can thus facilitate or impede organizational learning. The current literature demonstrates that the idea of the learning organization is applicable throughout the field of education and all areas related to organizational understanding.

Historically, the theories and conceptual models of the learning organization developed as an outgrowth of the field of organizational psychology. In the 1960s, organizational psychologists began to study organizations and noted patterns and trends in their employee behavior. During this period, considerable effort was put forth to discover the determinants of factors such as employee self-esteem. Organizational psychologists such as Korman (1971) developed the theory that employee self-esteem was determined by organizational experience. The shared employee experience evolved into the framework in organizational psychology of the organization-based conceptualization of a collective consciousness (Pierce, 2004).

The work that transitioned the learning organization from a theory and concept in the scholastic area and brought it to the forefront of the business and educational field was Senge's (1990) *The fifth discipline*. Senge (1990) brought forth the conceptual framework of organizational systems thinking that presented the organization as a collective group of people. According to Senge (1990), organizations experience development and learning in a similar manner to the varied groups of people that comprise the organization. For nearly a decade, Senge's (1990) ideas were academically supported primarily, and almost exclusively, through qualitative methods such as case studies. In the latter part of the 1990s and early 2000s, Marsick



and Watkins (2003) developed the Dimensions of the Learning Organization Questionnaire (DLOQ) and its abbreviated version the Dimensions of the Learning Organization Questionnaire (DLOQ-A), which allowed researchers to quantitatively study organizational learning.

Presently, the learning organization continues to remain a topic of vigorous discussion as many scholars and strategists advocate that all future global organizations should seek to become learning organizations through means such as learning from failure—a concept conceptually referred to as “failing fast” in order to adapt and improve the organization’s response to its respective environment (Dahlin, Chuang, & Roulet, 2018; Frese & Keith, 2015; Hofmann & Frese, 2011; Lei, Naveh, & Novikov, 2016). This advocacy of concepts of rapid adaptation to the environment is supported in today’s high-speed and dynamic culture. This is due to the ever-changing environment of the digital era as well as the international nature of business, and other organizations often crossing and narrowing international borders (Katane, Kristova, Vjatere, & Katans, 2015).

Within a social setting, the learning organization theory and conceptual framework has significance in almost all aspects of the societal order. This includes education systems as well as civic and commercial organizations. Klinge (2015) offered that the learning organization is essential to the adult education development within the modern organization, because it forms an environment that nurtures knowledge for both the student and mentee as well as the teacher and mentor. The learning organization helps to facilitate a reciprocal and collaborative learning partnership for systematic mentorship.

Furthermore, the concept of the learning organization has relevance outside the traditional learning literature throughout industry and academia. In analyzing the history of large public-sector organizations, many modern scholars can attain new insights into the phenomenon.

For instance, Daddis (2013) conducted an analysis of the organizational learning of the U.S. Army and its opponents in the Vietnam War, the North Vietnamese Army and the Viet Cong. In this analysis, Daddis (2013) argued that the U.S. Army had a much slower organizational learning process than its belligerents, and this likely influenced the outcome of the Vietnam War. In contrast to Daddis's (2013) analysis of the U.S. Army in Vietnam, General Stanley McChrystal used the principles of the learning organization and was able to transform the U.S. Joint Special Operations Command (JSOC) into a "team of teams" that effectively adapted to meet the challenges of fighting overseas terrorist organizations in the post-9/11 era (Norton, 2018; Reese, 2018c). Both examples are relevant to this study as they relate to the overall organizational culture on which the sample population resides.

In relating the learning organization to the greater society, community, and overall education system, school leaders are now reaching the discovery that they are often leading a learning organization that exists in a living synergistic social system (Siergrist, Green, Brockmeier, Tsemunhu, & Prate, 2013). This is because the learning organization is a system that is only part of the greater community.

### **Problem Statement**

The current literature for organizational learning covers the topic in relation to human resource development, as well as systems and strategic thinking, but fails to discuss how organizational learning influences employee retention. The literature suggests that advocating for organizational learning is a useful way for organizations to remain competitive in a fluid environment (Nazem & Mozaiini, 2014). However, the literature demonstrates a gap in respect of effectively addressing how organization learning relates to employee commitment and employee retention.

The research concept of organizational commitment establishes that organizational commitment is a primary driver of employee retention. The studies on organizational commitment and retention discuss numerous factors that influence employee retention. These include demographic factors (Jena, 2015), employee perception of justice (Ölçer, 2015), self-efficacy, and other psychological aspects (Park & Jung, 2015). However, there is no clear relationship in the literature on organizational commitment that effectively demonstrates a relationship to organizational learning and the learning organization (Valaski et al., 2012). The most recent and comprehensive study that looked at the relationship was Erdem and Uçar (2013), which used the “Learning Organization Perception Scale” (Güçlü & Türkoğlu, 2003) and the “Organizational Commitment Scale” (Balay, 2000) to measure compliance for the employee commitment. Thus, it is understood throughout the literature that “there is a limited number of studies that can manifest the relationship between learning organization and organizational commitment” (Erdem & Uçar, 2013, 1529). Therefore, the problem is that the literature has not addressed the issue of employee commitment through organizational learning, and there is consequently a gap in the literature that establishes whether there is a relationship between organizational learning and organizational commitment (Balay, 2012; Erdem & Uçar, 2013).

### **Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this quantitative, correlational study is to determine if a relationship exists between organizational learning and organizational commitment. The predictor variable of organizational learning will be generally defined as the Learning Culture Score (LCS) as measured by the Dimensions of the Learning Organization Questionnaire-Abbreviated (DLOQ-A). The criterion variables will be generally defined as the three subscales of the Organizational Commitment Profile’s (OCP), the Affective Commitment Score (ACS), Normative Commitment

Scale (NCS), and Continuance Commitment Score (CCS), as measured by the Three Component Model (TCM) of Employee Commitment Survey. The population for this study is the employee workforce at a medium-sized public-sector organization primarily in the information technology field with its employees dispersed across multiple locations throughout the Continental United States (CONUS).

### **Significance of the Study**

By conducting this study, this research seeks to address the gap in the literature by determining whether there is a relationship between organizational learning and organizational commitment. Therefore, this study is important as it relates to other studies that investigate the same issue in the wider body of knowledge in the topic of organizational learning. For instance, while Klinge (2015) argued that organizations can be mentored much like people, their study noted that no research suggested that such mentoring or any other organizational learning attribute is related to organizational commitment. Mena and Chabowski (2015) note that stakeholder-focused organizational learning drives organizations to respond to their stakeholders. They defined stakeholders as the “customers, employees, suppliers, shareholders, regulators, and communities” (Mena & Chabowski, 2015). However, it was inconclusive in their study whether these factors transpired to the organization’s employees, who are also stakeholders in the organization.

Desai (2015) suggested that an organization can improve by investigating and learning from its failures. This relationship of knowledge through learning did not clearly delineate organizational learning from the issues that arise from human resource challenges. Schilling and Fang (2014) noted the importance of the interpersonal network structure of an organization, but

they did not relay how the learning network facilitated employee commitment and/or employee retention.

This study will add to the existing body of knowledge of the learning organization by addressing the knowledge gap in its relationship to organizational commitment. Because of this research, the study will build on the understanding of the importance of organizational learning as it relates to employee commitment. Therefore, this research seeks to address an issue that is relevant to the field of education and throughout the public and private sector organizations. This study will investigate the relationship between organizational learning and organizational commitment and help to determine if there is a relationship between these two phenomena.

The gap in the literature demonstrates that a relationship may exist, and therefore, this gap warrants this correlational study. The limitation of this research is the ability to gain complete consensus in an organization through convenience sampling, which may limit the strength of the statistical inference. Therefore, the inference of the results of this research may apply only to the specific sample of the general population identified in this study. The threat to validity is addressed in the fact that in using the DLOQ-A and the TCM, the researcher has selected two reliable and validated research instruments to gather data for this study and will follow the instrument procedures precisely. The researcher intends to follow the instruments' procedures as specifically instructed by the authors of the research instruments.

### **Research Questions**

The research questions for this study are:

**RQ1:** Does the *learning culture score* of a diverse, cross-functional employee workforce at a medium-sized technology-centered public-sector workplace, predict its *affective commitment score*?

**RQ2:** Does the *learning culture score* of a diverse, cross-functional employee workforce at a medium-sized technology-centered public-sector workplace, predict its *normative commitment score*?

**RQ3:** Does the *learning culture score* of a diverse, cross-functional employee workforce at a medium-sized technology-centered public-sector workplace, predict its *continuance commitment score*?

### **Definitions**

Several terms that are pertinent to the study of the learning organization and an organization's employee commitment are defined as follows:

**Learning organization.** This is an organization that continually expands its capacity to create the desired results and nurtures new and expansive patterns of thinking (Jamali, Khoury, & Sahyoun, 2006; Senge, 1994). The learning organization is an entity where the management and employees value learning at work and organizational learning and thereby set up a climate for learning, known as a learning culture, the supports the expansion of the learning organization into its learning structure.

**Learning at work.** This is the lowest, first level in the development of the learning organization where the employees learn while working (Örtenblad & Koris, 2014). Often basic learning tools such as on-the-job training fall in line with learning at work.

**Organizational learning.** This is the second level of the learning organization and is a subordinate process of the learning organization. In organizational learning, management often has an awareness of the need for different levels of learning and thereby establishes a learning culture (Örtenblad & Koris, 2014).

**Climate for learning.** Third level of a learning organization; this is where an organization supports and facilitates the learning of its individuals and creates a learning atmosphere (Örtenblad & Koris, 2014). With a climate for learning, the learning organization can retain knowledge even when individual employees leave.

**Learning structure.** The fourth and highest level of a learning organization, this refers to an organization with a flexible, decentralized, informal and organic team-based structure which enables its members to make their own decisions in order to satisfy the continuously changing customer expectations quickly, and which needs continual learning and redundancy to occur in order for it to attain and retain flexibility. (Örtenblad & Koris, 2014, p. 176).

The learning structure is the ideal state of the learning organization.

**Organizational commitment.** An employee's rationale for remaining with an organization (Allen & Meyer, 1996).

**Intent to stay.** Tied to the phenomenon of organizational commitment, this is the employee's likelihood of remaining with their organization (Cowden, Cummings, & Profetto-Mcgrath, 2011).

**Affective commitment.** This is the employee's desire-based rationale for remaining with an organization and is considered the first or highest form of organizational commitment (Allen

& Meyer, 1996). Employees who have affective commitment have an intent to stay based on their individual wish to remain with the organization.

**Normative commitment.** This is the employee's obligation-based rationale for remaining with an organization and is considered the second or middle level of organizational commitment (Allen & Meyer, 1996). Employees who have normative commitment have an intent to stay based on their individual feeling of responsibility to remain with the organization, but not necessarily a desire to remain.

**Continuance commitment.** This is the employee's cost-based rationale for remaining with an organization and is considered the third or lowest level of organizational commitment (Allen & Meyer, 1996). Employees who have continuance commitment have an intent to stay based on their individual assessment or fear of the opportunity cost or economic risk of leaving.



## CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

### Overview

The current body of work in the studies in the learning organization and organizational commitment is the topic of both theory and practical scholarship. The phenomenon of the learning organization became prevalent more than two decades ago when it was first introduced as a concept to senior management at large-scale corporations. In the past decade, the learning organization has revolutionized how organizational psychologists and educators view organizational learning. Gronhaug and Stone (2012) argue that while learning organizations have been around for more than a century, for the most part “learning organizations have been embraced in theory but are still surprisingly rare” (p. 261). Therefore, while much is currently available in print about the learning organization, the relationship of the learning organization with other similar organizational study topics such as organizational commitment is rarely explored.

There are developments throughout the literature and research regarding the concept of the learning organization and organizational commitment—but these are typically not presented together in a systematic relevant discussion. In contrast to organization learning which is limited with other organizational phenomena, organizational commitment has demonstrated a positive association, where an “employee’s identifying with the organization and his/her desire to maintain the relationship with the organization” (Vagharseyyedin, 2016, p. 107).

The purpose of this literature review is to synthesize the information currently available about the learning organization, when compared to the topic of organizational commitment. The themes of organizational learning and commitment are typically drawn in relation to the traditional bureaucratic organization. Furthermore, in much of the literature on the topic, studies

on organizational learning and organizational commitment tend to emerge from the field of information management, or one closely connected to it. Furthermore, the significance of this literature review is that the learning organization and organizational commitment are of relevance throughout multiple fields of study, including business, psychology, and education. This is because people tend to live, study, and work under some type of a structural hierarchy. Furthermore, this literature review is relevant, and consequently it has value to academia and as well as the rest of society in presenting information on how these organizations learn, how they manage information, and how their employees are committed to the organization.

### **The Learning Organization's Conceptual and Theoretical Framework**

This section will discuss the conceptual or theoretical framework behind the two phenomena considered in this study: the learning organization and organizational commitment. This will provide background information that will assist by providing the contextual understanding of these phenomena. Thereby, this section will aid in understanding how this study contributes to the body of literature in the topics of both the learning organization and organizational commitment.

#### **Classical Management Theory**

Many of the theories in the organizational behavioral studies trace their roots back to Classical Management Theory from the Industrial Revolution. Classical Management Theory was developed by French engineer Henri Fayol within the scope of the economic environment of the Second Industrial Revolution (Rocha Araújo et al., 2014) and scholars note that the Classical Management Theory “particularly aimed to increase businesses’ efficiency through their organization and the application of scientifically-based general management principles” (p. 112).

Because Classical Management Theory used the scientific method to approach organizations, the organization was often seen by these theorists as a machine that acted with a cause-and-effect response to its environment. Often the employees who worked in these organizations were not seen as valued members of the organization. Instead, these employees were viewed as mere components of the organizational machine—more akin to gears and sprockets than as valued members of the organization.

### **Roots of Modern Organizational Behavior Studies**

In the 20th century, as the field of organizational behavior and psychology was expanded upon, the emphasis was placed on studying organizations as systems and collectives of people rather than as parts of the organization machine. Topics such as employee satisfaction and commitment to the organization were analyzed outside the framework previously dominated by the Classical Management Theory.

Therefore, the roots of the learning organization originated approximately 50 years ago, when organizational psychologists suggested employee self-esteem was determined by organizational experience (Korman, 1971, p. 593). Because employees formed the building blocks within their workplace, organizational and behavioral psychologists deduced a potential relationship between individual employee self-esteem and organizational behavior—meaning, in theory, the organization’s culture and attitude were derived from the employees’ self-esteem.

