Investigating communication satisfaction for a better understanding of organizational behavior

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Abstract:

Our research is consistent with the work of researchers who have attempted to understand the relationships between communication satisfaction and other aspects of organizational behavior such as job satisfaction, productivity, employee involvement, organizational commitment, and part-time employment (Downs & Hazen, 1977, Clampitt & Downs,1993; Varona, 1996; Iyer & Israel, 2012; Gray & Laidlaw 2002).

Our research aims to understand if and how communication satisfaction contributes to the development of organizational commitment. For this purpose, we chose a hypothetical-deductive approach, which guided us to use the quantitative method.

Data was collected by means of questionnaires intended for 180 officials from various public administrations in the Rabat Salé Kenitra region.

The empirical results of the research were processed using two software programs: SPSS 24 and SmartPLS 3.

The results of this research show that communication satisfaction is able to positively affect the official's attitude towards the organization.

Therefore, there is a significant impact of communication satisfaction on normative commitment (the duty to stay) and affective commitment (the desire to stay). However, continuance commitment (the obligation to stay) barely changes when communication satisfaction is more or less important.

The results of this study can be used to support HR and communication departments. It is a means of guiding decision-makers in particular, and researchers in general, to better apply and replicate this research model based on academic data and taking into consideration the perspective of officials.

The originality of this approach is that, to our knowledge, these two concepts (satisfaction communication and organizational commitment) have not yet been the subject of scientific research in the public sector in Morocco.

However, as it is a context that has certain specificities, future research could attempt to test this model on the private sector in a comparative study for example, while assessing other dimensions of internal communication, because in fact, there is a need to continue valuing communication and attempting newer approaches to assessment. (Ruck, 2012).

1. Introduction :

Morocco has embarked on a process of profound reform of the way the public administration operates. This new management style, called New Public Management (NPM), has led to a transformation of several aspects of the organization: its organizational modes, its human resource management policy, its strategies, its way of conceiving and fulfilling its missions, its structures, its values, its systems and networks, and its referents (Rondeaux, 2008).

Thus, the main approaches to administrative reform require a change in behavior and mentality.It is therefore essential to explore the individual-organization relationship because just like Michel Rousset (2002), we believe that public service is above all a human phenomenon.

There are, certainly, several ways of approaching the relationship between officials and their administration. We have chosen the managerial practices of internal communication, which have shown multiple effects on the individual's actual commitment.For (Castaing and Roussel, 2006), organizational commitment of agents is an important factor for the proper functioning and quality of public service.

When employees are satisfied with the quality of the communication which exists, it helps them to identify with the organization, and therefore to commit more to its goals and practices.

The literature shows that internal communication, which is developing in a considerable number of organizations, both private and public, can lead to the creation of a common vision for all employees and their federation around the organization's common goals and values in order to strengthen their commitment.

The relationship between these two variables has been confirmed by several authors and researchers.

In fact, the study conducted by Varona (Varona, 1996) in three Guatemalan organizations showed that the more satisfied employees are with communication, the more committed they are with the company and vice versa.

Putti, Aryee, and Phua (1990) also studied the impact of communication relationship satisfaction on organizational commitment in an engineering firm located in Singapore and demonstrated a positive relationship between these two variables.

Potvin (1991) confirmed a positive relationship between communication satisfaction and organizational commitment of employees.

In addition to these studies conducted in different contexts, a set of models supports this correlation, and this, since the emergence of the human relations school, supports the idea that what motivates the individual at work is not always related to economic factors, but also emotional and social.

It has been confirmed that an "engaging communication" strategy brings interesting results on the behavioral level Gueguen et al (2011), while helping organizations to develop employee's commitment Kress (2005).

This brief literature review, which will be detailed later, clearly shows that the relationship between communication satisfaction and organizational commitment exists and is relatively consistent (Rodwell et al., 1998; Dillon & Flood, 1992; Caldwell et al., 1990).

Our paper aims to understand if and how communication satisfaction contributes to the development of organizational commitment.

To do so, we developed the following research question:

"What is the effect of communication satisfaction on the nature of organizational commitment of officials in the Rabat Salé Kenitra region?"

In order to explore this possible correlation between these two variables, we chose a hypothetical-deductive approach, using the questionnaire to collect data. In this article, we will

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try to present the results of the survey conducted through 180 questionnaires after explaining the context of the research and the methodology followed.

