

2022

## Remote Work and Organizational Commitment in the Food Manufacturing Industry

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# Walden University

College of Management and Human Potential

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Terry Byers, Jr.

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Walden University  
2022

Abstract

Remote Work and Organizational Commitment in the Food Manufacturing Industry

by

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MA, University of Phoenix, 2012

BS, University of Phoenix, 2006

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Management

Walden University

November 2022

## Abstract

Limited research exists on the effects of remote work on the organizational commitment of managers working in the food manufacturing industry. This quantitative study was guided by the three-component model of organizational commitment coupled with relational cohesion theory to examine the organizational commitment of managers working remotely in the food manufacturing industry. The purpose of the study was to determine to what extent, if any, remote work has affected the organizational commitment of managers in an often overlooked and under-researched food manufacturing industry. Using the Three Component Model Employee Commitment Survey, data was collected from 143 anonymous respondents. Statistical analyses were performed on the data included Pearson's correlation testing and multivariate analysis of variance. The results of the analysis revealed a statistically significant but weak relationship between organizational commitment and remote work. The findings suggests that relational cohesion theory extends beyond the traditionally accepted views focused on face-to-face interactions and encompasses electronic interactions as well.

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## Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

In March of 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared COVID-19 a global pandemic. In an attempt to prevent the spread of the virus, many states went into some form of lockdown, and the concept of social distancing was born. The pandemic caused global disruption that forced companies to reevaluate their operating practices and drastically change their employees' working environments. In May of 2021, the WHO (2021) published a policy brief urging businesses to transition to remote work. This led to many employees moving from a traditional work environment into a remote work arrangement (Nyberg et al., 2021).

A gap in the existing literature on the transition to remote work has been identified; no identified studies have focused solely on the food manufacturing industry. Several studies did not focus on any particular industry, such as Chenji and Raghavendra (2021), who conducted research focusing on the challenges faced by remote workers, and Wang et al. (2020), who found that remote workers might experience feelings of isolation, thereby reducing organizational commitment (OC). Despite an exhaustive search, no research was found that addressed the impact of remote work on managers working in the food manufacturing industry. With this study, I examined if the transition to remote work influenced the OC of managers within the food manufacturing industry.

For this study, I used a quantitative methodology with a correlation design in which the relationship between an employee's remote work arrangement and their OC

was examined. I focused solely on managers working within the food manufacturing industry.

### **Background of the Study**

Classical organizational theory portrayed organizations as machines where employees were simply necessary components of the machine required to make it function (Taylor, 1947; Weber, 1947). This preliminary theory evolved into neoclassical theory with the introduction of behavioral science (Maiti & Sanyal, 2018). Neoclassical management theory viewed organizations with less rigidity in considering employees as essential parts of the organization and vital to its success. Neoclassical management theory paved the way for the study of OC.

Allen and Meyer (1990) created a three-component model (TCM) of OC which has become the gold standard for evaluating OC. The authors defined the three-component model of affective commitment, continuance, and normative commitment. The three components of OC have fostered a better understanding of the connection between the employee and the organization (Allen & Meyer, 1990). Affective commitment referred to the emotional attachment the employee feels to the organization. Continuance is the commitment the employee feels towards the organization based on the financial cost incurred by the employee if they were to leave the organization. Normative commitment is the employee's feeling of obligation towards the organization that keeps them from leaving (Allen & Meyer, 1990).

Yiing and Bin Ahmad (2009) broadly described OC as an employee's belief in an organization's values, future goals, and their desire to remain a member of that organization. Allen and Meyer (1990) stated that employee turnover intentions decrease as the OC of the employee increases. Chan et al. (2008) stated that employees with OC have higher levels of job satisfaction and are less likely to leave the organization.

Affective OC is a product of, and is enhanced by, organizational identification (Afshari et al., 2019; Lee et al., 2015). Organizational identification is the emotional attachment the employee feels towards the organization and their specific role within the organization, and it shares some similar traits with affective organizational commitment. The most significant difference is in the self-defining nature of organizational identification (Lee et al., 2015). In organizational identification, employees' feelings of self-worth and self-fulfillment become primarily based on the organization.

The relationships between OC, job satisfaction, and employee performance are an area of increasing scholarly interest (Ahmad & Raja, 2021). In a study of the antecedents of employee turnover intentions, the results displayed that job satisfaction, OC, and empowerment lowered the rate of turnover intention (Ozkan et al., 2020). Ozkan et al. (2020) stated that OC and job satisfaction were strong predictors of employee turnover intentions.

De Klerk et al. (2021) examined the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on remote work. The focus of the research was on the impact of remote work on an employee's work engagement. Although the authors did not specifically cite affective

OC, the essence of the research was directed toward the employee's psychological reactions to prolonged separation from the workplace. De Klerk et al. contended that remote work leads to a lack of personal interaction, negatively affecting the employee's ability to collaborate with fellow professionals and increasing feelings of isolation.

Diab-Bahman and Al-Enzi (2020) conducted qualitative research in Kuwait. They examined the emotional effects on both employers and employees who were forced into remote work arrangements due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The study uncovered an increased negative emotional stress in remote workers. The emotional stress caused by forced remote work arrangement may decrease the employee's OC. Even though remote work has been around for decades (Diab-Bahman & Al-Enzi, 2020), this is the first time in recent history that remote work has been recommended and, in some cases, forced by the government. The WHO (2021) urged businesses to transition to remote work to lessen the transmission risks of COVID-19 in the workplace.

Veith and Dogaru (2020) researched the impact of COVID-19 on the requirement for successful remote work environments. The researchers contended that one of the most significant challenges organizations faced was equipping their human capital with the tools to navigate the challenges of remote work successfully. Veith and Dogaru described managerial communication as a critical component of managing a remote work team successfully. Managers who had little to no experience leading remote teams struggled with digital communication techniques, which resulted in unclear direction and confused employees. This research study examines the challenges organizations have encountered

with the onslaught of the COVID-19 pandemic. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, industries that had never used remote work arrangements may have had ill-equipped leaders to lead a remote workforce adequately.

Wang et al. (2020) examined the effects of isolation on affective OC. Their research focused on the psychological impact on employees of remote work arrangements. Using a theoretical framework consisting of the need-to-belong theory and relational cohesion theory, the researchers discovered that feelings of isolation were stronger in remote employees, negatively affecting their OC. Wang et al. explored OC but did not focus on a particular industry or geographical region.

The identified gap in the existing literature is a lack of research on the effect of remote work arrangements on the OC of managers working in the food manufacturing industry within the United States. The specific problem I addressed with this research was the turnover rate among food manufacturing industry managers who moved from a traditional work environment into a remote work environment. Many published works have been completed since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic that investigated OC from several angles; however, no research specifically addressed the impact of remote work on managers working in the food manufacturing industry.

### **Problem Statement**

The issue that prompted me to search the literature is the dramatic operational changes many organizations around the globe have affected in response to the challenges created by the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic forced organizations to embrace



remote-centric work arrangements to continue business operations while maintaining social distancing. These shifts in business operating practices have not been thoroughly researched, and the long-term effects remain yet to be seen. One such under researched area is the effects on an employee's OC when transitioned into a remote work arrangement, limiting the understanding we have of this phenomenon. The identified gap in the existing literature is a lack of research on the effect of remote work arrangements on the OC of managers working in the food manufacturing industry within the United States. Research has been done on remote work and on OC, but this knowledge gap has not been addressed. The problem is that if remote work reduces the OC of managers, leading to high turnover, it could create a knowledge void which could have negative effects on the industry. Employees with higher levels of OC are less likely to engage in turnover (Yiing & Bin Ahmad, 2009). This research study may provide reliable information that can be used by business practitioners to develop programs and work arrangements geared toward increasing employee OC, which may decrease employee turnover intentions as a byproduct.

Several research studies have been completed since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic that investigated OC from several angles but did not focus on any industry. Chenji and Raghavendra (2021) conducted research focusing on the challenges faced by remote workers; Wang et al. (2020) found that remote workers might experience feelings of isolation, reducing OC; Matli (2020) and others indicated a relationship between remote work and OC. An exhaustive review of peer-reviewed research literature did not

reveal any literature that addressed the impact of remote work on managers working in the food manufacturing industry.

The problem statement for this study is focused on the effects of remote work on the OC of managers working the food manufacturing industry. If remote work reduces the OC of managers leading to high turnover it will create a knowledge void which could have negative effects on the industry. This problem statement meets the Walden doctoral research study requirements: it is justified, grounded in the literature, original, amenable to scientific study, and contributes to positive social change. The contribution to positive social change that this research hopes to create is a better understanding of the factors that may influence an employee's OC.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study is was to examine if OC is influenced by the transition to remote work. I used a quantitative methodology to test the theories of Allen and Meyer (1990) and correlate OC to remote work through a focus on managers working in the food manufacturing industry who have been moved into a remote work arrangement due to COVID-19. A correlational research design allowed me to examine the effect of the work environment on the OC of managers in the food manufacturing industry within the United States. A correlational design examines the relationships between two variables without any researcher manipulation of the variable (Frankfort-Nachmias et al., 2021). A simple linear regression analysis with one categorical variable was the statistical tool best equipped to interpret the data collected during the research.