It was from this standpoint that, according to Pierce (2004), “[r]esearch focused on an organization-based conceptualization of the self... started to emerge” (p. 592). The connection between the employee perception of “self” and the perception’s role in personal “self-esteem” was studied. This was combined with a conceptual relation to the organization’s collective

perception of the organization's "self-esteem" in studies for feasible connections (Korman, 1971; Pierce, 2004).

The postulation arose that instead of behaving like hierarchical constructs based on processes and formal rules and regulations, organizations often acted more like enormous clusters of people. It would be difficult to exaggerate the influence upon the field of the theory that organizations behave less akin to the Classical Management Theory's machine and more like large communities of people. Following the publication of Senge's (1990) seminal book, *The fifth discipline: The art & practice of the learning organization*, the research on the learning organization (LO) proliferated. (Santa, 2015, p. 242). Senge argues that when organizational learning is based on systems thinking it allows organizations to excel in dynamically changing environments.

Since the Industrial Revolution in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Classical Management Theory dominated organizational literature. The primary tenet of the Classical Management Theory is that organizations behave much like large machines. However, as noted by Alvesson and Willmott (1992), likely because of the Industrial Revolution many researchers who analyzed the modern management theoretical lens became disturbed that many employees felt isolated and alienated from their work environment. This caused the birth of organizational theory as well as the many professional fields based on organizational theory such as organizational psychology.

### **Organization Theory**

The father of modern organizational theory was Selznick (1948), who analyzed the relationships between organizations and, within organizations, among the individuals that form the organization. Selznick (1948) espoused the notion that an organization is a society within itself. Therefore, an organization is also a system of cooperative relationships tied together for a

common good. The “common good” in Selznick’s (1948) opinion was mainly to improve efficiency and effectiveness. According to Selznick (1948), organizations are a coalition of interdependent components working together in “an adaptive response of a cooperative system to a stable need” (p. 35). According to Senge (1994), when organizational learning theory is combined with learning organization theory, the adaptive aspects of the two prove Selznick’s (1948) common good. This is because the organizational learning assists the organization by speeding up the cycle for the organization’s improvement process.

In the 1970s, organizational psychologists such as Argyris (1973) discovered that the hierarchy constructs of the past were too formal. Argyris (1973) argued that organizations needed to develop the fluidity of information flow between the interpersonal relationships that exist within a learning organization. The concept of fluidity of information flow became the foundation for what would later be referred to as the learning organization (Levitt & March, 1988).

### **Organizational Learning Theory and the Learning Organization**

The roots of the learning organization are based on the theoretical and conceptual models of organizational learning that have arisen in the past 50 years. Historically, the concept of the learning organization advanced through the field as an outgrowth from the discipline of organizational psychology. The origins of the modern organizational theory go back to the 1960s, when organizational psychologists began studying organizations for configurations and developments that would explain the various aspects of the organization behavior, to include the various aspects of the organization’s employees’ behavior.

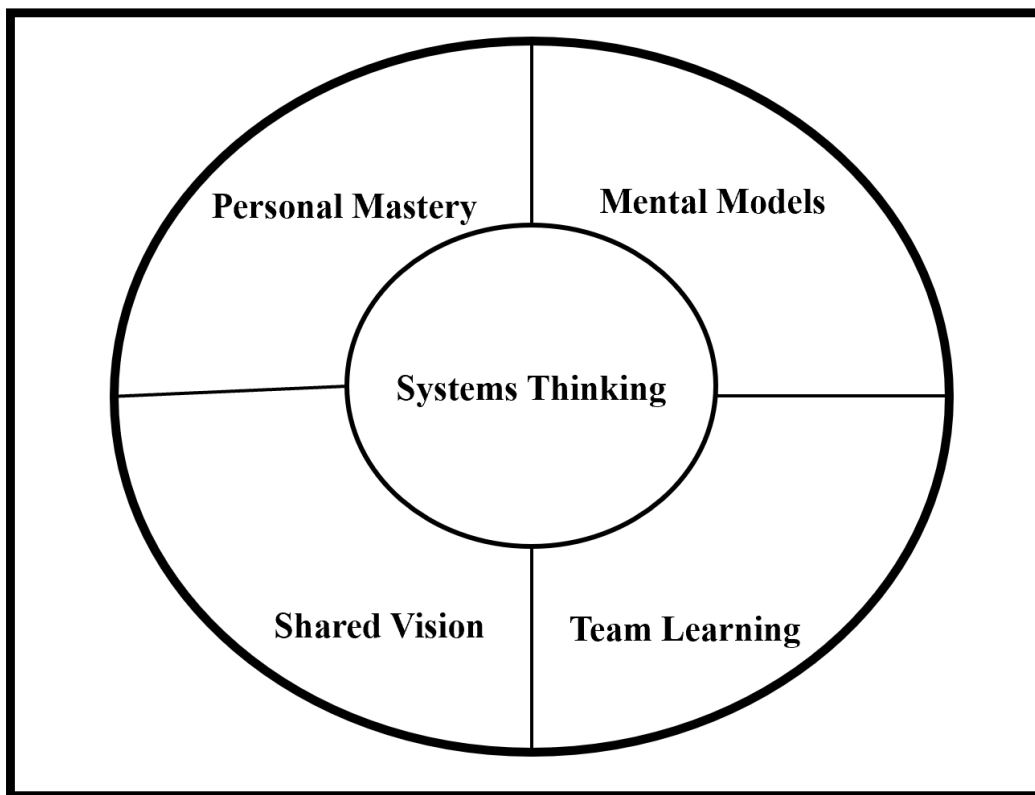
### **Organizational Learning**

Subsequently, structural psychologists such as Cangelosi and Dill (1965) and Korman (1971) advanced the notion that the worker's self-esteem was a determinant caused by organizational knowledge and shared experience. This is because Korman (1971) argued that the typical organization maintains organization-wide stories and legends that factored into a shared repository of knowledge and experience. This communal structural understanding progressed into the framework in organizational and behavioral psychology that is commonly referred to as the conceptualization of the organization as a self-existent entity to be studied (Pierce, 2004).

Bounding off the conceptual understanding of psychologists such as Korman (1971), Argyris and Schon (1978) were the first to coin the phrase "organizational learning" to denote an organization's capacity to learn through feedback loops. Shrivastava (1983) and Fiol and Lyles (1985) as well as Levitt and March (1988) expanded upon Argyris and Schon's learning organization by stratifying the various ways that organizations are capable of learning as well as the organization's shared memory—the means whereby organizations have a collective understanding of the lessons learned by their employees.

With the publication of his 1990 text, *The fifth discipline: The art and practice of the learning organization*, Peter Senge introduced organizational learning as a concept for mass consumption on the part of non-technical readers. Senge's text was seminal in that it also caused a divergence from the process of organizational learning and the entity of the learning organization. In his theory of the learning organization, Senge introduced the five disciplines as the concept of "focusing on Personal Mastery, Improving Mental Models, and Building Shared Vision, Team Learning, and Systems Thinking to analyzing the mystery of the learning organization" (Liu, 2018, p. 2144).

In Senge's theoretical model, the learning organization starts by stressing that its employees seek personal mastery. The organization will then assess the mental models—or assumptions that form the epistemological foundation from which the organization views its environment. Then the learning organization's leaders build the shared vision. Finally, the learning organization implements and proposes multiple means of team learning so that the collective is able to learn and continue to grow and adapt to its environment. The final discipline of the organization—the fifth discipline—is systems thinking. Through systems thinking, the learning organization has a shared understanding that it does not exist as insular machine, but as a living entity that is able to respond to the environment. For a visual depiction of Senge's conceptual model of the learning organization, see Figure 1, below.



*Figure 1.* Conceptual framework of the learning organization, adapted from Senge (1990) by Liu (2018).

The conceptual framework of the learning organization depicted above demonstrates the relationships among the five disciplines of the learning organization, personal mastery, mental models, shared vision, team learning, and systems thinking. Senge (1990) referred to these as the five disciplines, with the most important being systems thinking, as it forms the link between all four other disciplines. In this framework of the learning organization, an organization that does not have all of these five disciplines cannot be referred to as a strong learning organization. Building on Senge's work, theorists developed other conceptual frameworks for organizational learning. These include Garvin (1993), Gardiner and Whiting (1997), Goh (1998), Porth, McCall, and Bausch (1999), which were rooted in the theoretical origins of Argyris and Schon (1978) but expanded on this based on the evolving concepts of the period.

### **The Learning Organization Models I and II**

Essentially, after *The Fifth Discipline*, most of the academic literature began to discuss how learning organizations implement the process of organizational learning through various dimensions of learning (Geroy & Wright, 2000; Griego, Easterby-Smith, & Niccolini, 2000; Kogut & Zander, 1993; Marsick & Watkins, 2003; Örtenblad, 2002; Senge 1990; Somech & Drach-Zahavy, 2004; Popper & Lipshitz, 1998). After Senge's text was released and generated conversations among both academics and management theorists, Argyris and Schon (1996) once again contributed to the theoretical framework of the learning organization by expanding on the concept. They did so by comparing the traditional single-feedback loop, which they described as "Learning Organization I," where an organization's management revises its strategies and techniques for organizational learning as a result of external factors, with a new conceptual model which they proposed as the next step in the learning organization. In the updated model, what they defined as the "Learning Organization II," Argyris and Schon proposed the theory that



the learning organization can take the feedback from its environment and dynamically revisit previous epistemological assumptions, and then propose strategies and techniques for organizational learning. This concept of the “double loop” learning organization diverges from the generally accepted single-feedback loop theoretical model of the learning organization.

In summary, the conceptual model of the learning organization theorizes that the learning organization adapts to the external environment through the process of organizational learning and retains the lessons learned in a collective memory through another process called knowledge management (Aggestam, 2006; Upadhyay & Paul, 2019). In developing a conceptual framework of the learning organization, Klinge (2015) argued that organizations can be mentored like people; as organizations develop and learn through the lessons experienced by its collective workforce.

## **The Learning Organization’s Related Literature**

### **From Senge to the 21st Century**

The greatest and most seminal volume that carried the concept of the learning organization concept to the head of the commercial and educational professions was Peter Senge’s (1990) *The fifth discipline*. Senge (1990) conveyed the theoretical context of systems thinking and presented the organization as a collective group of people with a shared experience. According to Senge’s (1990) framework, organizations became established and learned in a similar manner as the assemblies of individuals that encompass the organization. As noted by Drucker (1993), it is knowledge along with human capital that holds that knowledge management that is the organization’s most valuable resource. This is why there is a shared need to retain knowledge in an organization through a collective consciousness (Argry, 1973).

Thus, as a result of the widespread dissemination of Senge's (1990) ideas, the concept of the learning organization's shared vision became a driver for managers to achieve improvements across their respective organizations (Slater & Narver, 1995). The learning organization became a topic of frequent discussion as numerous scholars and futurists advocated that the forthcoming global organizations should be learning organizations due to the ever-changing environment of the digital era as well as the transnational aspect of many organizations that blur international borders (Katane et al., 2015; Goh & Ryan, 2008; Weldy & Gillis, 2010).

In the late 1990s and the first decade of the 2000s it was discovered in a wide variety of studies that through learning an organization can be adaptive and responsive in a dynamic environment, such as information technology, and this adaptation that the learning organization provides often gives the learning organization a competitive advantage over the non-learning organizations in its industry (Argyris, 2004; Christensen, Anthony, & Roth, 2004; Davis & Daley, 2008; Dovey & Fenech, 2007; Ellinger, Ellinger, Yang, & Howton, 2002; Lopez, Peon, & Ordas, 2005; McHargue, 2000; Slater & Narver, 1995). While there is an overwhelming positive theme among the literature towards the learning organizations, detractors often note that despite the numerous studies on the learning organization and the outgrowth of management schools, the learning organization has remained an intangible subject in which many of its most ardent advocates have been unable to break it down into practical methodology (Cors, 2003; Jacobs, 1995; Luis, Javier, Nora, & Rafael, 2011; Vargas-Hernández & Noruzi, 2010). For the greater part of a decade, Senge's (1990) ideas were supported through qualitative methods such as case studies, shared stories, and action research. However, there were no statistical tools available to quantitatively validate the claims asserted by Senge and other proponents of the learning

organization, either because the ideas were assumed to be valid without empirical evidence, or the construct was too difficult to develop such an instrument for.

Thus, in the later part of the 1990s and early 2000s, Marsick and Watkins (2003) established the Dimensions of the Learning Organization Questionnaire (DLOQ), a research instrument that permitted researchers to mathematically research the various aspects that factor into the learning organization. The DLOQ was validated and widely dispersed to measure the theories of Senge (1990) and other learning organization proponents (Chalofsky, 2005).

### **Recent Learning Organization Literature**

Using the DLOQ, Klinge (2015) provided substantive research in support of the qualitative assertions of Senge (1990) and other learning organization proponents. Mena and Chabowski (2015) also approached the traditional approach to the learning organization by reversing the study from bottom-up to top-down. In comparing the learning organization to stakeholder theory, Mena and Chabowski (2015) presented that stakeholder-focused organizational learning drives organizations to respond to their stakeholders. Stakeholder theory ties the learning organization to the related concepts of value-chain hierarchy in an organization.

In a similar fashion to Klinge's (2015) study, Desai (2015) suggested that organizations can improve by investigating and learning from failures. Desai (2015) made this claim through the diagnoses of how often illegal activity is an outgrowth of poor organizational performance; where the probability of poor citizenship among employees is greater when the organization fails to learn from its failure. This mindset is often the case seen when the corrupt culture from the top is spread throughout the organization. Therefore, this supports the premise that the proponents of the learning organization argue that organizations can learn like the people who make up the

organizations. Just as people learn from both positive and negative experience, according to Desai (2015), organizations similarly learn from both positive and negative shared experience.

The current literature also demonstrates that the idea of the learning organization is applicable throughout the field of education and all fields related to organizational understanding. Schilling and Fang (2014) stated that the interpersonal network structure of an organization directly influences the diffusion and recombination of ideas and can thus facilitate or impede organizational learning. Many of the initial case studies that surrounded Senge's (1990) theories tended to focus on the business and technological realm.

Schilling and Fang (2014) posit that along with businesses, the concept of the learning organization naturally ties well into the educational learning organization, particularly as it relates to instructional design for a student body comprised of multi-generational students (Gerpott, Lehmann-Willenbrock, & Voelpel, 2017) as well as for talent management training for employees who lack the prerequisite skills to perform their job (Dewi, Dwiatmadja, & Suharti, 2019; Gil, Carrillo, & Fonseca-Pedrero, 2019; Sarange, 2018). Furthermore, in the wider societal context, the learning organization is of relevance in nearly all facets of society, to include education as well as public and private sector organizations that management could utilize as a tool for managing their workforce (Alipour & Karimi, 2018; Reese 2018a, 2018b; Sidani & Reese, 2018).