2. Literature review and hypothesis development:

The first step is to define our research problem, while also mentioning models and theories which clearly show the strong and significant relationship that exists between internal communication and organizational commitment Rodwell et al., (1998) ; Dillon & Flood (1992); Caldwell et al., (1990).

The aim of this literature review is to highlight the variables of our research model that connect the concepts studied as well as the formulation of the hypotheses that we will then test.

This research uses Allen and Meyer's model as a reference. Meyer and Allen (1991); Meyer and Herscovitch (2001) ; Meyer et al., (2002). It's a model that, at first, defined an approach reflecting an affective orientation towards the organization (Affective commitment), then a cost-oriented definition, where an individual's commitment is simply the result of the costs he or she associates with leaving the organization (continuance commitment). Finally, some definitions that focus on the moral obligation to remain in the organization (Normative commitment).

2.1. Background

Addressing the important challenges of the economic and social development of our country, the public administration's culture must imperatively evolve to support this performance perspective.

Therefore, empirical studies are needed in the organizational behavior field, in order to help decision-makers better understand the nature of the relationship between officials and their administrations, hence the need to have an effective model for reforming this sector.

Castaing and Roussel (2006) note that the organizational commitment of officials is an important factor for the proper functioning and quality of public service.

There are several ways of approaching the relationship between officials and their administrations. We have chosen the managerial practices of internal communication, which have shown multiple effects on the individual's actual commitment.

Moreover, whether the communication is efficient or not,it is the employee who has the final say. As a result, this research is more interested in employee's satisfaction with communication and its effect on affective, continuance and normative commitment.

2.2. Hypotheses development

The concept of organizational commitment has been the subject of much research over the past two decades. Some of these studies have demonstrated relationships between commitment and several other organizational variables such as : (a) absenteeism (Steers, 1977; Larson & Fukami, 1984) Fukami, 1984); (b) leadership style (Morris & Sherman 1981); (c) job performance (Mowday, Porter & Dubin, 1974; Steers, 1977); (d) employee turnover (Kom, Katerberg & Hulin, 1979; Angel & Perry 1981); (e) absenteeism (Steers, 1977); Larson & Fukami, 1984) Perry 1981); (e) openness to communication (Argyris in Housel & Warren, 1977); (f) network involvement (Eisenberg, Monge, & Miller, 1983), (g) participation in decision-making (Hall, 1977), (h) feedback received on the job, and (i) socialization strategies for new employees (Buchanan, 1974).

In most of these studies, the factors of commitment have focused primarily on individual, structural, and role-related variables (Mowday, Porter, & Steers, 1982; Dornstein & Matalon, 1989) while organizational processes have been ignored as potential determinants of commitment (Putti, Aryee, & Phua, 1990).

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One of the elements that has been disregarded is employee satisfaction with organizational communication practices. In fact, there is a lack of research on the relationship between communication satisfaction and organizational commitment. Therefore, the relationship that is supposed to exist between these two variables is more implied than demonstrated. To date, few studies have supported a relationship between communication satisfaction and organizational involvement (Putti, Aryee, & Phua, 1990; Potvin, 1991; Downs, 1991; C. W. Downs et al., 1995).

Putti, Aryee, and Phua (1990) studied the impact of communication satisfaction on organizational commitment in an engineering firm located in Singapore and demonstrated a positive relationship between these two variables.

In his study Potvin's (1991) examined the relationship between communication satisfaction and organizational commitment in three American organizations: a distribution company, a large hospital, and a high-tech multinational located in Dallas ,United States.

Potvin confirmed a positive relationship between communication satisfaction and organizational commitment of employees.

This result was also highlighted by Downs (1991) who tested this relationship in two Australian companies.

In another more recent study that compares the relationship between organizational commitment and organizational communication, Downs et al. (2004) compared the results obtained in American, Australian and Guatemalan organizations. A study that confirmed that satisfaction with communication dimensions is significantly related to organizational commitment.

Based on these elements referred to in this non-exhaustive literature review, we developed the following three hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1: *Communication satisfaction strengthens the emotional attachment of public administration employees in the Rabat-Salé-Kénitra region.*

Hypothesis 2: *Communication Satisfaction reinforces the need to officials to remain members of their administration in the Rabat-Salé-Kénitra region.*

Hypothesis 3: *Communication Satisfaction accentuates the obligation to remain a member of the public administration in the Rabat-Salé-Kénitra region.*

3. Research method or methodology

The perspective chosen in this research is quantitative, an approach that is part of a hypothetical-deductive perspective and consists on the control and explanation of the phenomenon (Altameem, 2007), with the aim of identifying causal relationships.