The independent variable, remote work, was defined as the situation where an employee works from a location other than the traditional brick-and-mortar office building and uses technology to communicate with coworkers and supervisors (see Matli, 2020). The dependent variable, OC, was defined by the three-component model (TCM) of OC created by Allen and Meyer (1990). The TCM consists of affective, normative, and continuance commitment: each of the three components measures a specific commitment aspect.

### **Research Question and Hypothesis**

The following research question was used for this study:

RQ: What effects, if any, do remote work arrangements have on the organizational commitment of managers working in the food manufacturing industry?

My approach included grounding the research in the existing theory of the three-dimension model of OC created by Allen and Meyer (1990). Allen and Meyer stated that employee turnover is directly related to the link between the employee and the organization. and they identified the three dimensions of OC as affective, continuance, and normative. Increased turnover is one possible effect of remote work on any measure of organizational commitment.

Affective OC refers to the emotional attachment the employee feels to the organization (Allen & Meyer, 1990). Continuance is the commitment the employee feels towards the organization based on the financial cost incurred by the employee if they

were to leave the organization. Normative commitment is the employee's feelings of obligation towards the organization that keep them from leaving.

The variables are organizational commitment and remote work. The null and alternative hypotheses are as follows:

$H_0$ : There is no relationship between organizational commitment and remote work

$H_a$ : There is a relationship between organizational commitment and remote work

There are four primary quantitative research designs: descriptive, correlational, causal-comparative, and experimental. Bloomfield and Fisher (2019) described a quantitative descriptive research design examining variables in a sample to measure and describe them. Descriptive research does not establish cause and effect and is often used to aid in creating a hypothesis that requires further research and testing. Frankfort-Nachmias et al. (2021) stated that correlational research describes the relationship between two variables. A quantitative causal-comparative research design is used to determine one variable's effect on another variable (Bloomfield & Fisher, 2019). A quantitative experimental research design is used to examine the relationship between the independent and dependent variables in a controlled environment. To conduct an experimental research design requires a controlled environment; this type of design can create challenges when used for social science research (Bloomfield & Fisher, 2019).

After reviewing the four primary quantitative research designs, I was determined that a correlation research design was the best suitable match for the research question.

The research question was created to explore the relationship between remote work and OC.

### **Theoretical Foundation**

A theoretical frame is derived from existing theory (Grant & Osanloo, 2014) and the conceptual framework is described as the researchers' vision of how the research problem will be explored. Grant and Osanloo (2014) used the analogy of building a house. The theoretical framework is the blueprint displaying an overall objective of the research and a path to achieve it. It grounds the research in existing theory and allows for further exploration. The conceptual framework describes how the information will flow throughout the research.

The theoretical framework for this research is grounded in the three-dimension model of OC created by Allen and Meyer (1990). The TCM of OC has been the cornerstone of OC research for over 2 decades (Smith & Hall, 2008). These components described the different paths of OC development and the implications for employees' behavior.

I also referenced relational cohesion theory in my study. Huang et al. (2018) described relational cohesion theory as frequent exchanges that produce a positive emotional response, which then creates commitment behaviors. Relational cohesion theory is focused on mild emotions (Lawler & Yoon, 1996) and how these emotions are the foundation for commitment behaviors. Relational cohesion theory highlighted the emotional factors in forming feelings of commitment (Lawler & Yoon, 1996). Lawler

and Yoon (1996) stated that commitment behaviors in the workplace are byproducts of relational cohesion.

This research was designed to determine if effective emotional responses are lessened in employees who work remotely, which results in decreased OC. The null hypothesis was that there was no relationship between remote work and OC and that remote employees experience the same positive emotional responses in the workplace as those working in a traditional brick-and-mortar setting.

### **Nature of the Study**

To address the research question in this quantitative study, a correlational research design was used to examine the effect of the work environment on the OC of managers in the food manufacturing industry within the United States. A correlational design study is used when the researcher desires to examine the relationships between two variables without any researcher manipulation of the variable (Frankfort-Nachmias et al., 2021). A simple linear regression analysis with one categorical variable was the statistical tool best equipped to interpret the data collected during the research.

Validated surveys were used to collect the data for the research design. According to Bar-Haim (2019), an important advancement in the study of OC was the creation of a widely accepted and validated data collection instrument. There are several validated surveys in use today, and the Allen and Meyer 24-item questionnaire focusing on the three components of OC is the most widely accepted and most widely used (Bar-Haim,

2019). To gain permission to use the survey, I contacted the survey's author and gained written permission. A copy of this permission appears in Appendix B..

### **Definitions**

The following definitions were used in this study:

*Affective commitment*: The feelings of affection an employee has for their employer that motivate them to stay with the organization (Allen & Meyer, 1990).

*Continuance commitment*: Employees' perceived cost of leaving the organization (Allen & Meyer, 1990).

*Food manufacturing industry*: Industries that process raw agricultural and livestock products into consumable food products. The food products manufactured in these facilities are often sold to wholesalers or retailers for distribution to the final consumers (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2016)

*Normative commitment*: The feeling of obligation an employee has towards their organization (Allen & Meyer, 1990).

*Organizational commitment*: An individual's alignment with the goals and values of an organization and their willingness to perform duties for the organization (Meyer et al., 2002).

*Remote work*: Work performed at a location, usually at home, where the employee uses technology to communicate with superiors and coworkers (Matli, 2020).

*Turnover intention*: The employee's voluntary desire to leave an organization (Yang et al., 2014).

### **Assumptions**

Neutens and Rubinson (2010) defined an assumption as a fact that is considered true but cannot be verified. In this study, information that I assumed to be true but that was not verified included (a) respondents to the survey would meet the predetermined criteria to take part in the study, (b) respondents would provide honest answers, and (c) respondents would read the informed consent information before completing the survey. This survey was directed at food manufacturing industry managers. I assumed their industry experience would motivate them to participate in the survey.

### **Scope and Delimitations**

The scope of a study frames the audience to which the study may apply (Burkholder et al., 2020). The population in this study was managers in the food manufacturing industry. The scope of this research was the food manufacturing industry.

Burkholder et al. (2020) defined delimitations as the aspects of the research that narrow the study, such as location, participants, and time. The delimitations of this study were that (a) the study was limited to the food manufacturing industry and (b) the study focused only on managers, which for this research is defined as an employee who has employees reporting directly to them and who leads others in the execution of their assigned duties.

Babbie (2019) defined the generalizability of research as the measure of how beneficial the results of a study are when applied to a broader population. Even though I



focused on a specific region and a specific industry for this study, the results of this study may be generalized to other locations and other industries.

### **Limitations**

Burkholder et al. (2020) described the limitations of a study as the areas of probable weakness within the study. Burkholder et al. clarified the differences between a delimitation and a limitation; the delimitation sets the right and left limits of the study and defines what is not included. The limitations are the weaknesses in the study design or methodology. The limitations of this study included the following: (a) the study focused on the food manufacturing industry and the results may not apply to other industries, (b) the participants used in this study all hold managerial level positions and the results may not relate to individuals operating in other capacities, (c) participation in the online survey is voluntary and the respondents may not be an accurate representation of the population being studied but rather a smaller subset.

### **Significance of the Study**

The overarching goal of this study was to contribute to the existing literature by means of an examination of the OC of managers working in the food manufacturing industry within the United States. The significance to theory was to narrow the gap caused by a lack of research focused on the food manufacturing industry, specifically since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. The significant practical application of this research was to inform leaders within the food manufacturing industry what effects remote work has had on the OC of managers within the industry. The significance to

social change was to understand what proactive steps leaders of food manufacturing organizations can take to retain employees while successfully transitioning their eligible workforce into remote work positions.

### **Significance to Theory**

This study was grounded in a theoretical foundation consisting of the TCM of OC created by Allen and Meyer (1990) and relational cohesion theory. Huang et al. (2018) described relational cohesion theory as a series of frequent exchanges that produce a positive emotional response, which then creates commitment behaviors. Lawler and Yoon (1996) stated that commitment behaviors in the workplace and other facets of life are byproducts of relational cohesion. This study contributes to existing theory by examining the effects of remote work on OC while applying relational cohesion theory as the precursor for OC.

### **Significance to Practice**

This study can aid business leaders and human resource professionals in fostering a better understanding of the possible effects of remote work arrangements on the OC of managers working in the food manufacturing industry. Employees are more committed to the organization they work for and less likely to leave the organization when there is a unity of personal and organizational needs (Martin & Roodt, 2008). Productive employee behavior is increased as the employee's OC increases (Ahmad, 2018). Organizations that understand what factors influence their employees' sense of OC and can increase those feelings of commitment may cultivate more productive and engaged employees.

## **Significance to Social Change**

O’Cass and Griffin (2015) stated that social change requires people to act. Change is a constant part of life, and just as individual lives change, society changes over time.

As social problems emerge, the solutions to those problems create social change.

Theophilus and Jack (2017) described six characteristics of social change.

- Social change is inevitable.
- Social change is omnipresent.
- Social change occurs at both the macro and micro levels.
- Social change is contagious.
- Social change occurs at a rate, either rapidly or slowly.
- Social change is measurable.

The three most prominent theories of social change are evolutionary, diffusion, and functionalist. “Evolutionary theory views social change as progress and holds a linear view that tends to see only the most recent societies as having achieved the highest level.” (Theophilus & Jack, 2017, p. 2). In diffusion theory, social change is a product of cross-cultural interactions, which spread cultural norms from one culture to another (Theophilus & Jack, 2017). The functionalist theory centers on the belief that society is constructed of interconnected parts, and there is a cause-and-effect element that creates social change.