Klinge (2015) noted that the learning organization should be a central concept to the field of adult education and development. This is because Klinge (2015) argues that the modern organization often requires the establishment of an environment that fosters learning for both mentee and mentor. Therefore, the symbiotic relationship of the mentor and mentees disseminated throughout the learning organization helps to facilitate a reciprocal and

collaborative learning partnership for the systematic mentoring process that Klinge (2015) believes is a critical component in adult learning environments and one of the key determinants for practitioners to assess whether they are in a learning organization (Reese 2018b).

The concept of the learning organization has relevance outside the traditional learning literature. In analyzing the history of large public-sector organizations, many modern scholars discover new insights. For instance, Daddis (2013) conducted an analysis of the organizational learning of the U.S. Army and its opponents in the Vietnam War, the North Vietnamese Army and the Viet Cong. In this analysis, Daddis (2013) argued that the U.S. Army was found to have a much slower organizational learning process, which likely influenced the outcome of the Vietnam War due to the inability to pacify the Viet Cong guerillas and restrict the North Vietnamese Army. Despite having never lost a major battle during the course of the near decade-long war, the U.S. Army failed to effectively adapt to war and in the end was forced to withdraw from the conflict having never achieved the objective of assuring the survival of the South Vietnamese Government.

The formal bureaucratic hierarchal structure of the U.S. Army during the Vietnam War did not foster the rapid exchange of knowledge and ideas necessary to adapt to the fluid environment of the Vietnam War. In contrast, Daddis (2013) argued that due to their underdog status, the North Vietnamese Army and especially the Viet Cong were forced to learn and adapt throughout the organization and change tactics to meet the technologically superior U.S. Army.

In comparison, General Stanley McChrystal used the principles of the learning organization to transform the U.S. Joint Special Operations Command into a “team of teams.” The organization effectively adapted to meet the challenges of fighting overseas terrorist organizations in the post-9/11 era (Norton, 2018; Reese, 2018c). Sloan (2019) notes that it was

through organizational learning that the British Royal Navy was able to survive the onslaught of the German Wolfpack attacks and thereby win the Battle of the Atlantic during World War II. Likewise, Crowell (2019) also notes that by applying design methodology and learning from the mistakes the U.S. Army made during their failed campaign in Fallujah during the spring of 2004, the U.S. Marines were able to effectively transform into a learning organization. This allowed the Marine Corps' units engaged during the Battle of Fallujah in November 2004 to adapt to the fluid environment and win the largest urban battle since Vietnam with minimal losses, thereby saving "blood and treasure" on the battlefield (Crowell, 2019, p. 13).

All of these real-world examples of the learning organization and organizational learning are relevant to this study, as they relate to the overall organizational culture, similar to the sample population of this study. Glennon, Hodgkinson, and Knowles (2019) offer that the learning organization is the ideal organization for public-sector organizations to emulate. Study of the learning organization should be an integral part of public administration education and training programs.

In relating the learning organization to the wider society, community, and overall education system, Siergrist et al. (2013) noted that school leaders are now reaching the discovery that they are often leading a learning organization that exists in a living synergistic social system. Therefore, the learning organization is a system that is only part of the greater community (Siergrist et al., 2013; Smith, 2018).

The most succinct definition of the learning organization was provided by Senge (1994), who offered that the learning organization is defined as a group "where people continually expand their capacity to create the results they truly desire, where new and expansive patterns of thinking are nurtured, and where collective aspiration is set free" (Jamali, Khoury, & Sahyoun,

2006, p. 337). Because the original definition for the learning organization is vague and difficult to conceptualize in practice, Örtenblad and Koris (2014) developed a typology to better define four types of learning organizations based on the literature:

- (1) *Learning at work*: an organization in which the employees learn while working (as opposed to learning at formal courses).
  - (2) *Organizational learning*: an organization with an awareness of the need for different levels of learning.
  - (3) *Climate for learning*: an organization that facilitates the learning of its individuals by creating a positive atmosphere that makes learning easy and natural, offers space and time for experimenting and reflection, and tolerates failure.
  - (4) *Learning structure*: an organization with a flexible, decentralized, informal and organic team-based structure that enables its members to make their own decisions in order to satisfy the continuously changing customer expectations quickly, and that needs continual learning and redundancy to occur for it to attain and retain flexibility.
- (pp. 175–176)

The topology of the learning organization demonstrates that organizations transition from the lowest form, “learning at work,” to the highest form, the “learning structure,” based on how committed the organization and its leadership are to the learning organization concept; as well as their ability to adapt the organization to meet the challenges of implementing the learning organization.

This topology falls in line with what Meyers (2018) refers to as “vicarious learning,” the term by which he refers to “individual learning that occurs through being exposed to and making meaning from another’s experience” (p. 610). As the employees and other members of the

organization utilize collaboration and other collective learning techniques, organizations tend to progress from the lower-level learning organization towards the higher levels (Rydstedt, 2019; Slivar, Golja, & Plavšić, 2018; Ward, Berensen, & Daniels, 2018).

Despite the typology and practice of the of the learning organizations, Santa (2015) noted that there are definitions that are easily confused—that of the learning organization and that of organizational learning. In contrast to the typology of the learning organization, organizational learning is merely the collective process by which organizations learn (Santa, 2015, p.245). Therefore, based upon this understanding of these two similar terms, a distinction must be made: while all organizations take part in organizational learning, not all organizations form the typology of the learning organization.

Furthermore, this distinction arises because the typology of the learning organization often involves a deliberate attempt by the management and employees to establish a framework of collective learning. Therefore, despite many proponents' claims that the learning organization—in some form of the typology—is a universal concept, Örténblad (2015) “questions the claim that the idea of the learning organization is universally applicable” (p. 163). Because there is limited evidence of universal applicability of the learning organization, there remains a gap in the literature for a research study that measures the statistical difference between the learning organization and organizational learning.

The prime target for a considerable amount of the application of the learning organization's typology are organizational bureaucracies. In many cases, the learning organization is on the opposite end of the organizational design spectrum to the traditional organization—the bureaucracy. For example, the bureaucracy is often structured with a formal hierarchy. This is because, by necessity, the learning organization's structure is typically flatter



than the bureaucracy in its design and/or function. Additionally, the bureaucracy often to promotes regulations and procedures, while the learning organization pushes for flexibility and adaptability so that the organization and its members can respond to the multitude of changes in a dynamic environment (Blundo-Canto et al., 2019; Sinclair, 2017).

As noted by Jamali et al. (2006), “There is indeed a stark realization that the traditional bureaucratic approach is no longer suitable to support competitive positioning in a hyper-dynamic environment. The past decade has witnessed the ascendancy of alternative paradigms...the learning organization [is] the most prominent” (p. 337). Because modern organizations tend to face change at a rapid and ever-increasing pace, according to its proponents, the learning organization is believed to be much better suited to meet these challenges than the slower bureaucracy. This is because bureaucracy is often slow to respond to challenges of the dynamic and ever shifting 21<sup>st</sup> century environment (Sabin et al., 2019).

One of the factors that makes the learning organization the prominent design for the future for its proponents, is shared knowledge and a culture of constant communication. This is produced by the fact that the learning organization’s culture is a culture that promotes self-improvement and continuous learning, along with large-scale transformational change (Santa, 2015, p. 246). In contrast, bureaucracies—particularly large, public-sector bureaucracies—are often “not able fully to adopt the learning organization idea” (Örtenblad, 2015, p. 171). The major factors that inhibit these bureaucracies center around their inability to undergo the process of “debriefing.” Debriefing is the process of applying knowledge management through organizational lessons learned, which is then used to mend current processes and develop better future procedures (Holzmann, Mischari, Goldberg, & Ziv, 2012). Another major challenge for large public-sector bureaucracies is implementing a change management process. This is because

the hierarchy or formal configuration of the organization typically cannot adapt in time to current environmental conditions (Kuipers et al., 2014, p. 15).

In contrast to the bureaucracy, the learning organization often tailors itself to effectively adapt to environmental factors that necessitate change. Furthermore, by definition, the learning organization seeks to debrief lessons learned across the organization on a regular basis.

According to Chinowsky and Carrillo (2007), this is the methodology by which the learning organization implements organizational learning in order to achieve the shared memory of “knowledge management.” Therefore, one of the primary differences between the bureaucracy and the learning organization is how each organization approaches knowledge and information management. According to Opengart (2015), when referring to learning organizations, “Knowledge is seen as a source of benefit to be shared by all, rather than as a tool to enhance power, exacerbate silos-structures or further isolate some employees...sharing knowledge and information is essential to collective learning” (p. 189).

French (2009) states that knowledge and information management at the organizational level involves managing the “mechanisms that mediate between the micro-processes of individual knowledge and the outcomes of organizational performance” (p.12). However, the bureaucracy’s approach to knowledge and information management is typically structured in multiple silos which transverse up and down the chain of command from the employee through the formal supervisory levels. These distinct lines of communication in these organizations do not have the free flow of information that is typical within the learning organization.

Information management and technology management often coincide with the topic of knowledge management (Upadhyay & Paul, 2019). In this realm, the learning organization is typically viewed by its proponents as better suited than the bureaucracy since, according to Santa

(2015), within the learning organization, “the advance technologies [are] at the center [...] of the systems and processes [...] through which the successful [learning organizations] will elicit, code, store and create knowledge” (p. 251). Consequently, “with the advancement of information technology, the effectiveness and efficiency of inter-organizational collaboration can be enhanced” (Yang & Maxwell, 2011, p. 168).

On the contrary, the bureaucracy tends to be slower than the learning organization in the process of adapting to information technology. This is because the bureaucracy often has formal approval processes and strict rules to abide by in implementing and utilizing new technology (Ertl, Greger, Wolf, & Krcmar, 2014). These attributes often mean that the learning organization tends to be more technologically advanced than its bureaucracy counterparts. Because learning organizations are often able to advance with the latest technological developments, learning organizations often expand on the free flow of information and knowledge, both internally and externally of their organization’s boundaries. To the proponents, this, among other factors, often places the learning organization at an operational and strategic advantage over the bureaucracy within any dynamic organizational environment.

One of the researchers who developed the DLOQ and DLOQ-A has noted that with the rise of modern technologies such as social media, research now emerging that tests “cross-cultural validity and levels of analysis, as well as social network analyses, shows promise in deepening our understanding of the [learning organization]” (Watkins & Kim, 2018). These new paths for research into the learning organization have diverged in other emerging areas such as the ecological and environment as well as the construction industry (Borge, Filstad, Olsen, & Skogmo, 2018; Yu, Gong, Sun, Hu, & Luo, 2018; Rahimian, Kazemi, & Abbaspour, 2017).

In the business field, the learning organization has also started to see a re-emergence, as there has arisen a need for utilizing the learning organization for business intelligence, since it offers a potential solution as a means to expand organizations from steady state operations to high performing organizations (Adžić, 2018; Berisha Qehaja, Kutllovci, & Havolli, 2017; Coroban & Gavrilă, 2019; Cunha & Clegg, 2019). In the education field, there has been recent interest in applying the principles and strategies of the learning organization across various levels of academia and K-12 educational institutions, as these entities that are involved in the education processes tend to have external processes and procedures that reflect stagnant bureaucracies (Arnesson & Albinsson, 2019; Hesbol, 2019; Holba, Bahr, Birx, & Fischler, 2019).

Finally, Dragomir (2017) argued that the learning organization, with its foundation in Peter Drucker's (1993) Total Quality Management (TQM), should be revisited as an ideal model that managers can utilize for TQM. Furthermore, Tortorella, Marodin, Fogliatto, and Miorando (2015) articulated that the principles of the learning organization are useful for implementing lean processes and procedures for both general management and human resource management (HRM) personnel.

### **Organizational Commitment's Theoretical Framework**

According to Farahani, Taghadosi, and Behboudi (2011), organizational commitment is the psychological connection or loyalty that employees have to their organization. Qureshi, Hayat, Ali, and Sarwat (2011) define organizational commitment as the "feeling of responsibility that an employee has towards the mission of the organization" (p. 643). The common thesis throughout the literature covering organizational commitment is that, over a period of time, an employee tends to develop a sense of loyalty towards their place of employment that scholars have labeled organizational commitment. As noted by Llobet and Fito (2013), significant

research has demonstrated how organizational behavior, to include organizational commitment, factors into the employee job satisfaction. They also noted that in the field the “identification of the worker with the organization and their perception...are key variables to adaption and retention by the organizations” (p. 1068).

### **The “Side Bet”**

The original analogy of organizational commitment is the “side bet” (Becker, 1960). In the historical view of organizational commitment, the analogy is that an employee makes a series of side bets based on the value of staying or leaving an organization. If the employee has more to gain in staying than in leaving, the employee has a higher level of organizational commitment and is therefore bound to the organization (Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001). Consequently, if the employee has little invested in his or her organization, and has more to gain in leaving the organization, he or she is more likely to leave—and therefore, is less committed to the organization.

In the first empirical study of organizational commitment, Mowday, Steers, and Porter (1979) developed the Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ), which determined with a strong validation study the likelihood of an employee staying with an organization based on the employee’s affective commitment to the organization.

### **Intent to Stay**

Expanding upon the research of Mowday et al. (1979), Angle and Perry (1981) developed the first multi-component model of “commitment” or “intent to stay” as well as the employee’s “value” to their respective commitment to the organization. O’Reilly and Chatman (1986) researched and added to the theoretical model the employee’s internal identification to the

organization, and Penley and Gould (1988) added the individual's morality as factors that increased or decreased their respective intent to stay.

In recent studies, organizational behavior theorists have noted that an organization's senior management can have a significant influence upon their employee workforce. Keskskes (2014) noted that this is the relationship that organizational commitment has with the leadership and the leadership style of management, by summarizing "leadership is an important function of management which helps to maximize efficiency and to achieve organizational goals" (p. 27).

Bowling, Alarcon, Bragg, and Hartman (2015) noted that "over the four decades, occupational researchers have given considerable attention to the potential correlates and workload," which is often caused by management, and includes the employee's desire to remain with an organization (p.95). For this reason, Vagharseyyedin (2016) noted that organizational commitment is a major contributing factor ("determinant") in employee turnover (p. 107).

This likelihood of employees choosing to leave their organization has been defined in the organizational psychology community as the "employee's intent to stay." Cowden, Cummings, and Profetto-Mcgrath (2011) defined "intent to stay" through the extensive research as "the stated probability of an individual staying in his/her present position" (p. 462). Furthermore, they noted that intent to stay is in fact a "negative predictor of turnover or voluntarily leaving the organization" and tied directly with the key variables associated with "leadership practices" (p. 462).