3.1. Research model

Based on the hypotheses formulated above, we introduce our research model in the following figure .

Figure 1 : Research model
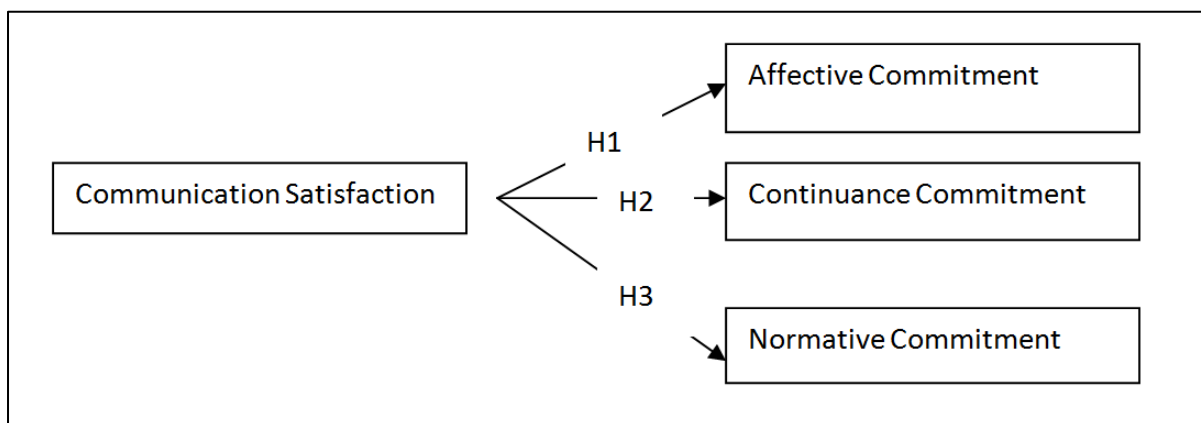
The three dimensions of organizational commitment flow from the Allen and Meyer (1991, 1997) model. Thus, we measure the affective and normative dimensions using the 12 items from the Allen et al. scale (1993) and the continuance dimension with the components of perceived sacrifice and perceived absence of alternatives using the 6 items from the Stinglhamber et al. scale (2002) taken up by Guerrero et al.

The table below shows some examples of the items used in this research :

Table 1: examples of items used to measure « organizational commitment »

	Meaning	**Examples of Items**
Affective Commitment	commitment as a desire to stay	-I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career in this organization. -This organization has a great deal of personal meaning for me.
Continuance Commitment	commitment as a need to stay	-One of the few negative consequences of leaving my job at this organization would be the scarcity of available alternatives elsewhere. -Right now, staying with my job at this organization is a matter of necessity as much as desire
Normative Commitment	commitment as an obligation to stay	-This organization deserves my loyalty. -I would feel guilty if I left this organization now.

As for the explanatory variable " communication satisfaction", we used the measurement scale named " The Communication Satisfaction Questionnaire", developed by Downs and Hazen (1977, 1988), validated as a measurement scale of organizational communication. Varona (1996), and used internationally.Rubin et al.(1994)

In addition to its reliability, this measurement scale appears to meet the requirements of this survey. Mhiri (2019).

We adapted this measurement scale to our research following the exploratory study conducted.

Thus, we will measure communication satisfaction using seven factors : personal feedback, corporate perspective, organizational integration, relations with the supervisor, communication climate, media quality, co-worker communication Hamilton (1987).

We notice that these dimensions can be assembled into three categories: informational dimensions, relational dimensions, and info-relational dimensions.

The informational category includes the level of satisfaction with the content and flow of information, while the relational category includes satisfaction with the relationships in terms of communication between members of the organization. Pincus (1986) ; Putti et al.(1990).