The potential contribution to positive social change I sought to make with this study is the opportunity to decrease employee turnover. The end goal is to better

understand the factors associated with remote work that may negatively impact an employee's OC. Lee et al. (2015) stated that organizational identification can root an employee in the organization and is a precursor to OC, and concluded that positive employee behavior outcomes are a byproduct of increased OC. Understanding remote work's effect on an employee's feeling of identification within the organization may allow for increased OC and decreased turnover rates.

### **Summary**

OC and remote work arrangements have received increasing attention from both the scholarly and practitioner communities since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. There has been prior research on OC, yet no found research has addressed the food manufacturing industry. The food manufacturing industry is an understudied life-sustaining industry worthy of scholarly research. The identified gap is not specific to the COVID-19 pandemic, but the social issue involving OC and remote work has been highlighted because of the COVID-19 pandemic and evolving societal expectations for social distancing.

The gap that has been identified is a result of no prior study focusing on the impacts of remote work on managers working within the food manufacturing industry. This research is focused on managers working full-time for food manufacturing companies in the United States. Remote work arrangements are nothing new: Kelly (1988) declared, over 3 decades ago, that work from home arrangements were bound to replace traditional work schedules. The COVID-19 pandemic required organizations

around the globe to transition a portion, if not all, of their staff into remote work arrangements. Looking past the IT constraints faced by many organizations, this research focused on the effect of remote work on an employee's OC.

In this quantitative study with correlation design. I examined the relationship between an employee's remote work arrangement and OC. I focused my study solely on managers working within the food manufacturing industry. The study is grounded in a theoretical foundation of Allen and Meyer's (1990) TCM of OC and relational cohesion theory.

## Chapter 2: Literature Review

The social problem that prompted this study is the limited understanding of the effect on employees' OC of transitioning from a traditional work environment to a remote work arrangement. The COVID-19 pandemic forced organizations to embrace remote-centric work arrangements to continue business operations while maintaining social distancing. These shifts in business operating practices have not been thoroughly researched, and the long-term effects remain to be seen. One such under-researched area is the effects on an employee's OC when transitioned into a remote work arrangement.

### **Literature Search Strategy**

The literature review conducted for this study included books, professional publications, and peer-reviewed articles located in journals that focused on the areas of human relations, business psychology, organizational behavior, and leadership. Using the ProQuest database, I conducted exhaustive online searches using the following keywords: *organizational commitment, commitment, organizational, employee turnover, remote work, distributed work, flexible work arrangements, telework, work from home, COVID-19, and pandemic*. Using the phrases *organizational commitment* and *remote work* with filtering set to return only peer-reviewed articles published within the last 5 years yielded only three results.

Widening the search criteria to *organizational commitment, remote work, work from home, flexible work, or virtual work* yielded 1,948 peer-reviewed articles published within the past 5 years. It was determined that the search was returning articles with the

word “organization” within the body of the article. Removing the word *organization*, using only *commitment* as the primary search word, and filtering the results to those conducted in the United States returned 256 results. To increase the scope of available research articles I increased search to include research conducted outside of the United States.

To ensure the search criteria were correct and relevant articles were not discarded, a search was conducted using just the keywords *organizational commitment*; 1,519 peer-reviewed articles published within the past 5 years were returned. When the additional location filter was enabled in the United States, only 105 articles remained. Many published works have been completed since the COVID-19 pandemic investigating organizational commitment from several angles; however, no research specifically addressed the impact of remote work on managers working in the food manufacturing industry.

### **Theoretical Foundation**

The study of OC is rooted in organizational psychology (Meyer et al., 2002). Scholars have offered numerous definitions of OC; the best generalized definition is the link between employee and organization that decreases the likelihood that the employee will leave the organization (Allen & Meyer, 1990; Allen & Meyer, 1996). OC has traditionally been viewed as a measure to predict employee turnover that was based largely on job satisfaction (Bar-Haim, 2019). The concept has since evolved from an attitudinal construct into a multidimensional holistic construct that incorporates the

employee's psychological connection to an organization. As demonstrated by Živković et al. (2021), Rawashdeh and Tamimi (2019), Satardien et al. (2019), and Cobbinah et al. (2020), the study of OC allows organizations to take proactive measures to increase employee work product and retention.

Salanick (1977) expressed concerns that the models of OC existing at that time lacked comprehension and were not articulate enough to allow for conceptualization. This prompted Wiener (1982) to emphasize a construct of OC that focused on the individual's sense of moral and ethical standards. Previously established theories of OC had focused on behavior outcome models such as reward and punishment. Wiener called for research in OC that investigated the effects of motivation, commitment, and job satisfaction on work behaviors. Wiener was among the first researchers to view OC from a construct not solely rooted in job satisfaction.

In 1987, Allen and Meyer focused on a new commitment model containing the three components of affective, continuance, and normative commitment. Up to this point, the prevailing method for studying OC focused only on the affective attachment an employee had to the organization (Allen & Meyer, 1990). The framework created by Allen and Meyer (1987) incorporated the two additional components of continuance and normative commitment and theorized that all three components were distinguishable traits of commitment.

Employees with high levels of affective commitment remain in an organization because of their feelings of affection towards the organization (Allen & Meyer, 1990,



1996). This is a question of the employees' intrinsic feelings associated with their position or organization. Employees with continuance commitment remain with the organization because of the actual or perceived costs of leaving (Allen & Meyer, 1990, 1996); this is most commonly associated with extrinsic incentives related to the organization. Employees with high levels of normative commitment to an organization stay because of an obligation to the organization (Allen & Meyer, 1990, 1996).

A critical aspect of the research conducted by Allen and Meyer (1990) was to define the antecedents of each of the three components of OC. Affective commitment is cultivated by an employee's understanding of their role, the quality of leadership, relationships with coworkers, and a feeling of personal importance. The antecedents to an employee's level of normative commitment were determined to be related to the employee's experiences before joining the organization, job-related experiences after joining the organization, and positive interactions with coworkers (Sarkar & Nirala, 2020). The precursors to continuous commitment are primarily based on employee rewards and pay benefits and employee perception that finding a job with equal or greater pay would be difficult (Allen & Meyer, 1990).

Allen and Meyer (1990) stated that employees could experience different levels of each of the three components of OC, the commonality between all three components being a connection between employees and the organization. Empirical research on OC has attempted to define the link between employee and organization and the factors that decrease employee turnover (Allen & Meyer, 1990). The framework established by Allen

and Meyer has allowed researchers to examine the effects of organizational and operational changes on the employee's OC.

Wang et al. (2020) used a theoretical foundation of Allen and Meyer's (1990) TCM of OC to explore the effects of remote work and feelings of isolation on employees' OC. Their study encompassed a wide variety of professionals and did not focus on any one industry. The research demonstrated the use of the TCM of OC to study the effects of remote work on OC as an antecedent of workplace behaviors. The authors paired relational cohesion theory with the TCM of OC to provide a foundation for the research. Relational cohesion theory centers on the belief that the fundamental human emotional process is what creates commitment behaviors (Lawler & Yoon, 1996). Lawler and Yoon (1996) stated that relational cohesion mediated commitment behaviors. In their research, the authors defined commitment as an individual's attachment to either another individual or an entity such as an organization.

The study of relational cohesion theory is relatively young and there is a notable lack of published literature on the subject. The broad scope of relational cohesion theory builds from social exchange theory but adds an element of continuance or focuses on cumulative series of exchanges (Wang et al., 2020). Huang et al. (2018) described relational cohesion theory as suggesting that frequent exchanges between individuals create positive emotions. Commitment behaviors are created as a byproduct of relational cohesion: engagement in a task or relationship is strengthened when frequent exchanges

between individuals create feelings of positive emotions. These feelings are intrinsic and become antecedents to commitment behaviors (Huang et al., 2018).

As technology advances it can alter how human relationships are formed and maintained. The research conducted by Huang et al. (2018) focused on the impacts of technological advancements on people's interactions using a foundation of relational cohesion theory. Huang et al. examined how online social networks elicit a human emotional response. The authors applied relational cohesion theory to an online environment, an approach that warrants further investigation: the same research principles could be brought to bear in a professional online environment, (i.e., remote work).

My rationale for choosing the theoretical foundation for this study was that relational cohesion theory is rooted in sociology and provides a gateway to a better understanding of how human emotion can predict commitment behaviors (see Lawler & Yoon, 1996). When applied to the TCM of OC, this theory created the base for this study. My goal was to investigate whether remote work environments and the lack of face-to-face interactions erode employees' feelings of relational cohesion, which adversely affects their OC levels.

The research question in this study was "What are the effects of remote work on the OC of managers working in the food manufacturing industry?" Using a theoretical foundation of the TCM of OC in conjunction with relational cohesion theory, I addressed how an employee's emotional state may be altered when moved into a remote work

position and how this emotional response may influence the OC. The goal of this study was to build on the existing knowledge of OC by applying it to a population that has not been previously studied in this context.

The study of OC has received so much attention because organizations must create and maintain a competitive advantage in a resource-constrained environment. To accomplish this, researchers and practitioners have placed a greater focus on retaining talent (Carvalho et al., 2018; Cobbinah et al., 2020; Rawashdeh & Tamimi, 2019; Živković et al., 2021). A critical advancement in the study of OC was the creation of a widely accepted and validated data collection instrument (Bar-Haim, 2019). There are several validated instruments in use today, and the Allen and Meyer 24-item questionnaire focusing on three components of OC is the most widely accepted (Bar-Haim, 2019).