Wang, Tao, Ellenbecker, and Liu (2012) carried out an exhaustive study on the predictors of employees' intent to stay in the nursing profession, and found that some strategies to increase these "nurses' intent to stay include employment practices that improve the work environment, increased wages and benefits, and greater professional opportunity for nurses' personal growth

and development and promotion” (p. 547). The last strategy of workforce growth and development by the authors ties directly to the attributes commonly associated with the learning organization.

In a recent study, Yarbrough, Martin, and Alfred (2017) discovered a “strong correlation between professional values and career development and that both job satisfaction and career development correlated positively with retention” (p. 675). In the authors’ findings, direct ties were also found between the attributes commonly associated with the learning organization and the promotion of professional values and employee career development.

### **Three Component Model of Commitment’s Conceptual Framework**

Because the reasons that employees choose to stay or leave falls within a series of general areas, Allen and Meyer (1996) developed the most comprehensive measurement to understand why employees would choose to either stay or leave. Allen and Meyer’s (1996) conceptual and theoretical understanding of “Intent to Stay” was validated in their organizational commitment as the Three Component Model of Commitment (TCM). The TCM is based on Becker’s (1960) concept of the definition of the “side bet” for organizational commitment.

Furthermore, Allen and Meyer (1990) redefined Becker’s (1960) “side bet” organizational commitment in their TCM model as “continuance commitment,” which is one of the three components of the TCM’s commitment, the others being “affective commitment” and “normative commitment.” These are the three primary reasons for the respective employee’s overall mindset in their intent to stay (Meyer & Herscovich, 2001).

Affective commitment is the employee’s desire-based rationale for remaining with an organization and is considered the first or highest form of organizational commitment (Allen &

Meyer, 1996). Employees who have affective commitment have an intent to stay based on their individual wish to remain with the organization.

Normative commitment is the employee's obligation-based rationale for remaining with an organization, and is considered the second or middle level of organizational commitment (Allen & Meyer, 1996). Employees who have normative commitment have an intent to stay based on their individual feeling of responsibility to remain with the organization, but not necessarily a desire to remain.

Finally, continuance commitment is the employee's cost-based rationale for remaining with an organization and is considered the third or lowest level of organizational commitment (Allen & Meyer, 1996). Employees who have continuance commitment have an intent to stay based on their individual assessment or fear of the opportunity cost or economic risk of leaving.

Meyer, Stanley, Herscovitch, and Topolnytsky (2002) expanded upon Allen and Meyer's (1996) conceptual model by adding further stratifications such as perceived justice, transformational level leadership, experience at work, and employee's role in the organization as factors that could influence affective commitment. Meyer, Becker, and Vandenberghe (2004) proposed the theory of autonomous motivation that is derived from an employee's internal commitment to the organization. Finally, Somers (2009) and Meyer and Maltin (2010) discovered that job stress was theoretically linked to employee commitment and that a high affective commitment was found to be related to a reduction in job-related illness.

In summary, the theoretical and conceptual models in organizational commitment are intrinsically tied to the research instrument(s) that are used by the researchers and theorists who expand upon the research. Unlike the learning organization, which had a predominance of qualitative research surrounding the development of its theoretical and conceptual model, the



literature surrounding organizational commitment is primarily quantitative in nature. This is likely because a significant amount of organizational behavior and industrial and organizational psychologists research organizational commitment, whereas the learning organization is a multi-disciplinary field that is studied by education theorists, organization behaviorists, and management theorists.

### **Related Literature on Organizational Commitment**

As noted in the previous section of this chapter, the TCM is the primary research instrument for organizational commitment. It has gone through several revisions throughout the years, because it had its reliability challenged by researchers such as Bergman (2006) due to the question of the interaction of affective commitment and normative commitment which form most of the scores within the Organizational Commitment Profile (OCP). Bergman (2006) articulated that the lines between affective commitment and normative commitment often blur in their scoring for the OCP.

However, González and Guillén (2008) noted that the relationship found in Bergman's (2006) study with the TCM was likely caused by the employees taking the survey confusing the feelings associated with affective commitment as opposed to the logical assumptions behind the normative commitment questions. Meyer, Becker, and van Dick (2006) also saw the same issues with the questions forming the normative and affective commitment questions. In more recent studies, following the revalidation and revision of the TCM, Fu, Bolander, and Jones (2009) saw a strong relationship between all three components of the TCM in their OCP profile of salesmen and saleswomen. The more recent results of the study demonstrated OCP's similarities to those seen in Allen and Meyer's (1996) revised TCM, while others sought to refine the organizational commitment's component scales (Trigueiro-Fernandes, Filho, Mól, & Añez, 2019).

In recent literature, much of the organizational commitment academic discussion revolved around the employee's quality of life, job benefits, on-the-job stress, and perceived support network at their work, as it tied to their respective level of organizational commitment (Abdelmoteleb, 2019; Bala, Saini, & Goyal, 2019; de la Torre-Ruiz, Vidal-Salazar, & Cerdón-Pozo, 2019; Rehman, Nawaz, & Khan, 2018).

Philippaers, De Cuyper, and Forrier (2019) noted that a driving factor for employee's intent to stay and their affective commitment to the organization in recent literature is their perception that they are in control of their personal career path, rather than being one name among the mass in the organization. Gomes Maia and Bittencourt Bastos (2019) similarly stated that the employee's perception of control and commitment falls in line with their perception that this is a "psychological contract" that ties employee success with their rising career paths, and that to deviate from that perceived contract would cause a reduction in employee commitment.

Other studies examined some of the employee's perceived values such as climate change and other collective shared values (Kim, 2019; Mousa, Puhakka, & Abdelgaffar, 2019). This is in addition to the multi-generational work organizations where the aging "Baby Boomers" tend to have values that are divergent from the rising "Millennials" who are starting to form the baseline for the workforce in many industries such as technology (Redditt, Gregory, & Ro, 2019).

However, the most dominant theme that arises out of the current literature on organizational commitment is the discussion of the role that leadership factors into the employee's intent to stay and commitment to the organization. According to Samsudin et al. (2018), the link between "citizenship behaviors" and overall work productivity among employees rests in the organizational leaders' support of their employees.

In a similar manner, Jain, Duggal, and Ansari (2019) examined how the organization's trust demonstrated by the senior management and the employee's psychological stability factored into the perceptions of the level of transformational leadership in the organization as well as the organizational commitment. Trust also factored into the employee's willingness to share knowledge (Curado & Vieira, 2019). Furthermore, Banjarnahor, Hutabarat, Sibuea, and Situmorang (2018) connected the employee's perceived satisfaction on the job as an influencing factor for organizational commitment that provided a feedback loop for management to determine their use of directive or participatory style, which in turn influenced employee's job satisfaction.

### **The Learning Organization and Organizational Commitment**

Much of the research in the learning organization seems to either directly or indirectly correlate to the factors that determine organizational behavior and organizational commitment (Choi, Kim, & Yoo, 2016; Fauzia, Budiningsih, Djaelani, & Ahmad, 2017). For example, Zheng and Wang (2017) noted that factors such as the employee's perception of their qualifications for their job may be correlated to their affective commitment to the organization, while other researchers connected organization learning and employee commitment through effective employee engagement (Czaplicka-Kozłowska, & Stachowska, 2018; Jha & Kumar, 2016).

Furthermore, the authors noted that for many of these employees, their affective commitment was often stronger if they perceived themselves as only just qualified or underqualified for their jobs, as this enhanced knowledge sharing across the organization through means such as electronic collaborative tools and e-learning (Naim & Lenka, 2017; Zareie & Jafari Navimipour, 2016). For that reason, the results of their study showed that "when the level of organizational learning was high, the negative relation between perceived overqualification

and affective commitment was stronger, whereas the positive relationship between perceived overqualification and performance was weaker when the level of organizational learning was high” (Zheng & Wang, 2017, p. 1675).

However, a strong trend in the literature is the link between effective, authentic leadership and higher forms of commitment such as affective commitment (Azeem & Mataruna, 2019; Milić, Grubić-Nešić, Kuzmanović, & Delić, 2017). In reviewing the organization’s capacity (professional knowledge and skills), commitment, and culture (the guiding vision), Seibold and Gamble (2015) found that in an organization “employees learn to treat others, in part, from how they are treated by [their] leadership” (p. 286). Choie, Kim, and Yoo (2016) found in their study that the learning organization is correlated with quality commitment.

It can be inferred that this commitment to the quality management organization’s work product likely ties the employees’ commitment to the overall organization. This is likely why Lim (2010) found “that the learning organization culture is moderately and positively related to job satisfaction” (p. 311). Furthermore, in assessing the learning organization culture on trust and organizational commitment, Song, Kim, and Kolb (2009) found “that learning organization culture works as a mediating variable to explain the association between interpersonal trust and organizational commitment” (p. 147). In summary, the literature tied organization capacity, culture, and commitment into the development of the learning organization (Hendri, 2019; Sobral, Furtado, & Islam, 2017).

### **Research Gap**

There is no clear relationship in the literature on organizational commitment that effectively demonstrates a relationship to organizational learning and the learning organization (Valaski et al., 2012). Another comprehensive study that looked at the relationship was Erdem

and Uçar (2013), which used the “Learning Organization Perception Scale” (Güçlü & Türkoğlu, 2003) and the “Organizational Commitment Scale” (Balay, 2000) that measured compliance for the employee commitment. Thus, it is understood throughout the literature that “there is a limited number of studies that can manifest the relationship between learning organization and organizational commitment” (Erdem & Uçar, 2013, 1529). Therefore, the problem is that the literature has not addressed the issue of employee commitment through organizational learning and, consequently, there is a gap in the literature in terms of whether there is a relationship between organizational learning and organizational commitment (Balay, 2012; Erdem & Uçar, 2013).

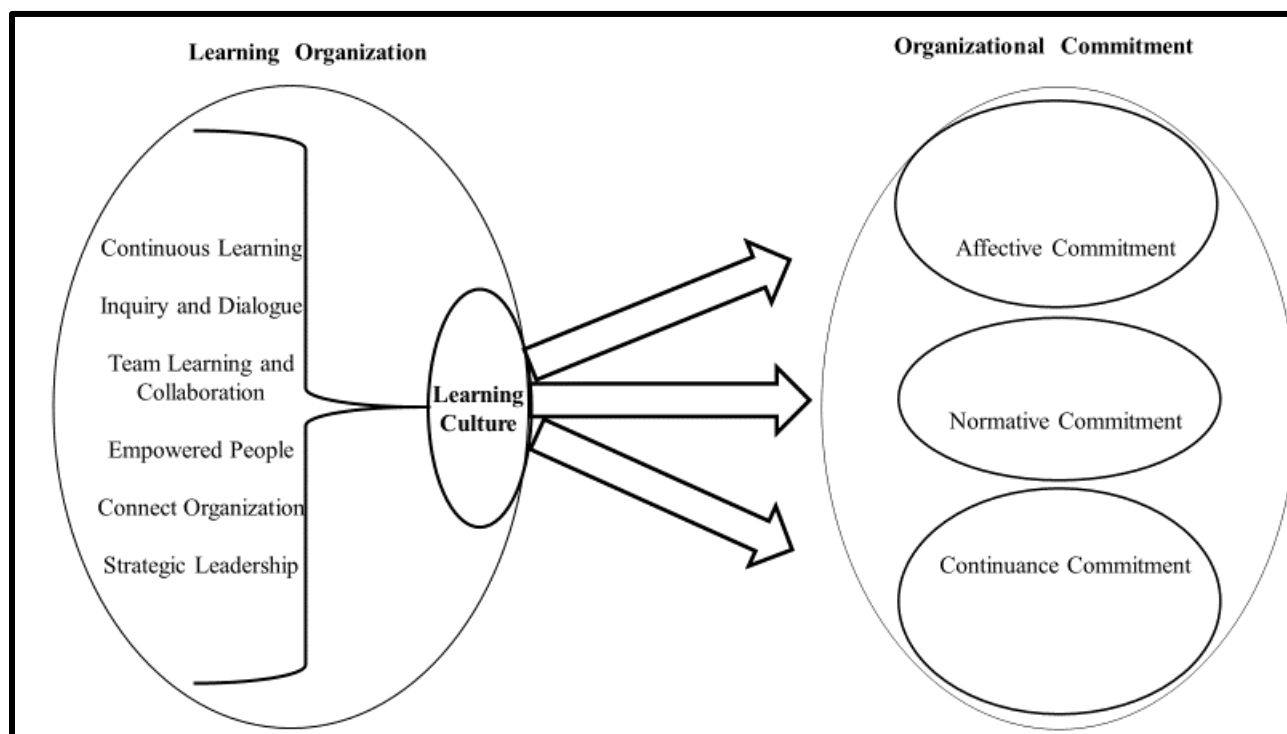
Massingham and Diment (2009) explored the organizational commitment and knowledge management efforts and initiatives from management in developing an organization’s capacity to become a learning organization. Unfortunately, the authors’ noted a limitation to their findings due to the weak construct of their research design and recommended future research to explore relationships in this field (p. 139). Also, in the same year, Dirani (2009) conducted a correlation analysis of Lebanese bankers on their perception of the learning organization, organizational commitment, and job satisfaction, and found positive relationships between the three variables. However, in his consolidated questionnaire, Dirani (2009) chose to use Mowday, Steers, and Porter’s (1979) “Organizational Commitment Questionnaire” (OCQ), which is limited to a single commitment analysis of affective commitment, unlike the more comprehensive and more reliable TCM, which examines all three motives as to why employees choose to remain at their organization. A similar study that also utilized the OCQ was conducted prior to Dirani’s study by Jeong, Lee, Kim, Lee, and Kim (2007), who studied the learning organization and organizational commitment in a population of nurses.

Rouhana and Chams (2013) conducted a study with a small sample of employees working in a distribution of small- and medium-sized companies, and found a “positive correlation between the seven components of learning organization and employees’ commitment” (p. 29). However, the researchers noted that because of the small sample size, their results were only partially conclusive, and recommended a larger sample in order to bind the results more strongly (p. 34). Tsai (2014) conducted a study of the learning organization, internal marketing, and organizational commitment within the nursing staff at multiple hospitals, and obtained inconclusive results. Therefore, Tsai suggested for “future studies...to explore the relationship between the creation of a learning organization, employee’s organizational commitment and their turnover rate” (p. 163).

It is in this gap of the research that this study seeks to contribute to the body of knowledge. While there have been studies in organizational learning and the relationship with organizational commitment, they have had limitations, such as the sample issues and the strength of their research instrument or the mediating effects of other variables such as organizational culture. This research seeks to address this by utilizing an organizational consensus. Furthermore, most of the studies of the relationship between the learning organization and organizational commitment have primarily focused on the medical field or education field (Alipour & Karimi, 2018; Balay, 2012; Jeong et al., 2007; Lau et al., 2017; Tsai 2014). This study seeks to sample the field of information technology, where advances in technology and software designs and development methodologies require the workforce to constantly seek personal development.