The table below shows some examples of the items used in this research :

Table 2 : examples of items used to measure

	Meaning	Examples of Items
The informational dimension	-Media quality -Organizational integration -Organizational perspective	-Written reports are clear/concise -I receive information on the requirements of my job -I receive information on government action affecting my administration
Relational dimension	Horizontal communication	Horizontal communication with other employees is accurate
Relational/ informational dimension	-Personal feedback -Communication climate -Supervisor communication	-Information on how i am being evaluated -I receive the information needed to do my job on time -My supervisor is open to ideas

Source : The Communication Satisfaction Questionnaire, Downs and Hazen (1977, 1988)

3.2. Sample and description

The target population of this study is the officials of the administrations located in the region Rabat Salé-Kénitra.

We first examined the rule mentioned by Hair et al. (Hair et al., 2017), to decide the sample size, the latter needs to be 10 times larger than the number of indicators contained in the largest construct or variable.

Therefore, for this study, we used the convenience sampling technique after attempting the multistage sampling method.

We had to interview 227 managers, 66 supervisors and 89 operational staff with a total of 382 individuals.

However, our intention did not take shape because of the context in which the survey took place. The Covid-19 pandemic restricted the channels of communication with the respondents, making it impossible to apply the multistage sampling method.

Thus, after contacting multiple officials in the region concerned, either electronically, through social networks, or by phone, we managed to collect a total of 180 responses.

The respondents have quite varied characteristics in terms of age, gender and seniority. We made sure to spread our selection over all the profiles and categories of officials in the main

cities of the region, i.e. Rabat, Salé, Temara and Kenitra, in order to guarantee the good representativeness of the sample.

Our sample is composed of both sexes, 45% of women and 55% of men, mainly young people aged 30 to 45 years, with 46%.

4. Results and discussion

We will present the results of the quantitative analysis of the final sample (180 respondents), including the results of the descriptive analysis using SPSS 24 software, and the evaluation of the measurement model, and the structural model, by using the PLS (Partial Least Squares) method using SmartPLS 3 software.

Taking into consideration the main reasons proposed by Chin et Newsted (Chin et Newsted, 1999) ,this study adopts PLS-SEM as the statistical method to evaluate the research model based on the following reasons:

- Our study is predictively oriented to test hypotheses.

-Structural relationships are not firmly established.

- The objective of this study is to test the relationships based on prior theoretical knowledge. The ability of PLS-SEM to estimate correlations between residuals, and to assess their impacts on the model, makes this technique the appropriate approach.

- The PLS method tolerates relatively small sample sizes, in our case 1the sample size is 180 (Fernandes, 2012).

Therefore, we will present the results of the reliability and validity of the measurement model, then, we will expose the relations between the studied variables.

4.1. Analysis of the measurement model

All the loading factors of the items measuring the variables: (Affective commitment, normative commitment, and continuance commitment) give values that exceed 0.7, which means that each item gives reliable measures for the measured variable. We also have an average variance extracted (AVE) that exceeds 0.5 as well as a satisfactory composite reliability for the variable (Affective commitment) on the other hand we notice that the AVE for the variables (Normative commitment and continuance commitment) give values below the accepted threshold of 0.5, this is due to the factor loading of some items that give a value lower than 0.5, hence the need to remove these items from our research model in order to improve the value of the AVE

The following table shows the results of the measurement model analysis after the removal of the above items:

Table 3: Analysis of the measurement scale of the variables (after deleting the items)

Variables	Dimension	Items	Factor Loading	Alpha de Cronbach	CR	AVE
Communication satisfaction	**co-worker communication**	Com_infor_1	**0,783**	**0,797**	**0,868**	**0,622**
		Com_infor_2	**0,829**			
		Com_infor_5	**0,769**			
		Com_infor_6	**0,773**			
Affective commitment		Affective_1	**0,763**	**0,826**	**0,885**	**0,658**

	Affective_2	**0,774**				
	Affective_4	**0,881**				
	Affective_5	**0,822**				
normative commitment	Normative_1	**0,800**	**0,846**		**0,896**	**0,684**
	Normative_4	**0,818**				
	Normative_5	**0,860**				
	Normative_6	**0,829**				
Continuance commitment	Calculée_1	**0,799**	**0,771**		**0,856**	**0,603**
	Calculée_2	**0,822**				
	Calculée_3	**0,867**				
	Calculée_4	**0,588**				

Source : Authors

The following figure represents the diagram produced by the SmartPLS software which illustrates the results of the measurement models in our model.