### **Evolution of the Scale**

Porter et al. (1974) developed a 15-item questionnaire that was designed to gauge the OC of the respondents. The organizational commitment questionnaire (OCQ) was composed of questions designed to relate to Porter et al.'s definition of OC. All 15 questions used a seven-point Likert scale to measure the responses. A Likert scale uses numerical responses to measure respondents' perceptions regarding a specific question (Tóth et al., 2020). Porter et al. stated that, prior to the development of the OCQ, all previous studies on employee turnover focused solely on job satisfaction as a predictor of turnover rates. The pioneering research conducted by Porter et al. moved beyond the job

satisfaction construct and into using attitudinal measurements alongside job satisfaction as a predictor for turnover.

Before the Porter et al. (1974) research, scholars had viewed job satisfaction and OC as two separate constructs, and the two had not been studied together. Porter et al. (1974) described three factors that characterized OC and created a more holistic approach to understanding employees' turnover intentions:

- acceptance of organizational goals and values
- willingness to exert effort on behalf of the organization
- a desire to remain with the organization

The research conducted by Porter et al. (1974) found that OC was a more reliable predictor of turnover intentions in comparison to job satisfaction. Porter et al. stated that OC is more abstract, whereas job satisfaction measures tangible assets. The research conducted by Porter et al. marks the turning point for studying OC and its acceptance in the academic world as a more reliable predictor of employee turnover. Bar-Haim (2019) called the OCQ created by Porter et al. one of only several research instruments at the core of empirical research conducted on OC.

Mowday et al. (1978) used the OCQ to research the OC of 2,563 employees across various industries and professions. In their research, Mowday et al. were the first to define commitment in terms of a personal attitude adopted by the employee. The study conducted by Mowday et al. was groundbreaking not only because it focused on OC as an attitudinal construct but also because it sought to validate the OCQ. Mowday et al.

studied a much larger population and sample than in the original study conducted by Porter et al., which used only a small sample of psychiatric technician trainees. The study conducted by Mowday et al. was longitudinal, which allowed the researchers to administer the same OCQ at several points during a predetermined period. The result of the research was that the OCQ was validated as the most accurate means by which to gauge the OC of an employee. The academic community began to turn from viewing job satisfaction as the antecedent to turnover intentions to seeing OC as the leading indicator of turnover intentions. This marked an important milestone in OC because it allowed scholars to view turnover intentions as less confined to a single emotional state of mind. Job satisfaction is likely to vary day to day and task to task, whereas the commitment construct is more stable (Mowday et al., 1974).

In 1980, Cook and Wall took the largely North American-based approach to the study of OC and applied it to British blue-collar workers. The research conducted by Cook and Wall took the OCQ and shortened it to nine questions and added two additional subsections to the questionnaire. The subsections of the questionnaire were (a) interpersonal trust at work, (b) OC, and (c) personal need nonfulfillment. This research did not focus solely on OC but was intended to study the quality of working life. The Cook and Wall study focused on three constructs of OC: identification, involvement, and loyalty (Bar-Haim, 2019).

The study conducted by Cook and Wall (1980) was a significant breakthrough in developing OC theory because it took the theory and applied it to a new, under-

researched sample. Bar-Haim (2019) stated that Cook and Wall's survey drew scrutiny from the academic community due to a belief that Cook and Wall failed to properly differentiate the three dimensions of commitment. Cook and Wall claimed that their study did in fact differentiate between three dimensions of commitment. This claim was rebutted in 1983 by Morrow, who claimed to have found similarities among the three dimensions identified by Cook and Wall. The study identified several variables as antecedents of OC. The study conducted by Cook and Wall provided scholars with another validated survey to use to study organizational commitment.

Allen and Meyer (1990) cited ambiguity in the academic community regarding the working conditions that led to the development of OC. This prompted Allen and Meyer to conduct a study with three primary goals: (a) to clearly define the distinctions between the three common dimensions of attitudinal commitment; (b) to create a tool to measure each of the three dimensions of attitudinal commitment; and (c) to demonstrate, through field research, that the three dimensions are precursors of commitment. The three dimensions proposed by Allen and Meyer were affective attachment, perceived costs, and obligation.

The TCM of OC was developed by Allen and Meyer (1990) in acknowledgement that the link between employee and organization was the primary focus of OC research, but that the link might differ between employees. Employees with affective commitment stay because they desire to, employees with continuance commitment stay because they must, and employees with normative commitment stay because of a sense of obligation

(Allen & Meyer, 1990). These three components of OC may be experienced individually or in congruence with each other. They are not types of OC but components of the overall makeup of OC (Allen & Meyer, 1990).

The 24-item questionnaire created by Allen and Meyer in 1990 is now the most used tool to evaluate OC (Bar-Haim, 2019). Since its creation, it has been used in numerous studies and has been validated multiple times and in multiple cultural contexts (Bar-Haim, 2019). Due to the importance and academic use of the TCM of OC and the corresponding 18-item questionnaire, the construct validity should continually be subjected to academic scrutiny (Allen & Meyer, 1996). The TCM of OC is the most widely accepted construct in use today (Klein et al., 2009).

The OCQ marked a turning point in the study of OC. Prior to the development of the OCQ, researchers had used a variety of smaller instruments ranging from as few as two questions to an average of four questions (Porter et al., 1974). The availability of a validated survey ignited a renewal in the interest in OC. This renewed interest prompted the codification of the OCQ by Mowday in 1979 and, through empirical research, led to Allen and Meyer's (1990) TCM of OC.

### **Organizational Commitment in Recent Research**

Carvalho et al. (2018) stated that OC has received so much attention because practitioners realized that committed employees improve business performance. Carvalho et al. explored the relationship between organizational culture and OC in the Brazilian banking industry. One goal of their quantitative research was to correlate OC and



organizational culture. Carvalho et al. used the TCM of OC 24-item questionnaire created by Allen and Meyer in 1990 as part of their data collection strategy. Using factorial analysis and multiple regression, Carvalho et al. proved a statistically significant relationship between OC and organizational culture. Jehanzeb and Mohanty (2020) reported similar findings when they investigated the relationship between organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) and OC. The authors reported organizational justice had a positive and statistically significant effect on OC. They further reported that OC had a statistically significant effect on OCB. The research by Jehanzeb and Mohanty and Carvalho et al. illustrates the positive impact of higher levels of OC in an organization.

Lee and Lee (2021) conducted research on the negative impact on work life balance when an employee is overly committed to their organization. The research conducted by Lee and Lee was based in Korea and focused on public sector employees. The overarching principles of their research can be applied to any locale and likewise to any industry due to the high transferability of their findings. Technological advancements have blurred the line between professional and work lives. Overly committed employees may be an asset to their organization but their commitment levels may create conflict in their personal lives. The present study is focused on OC as a positive construct to retain employees, but there exists empirical research that indicates employees who display exaggerated levels of OC can negatively affect their personal and home lives.

Carvalho et al. (2018) demonstrated that job satisfaction is a byproduct and not an antecedent of organizational culture and is distinctly separate from OC. This finding

conformed with previous research on OC by Allen and Meyer (1990), Cook and Wall (1980), and Mowday (1978). Carvalho et al. demonstrated the applicability of the Allen and Myers TCM 24-item questionnaire to determine the levels of the three components of OC within an employee base. Their research further validated the widely held belief that OC and job satisfaction must be viewed as two separate constructs.

Cobbinah et al. (2020) stated that OC theory has received so much scholarly attention because it is a key behavioral construct vital to an organization's growth and survival. Rawashdeh and Tamimi (2019) took a similar view: they concluded that OC has become prevalent in academic research because organizations are placing a greater emphasis on retaining talent. Cobbinah et al. researched the relationship between organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) and OC. A key concept in the study of organizational citizenship behavior is employee productivity (Cobbinah et al., 2020). In contrast, OC does not incorporate a component of task performance but remains rooted in preventing voluntary employee turnover.

Cobbinah et al. (2020) concluded that OCB mediated the relationship between affective OC and job performance. The research conducted by Cobbinah et al. used a sample population from Ghana, and cultural differences may negatively impact the applicability of the study to western culture. The importance of the research conducted by Cobbinah et al. was to correlate job performance factors to OC by adding the variable of OCB. This further demonstrated the applicability of OC as a barometer for a wide range of employee behaviors.

Satardien et al. (2019) studied the relationship between perceived organizational support, OC, and turnover intention in the aviation industry. Using the Allen and Meyer TCM 24-item questionnaire, Satardien et al. gathered data and conducted linear regression statistical analysis. The analysis uncovered that perceived organizational support and OC are both predictors of employee turnover intention. This finding is in line with the empirical research using OC as an antecedent for employee turnover (Allen and Meyer, 1990; Carvalho et al., 2018; Cobbinah et al., 2020; Rawashdeh & Tamimi, 2019; Živković et al., 2021) Satardien et al. stated that OC is rooted in the belief that employees who identify with their organization will put forth more effort on behalf of the organization and will stay in the organization's employ.