Therefore, by using the DLOQ-A and the TCM, discussed in detail in the following chapter, this study seeks to add to the body of literature on the learning organization and

organizational commitment by studying whether the dimensions that factor into the learning organization predict employee commitment. Figure 2 below graphically depicts the hypothesis of this study. In the left circle are the six dimensions of the learning organization: continuous learning, inquiry and dialogue, team learning and collaboration, empowered people, a connected organization, and strategic leadership as measured by the DLOQ-A.



*Figure 2.* Conjectured model of the relationships between DLOQ-A and the TCM.

For an organization to be considered a strong learning organization, it would have to score highly in the questions of six of these dimensions that define the organization's Learning Culture Score (LCS). In the right circle are the three forms of employee commitment that are measured by the TCM, the Affective Commitment Score (ACS), Normative Commitment Score (NCS), and Continuance Commitment Score (CCS). These three scales provide the Organization Commitment Profile, which can provide a granular picture as to why an organization may have a

strong overall commitment score. The three arrows depict the hypotheses of this study, where the learning culture that is derived from the dimensions of the learning organization is able to predict organizational commitment based on affective commitment, normative commitment, and/or continuance commitment.

### **Summary**

In summary, this literature review introduced the concept of the learning organization and its development over the last four decades from Classical Management Theory, organizational learning, and the multi-dimensional learning organizational theory in its multiple forms. Furthermore, this chapter included a discussion on the attributes of the learning organization, as well as the current state of the academic dialogue as it related to the learning organization.

This chapter also briefly covered the concept of organizational commitment, as well as a brief discussion of its history and the development of the logical components of Allen and Meyer's (1996) Three Component Model of Commitment (TCM), the research instrument primarily used to measure organizational commitment. The current literature dialogue on organizational commitment was also discussed. Finally, this chapter briefly discussed how the literature on the learning organization, often seen through its positive antecedents, has a conceptual gap, since there is not much in the current discussion that addresses the connection between organizational commitment and the learning organization.

This gap, particularly when applied to the technology field, is one in which this study seeks to add to the body of work. Furthermore, the literature depicts that the practical aspect of organizational commitment could have merit when correlated to the positive factors of the learning organization and thereby have practical application for management and employees at all levels.



A comprehensive review of the current body of literature demonstrated that the volume of literature regarding of the learning organization literature is rare and limited in its connectivity to organization/employee commitment scholastic articles. Finally, in the body of literature, most organizational/employee commitment articles articulate the need for learning at the individual level in contrast to the organizational level. Therefore, this study seeks to address the gap by determining what relationship exists, if any, between the learning organization and organizational commitment.

## **CHAPTER THREE: METHODS**

### **Overview**

This chapter introduces the methodology for this correlational study on the learning organization and organizational commitment. The first section discussed is the research design as well as the rationale for why the researcher selected the particular design. The research question and hypotheses are then restated from the first chapter, with details on the interaction between the predictor and criterion variables. The population and setting are then discussed with an emphasis on how the sample size statistical power demonstrates the rationale for the sampling methodology, convenience sampling for organizational consensus. Finally, the chapter concludes with the procedures for future studies to reference, in the possibility that follow-on research is conducted, along with the data analysis methodology that resulted in the outcome discussed in the next chapter.

### **Design**

The research design for this quantitative study was a correlational research study utilizing three bivariate linear regressions (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2007). The rationale behind the use of the correlational design was that this design provides the most appropriate design for the study of two independent, continuous variables (Warner, 2013). Because the two separate research instruments used in this study produce their respective results as continuous values, measuring a possible predictive relationship between the two variables warranted using a bivariate correlational study for each of the three research questions. The first research instrument, the Dimensions of Learning Organization Questionnaire-Abbreviated (DLOQ-A), produced a set of predictor variables labeled the “learning culture scores.” The second research instrument, the Revised Version of the Three Component Model (TCM) of Employee Commitment, produced

three sets of independent scores that provided the Organizational Commitment Profile (OCP) of the organization, comprising the affective, normative, and continuance commitment scores. The research design sought to correlate the single predictor variable, the learning culture score, with each of the criterion variables, the affective, normative, and continuance commitment scores separately in order to determine if there was a relationship between the learning organization and the three primary reasons why employees choose to remain in their organization. Therefore, three separate bivariate linear regressions were the most appropriate statistical tool for this study.

Furthermore, utilizing the guidance provided by Warner (2013), the bivariate analysis was then selected, utilizing bivariate linear regression because it is the preferred method for determining the relationship of the predictor and outcome variables for the research instruments' two separate sets of scores; such as the Learning Culture Score (LCS) produced by the DLOQ-A and each of the Organizational Commitment Profile (OCP) scales produced by the TCM, the Affective Commitment Score (ACS), the Normative Commitment Score (NCS), and the Continuance Commitment Score (CCS), respectively. Therefore, the correlational analysis would help to determine if a relationship exists between the predictor and three sets of criterion variables, separately. The predictor variable for this study was the LCS, as measured by the DLOQ-A, and the criterion variables for this study were the OCP's subscale, the ACS, NCS, and CCS, as measured by the Revised TCM of Employee Commitment Survey.

### **Research Questions**

The research questions for this study were:

**RQ1:** Does the *learning culture score* of a diverse, cross-functional employee workforce at a medium-sized technology-centered public-sector workplace, predict its *affective commitment score*?

**RQ2:** Does the *learning culture score* of a diverse, cross-functional employee workforce at a medium-sized technology-centered public-sector workplace, predict its *normative commitment score*?

**RQ3:** Does the *learning culture score* of a diverse, cross-functional employee workforce at a medium-sized technology-centered public-sector workplace, predict its *continuance commitment score*?

### Hypotheses

The null hypotheses for this study were:

**H<sub>01</sub>:** There is no statistically significant predictive relationship between the *learning culture score* as measured by the Dimensions of the Learning Organization Questionnaire-Abbreviated (DLOQ-A) at a medium-sized, information technology-centered public-sector workplace, and the cross-functional employee workforce's *affective commitment score*, as measured by the Revised Version of the Three Component Model (TCM) of Employee Commitment Survey at this medium-sized public-sector organization.

**Predictor variable:** Learning Culture Score (LCS).

**Criterion variable:** Affective Commitment Score (ACS).

**H<sub>02</sub>:** There is no statistically significant predictive relationship between the *learning culture score* as measured by the Dimensions of the Learning Organization Questionnaire-Abbreviated (DLOQ-A) at a medium-sized, information technology-centered public-sector workplace, and the cross-functional employee workforce's *normative commitment score*, as measured by the Revised Version of the Three Component Model (TCM) of Employee Commitment Survey at this medium-sized public-sector organization.

**Predictor variable:** Learning Culture Score (LCS).

**Criterion variable:** Normative Commitment Score (NCS).

**H<sub>03</sub>:** There is no statistically significant predictive relationship between the *learning culture score* as measured by the Dimensions of the Learning Organization Questionnaire-Abbreviated (DLOQ-A) at a medium-sized, information technology-centered public-sector workplace, and the cross-functional employee workforce's *continuance commitment score*, as measured by the Revised Version of the Three Component Model (TCM) of Employee Commitment Survey at this medium-sized public-sector organization.

**Predictor variable:** Learning Culture Score (LCS).

**Criterion variable:** Continuance Commitment Score (CCS).

### **Participants and Setting**

The population for this study was the employee workforce at a medium-sized, public-sector organization with an institutional mission centered around information technology. Participants for the study were recruited by using consensus of this organization's diverse, cross-functional, adult, employee workforce. Because the organization has more work than can be done by the permanent government employee workforce, the organization augments its staff by contracting work out to private organizations, referred to as government contractors. At its current state, the government workforce comprises less than one-fifth of the entire workforce. Therefore, contract staff are typically the employees who perform the majority of the actual work performed at the organization, with the government staff serving in management and oversight roles over the contractor's work. However, due to labor regulations, only the government staff were considered as part of the workforce. The employee workforce at this organization was

dispersed at multiple work sites throughout the Continental United States (CONUS) and the organization has very small satellite offices at overseas government locations located outside the Continental United States (OCONUS). The work involved in this organization primarily revolves around highly skilled clerical work and information technology development, administration, and project management.

The sampling procedure used for this study was nonprobability convenience sampling of the entire government workforce. The reason for not selecting a more robust sampling methodology was the inability to access the larger population of the workforce, such as the contractor support staff.

However, despite being limited by convenience sampling, according to Gall et al. (2007), most researchers still find it preferable to use a nonprobability sampling to conduct the study rather than to choose to not conduct the study. Furthermore, in the case of this study, it is the organization's attributes—the learning culture and commitment profile—that were studied, as opposed to the individual employees. Surveying the employees was merely the means to attain the values for the organization's learning and commitment scores for the sake of comparison. Thus, the convenience sampling of selecting an organization to achieve consensus was appropriate for this study. Therefore, the rationale for using nonprobability sampling was the difficulty of gaining enough participants to conduct the study. A probability sampling technique would not have made it possible to get a sample size large enough with the statistical power required to conduct this study. Furthermore, the sample population required a significant effort to gain legal review beyond the traditional Institutional Review Board (IRB) authorization to conduct the study. Adding a probability sampling methodology on top of the review would have increased the time required to get the necessary participants and extended the study beyond its

timeline. Therefore, the limitation of this convenience sampling was that the inference from the results will apply only to this specific sample population.

This study sought a minimum sample of 105 participants. According to Warner (2013, p. 362), the sample size needed to achieve a medium effect size with an Alpha of .05 and with a statistical power of .80 requires a minimum of 105. The sample population of 430 participants ensured that the study had enough statistical power for a medium effect size. Because the agency is more than three times the size of the required 105 participants, the researcher's assumption was that at least 30% of the requested population would participate in the survey, and thereby the study results would be more than adequate to achieve the desired statistical power.

Since the research sought to conduct a consensus of the organization, none of the descriptive demographic questions that are often requested (i.e. gender, age, race) were applicable to either research instruments. This is because the validity of both instruments is based on studying the organization as a collective. Therefore, the additional questions, outside of the two research scales, were from the DLOQ-A that requested only basic information about the respondent. This was simply the employee's role primary responsibility (General Management, Operations/Production, Administration, Logistics, or Financial/Accounting, Human Resources, Marketing/Sales, Technical/R&D), role (Senior Management, Middle Management, Supervisory, Non-Management Technical/Professional, Non-Management-Hourly Employee), educational experience (Did not complete high school, High school graduate, Certificate or associate's degree, Undergraduate degree, Graduate degree or higher), time spent on work related learning, and general questions about the organization. For each of the responses and scales, the respondents were given the opportunity to not answer by selecting the "N/A or I prefer not to answer" choice, which would omit the respective question or scale.

The setting for the study was primarily through asynchronous, virtual interaction. This ensured that the participants had no personal interaction with the researcher. Furthermore, the researcher had buy-in from the senior executive management for the study and was able to utilize the executive director of the organization as a liaison between the researcher and the participants. The entire government population of the organization's employee workforce was contacted twice by the director about the study via e-mail; the initial notification with a link to the survey and a reminder sent several weeks after the study commenced. Participation was voluntary, and participants were able to participate from their desk at their local workstation or at home during a mass teleworking implementation.

## **Instrumentation**

### **Learning Organization**

The instrument this study used to measure organizational learning was the Dimensions of the Learning Organization Questionnaire-Abbreviated (DLOQ-A). According to Marsick and Watkins (2003), the DLOQ is the primary research instrument available to measure organizational learning. The DLOQ was developed to measure organizational learning based on the gap that there existed no instrument, at the time, to measure organizational learning (Watkins and O'Neill, 2013).

The DLOQ-A scoring produces a single set of values in the Learning Culture Score (LCS), which is the mean score assessing the organization's learning culture as measured by specific answers within the 21 questions of the instrument. The participant provided their responses on a 7-point Likert scale that ranges from 1 = *almost never* to 7 = *almost always*. That is, the higher the number, the stronger the organizational learning, where an answer of "1" is "almost never" and "7" is "almost always." For each question the respondent also had the option



of selecting “N/A,” which allowed the respondent the option of not responding to any question they deemed as non-applicable. The questions measure across the six dimensions of the abbreviated instrument that determine organization’s learning culture as a set value. The six dimensions are continuous learning, inquiry and dialogue, collaboration and team learning, empowered people, connect the organization, and strategic leadership (Marsick & Watkins, 2003). These learning culture questions from the six dimensions were then tallied based on the procedures in the research instrument by averaging the learning culture scores from the participant responses into a composite score, which is operationally defined as the LCS (Marsick & Watkins, 2003; Yang, Watkins, & Marsick, 2004).

The DLOQ was originally developed by Marsick and Watkins (1999) and was validated at the time by other experts in the field and then revalidated after the development of the short form DLOQ-A (Yang et al., 2004). The DLOQ and its short form, DLOQ-A, and the LCS, were validated as an instrument; the Cronbach’s coefficient alpha for the research instrument was .92, and each of the seven dimensions were all above .80, ranging from .89 to .94 (Yang et al., 2004). The reliability studies were completed ensuring the scales were consistently reliable above the required .70 (Nunnally, 1978; Yang et al., 2004). The DLOQ and DLOQ-A have been used in numerous studies (e.g. Awasthy & Gupta, 2012; Dahanayake, & Gamlath 2013; Little & Swayze, 2015). Permission to use the instrument in this study was granted by the authors on January 4, 2016 and again on August 7, 2019. The abbreviated version of the instrument was chosen since the burden on the individual taking the survey was less than 20 minutes to complete the 21-question survey. See Appendix D for the e-mail from the author granting permission to use the instrument.

## Organizational Commitment

The instrument in this study used to measure organizational commitment was Allen and Meyer's (1990) Three Component Model (TCM) of Employee Commitment Survey. According to Meyer and Allen (1996), the purpose of the TCM is to measure employee commitment to the organization. The TCM was built on prior instruments that linked commitment to employee retention. While commitment is multi-dimensional, the TCM specifically looked into why some employees go the extra mile (Meyer & Allen, 1996; Moqsood, Hanif, Rehman, & Glenn, 2012).