Figure 2 : Results of the indicators of the variable measurement models
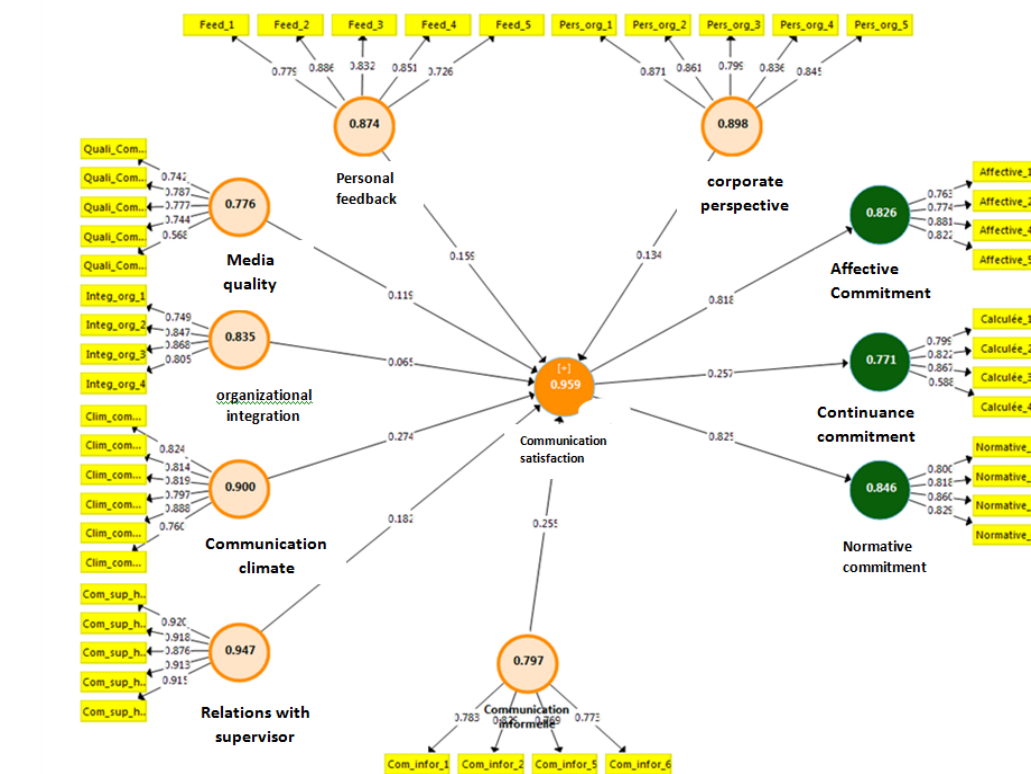
Source : Authors

Table 4: Analysis of the contribution of each dimension to the internal communication variable

Relation	Std. Beta (β)	Std. Dev	T-Value	P-value	Decision
communication climate to Communication satisfaction	0,271	0,044	6,111	0,000	Accepted
Relations with supervisor to communication satisfaction	0,185	0,042	4,418	0,000	Accepted
Co-worker communication to communication satisfaction	0,249	0,034	7,367	0,000	Accepted
Personal feedback to communication satisfaction	0,159	0,039	4,020	0,000	Accepted
Organizational integration to communication satisfaction	0,066	0,041	1,583	0,114	Rejected
Corporate perspective to communication satisfaction	0,135	0,043	3,104	0,002	Accepted
Media quality to communication satisfaction	0,126	0,037	3,366	0,001	Accepted

Source : Authors

4.2. Discussion

The success of an internal communication strategy is only possible if the working climate is comfortable, if the people in the administration master the communication techniques, if the conflicts are well managed, if the individual receives in time the necessary information allowing him to carry out his work without frustration, and finally if the internal communication of the administration motivates and helps the collaborator to reach the assigned objectives.

In addition, it is important that each department is aware of the projects of the other departments, that the team is harmonious and that communication with other collaborators is fluid.

In public administration, internal communication is manifested in the attitude of the supervisor who is, on the one hand, called upon to listen, to pay attention to the ideas of the members of his or her team, and to give them advice on how to solve problems related to their mission.

On the other hand, the quality of this relationship, which is so sensitive, can be translated in a material way by a follow-up and a continuous evaluation of the work of the official, and in a non-material way by a mutual trust to be developed over time.

Communication satisfaction also means that the official receives enough information about the progress of his/her work in general and about his/her contribution as an individual.