The interpretation given by Satardien et al. (2019) differed from the 1990 Allen and Meyer definition of OC, as it added a component of employee effort on behalf of the organization. Satardien et al. contended that OC results from perceived organizational support. They focused solely on turnover intention and did not investigate the work behaviors associated with both perceived organizational support and OC. In response, in 2002 Meyer et al. offered a new, more encompassing definition of OC, which included the components of employee alignment and willingness to exert effort on behalf of the organization.

Recent studies in the field of OC have placed greater emphasis on available employee resources and their effect on commitment. One such example is the study conducted by Rawashdeh and Tamimi (2019), who investigated the relationship between

employee training availability and OC. Rawashdeh and Tamimi used a generic view of OC in their study, seeing it as a barometer for employee turnover intentions and the intent of the employee to labor on behalf of the organization. Globalization has brought an abundance of change to organizations worldwide and increased job availability (Rawashdeh & Tamimi, 2019). These changes have prompted organizations to place a greater emphasis on creating work environments that cultivate OC to decrease employee turnover. Satardien et al. (2019) and Cobbinah et al. (2020) reached similar findings in their perspective research on the effects of employee support on OC. The research conducted by Rawashdeh and Tamimi illustrated the evolving organizational landscape and the need for organizations to enact policies and training that will foster higher levels of OC and increase employee retention.

Valentine et al. (2018) conducted a study focusing on OC and ethical decision-making. Valentine et al. used the OCQ created by Porter et al. (1974) but credited the creation of the questionnaire to Mowday et al. (1978). It is important to note that the OCQ was not created by Mowday et al. The research conducted by Mowday et al. confided the OCQ by using it in a much larger study than the one in which Porter et al. initially used it. Valentine et al. claimed to have discovered a relationship between data-driven ethical decision-making and OC. The researchers, however, used an outdated data collection tool; they based organizational commitment on an attitudinal construct; and they failed to differentiate between the three widely accepted components of OC.

Organizations have begun implementing strategic initiatives to increase OC while simultaneously increasing job satisfaction to decrease employee turnover (Živković et al., 2021). Using a theoretical framework of Allen and Meyer's (1990) TCM of OC, Živković et al. (2021) used a sample of 121 employees pulled from five companies in Croatia to conduct quantitative research on the relationship of OC and turnover in the logistics industry. Using statistical analysis, Živković et al. confirmed a relationship between affective and normative OC and employee turnover intention. This study further validated the use of Allen and Meyer's (1990) 24-item questionnaire in an under-researched profession in a setting other than western culture.

Empirical research has established a connection between the separate constructs of job satisfaction and OC (Yousef, 2002). OC is multifaceted and holistic, whereas job satisfaction has generally been viewed as one-dimensional and subject to frequent changes based on the emotional state of the employee (Porter et al., 1974). OC has evolved from its original intended use as a barometer to gauge employee turnover intention and now encompasses workplace behaviors and motivation. One such example is the research conducted by Ahmad and Raja (2021), who studied the relationship between OC and overall business performance in the banking industry. Ahmad and Raja used confirmatory factor analysis and a sample of 500 respondents from the banking industry in India. They found that OC can be an essential tool in gauging an employee's contribution to an organization. The results of Ahmad and Raja's study were in line with

previous studies conducted by Conchas (2000), Kim et al. (2005), and Rashid et al. (2003), that found a positive relationship between organizational performance and OC.

Sarkar and Nirala (2020) stated that levels of commitment could be grouped into three categories; high, moderate, and low. Employees with high levels of commitment have a well-founded understanding of the goals and objectives of the organization and generally intend to stay with the organization (Sarkar & Nirala, 2020). Employees with moderate levels of commitment understand the organizational objectives and generally intend to stay in the organization's employ. Employees with low levels of commitment do not understand or align with the organizational objectives and, in many instances, will leave the organization if another opportunity arises (Sarkar & Nirala, 2020). The data collection instruments used to study OC primarily use a seven- or five-point Likert scale. The higher the response, the lower the commitment of the respondent (Rawashdeh & Tamimi, 2019). Sarkar and Nirala provided a simplistic method of grouping and defining OC levels.

From its inception, the study of OC has focused on understanding and predicting why employees choose to leave an organization. As organizations seek to create and maintain a competitive advantage in a resource-constrained environment, scholars and practitioners focus more on retaining talent (Carvalho et al., 2018; Cobbinah et al., 2020; Rawashdeh & Tamimi, 2019; Živković et al., 2021). As organizations emerge from the COVID-19 pandemic, the lingering question will be whether to revert to past practice or to embrace the adopted changes to comply with social distancing requirements. Research

is needed to fully understand how these changes, specifically remote work arrangements, have affected employees' OC.

### **Remote Work**

Remote work is not a new phenomenon. As the industrial era evolved into a digitalized business model, organizations began to explore the feasibility of remote work and forms of hybrid work arrangements. Remote work has become much more common during the COVID-19 pandemic, as millions of workers around the globe were forced out of the office and into remote work arrangements (De Klerk et al., 2021). Before the technical advancements of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, remote work was referred to as telecommuting (Matli, 2020). Rocha et al. (2019) described remote work as an innovative form of work that has the potential to positively impact the organization and the employee. Angelucci et al. (2020) and Clancy (2020) described the advantages of remote work as greater flexibility for the employee, which fosters job satisfaction that leads to increased worker productivity. The disadvantages include a lack of access to organizational resources, limited social interactions with coworkers, and feelings of isolation (Clancy, 2020).

The advantages and disadvantages of remote work have been studied but never on a global scale. Many organizations are contemplating the future of remote work (Diab-Bahman & Al-Enzi, 2020). In 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic forced organizations to move employees from a traditional work environment to a remote environment on an unprecedented scale and at an unprecedented rate (Matli, 2020). Business practices have

evolved as a result of the pandemic and will continue to evolve as employees become more accustomed to working remotely (Nyberg et al., 2021). Academics and practitioners are attempting to decipher if remote work is the new normal or if there will be a gradual transition from remote work back to traditional work environments.

Matli (2020) cited increased anxiety in remote workers driven by the isolation and uncertainty surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic. Grzelczak (2021) conducted a qualitative study in Poland in which he found that respondents to his questionnaire reported an increase in overall job satisfaction during the pandemic. It is not disclosed in the research, however, what the sample was and how long these employees had been in a remote work position. Matli and Grzelczak reported a common theme among respondents: a feeling of relief at not having to commute to a physical work location. This marked advantage of remote work may be a catalyst in explaining employees' increased feelings of job satisfaction while working remotely.

Wang et al. (2020) researched remote work and the relationship to OC just before the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, using the TCM of OC. Their research was focused on the effects of isolation as a result of remote work and its relationship to OC. Using confirmatory factor analysis, Wang et al. discovered a relationship between continuous commitment and remote work but did not uncover any relationship between normative commitment and remote work. Wang et al. suggested that organizations with remote workers will experience lower turnover rates if they focus on shifting continuance commitment to normative commitment.



Wang et al. (2020) contended that organizations can cultivate higher levels of normative commitment by focusing on investment in the employee, which will create a sense of obligation on behalf of the employee. This suggested that organizations may decrease turnover rates by focusing on only one component of OC. Wang et al. suggested that organizations focus on ensuring remote employees feel that they are still connected to the organization by increasing their organizational visibility. This finding was congruent with the finding by Angelucci et al. (2020) and Clancy (2020). Remote workers are more inclined to feel forgotten within the organization due to a lack of interpersonal connections with coworkers and supervisors (Angelucci et al., 2020; Clancy, 2020).

Gallacher and Hossain (2020) stated that higher paid employees in leadership roles are more likely to be able to perform their job functions remotely. Lower-income, less-educated employees are less likely to hold positions that allow the flexibility of remote work. In hierarchical structured organizations this presents additional challenges as leaders are forced to communicate with junior managers and supervisors via digital methods. Varner and Schmidt (2022) offered a novel perspective regarding personal privacy and remote work. They stated that remote work involving video conferencing calls can be invasive, for one because it allows coworkers to view the interior of the homes of their coworkers. Video conferencing could also force an employee to reveal portions of their personal life they wish to keep from their coworkers such as sexual orientation, national origin, or political affiliation.

Digital communication methods include email, video conferencing, and other technologically enabled means of conveying a message. Creating cohesion among remote employees requires leaders to evolve existing leadership styles to remain effective when their message is delivered over digital communication means (Christoffels, 2019). These attributes are increasingly difficult to convey over digital communication. Nyberg et al. (2021) stated that clear communication is a key component of managing a remote work force. Organizations that are unwilling or unable to embrace new and creative ways of communicating will be faced with an employee base that is disjointed and lacking direction. Ensuring employees remain productive and aligned with organizational goals and values has become increasingly difficult and requires a greater degree of focus. A key component of leadership is aiding the organization in adapting to an everchanging environment in order to stay competitive.

Christoffels (2019) proposed that successful change leaders are those who influence organizations by cultivating an atmosphere where teams are involved and motivated. Christoffels conducted an examination of eLeadership and the use of digital innovation and digital transformation in distant teams. His research was centered on digital transformation change initiatives and a manager's competency with new technology. Leaders who can motivate remote employees and keep them engaged are those who possess the technical expertise to harness the full capabilities of digital communication and are able to tailor existing leadership styles to fit the new delivery methods.