The TCM scores and measures organizational commitment in its composite score called the Organizational Commitment Profile (OCP). The OCP is a measurement based on 18 questions answered with responses on a 7-point Likert scale that ranges from 1 = *strongly disagree* to 7 = *strongly agree*. That is, the higher the number, the stronger the organizational commitment, where an answer of "1" is "strongly disagree" and "7" is "strongly agree." For each question the respondent also had the option of selecting "N/A," which allowed the respondent the option of not responding to any question they deemed as non-applicable from their perspective. If the respondent chose to select "N/A" for all the questions of one of the three scales (ACS, NCS, CCS), then that respondent's response was not factored into that respective sample. Therefore, the higher the number for the respective scales on each of the three components, the stronger the organizational commitment determined across the three separate scales of affective, continuance, and normative commitment. The composite scores of these three scales were calculated separately in accordance with the research instrument procedures to determine the score for each respective scale.

The TCM was determined to be valid with the Cronbach's coefficient alpha for the TCM as .84 (Moqsood et al., 2012, p. 139). Also, the scales went through studies to determine their

reliability for consistency (Allen & Meyer, 1996, 2000). Furthermore, the TCM has been used in numerous studies (e.g. Campbell, 2013; Nasr, 2012; Soumyaja, Kamalanabhan, & Bhattacharyya, 2011). Permission to use the instrument was granted on December 29, 2015 through the license download and revalidated through another academic license download on August 9, 2019. With the revised version of the TCM, it was estimated to take the participant no more than 15 minutes to complete the 18 questions in the survey. See Appendix E for the license permission to use the instrument for academic purposes.

### **Procedures**

Before data collection began, the researcher gained approval from the organization's senior management, which included a comprehensive review by the legal staff that took nearly two years due to numerous forms required by government regulation for the organization's review and approval process. Afterwards, the researcher defended the research proposal with the dissertation committee and then submitted the package for Liberty's Institutional Review Board (IRB) for approval to collect data. Because human interaction in this study was minimal, informed consent was provided, no personally identifiable data was collected, and the participants remained anonymous throughout the study, the IRB determined that this research did not involve human subjects. See Appendix A for the IRB Waiver Letter.

After the Liberty University IRB granted permission to collect data, the researcher had to submit the protocol forms to the government IRB to obtain permission from the organization where the study was conducted prior to sending the questionnaires to the participants. After receiving permission to collect data, the researcher drafted a cover letter from the researcher to the participants as an attachment and participant instructions into a draft e-mail for distribution by the organization's executive director. See Appendices B-C for the executive management e-

mails and instructions.

After the data collection was approved by the dissertation committee and authorized by Liberty and the government IRBs, the researcher contacted the organization's executive management and reviewed the step-by-step procedures for the study's data collection process. During this meeting, the researcher provided instructions and the draft e-mail for the director to distribute the e-mail recruiting participants for the study (see Appendices B-C). This included information on how to distribute the DLOQ-A and TCM questionnaire via e-mail with the cover letter, instructions, and the link to the survey.

The researcher ensured that the survey had an initial open period of 3 weeks for participants to take the voluntary survey. However, after the initial e-mail was distributed, the COVID-19/Coronavirus pandemic stalled the workforce for a period of several weeks. After the organization migrated to the teleworking environment, the reminder e-mail was sent out by the executive director reminding the employees that the survey would close within 2 weeks. The total time burden to complete the combined surveys of the two instruments was approximately 25 minutes.

Once the data collection was completed, the researcher exported the data from the survey site. The researcher then tabulated the data into a spreadsheet and scored the results based on the scale's instructions from each instrument. The researcher then coded the results into an SPSS data file to conduct the statistical analysis. The data was then run through SPSS to conduct three separate assumption testing and bivariate linear regression analyses to determine if a predictive relationship existed between the predictor, the LCS, and each of the criteria, the ACS, the NCS, and the CCS, respectively. The researcher then reported the findings in APA formatted results sections for the data results from each analysis (see Chapter 4).

## Data Analysis

The statistical analysis used in this study was three separate bivariate linear regression analyses (Gall et al., 2007, p. 347). This statistical analysis tool was consistent with the research question of determining if a predictive relationship exists between the organizational learning culture scale, the predictor variable, and the criterions, each of the respective organizational commitment scales, the affective, normative, and continuance commitment scales. The rationale for why for three bivariate linear regressions were appropriate was Warner's (2013) guidance that "[a] bivariate regression analysis provides an equation that predicts raw scores on a quantitative Y variable from raw scores on an X variable" (p. 344). This was the appropriate analysis for this study as the focus of this study was to compare the raw scores of the organization's learning culture, LCS, with the raw scores of three organizational commitment scales, ACS, NCS, CCS, respectively. By comparing the two values in a bivariate linear regression, the data was analyzed exclusively to determine if a predictive relationship exists between the LCS and each of the commitment scales separately.

The analysis began with data screening for missing and unusual scores. Assumption testing was then conducted. A single scatter plot of the predictor variable on the x-axis and the criterion variable on the y-axis was used to examine the three assumptions of the data for a bivariate linear regression. First, the assumption was that there were no extreme bivariate outliers. The scatter plot between the predictor variable (x-axis) and criterion variable (y-axis) was examined for the presence of extreme bivariate outliers. Next, the assumption of linearity, which states that the relationship between the two variables is linear, was assessed using this same scatterplot. Third, the assumption of bivariate normal distribution was checked on the scatter plot. A classic "cigar shape" indicates the assumption is tenable.

Finally, since three bivariate linear regressions were conducted, a Bonferroni correction was needed to guard against a Type I Error. The alpha level was lowered from  $p < 0.05$  and calculated to be  $p < 0.017$ , based on  $0.05/3 = .017$  (Warner, 2013). In the next chapter, the data analysis section of this study reports:

- Descriptive statistics ( $M$ ,  $SD$ )
- Number ( $N$ )
- Degrees of freedom ( $df$ )
- $r$  and  $r^2$
- $F$  value ( $F$ )
- Significance level ( $p$ )
- $B$ , beta, and  $SE B$
- Regression equation

## CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

### Overview

This chapter describes the results and reporting of all data analyses along with a review of the research questions and hypotheses. The findings in this consist of the descriptive statistics, assumption testing, hypothesis testing, and the results for each of the three bivariate linear regression statistical analysis. These results are further discussed in the following chapter.

### Research Questions

**RQ1:** Does the *learning culture score* of a diverse, cross-functional employee workforce at a medium-sized technology-centered public-sector workplace, predict its *affective commitment score*?

**RQ2:** Does the *learning culture score* of a diverse, cross-functional employee workforce at a medium-sized technology-centered public-sector workplace, predict its *normative commitment score*?

**RQ3:** Does the *learning culture score* of a diverse, cross-functional employee workforce at a medium-sized technology-centered public-sector workplace, predict its *continuance commitment score*?

### Null Hypotheses

**H<sub>0</sub>1:** There is no statistically significant predictive relationship between the *learning culture score* as measured by the Dimensions of the Learning Organization Questionnaire-Abbreviated (DLOQ-A) at a medium-sized, information technology-centered public-sector workplace, and the cross-functional employee workforce's *affective commitment score*, as

measured by the Revised Version of the Three Component Model (TCM) of Employee Commitment Survey at this medium-sized public-sector organization.

**H<sub>0</sub>2:** There is no statistically significant predictive relationship between the *learning culture score* as measured by the Dimensions of the Learning Organization Questionnaire-Abbreviated (DLOQ-A) at a medium-sized, information technology-centered public-sector workplace, and the cross-functional employee workforce's *normative commitment score*, as measured by the Revised Version of the Three Component Model (TCM) of Employee Commitment Survey at this medium-sized public-sector organization.

**H<sub>0</sub>3:** There is no statistically significant predictive relationship between the *learning culture score* as measured by the Dimensions of the Learning Organization Questionnaire-Abbreviated (DLOQ-A) at a medium-sized, information technology-centered public-sector workplace, and the cross-functional employee workforce's *continuance commitment score*, as measured by the Revised Version of the Three Component Model (TCM) of Employee Commitment Survey at this medium-sized public-sector organization.

### Descriptive Statistics

Mean and standard deviation were obtained for each variable, as illustrated in Table 1.

Table 1

#### *Descriptive Statistics*

Variable	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Learning Culture Scores	3.76	1.48	116
Affective Commitment Scores	4.03	1.69	115
Normative Commitment Scores	3.98	1.42	115
Continuance Commitment Scores	3.93	1.67	115



## Results for H<sub>0</sub>1

### Data Screening

Data screening was conducted on all variables. The researcher examined the data set for missing data points and inconsistencies. No data errors or inconsistencies were identified; therefore, no data were excluded.

### Assumption Testing

A bivariate linear regression was used to test the first null hypothesis. Bivariate linear regression requires that the assumptions of no bivariate outliers, linearity, and bivariate normal distribution are met. To test these assumptions, a scatterplot of learning culture scores against affective commitment scores was created. Visual inspection of the scatterplot shows that the assumptions of linearity and no bivariate outliers are tenable. The assumption of bivariate normal distribution was also met as illustrated in the cigar shape data points observed in the scatterplot graph (see Figure 3).

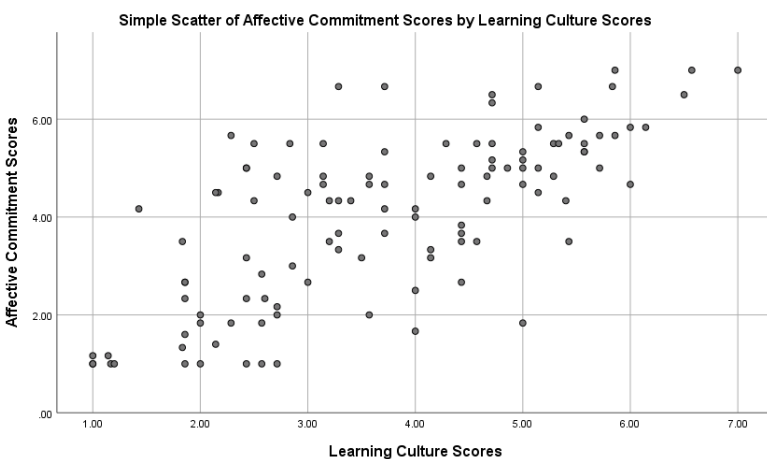


Figure 3. Scatterplot of learning culture scores vs affective commitment scores.

### Null Hypothesis 1 (H<sub>01</sub>)

A bivariate linear regression was run to test the first null hypothesis (H<sub>01</sub>), which stated that there is no significant predictive relationship between *learning culture score* as measured by the Dimensions of the Learning Organization Questionnaire-Abbreviated (DLOQ-A) at a medium-sized, information technology-centered public-sector workplace, and the cross-functional employee workforce's *affective commitment score*, as measured by the Revised Version of the Three Component Model (TCM) of Employee Commitment Survey at this medium-sized public-sector organization. The regression model is statistically significant,  $F(1, 113) = 113.828, p < .001$ . The regression equation for predicting the affective commitment score is  $Y_{\text{affective commitment score}} = .961 + .822 X$  (learning culture score). The 95% confidence interval of this slope was .669 to .974. Table 2 provides a summary of the regression analysis for the variable predicting affective commitment scores. Accuracy in predicting affective commitment,  $R = 0.71$ , is relatively strong. An organization's learning culture score accounted for 50% of the explained variability in the affective commitment score.

Table 2

#### *Coefficients*

Model	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	$\beta$
Constant	.961	.308	
LCS Score	.822	.077	.708

*Note:* Dependent variable: Affective Commitment Score

$$R^2 = .502 (p < .001)$$

The results show sufficient evidence to reject the null hypothesis and conclude that learning culture scores ( $M = 3.76, SD = 1.48$ ) did significantly predict overall affective commitment scores ( $M = 4.03, SD = 1.96$ ),  $F(1, 113) = 113.828, p < .001$ .

## Results for H<sub>02</sub>

### Data Screening

Data screening was conducted on all variables. The researcher examined the data set for missing data points and inconsistencies. No data errors or inconsistencies were identified; therefore, no data were excluded.

### Assumption Testing

A bivariate linear regression was used to test the second null hypothesis. Bivariate linear regression requires that the assumptions of no bivariate outliers, linearity, and bivariate normal distribution are met. To test these assumptions, a scatterplot of learning culture scores against normative commitment scores was created. Visual inspection of the scatterplot shows that the assumptions of linearity and no bivariate outliers are tenable. The assumption of bivariate normal distribution was also met as illustrated in the cigar shape data points observed in the scatterplot graph (see Figure 4).

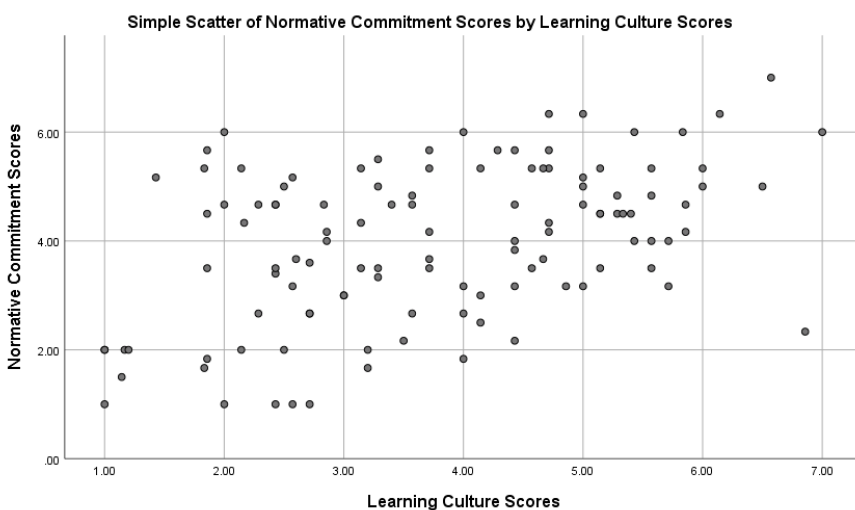


Figure 4. Scatterplot of learning culture scores vs normative commitment scores.

## Null Hypothesis 2 (H<sub>0</sub>2)

A bivariate linear regression was run to test the second null hypothesis (H<sub>0</sub>2), which stated that there is no significant predictive relationship between *learning culture score* as measured by the Dimensions of the Learning Organization Questionnaire-Abbreviated (DLOQ-A) at a medium-sized, information technology-centered public-sector workplace, and the cross-functional employee workforce's *normative commitment score*, as measured by the Revised Version of the Three Component Model (TCM) of Employee Commitment Survey at this medium-sized public-sector organization. The regression model is statistically significant,  $F(1, 113) = 28.080, p < .001$ . The regression equation for predicting normative commitment score is,  $Y_{\text{normative commitment score}} = 2.364 + .428 X$  (learning culture score). The 95% confidence interval of this slope was .260 to .589. Table 3 provides a summary of the regression analysis for the variable predicting normative commitment scores. Accuracy in predicting normative commitment,  $R = 0.446$ , is moderate. An organization's learning culture score accounted for 20% of the explained variability in the normative commitment score.