The need for every individual to know how their work is judged and how their performance is evaluated agrees with the idea that communication is an act that involves exchange and feedback. (Amiel, Bonnet, and Jacobs 1997)

The importance of personal feedback at work has also been emphasized by (Buchanan, 1974) and also by Weiner (1948) who explains it simply as "the reaction of the receiver to the message sent and its return to the sender".

In addition, at the relational level, a person needs to know that his efforts are recognized that his supervisor understands the problems and challenges encountered in the course of his work so that he can make the necessary improvements to his contribution to the administration.

The understanding of internal communication can only be complete if the "organizational perspective" dimension is taken into account.

This includes information about the administration on the one hand (objectives, financial situation, achievements and level of performance) and information about government action on the other. The results show that officials also appreciate the information received on the activity sector to which he belongs.

In practice, the use of communication tools is inevitable, but the right ones must be chosen. In fact, it is not enough to have an internal journal, and send out written reports; the most important thing is that they contain useful, up-to-date and interesting information for the internal audience.

Therefore, we notice that "communication satisfaction" is a multidimensional construct, as much informational as it is relational.

On the other hand, the results of the first hypothesis show that there is a significant correlation at the 0.01 threshold with a positive standard Beta coefficient that reflects a strong influence of 0.814. This result allows us to accept our first hypothesis and confirm that communication satisfaction does indeed positively influence affective commitment, and that any variation in communication satisfaction by one unit implies a strong positive variation in affective commitment by 81%.

Results show that there is a significant influence relationship between internal communication and continuance commitment, the strength of this relationship is estimated by the standard beta coefficient which gives a value of 0.261 which shows that any variation of communication satisfaction implies a weak variation of the continuance commitment, this result allows us to accept the second hypothesis (H2) but stay aware of the week link between the two variables

The analysis of the third hypothesis H3 yields significant results with a value below the accepted error threshold of 0.000 and a positive standard Beta coefficient that reflects a strong influence also 0.823. This means that communication satisfaction has a significant positive impact on normative commitment, i.e. any variation in communication satisfaction by one unit implies a positive increase in normative commitment by 82%.

After analyzing these three hypotheses, we now understand the importance of communication satisfaction as a factor of changing an official's behavior towards his administration.

Officials are in fact willing to be more committed towards their administrations if they are satisfied with the communication.

5. Summary and conclusions

The results of this research are a contribution to the body of work on communication satisfaction and organizational commitment.

Although other research has previously sought to understand how to develop staff commitment in many contexts such as schools (Nicholson, 1980; Jones, 1981; Duke, 1981;

Wippich, B., 1983; Wippich, M., 1983), no studies have been conducted in the Moroccan public service.

After a non-exhaustive literature review, we presented the sample size (180 participants), and explained the use of principal component analysis (PCA) and structural equation methods, in particular the PLS method, as statistical tools to analyze the data collected.

The positive effect of communication satisfaction on organizational commitment is a result we obtained that is consistent with the literature (Putti, Aryee & Phua, 1990; Potvin, 1991; Down, 1991; C. W. Downs et al. 1995; Varona 1996).

The test confirmed the first hypothesis. This means that if the official is satisfied with the internal communication of his administration, this can reinforce his desire to stay.This positive relationship has been confirmed by Liou and Nyhan (1994) who found that emotional commitment is an important component of public service commitment.

Affective commitment is an attitude based on strong social-emotional elements. It can be explained by concepts of social exchange (the social exchange theory) that contain relational elements that can be reinforced by communication satisfaction.

When it comes to the impact of communication satisfaction on continuance commitment, results show that it is not significant. Officials whose relationship with the administration is based on "need" would decide to remain there following a reasoned choice. They would consider it more opportune to remain loyal to the administration than to leave it, because in the second case, the operation would be disadvantageous, given all the material and immaterial investments involved.

As to the third hypothesis , which has been confirmed strongly, normatively committed officials consider it morally right to remain in their administrations. Judging internal communication to be effective and relevant develops the moral responsibility of the official towards his administration, which prevents him from leaving.

Therefore, suggesting a model that takes into consideration the different types of commitment is a theoretical contribution that can enrich the field of study of both commitment and communication.It is therefore a new theoretical model that has its roots in the theories of commitment and has been adapted to the public domain in order to understand the behavior of officials in case they are satisfied with the communication in their administration.

In this regard, these results would help decision-makers and those responsible for internal communication strategy to coordinate their efforts to redefine this concept, to give it its right value in order to strengthen the official-administration relationships.

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