Empathy toward the unique problems of remote workers is a critical component of building trust. Leaders must not only tailor their leadership styles to remote employees but also tailor their performance expectations during times of organizational change. Meghana and Vijaya (2019) conducted research that established trust as a key element in the eLeadership relationship. Establishing a trust relationship with remote workers is a critical step in effective change management. Leaders of remote work employees must leverage technology to establish a trust relationship that builds the employees' bond to the organization. Providing guidance, feedback, and training on new digital communication methods and setting expectations aid in building the trust relationship with a remote worker.

Polling conducted by the Pew Research Center (2020) showed that the COVID-19 pandemic increased remote work by 51%, with over half of those polled indicating they would like to stay in a remote work arrangement post-pandemic. Chenji and Raghavendra (2021) conducted polling that indicated that over half of the respondents reported an increase in their work productivity while working remotely during the pandemic.

A review of the existing literature on remote work shows a dramatic increase in the published research since December 2020. The COVID-19 pandemic has prompted researchers to view organizational staffing issues through the lens of pandemic social distancing requirements. Although the U.S. government has rescinded its recommendation of remote work as the effects of the pandemic begin to dwindle,

organizations need to better understand the impact of remote work on OC now more than ever.

### **Relational Cohesion Theory**

Relational cohesion theory contends that frequent interactions can alter an individual's relationship with the person or organization they interact with. Lawler and Yoon (1996) developed the concept of relational cohesion by building on social exchange theory. Relational cohesion theory rests on the belief that when frequent interactions occur, the interactions create a relationship. The relationship will have value based on the emotional response felt by the individual or individuals involved in the interaction (Lawler & Yoon, 1996).

Social exchange theory is based on the belief that, when positive interactions occur between two individuals, the individual receiving the positive interaction will respond in positive ways (Sungu et al., 2019). The essence of social exchange theory rests in the belief that the exchange process between individuals creates social behavior. Zoller and Muldoon (2019) described social exchange theory as the most researched and prominent theory in organizational behavior. In this theory, there are two parties involved in every exchange: the exchange initiator and the exchange receptor (Sungu et al., 2019). The exchange receptor will attempt to reciprocate in the exchange to satisfy the exchange initiator.

A major component of relational cohesion theory is the idea that there is equal power between the two individuals involved in the exchange and implied mutual benefit

for both individuals (Huang et al., 2018). Sungu et al. (2019) stated that social exchange theory could explain the relationship between organizational support, job satisfaction, and affective OC. Shore and Shore (1995) said that employees will personify organizations based on the actions of managers and supervisors. When employees feel that the organization goes out of its way to care for their wellbeing, they will reciprocate with added effort and loyalty. The added effort and loyalty foster job satisfaction, which creates affective OC.

Building on social exchange theory, relational cohesion theory provides insight into the complexity of organizational behavior. Understanding what actions create what reactions allows practitioners to control workplace behaviors. Managers can learn to modify their conduct, given that employees base their perceptions of the organization on the actions of their supervisors (Sungu et al., 2019). Further scholarly research is needed to better understand the effects of remote work on the relational cohesion of the involved employees.

### **Food Manufacturing Industry**

The food manufacturing industry processes raw agricultural and livestock products into consumable food products (Stadler et al., 2020). Food manufacturers generally sell to distributors or retailers and not to the final consumer (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2016) and so are a critical link between agriculture and the consumer (Ramsey et al., 2021). Welch and Mitchell (2000) stated that the food manufacturing and food processing industry was dominated by large organizations with highly automated

processes and global reach. Huebbe and Rimbach (2020) stated that during the twentieth century the scope of food processing evolved: the industry focused on improving food safety and increasing shelf life and nutritional value while focusing on consumer convenience and taste.

Technological advancements since the industrial revolution have transformed the food manufacturing industry into a revenue generating industry (Welch & Mitchell, 2000). Huebbe and Rimbach (2020) credited the rapid progress in the industry to the use of electricity and the refinement of grain milling. Employment in the food manufacturing industry increased in 2010 and labor costs now account for the largest portion of the cost of finished food products (Ramsey et al., 2021). The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2022) reported that there are 1.644 million employees working in food manufacturing, with 59,360 of the employees being first line supervisors or managers.

The COVID-19 pandemic created a substantial disruption in the food manufacturing industry (Ramsey et al., 2021). Part of the disruption was caused by supply chain difficulties caused by labor shortages (Hobbs, 2021). Hailu (2020) called the COVID-19 pandemic a food supply issue as well as a public health issue. Waltenburg et al. (2021) conducted research on the effects of COVID-19 in the food manufacturing industry and noted that close work proximity among employees was a contributing factor in the spread of the virus. Cho et al. (2020) stated that the pandemic negatively affected employees in the food manufacturing industry by decreasing the likelihood of continued employment.

Prior to the pandemic, eating out, or consuming food away from home, accounted for over half of consumers' food expenses (Luckstead et al., 2020). The pandemic brought government mandated lockdowns and small business closures. This caused a shift in food demand from restaurants to supermarkets and retail outlets (Lusk and McCluskey, 2020). This shift in demand only exacerbated the logistical problems and labor shortages in the food manufacturing industry and highlighted the importance of that industry. Djokoto et al. (2022) stated that the food manufacturing industry has increased accessibility to food and enhanced food safety through process improvements and conformity to governmental regulation. Hobbs (2021) credited the success and survival of the food manufacturing industry during the pandemic to large food manufacturing firms benefiting from economies of scale.

### **COVID-19 Pandemic**

On March 11<sup>th</sup>, 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared COVID-19 a global pandemic. The virus first appeared in Wuhan, China, in December 2019 and began to spread rapidly around the globe. By March of 2020 the United States and Europe had the highest infection rates (Fan et al., 2020). To prevent the spread of the virus, many states went into some form of lockdown (Hobbs, 2021), and the concept of social distancing was born. At the height of the pandemic in March and April of 2020 many state and local governments enacted social distancing measures to stem the spread of the virus. These measures included school and business closures and bans on large gatherings (Courtemanche et al., 2020).

The COVID-19 pandemic caused a global disruption that forced companies to reevaluate their operating practices and drastically change their employees' working environments. In May of 2021, the WHO published a policy brief urging businesses to transition to remote work (World Health Organization, 2021). The COVID-19 pandemic brought with it an abundance of innovation and spurred technological growth in multiple industries (Kurecic & Hatlek, 2021). Organizations drove innovation as they sought solutions to the complexity of social distancing while balancing the need to stay profitable with conducting business in a socially responsible manner. The pandemic created a survive-or-die atmosphere for organizations: those that reacted quickly and leveraged existing technology were able to weather the pandemic.

The COVID-19 pandemic created an operating climate for organizations that was subject to daily change based on governmental restrictions and infection rates. Nyberg et al. (2021) stated that most of the lessons learned from the pandemic focused on the speed with which organizations had to adapt to new operational challenges brought on by the pandemic. The mitigation measures first taken in China included restricting the movement of the population and closing all but essential businesses; these actions caused a global disruption to supply chains (Roldán et al., 2021). Global supply chains consist of small companies and large companies with an international presence producing various unfinished products (Kurecic & Hatlek, 2021). These products or components are often-times manufactured in resource rich countries or countries with lower labor costs. This



creates a costs savings to the company purchasing them over manufacturing them domestically.

In their research on the effects of the pandemic, Kurecic and Hatlek (2021) stated that the pandemic highlighted the failures of the global economy. As the pandemic restricted work activities and movements, small companies were unable to produce, which led to a stagnant global supply chain. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 36% of businesses in the United States experienced difficulty obtaining the necessary supplies to operate their business. The food manufacturing industry was estimated to be in the top three industries facing crippling supply shortages.

Nyberg et al. (2021) investigated how organizations conducted internal and external communication during the pandemic. Nyberg et al. indicated that organizations came to understand the contributions of internal stakeholders. Organizations focused on communication efforts to ensure they were delivering a unified and accurate message: this aided in lessening employees' fears that they would be let go (Nyberg et al., 2021). Kurecic and Hatlek (2021) echoed a similar message in their research, which focused on the advancement of technology and communication mediums during the pandemic. Kurecic and Hatlek stated that the pandemic accelerated digitalization as consumer habits shifted towards more online shopping, which involved less human contact. This shift required organizations to communicate internally and externally with added clarity to avoid ambiguity and avoid creating confusion among their customers and, more importantly, their employees.

These shifts in both business practices and consumer habits highlighted the need for enhanced communication during the pandemic. Einwiller et al. (2021) conducted research on internal corporate communications at the height of the pandemic. Using a theoretical foundation of social exchange theory, Einwiller et al. contended that when organizations provide unfavorable information to their employees, they have to provide balance by offering supportive services. Einwiller et al. described supportive services as flexible working arrangements and other employee perks. Organizations that recognized social exchange theory as a give-and-take between the organization and its employees were able to foster higher levels of commitment during the challenges presented by the pandemic (Einwiller et al., 2021).

### **COVID-19 and Food Manufacturing**

The COVID-19 pandemic impacted virtually every industry around the globe; one of the most troubling and visible impacts was to the food manufacturing industry. Consumers saw empty grocery store shelves, and those eateries that remained open during the pandemic witnessed unprecedented lead times for common food items from suppliers. Trmčić et al. (2021) stated that in the United States, COVID-19 unemployment relief programs enticed healthy able-bodied workers to leave their jobs. This was prevalent in the food manufacturing industry because government-sponsored relief programs monetarily matched or came close to matching the salaries of food manufacturing workers. As the labor shortage worsened, it forced managers and other

organizational leaders to assume production line jobs. This led to a lack of leadership and had negative effects on the remaining workers (Trmčić et al., 2021).