Table 3

### *Coefficients*

Model	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	$\beta$
Constant	2.364	.328	
LCS Score	.428	.081	.446

*Note:* Dependent variable: Normative Commitment Score

$$R^2 = .199 (p < .001)$$

The results show sufficient evidence to reject the null hypothesis and conclude that learning culture scores ( $M = 3.76, SD = 1.48$ ) did significantly predict overall normative commitment scores ( $M = 3.98, SD = 1.42$ ),  $F(1, 113) = 28.080, p < .001$ .

## Results for H<sub>03</sub>

### Data Screening

Data screening was conducted on all variables. The researcher examined the data set for missing data points and inconsistencies. No data errors or inconsistencies were identified; therefore, no data were excluded.

### Assumption Testing

A bivariate linear regression was used to test the third null hypothesis. Bivariate linear regression requires that the assumptions of no bivariate outliers, linearity, and bivariate normal distribution are met. To test these assumptions, a scatterplot of learning culture scores against continuance commitment scores was created. Visual inspection of the scatterplot shows that the assumptions of linearity and no bivariate outliers are tenable. The assumption of bivariate normal distribution was also met as illustrated in the cigar shape data points observed in the scatterplot graph (see Figure 5).

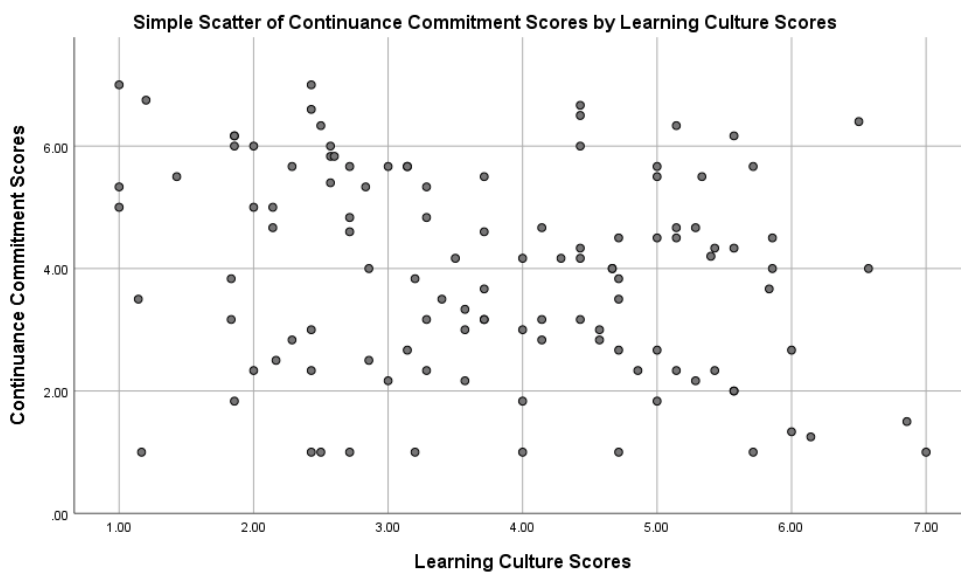


Figure 5. Scatterplot of learning culture scores vs normative commitment scores.

### Null Hypothesis 3 (H<sub>03</sub>)

A bivariate linear regression was run to test the third null hypothesis (H<sub>03</sub>), which stated that there is no significant predictive relationship between *learning culture score* as measured by the Dimensions of the Learning Organization Questionnaire-Abbreviated (DLOQ-A) at a medium-sized, information technology-centered public-sector workplace, and the cross-functional employee workforce's *continuance commitment score*, as measured by the Revised Version of the Three Component Model (TCM) of Employee Commitment Survey at this medium-sized public-sector organization. The regression model is statistically significant,  $F(1, 113) = 6.645, p = .011$ . The regression equation for predicting continuance commitment score is  $Y_{\text{continuance commitment score}} = 4.940 + -.267 \times (\text{learning culture score})$ . The 95% confidence interval of this slope was -.472 to -.062. Table 4 provides a summary of the regression analysis for the variable predicting continuance commitment scores. Accuracy in predicting normative commitment,  $R = 0.236$ , is moderately low. An organization's learning culture score accounted for 6% of the explained variability in the continuance commitment score.

Table 4

#### *Coefficients*

Model	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	$\beta$
Constant	4.940	.420	
LCS Score	-.267	.104	-.236

*Note:* Dependent variable: Continuance Commitment Score

$$R^2 = .056 (p < .05)$$

The results show sufficient evidence to reject the null hypothesis and conclude that learning culture scores ( $M = 3.76, SD = 1.48$ ) did significantly predict overall continuance commitment scores ( $M = 3.93, SD = 1.67$ ),  $F(1, 113) = 6.645, p = .011$ .

## **CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSIONS**

### **Overview**

This chapter will discuss the results of the data analysis on each of the three research questions with specific reference to the literature on the phenomena. Afterwards, the chapter will discuss the implications of the findings, and their significance for the broader picture, as well as the limitations of the results. Finally, the chapter will conclude with recommendations for future research to continue moving forward to expand the existing knowledge in these areas.

### **Discussion**

The purpose of this study was to determine if a relationship exists between organizational learning and organizational commitment. The predictor variable of organizational learning is generally defined as the Learning Culture Score (LCS) as measured by the Dimensions of the Learning Organization Questionnaire-Abbreviated (DLOQ-A). The criterion variables were generally defined as the three subscales of the Organizational Commitment Profile, the Affective Commitment Score (ACS), Normative Commitment Score (NCS), and Continuance Commitment Score (CCS), as measured by the Three Component Model (TCM) of Employee Commitment Survey. The population for this study was the employee workforce at a medium-sized public-sector organization primarily in the information technology field with its employees dispersed at multiple locations throughout the Continental United States (CONUS).

This research sought to address the gap in the literature by determining whether there is a relationship between organizational learning and organizational commitment (Balay, 2012; Erdem & Uçar, 2013; Valaski et al., 2012). Previous studies in the literature demonstrated a gap with respect to how organization learning relates to employee commitment and employee retention. While there have been studies in organizational learning and its relationship to

organizational commitment, they have had limitations, such as the sample issues and the strength of their research instrument or the mediating effects of other variables such as organizational culture (Dirani, 2009; Lau et al., 2017; Massingham & Diment, 2009; Rouhana & Chams, 2013). This research sought to address these issues by utilizing an organizational consensus and a robust research instrument. Furthermore, the literature has not addressed the issue of employee commitment through organizational learning, and consequently, there is a gap in the literature that establishes whether there is a relationship between organizational learning and organizational commitment (Erdem & Uçar, 2013). It is in this gap in the research that this study sought to contribute to the body of knowledge. Furthermore, most of the studies of the relationship between the learning organization and organizational commitment have primarily focused on the medical field or education field (Alipour & Karimi, 2018; Balay, 2012; Jeong et al., 2007; Tsai 2014). This study sought to sample the field of information technology where advances in technology and software designs and development methodologies require the workforce to develop their skills professionally to maintain technical proficiency.

This significance of this study is that it relates to other studies that investigate the same issue in the wider body of knowledge in the topics of organizational learning, the learning organization, and organizational commitment. However, previous studies had limitations, such as sampling issues and the strength of their research instrument (Balay, 2000; Güçlü & Türkoğlu, 2003). The prior studies on the relationship between the learning organization and organizational commitment primarily focused on the medical or educational fields. However, this study sampled the field of information technology, where advances in technology and software designs and development methodologies require the workforce to develop their skills professionally to



maintain technical proficiency. The following is a discussion of each of the three research questions for this study.

### **Research Question 1 Findings**

**RQ1:** Does the *learning culture score* of a diverse, cross-functional employee workforce at a medium-sized technology-centered public-sector workplace, predict its *affective commitment score*?

The results of the hypothesis testing for first research question uncovered a predictive relationship between the learning culture and affective commitment. This is consistent with the literature, such as Lau, McLean, Hsu, and Lien's (2017) recent study that discovered that the learning organization directly influenced affective commitment. Furthermore, this finding was also in congruence with Islam, Ahmed, and Ahmad's (2015) study that found that "when employees are...provided a culture to learn on a continual basis, they exhibit more emotional attachment toward their organization and are less likely to leave the organization... learning culture enabled them to be more committed to their organizations" (p. 426). The findings were also consistent with the information technology field that requires a dynamic learning environment to stay current in the field (Noviandri, 2019). Thereby, other studies found significant relationships "between learning culture, inquiry and dialogue, knowledge sharing structure and affective commitment to change" (Malik & Garg, 2017, p. 610). Furthermore, the findings in this study supports previous research that showed a significant connection between how the learning culture impacts employee engagement and other positive citizenship behaviors, including the employee workforce's tendency towards affective commitment (Allen & Meyer, 1996). Samsudin et al. (2018) linked "citizenship behaviors," affective commitment, and overall improvements in work productivity based on organizational leadership support to their

employees. Lin and Kuo (2007) noted how the learning organization and its attributes of learning cultures, organizational learning and knowledge management “have direct and significant influences on organizational performance” (pp. 1066, 1078). Hwang and Kim’s (2007) “research [established] an empirical link among affective commitment, collectivist culture, social influence, and attitude toward sharing knowledge” (p.245) as “driver[s]” of success in technology mediated learning and knowledge management, which are other indicators of strong organizational performance. Along with affective commitment’s relationship to strong organizational performance, Jeong et al. (2007) discovered that “the learning organization principles of shared vision and team learning were statistically significant predictors for organizational effectiveness” (p. 53). The results of this study support previous findings that by fostering a strong organizational learning culture with frequent and effective employee engagement, managers can expect improvements in employee performance and desire to remain with the organization. For instance, Choi et al. (2016) discovered the learning organization is correlated with the employee’s desire and commitment to improve the quality of their work output, and Fauzia et al. (2017) found that there is a relationship between the learning organization, knowledge sharing, and employee commitment based on affective commitment and employee drive towards innovation. Milić et al.’s (2017) study revealed that the employee’s “authentic leadership capabilities moderately and positively influence employee affective commitment, which in turn partly affects the learning organization at the organizational level” (p. 9).

The statistical test used to analyze the results was a bivariate linear regression between the learning culture scores, the predictor, and the affective commitment scores, the criterion. The results of the data analysis for the first research question support the rejection of the first null

hypothesis, as the data demonstrates a strong predictive relationship between the *learning culture score* as measured by the Dimensions of the Learning Organization Questionnaire-Abbreviated (DLOQ-A) at a medium-sized, information technology-centered public-sector workplace, and the cross-functional employee workforce's *affective commitment score*, as measured by the Revised Version of the Three Component Model (TCM) of Employee Commitment Survey. Results indicate that an organization's learning culture score accounts for 50% of the explained variability in the affective commitment score. This demonstrates a strong correlation between an employee's desire to remain at an organization and organizations with strong learning cultures, and the results support similar findings by the previous studies in the literature.

### **Research Question 2 Findings**

**RQ2:** Does the *learning culture score* of a diverse, cross-functional employee workforce at a medium-sized technology-centered public-sector workplace, predict its *normative commitment score*?

The results of the hypothesis testing for the second research question that uncovered a predictive relationship between the learning culture and normative commitment is consistent with Islam, Kassim, Ali, and Sadiq's (2014) study that found that organizational learning culture has a direct influence on customer satisfaction, and indirectly influences normative commitment. However, Meyer and Parfyonova (2010) note that "normative commitment is an important motivational force that has been overlooked and underutilized" (p. 292). This is likely because much of the literature demonstrates strong connections between affective commitment and normative results; that is, these two rationales for why employees choose to stay with their organization are often related (Kang, Matusik, & Barclay, 2017; McCormick & Donohue, 2019). This is a primary reason why Meyer and Allen (2004) revised the TCM instrument. As they

state, “The greatest difference between the original and revised versions will be seen in the NCS. Briefly, the NCS measures employees’ feeling of obligation to remain with the organization” (p. 4). They state the rationale for this as follows: “Theoretically, this obligation can arise from two primary sources: socialization experiences and receipt of ‘benefits’ from the organization that require reciprocation on the part of the employee” (Meyer & Allen, 2004, p. 4). The revised version of the TCM used in this study demonstrates a consistency with the results of Islam et al. (2014), which “found that organizational level efforts also enhance an employee’s normative commitment. Therefore, HR managers should establish a learning environment in the organization,” (p. 401). This study is also consistent with the results of Ben Mansour, Naiji, and Leclerc (2017), who found a “positive relation between training satisfaction and normative commitment” (p. 1). Ben Mansour et al. (2017) further noted a gap in the literature pertaining to normative commitment, characterizing it as “an often-overlooked aspect” (p. 10).

Therefore, because the literature often separates normative commitment from affective commitment, in relation to the learning organization, there was an a priori assumption that the results of the second research question would diverge from the first research question. This assumption was based on concerns that other studies that compared the learning organization and organizational commitment and the normative commitment score were inconsistent with the rest of the literature. The studies were primarily conducted with research instruments developed for the Turkish language, Güçlü and Türkoğlu’s (2003) Learning Organization Perception Scale to assess the learning organization, and Balay’s (2000) Organizational Commitment Scale to assess organizational commitment. These prior studies that separated the organizational commitment with the learning organization had inconsistent results on the normative subscale (Çakır, 2007; İmamoğlu, 2011; Uğurlu, 2009). According to Erdem and Uçar

(2013), the instruments had inconsistencies primarily with the normative scale:

However, they are not consistent with Uğurlu's (2009) results in which teachers are the most committed in continuity dimension and slightly committed in normative commitment. The same inconsistency occurs in İmamoğlu's (2011) study in which the results showed that teachers are the most committed in compliance [continuance] dimension and the least committed in identification [normative] commitment. On the other hand, Çakır (2007) reached a conclusion in his/her study that teachers are uncommitted in emotional [affective], continuity and normative sub-dimensions of organizational commitment. (p. 1532)

The findings for this second research question, that there is a predictive relationship between the learning culture and normative commitment, was consistent with more recent studies that did not use a Turkish-based research instrument.

The statistical test used to analyze the results was a bivariate linear regression between the learning culture scores, the predictor, and the normative commitment scores, the criterion. The results of the data analysis for the second research question support the rejection of the second null hypothesis, as the data demonstrates a strong predictive relationship between the *learning culture score* as measured by the Dimensions of the Learning Organization Questionnaire-Abbreviated (DLOQ-A) at a medium-sized, information technology-centered public-sector workplace, and the cross-functional employee workforce's *normative commitment score*, as measured by the Revised Version of the Three Component Model (TCM) of Employee Commitment Survey. Results indicate that an organization's learning culture score accounts for 20% of the explained variability in the normative commitment score. This demonstrates a moderate correlation between an employee's personal obligation to remain at an organization

and organizations with strong learning cultures.