Sharma et al. (2021) cited four primary reasons for the food supply shortage during the pandemic: (1) lack of supply of raw materials; (2) farm disruption; (3) labor shortages; and (4) logistical challenges. The research conducted by Sharma et al. in India focused on the combined elements of food supply chains and examined the effects of COVID-19 from a more holistic approach. The overarching theme to the research was that a labor shortage in all elements of the food supply chains was the driving factor behind the food shortage experiences not only in the United States but globally. This research aligned with Trmčić et al. (2021), which focused on the labor shortage as the driving factor behind the food supply shortage during the pandemic.

A large component of the food manufacturing industry is ensuring food safety. Trmčić et al. (2021) researched the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on food manufacturing safety and quality in the United States. The overarching goal of the research was to examine how COVID-19 mitigation measures enacted in food manufacturing facilities compounded the difficulties presented by the labor shortage. Trmčić et al. stated that social distancing, the mandatory use of face masks, and mandatory employee health screenings added additional challenges to the food manufacturing industry. The mandated virus transmission mitigation policies, coupled with understaffed facilities, amplified the challenges faced by the food manufacturing industry. Their research is important to this study because, although it does not

specifically address OC, it focuses on working conditions and challenges faced by leaders and employees in the food manufacturing industry. Viewed from the lens of job satisfaction, this research highlighted challenging operational conditions in the food manufacturing industry, which may affect the OC of employees. Trmčić et al. discussed the labor shortage and the need to move managers and leaders into production roles. This operational necessity can erode the OC of managers and create conditions for collective turnover (Kraichy & Schmidt, 2020).

### **Employee Turnover**

Employee turnover is one of the workplace challenges that prompted the renewed academic and practitioner interest in OC. In recent years more attention has been given to this issue as organizations grapple with creating programs and policies to reduce turnover (Moqbel et al., 2020). Ahmad (2018) defined employee turnover as the employee's response to the conditions of an organization, which motivate the employee to seek an alternative job and ultimately leave the organization.

The negative effects of high employee turnover stretch beyond just the financial cost and into the knowledge management and knowledge sharing realms. As knowledgeable employees leave an organization, they reduce the organization's overall effectiveness (Moqbel et al., 2020). Employee turnover has been a challenge for organizations for decades. The first research published on OC (Porter et al., 1974) was intended to create a better understanding of what factors might decrease employee

turnover. Decades later the study of OC remains focused on what factors bind an employee to an organization.

Employee turnover has a negative effect on an organization. When employees leave a job, they take with them experience and know-how and that can decrease an organization's competitive advantage (Trequattrini et al., 2019). A review of the recent peer-reviewed literature on employee turnover did not unearth an exact cost associated with turnover, but the estimated cost for an organization to replace an employee is more than 1.5 times the employee's salary (Cascio, 2006; Hewlett, 2007; Mayfield & Mayfield, 2007). Manzoor et al. (2020) stated that turnover creates two components of cost to an organization: the first is the financial cost to the organization and the second is the cost placed on the remaining employees, as they are assigned additional duties until the vacancy is filled. Kraichy and Schmidt (2020) stated that employee turnover can evolve into collective turnover. Collective turnover is a ripple effect caused by vacant positions: as employees are overworked or overstressed because of lack of staffing, they too will leave the organization. Empirical studies on collective turnover focus on the holistic environment of an organization, as opposed to the research on employee turnover, which focuses on the individual.

Polling conducted in 2021 by the Pew Research Center revealed that employees with a four-year degree or higher were less likely to leave their jobs. Choi and Park (2020) stated that job switching at a managerial level is more challenging due to a restricted job market. The research conducted by Choi and Park focused on senior-level

managers and leadership and did not encompass lower-level managers and first line supervisors. Kangas et al. (2018) conducted research on managerial turnover that focused on the ethical climate of an organization and the managers' decision to leave the organization. This research did not focus on any particular industry and did not explore other possible antecedents to turnover other than ethical considerations.

In November of 2021 the United States witnessed an unprecedented number of employee resignations, an event since referred to as "The Great Resignation." The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported that over 24 million America workers voluntarily left their job in 2021. The Pew Research Center conducted polling that revealed the top three reasons employees left their jobs that year were low pay, lack of advancement opportunity, and a lack of respect in the workplace. In contradiction to the earlier work completed by Choi and Park (2020), Sull et al. (2022) concluded that the Great Resignation affected both employees and managers, or workers often referred to as white-collar workers. The COVID-19 pandemic and organizations' response measures or lack thereof may have been a catalyst for the high amount of turnover witnessed in 2021 (Sull et al., 2022).

There is mounting evidence to support the belief that the Great Resignation was connected to the pandemic. Multiple studies since the start of the pandemic have focused on the psychological stress associated with the uncertainty surrounding the pandemic. In data published by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2021), respondents to their polling indicated that remote work was not an overwhelming consideration in leaving a job. Sull

et al. (2022) theorized that the reason for this was that organizations that were able to offer remote work were operating in a field where remote work had become normalized due to the pandemic. Other organizations in the field would have similar arrangements. Sull et al. (2022) cited organizational culture as the primary catalyst for employee turnover during the Great Resignation. Iyer and Iyer (2020) theorized that fear played a large part in the unpredictable actions of individuals during the COVID-19 pandemic. Fear coupled with an uncertain future fostered the conditions for the Great Resignation.

### **Research Gap**

This chapter has demonstrated that there currently exists a large body of research that focuses on issues tangential to those that are being addressed in my research from a variety of perspectives. The previous research discussed in this chapter frames the gap but does not fully encapsulate it, leaving an important research gap. The motivation for filling the research gap is to create a better understanding of how OC levels are affected by remote work arrangements. There exists a considerable body of research on OC dating back to 1950 (Bar-Haim, 2019), however, there currently exists no studies that focus on the OC of managers in the food manufacturing industry. As illustrated by research done during the COVID-19 pandemic, the food manufacturing industry is often overlooked, until the food supply chain systems of the United States experience operational difficulties.

The pandemic created unprecedented operational challenges for the food manufacturing industry as organizations struggled to retain employees at all levels.

Examining the effects of remote work on OC through the lens of relational cohesion theory in an often-overlooked industry will add to the existing body of knowledge. Existing research has not yet directly examined what organizational factors and what work arrangements drive high turnover rates among managers in the food manufacturing industry. Remote work for managers in the food manufacturing industry was an alien idea until the pandemic caused an operational upheaval in 2020. The need to keep the industry running to ensure food was available to the population necessitated that organizations embrace remote work. These dramatic shifts in work arrangements happened quickly and the consequences are as yet unknown. This study will add to the existing body of knowledge of OC, relational cohesion theory, and the food manufacturing industry.

### **Methodological Precedent**

This study uses a quantitative methodology with a correlation design. The methodology was introduced in Chapter 1 and will be discussed in detail in Chapter 3. In the literature review section, it would be inappropriate to fail to mention the methodological precedent set by previous researchers. The focus of this section is to demonstrate alignment between research question and methodology by demonstrating the use of quantitative methodology and correlation design in previously published peer-reviewed research.

Ahmad and Raja (2021) used quantitative correlation research to determine the relationship between job satisfaction, OC, and business performance in the banking industry. Similarly, Filimonau et al. (2020) investigated the relationship between



corporate social responsibility and OC in the hospitality industry in Spain. These are just two of multiple examples that display the appropriateness of the use of quantitative correlation research when investigating the relationship between variables. This study moves beyond descriptive research but does not go as far as variable manipulation, the use of quantitative correlation research is the most suitable to answer the research question.

A large section of the literature review was dedicated to describing the evolution of both OC and the tools used to measure OC. In quantitative research data collection instruments must be in alignment with the research objective and validated. A validated survey is one that has been proven to measure what it is intended to measure. In this study to measure OC, the Allen and Meyer (1990) TCM Employee Commitment Survey will be used. It has been used in multiple studies and is considered by academics to be the most accurate data collection instrument in the study of OC (Bar-Haim, 2019). An in-depth review of the applicability of the TCM Employee Commitment Survey will be conducted in the following chapter, Chapter 3.

### **Summary and Conclusions**

The literature review of published material related to this study produced a body of literature that did not provide information regarding the OC of managers in the food manufacturing industry who are working remotely. The food manufacturing industry is an often overlooked industry in the social sciences. There are numerous articles regarding sanitation and food safety measures, but these articles were written from a hard science

perspective and failed to mention the human aspect of the industry. The food shortage experienced during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the need for greater scholarly and practitioner focus on the food manufacturing industry. This shortage was dual-pronged, involving a breakdown in logistical capacity across the United States and a labor shortage in the food manufacturing industry. The present study focuses on the effect of remote work on the OC of managers in the food manufacturing.

Empirical research on OC has evolved from presenting OC as an antecedent to turnover to approaching OC from a more holistic viewpoint. The TCM of OC incorporates the psychological components of affective, continuance, and normative commitment (Allen & Meyer, 1990; Allen & Meyer, 1996). The study of OC evolved as academics recognized its importance, not only as a barometer for employee turnover but also as antecedent to organizational citizenship behaviors. Due to these developments the use of OC in academic research became more prevalent.