### **Research Question 3 Findings**

**RQ3:** Does the *learning culture score* of a diverse, cross-functional employee workforce at a medium-sized technology-centered public-sector workplace, predict its *continuance commitment score*?

The results of this study's third research questions, where the learning culture has a negative correlation with continuance commitment, is consistent with Meyer and Allen's (2004) TCM which notes that "in theory the optimal profile should be one in which ACS scores are high (e.g., above the scale midpoint), and the CCS is considerably lower (e.g., below the scale midpoint)" (p. 5). This is based on the research into the model for organizational commitment that found that the determinants for a negative correlation for continuance commitment is comparable to the degree and strength of the affective commitment's positive relationship with the phenomena (Meyer & Allen, 1991; Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001). Furthermore, the results of this study are also consistent with the perceived weak learning organization as correlated to a higher degree of continuance commitment (Beauregard, Lemyre, & Barrette, 2019). As Beauregard et al. (2019) note:

Under circumstances where OLP [organizational learning practices] are encouraged and sustained, affective commitment could express a form of positive, critical appraisal of the quality of the returns individual learning agents—as actors—gain from their organization–member exchanges. Conversely, continuance commitment could be anticipated under circumstances where OLP are weakly supported. (p. 223)

Therefore, the results are consistent with the body of other research that found that weak learning organizations show an increased likelihood of stronger levels of continuance commitment

(Boichuk & Menguc, 2013; Tsai, 2014). As noted by Boichuk and Menguc (2013), “it is theoretically relevant to show affective and continuance commitment’s differential effects” (p. 211). Consequently, the divergence in this study with a weak, negative correlation between the learning culture and the continuance commitment scores are congruent with the research.

The statistical test used to analyze the results was a bivariate linear regression between the learning culture scores, the predictor, and the continuance commitment scores, the criterion. The results of the data analysis for the third research question support the rejection of the third null hypothesis, as the data demonstrates a strong predictive relationship between the *learning culture score* as measured by the Dimensions of the Learning Organization Questionnaire-Abbreviated (DLOQ-A) at a medium-sized, information technology-centered public-sector workplace, and the cross-functional employee workforce’s *continuance commitment score*, as measured by the Revised Version of the Three Component Model (TCM) of Employee Commitment Survey. Results indicate that an organization’s learning culture score accounts for 6% of the explained variability in the continuance commitment score. This demonstrates a weak correlation between an employee’s need to remain at an organization solely for economic or financial reasons and organizations with strong learning cultures.

### **Implications**

The implications of the study help to address the current gap in the literature between the phenomena of the learning organization, and the multiple subjects surrounding organizational learning, and employee commitment, and the various reasons that impact the employee’s desire to stay with an organization. While the body of knowledge has a robust amount of research on each phenomenon, there is little research that addresses the intersection of the learning organization and organizational commitment. Therefore, this study adds to this body of research

by linking these two important subjects in describing that a predictive relationship exists between an organization's learning culture and organizational commitment.

The practical implications of this study are of importance to the fields of organizational behavior, management, business, education, as well as the numerous proponents of systems dynamics that value the impact of the individual employee holistically upon the organization. The implications of this study are useful for organizations in fields that are in decline, such as legacy technologies, that need to evolve and adapt to their changing field. This research supports how leaders of organizations that seek a dynamic workforce that can adapt to the changing pressures of modern society should seek to develop and improve upon their learning cultures. An additional benefit of this responsive workforce, or learning organization, is the stronger likelihood of employees who choose to remain with their company on the basis that they desire to be a part of the team, or at least identify themselves with the organization, rather than showing up to work simply to collect a paycheck. Thus, leadership that can implement the dimensions of a learning organization is able to develop a strategic vision that empowers their workforce to grow and change in response to their environment. In doing so, they can inspire their workforce to choose to be part of the team, rather than staying out of fear of loss of employment.

In conclusion, this study helps to address the gap in the literature that exists between the learning organization and organizational commitment. By analyzing the data from two robust research instruments, this study links the phenomena together. This study discovered that a positive, predictive relationship exists between a strong learning culture and strong affective and normative employee commitment. This study also discovered that a perceived weak learning culture weakly predicts continuance employee commitment. While this study recognizes that it has limitations, it seeks to add value to the body of knowledge in the learning organization and



organizational commitment. Therefore, this study hopes to be only the launching point for future studies that will continue to add to the literature on these subjects.

### **Limitations**

There were three limitations in this research, the sample selection, the limitations from the correlational design, and the potential impact from a global pandemic during data collection. First, the study was limited to a convenience sampling methodology to achieve enough survey responses for a sample size large enough to achieve a medium effect size with an Alpha of .05 and a statistical power of .80 (Warner, 2013, p. 362). This required a minimum of 105 participants, and therefore a consensus of the organization was needed to receive enough responses for the statistical power. Therefore, by meeting the requirements needed to achieve the statistical power, a tradeoff was made to forego more robust sampling methodologies. Therefore, the inference of the results of this research may be limited to the specific sample of the general population identified in this study and the findings cannot be generalized beyond the population studied. Second, another limitation of the study is the correlational design. The correlational design limitations consist of not allowing for the scientific control of variables, the fact that the experimenters cannot control extraneous variables, and that the design cannot show causality since correlation is limited to only showing relationships between variables, rather than supporting the statement that one variable causes another variable to occur (Gall et al., 2007).

Finally, the data collected for this research occurred during the middle of the SARS-CoV-2 or COVID-19, Coronavirus global pandemic. Therefore, the other major limitation to this study may be the impact that this pandemic had upon the individuals responding to the surveys. As noted in evolving literature, the pandemic caused an increased burden upon the American workforce due to health risks (Baker, Peckham, & Seixas, 2020). The data collection occurred

when most of the sample participants were forced to shelter-in-place and/or shift their work to remote environments, i.e. teleworking. Many occupational fields that traditionally work in physical office spaces had to shift their workforce into the remote environment and noted major challenges caused by this adjustment (Li, 2020; Lincoln, Khan, & Cai, 2020). Consequently, the results of this research may have confounding variables as the respondents in the sample, along with the entirety of American society, were impacted in numerous ways by the COVID-19 pandemic.

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

The findings of this study demonstrate the need for further investigation into the learning organization and learning culture and organizational commitment. Several suggestions for future studies are listed below.

1. Develop a conceptual or theoretical framework to explore how the learning organization improves upon employee commitment.
2. Case study research to investigate trends in various strong and weak types of learning organizations, or to conduct an ethnographic study to observe if there are any attributes that makes the information technology workforce more receptive to learning cultures over other occupations, such as the education or medical fields.
3. Correlation study between the six dimensions of the Dimensions of the Learning Organization Questionnaire-Abbreviated (DLOQ-A) and the three scales of the Organizational Commitment Profile (OCP).
4. Replicate this study using a different sample population (i.e. the medical field, education field), or to replicate this study after the end of the COVID-19 pandemic, or

to replicate this study with the longer version of the learning organization research instrument, the Dimensions of the Learning Organization Questionnaire (DLOQ).

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## APPENDIX A: IRB Waiver Letter

# LIBERTY UNIVERSITY

## INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

January 20, 2020

Timothy Shives

IRB Exemption 4140.012020: Learning to Commit: Analyzing the Predictive Relationship of the Learning Organization Upon Employee Commitment

Dear Timothy Shives,

The Liberty University Institutional Review Board has reviewed your application in accordance with the Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP) and Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulations and finds your study to be exempt from further IRB review. This means you may begin your research with the data safeguarding methods mentioned in your approved application, and no further IRB oversight is required.

Your study falls under exemption category 46.101(b)(2), which identifies specific situations in which human participants research is exempt from the policy set forth in 45 CFR 46.101(b):

(2) Research that only includes interactions involving educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior (including visual or auditory recording) if at least one of the following criteria is met:

(i) The information obtained is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that the identity of the human subjects cannot readily be ascertained, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects.

Please note that this exemption only applies to your current research application, and any changes to your protocol must be reported to the Liberty IRB for verification of continued exemption status. You may report these changes by submitting a change in protocol form or a new application to the IRB and referencing the above IRB Exemption number.

If you have any questions about this exemption or need assistance in determining whether possible changes to your protocol would change your exemption status, please email us at

Sincerely,

G. Michele Baker, MA, CIP  
 Administrative Chair of Institutional Research  
 Research Ethics Office

**LIBERTY**  
 UNIVERSITY  
*Liberty University | Training Champions for Christ since 1971*

**APPENDIX B: Invitation Email to Participate in Survey**

Dear [ORGANIZATION] Staff,

As part of the [ORGANIZATION]'s strategic vision, the [ORGANIZATION] Senior Management constantly looks at continuous improvement across the enterprise. One aspect of that is developing the learning organization where the organization continually grows and develops as a team. Timothy Shives, one of our employees, is conducting research as part of the requirements for a Doctor of Education degree. Please see Mr. Shives' recruitment letter as an attachment to this e-mail for more details and note that this research aligns with the strategic vision of the organization. As part of Mr. Shives' dissertation study, we are surveying the workforce to assess whether or not we currently have a learning organization and if so, to what degree it is in place. Furthermore, we seek to determine if a learning in an employment setting impacts the commitment employees have to that employer by meeting their needs for competence, autonomy and relatedness at work. If you would like to participate in this research please click the link below to be directed to an on-line survey.

We need your input. This survey should take between ten to twenty-five minutes. So please provide management honest and open feedback. Take time to read the disclosure and understand that none of the aggregate data analyzed can be traced back to individual employee responses. Please see the following link to the survey:

(Survey link here)

Feel free to contact Timothy Shives at [PHONE] or [E-MAIL] if you have any questions.

Best Wishes,  
[EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR]

## APPENDIX C: Reminder Email Letter to Participants

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Dear [ORGANIZATION] Staff,

Please consider completing this survey if you haven't already done so. **See the original message below.**

Thank you!

-[EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR]

---

Dear [ORGANIZATION] Staff,

As part of the [ORGANIZATION]'s strategic vision, the [ORGANIZATION] Senior Management constantly looks at continuous improvement across the enterprise. One aspect of that is developing the learning organization where the organization continually grows and develops as a team. Timothy Shives, one of our employees, is conducting research as part of the requirements for a Doctor of Education degree. Please see Mr. Shives' recruitment letter as an attachment to this e-mail for more details and note that this research aligns with the strategic vision of the organization. As part of Mr. Shives' dissertation study, we are surveying the workforce to assess whether or not we currently have a learning organization and if so, to what degree it is in place. Furthermore, we seek to determine if a learning in an employment setting impacts the commitment employees have to that employer by meeting their needs for competence, autonomy and relatedness at work. If you would like to participate in this research please click the link below to be directed to an on-line survey.

We need your input. This survey should take between ten to twenty-five minutes. So please provide management honest and open feedback. Take time to read the disclosure and understand that none of the aggregate data analyzed can be traced back to individual employee responses. Please see the following link to the survey:

(Survey link here)

Feel free to contact Timothy Shives at [PHONE] or [E-MAIL] if you have any questions.

Best Wishes,

[EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR]

**APPENDIX D: Permission to use the DLOQ-A****Shives, Timothy**

---

**From:** Karen Watkins [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, August 7, 2019 1:22 PM  
**To:** Shives, Timothy  
**Cc:** Marsick, Victoria  
**Subject:** Re: Request to use the DLOQ-A for Dissertation

Hi Tim,  
Happy to grant you permission under these conditions.  
Take care,  
Karen

Karen E. Watkins, Professor  
Learning, Leadership & Organization Development  
Department of Lifelong Education, Administration & Policy  
The University of Georgia

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
Office: [REDACTED]  
Cell: [REDACTED]  
Skype id: [REDACTED]  
E-mail: [REDACTED]

---

**From:** "Shives, Timothy" [REDACTED]  
**Date:** Wednesday, August 7, 2019 at 8:35 AM  
**To:** karen watkins [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** Request to use the DLOQ-A for Dissertation

[External Sender]  
Professor Watkins,

Per the instructions in your article, "The Dimensions of the Learning Organization Questionnaire (the DLOQ): A Nontechnical Manual," I am requesting permission to use the DLOQ as a research instrument for my dissertation effort. I intend to use the DLOQ-A short form exactly as published in your article, "Demonstrating the Value of an Organization's Learning Culture: The Dimensions of the Learning Organization Questionnaire."

Thank you for your support and consideration in this matter.

Very Respectfully,  
Timothy Shives, EdS., MscITM, MBA, PMP, LSSB  
Doctoral Candidate, EdD Program  
Liberty University School of Education

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]



## APPENDIX E: Academic License to use the TCM



### TCM Employee Commitment Survey

Based on the Three-Component Model (TCM) of commitment (Meyer & Allen, 1991; 1997), the TCM Employee Commitment Survey measures three forms of employee commitment to an organization: desire-based, obligation-based and cost-based.

#### What is the TCM Employee Commitment Survey?

Employees respond to a series of statements pertaining to their relationship with the organization and their reason for staying.

In the original version of the survey, there are eight statements for each of three commitment scales: the Affective Commitment Scale (ACS), the Normative Commitment Scale (NCS) and the Continuance Commitment Scale (CCS).

In the revised version there are six statements for each form of commitment. The survey can be administered alone, or can be imbedded in more extensive paper and pencil or web-based organizational surveys.

The TCM Employee Commitment Survey is designed to measure three forms of employee commitment to an organization:

1. **desire-based**  
(affective commitment)
2. **obligation-based**  
(normative commitment)
3. **cost-based**  
(continuance commitment).

#### Academic Package

The Academic Package includes the survey, instructions for using, scoring, and interpreting the survey results as well as additional sources for more information about the commitment scales and employee commitment. The license provides proper permission notice for use of the scales for academic purposes.

The license for the Academic Package is limited to the use of the TCM Employee Commitment Survey in a single research project. Subsequent use of the Survey requires a renewal license. The license agreement for the Academic Package stipulates that the scales will be used for academic purposes only, and that the user will not charge clients for administering/interpreting the scales or use the scales as part of a proprietary organizational survey.

#### Academic Licenses

FREE\*

#### Commercial Package

The survey can be administered alone, or can be imbedded in more extensive paper and pencil or web-based organizational surveys.

Instructions for using, scoring, and interpreting the survey results are provided. Sources for obtaining more information about the commitment scales, as well as for the management of employee commitment will also be provided.

Questionnaires are provided without instructions regarding various options for analysis of results.

The commercial license is available in a variety of offerings depending on the number of subjects you wish to include.

#### Commercial Licenses

1-100 Subjects \$300 CAD