The lack of academic research in the food manufacturing industry revealed by this literature review was alarming. I was unable to locate any study that focused exclusively on the food manufacturing industry in the United States. The studies reviewed in this chapter pertaining to the COVID-19 pandemic focused more on supply chain difficulties and did not elaborate on the impact of remote work on the retention rates of managers within the industry. The research conducted by Waltenburg et al. (2021) focused on viral transmission rates in food manufacturing industries but did not address voluntary turnover of managers or first line leaders. This study will aid in closing the identified gap

in the existing literature by adding knowledge on the effects of remote work on the OC of managers in the food manufacturing industry. This study will incorporate a theoretical foundation of the TCM of OC alongside relational cohesion theory to explore the relationship between the variables of remote work and OC.

### Chapter 3: Research Method

This quantitative correlation study tested the theories of Allen and Meyer (1990) and examined the relationship between OC and remote work. Specifically, I focused on managers working in the food manufacturing industry who have been moved into a remote work arrangement due to COVID 19. The independent variable, remote work, was defined as the work mode of an employee who works from a location other than the traditional brick-and-mortar office building and who uses technology to communicate with coworkers and supervisors (see Matli, 2020). The dependent variable, organizational commitment, was defined as an employee's alignment with the goals and values of an organization and their willingness to perform duties for the organization (see Meyer et al., 2002). The overarching goal of this study was to foster positive social change by increasing the knowledge of the effects of remote work on OC in the food manufacturing industry.

Chapter 3 begins with an examination of the research methodology and its alignment with the research question. The data collection strategy is described along with the population and sample size. A review of the data analysis plan is conducted in which I describe the statistical tests that I used to interpret the data. The internal and external threats to validity are scrutinized and an evaluation of the ethical implications of the research is conducted. The section is concluded with a summary and transition into Chapter 4, the data interpretation.

## Research Design and Rationale

### Research Question

This research was guided by one research question.

RQ1: What effects, if any, do remote work arrangements have on the organizational commitment of managers working in the food manufacturing industry?

$H_0$ : There is no relationship between organizational commitment and remote work

$H_a$ : There is a relationship between organizational commitment and remote work

### Variables

In this study, the independent variable was the number of days worked remotely during a week. Remote work is defined as the situation of an employee who works from a location other than the traditional brick-and-mortar office building and who uses technology to communicate with coworkers and supervisors (Matli, 2020). In statistical analysis, the independent variable is defined as the variable that causes the effect being studied (Frankfort-Nachmias et al., 2019). The dependent variable, OC, was defined by the TCM of OC created by Allen and Meyer (1990). The dependent variable is generally defined as the variable in which the effect is being observed (Frankfort-Nachmias et al., 2019). In other words, the purpose of this study was to determine to what degree OC is affected by remote work. For the variable of organizational commitment, the appropriate level of measurement was the ordinal scale. The measure of remote work was on an ordinal scale as well. Both variables were measured by survey responses. The survey used a Likert scale which provided the respondent a numerical response to each question.

## **Research Design**

There are four primary quantitative research designs: descriptive, correlational, causal-comparative, and experimental. Bloomfield and Fisher (2019) described a quantitative descriptive research design as an examination of variables in a sample to measure and describe them. Descriptive research does not establish cause and effect and is often used to aid in creating a hypothesis that requires further research and testing. Shields and Smyth (2016) stated that correlational research describes the relationship between two variables. A quantitative causal-comparative research design seeks to determine one variable's effect on another variable (Bloomfield & Fisher, 2019). A quantitative experimental research design examines the relationship between the independent and dependent variables in a controlled environment. The requirement of a controlled environment creates additional challenges when selecting experimental design for social science research (Bloomfield & Fisher, 2019).

After reviewing the four primary quantitative research designs, I determined that a correlational research design was the best suitable match for this research question. When selecting a research design, the fundamental consideration is the alignment between the research question and the research design. The researcher must establish that the selected research design will best result in an answer the research question. A correlational design examines the relationships between two variables without any researcher manipulation of the variables (Frankfort-Nachmias et al., 2021).

In this study, I sought to determine to what extent the independent variable has an impact on the dependent variable; therefore, the most appropriate research design was a correlational design. In addition to alignment, applicability and time and resource constraints are also important considerations when selecting a research design. The use of the correlational design does not create undue burdens on the resources needed to conduct the research and it does not create any time related issues.

The goal of this study was to create knowledge and aid in filling in the identified gap in literature. To advance the existing knowledge on which this study is based, I examined the relationship between the two variables, using a specific population. The correlational design allowed me to properly analyze and interpret the relationship between the variables and add to the existing literature on OC and remote work arrangements. Previous studies on OC such as those conducted by Ahmad and Raja (2021), Filimonau et al. (2020), and Wang et al. (2020) have set a methodological and design precedent for the study of OC as a dependent variable with researchers using a correlational design to investigate the effects of a variety of independent variables on OC.

## **Methodology**

### **Population**

The population of interest for this study was managers working in the food manufacturing industry who have transitioned from a traditional work environment to a remote work environment. In social science research, a population is the set of individuals, groups, or events on which the research is focused (Frankfort-Nachmias et

al., 2021). The population in this study included managers of either sex with any amount of job tenure and was limited to managers working in the food manufacturing industry in the United States. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2022) described a manager as an employee who has leadership responsibility and/or employees who report directly to them. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2022) reported that there are 1.644 million employees working in food manufacturing with 59,360 of the employees being first line supervisors or managers. Of the reported 59,360 managers working in the food manufacturing industry, the exact number of those working remotely is unknown.

### **Sampling and Sampling Procedures**

To calculate the sample size for this study I used a priori analysis. After running a priori G\_Power analysis, I determined that a minimum sample size of 135 participants was required to achieve a statistical power of 80%, with a statistical significance of 0.05, and a medium effect size. The expected return rate was less than the number of surveys sent out, therefore, I sent 500 surveys inviting individuals to participate in the study. This study incorporated inferential hypothesis testing and used simple linear regression to analyze the data. To collect the data, I used nonprobability sampling, which included a combination of convenience and snowball sampling. The sampling frame consisted of managers working in the food manufacturing industry in the United States who have transitioned from a traditional work environment to a remote work environment.

Probability sampling allows the researcher to specify for everyone in the population their probability of being included in the sample (Babbie, 2017). Simple



random sampling means each member of the population has an equal chance of being included in the sample (Babbie, 2017). The nonprobability sampling techniques used included convenience and snowball sampling. Nonprobability sampling strategies are those that do not use probability theory to create the sample (Babbie, 2017).

Convenience sampling was used because it is the most cost-effective and requires the least amount of time to conduct. In convenience sampling, the researcher draws a sample from the segment of the population that is most convenient. Snowball sampling involves each participant referring additional individuals that are a part of the population being studied. Both convenience and snowball sampling techniques are beneficial to the researcher when the population is limited and when locating its members may be challenging (Babbie, 2017). Other examples of nonprobability sampling techniques include quota sampling and purposive sampling (Babbie, 2017).

### **Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection (Primary Data)**

Prior to any data collection, I obtained institutional review board (IRB) approval through the Walden University IRB. Walden University's approval number for this study is 08-22-22-1030069 and it expires on August 21, 2023. This study incorporated both convenience and snowball sampling. The first set of respondents were obtained by posting the research invitation and informed consent letter to my LinkedIn account. The data collection plan included a snowball sampling element, which occurred after the first set of convenience sampling questionnaires were returned. The surveys used in this study were sent out digitally via email as well as being posted to my LinkedIn account.

The recruitment of the first set of respondents occurred as follows. After I identified potential participants, I sent them an email explaining the study, the requirements to participate in the study, and a link to complete the survey. I determined which potential participants to invite to participate based on their position in the organization and the industry in which they are employed; no other selection criteria were used to select participants. I used the digital survey platform SurveyMonkey. SurveyMonkey is a private company based in the United States that allows users to create surveys, gather responses, and interpret the data collected from the surveys.

The TCM of OC 18-item questionnaire developed by Allen et al. (1993) was the data collection instrument for measuring the OC of the respondents. There are several validated surveys in use today; however, the Allen et al. 18-item questionnaire focusing on the three components of OC is the most widely accepted and most widely used (Bar-Haim, 2019). To gain permission to use the survey, I contacted the survey's author and gained written permission. The survey and permission for use will be included in Appendix B.

### **Instrumentation and Operationalization of Constructs**

The data collection instrument that was used in this study is the TCM of OC 18-item questionnaire, also known as the TCM Employee Commitment Survey, that was developed by Allen et al. in 1993. The three components of OC may be experienced individually or in congruence with each other. They are not types of OC but components of the overall makeup of OC (Allen & Meyer, 1990). The 18-item questionnaire created

by Allen and Meyer is now the most used tool to evaluate OC (Bar-Haim, 2019). Since its creation, it has been used in numerous studies and has been validated multiple times and in multiple cultural contexts (Bar-Haim, 2019). The TCM of OC is the most widely accepted construct (Klein et al., 2009) in use today.

I contacted Dr. Meyer and was given instructions to download the survey and survey use permission sheet on their TCM website. The documentation providing use of the TCM 18-item questionnaire as well as a copy of the TCM Employee Commitment Survey is included in the appendix of this study.

### **Data Analysis Plan**

The data analysis plan included using the Statistical Package of Social Science Software (SPSS) to analyze the data. Descriptive statistical methods were used to describe the sample and inferential statistics were used to interpret the data and draw conclusions. Frankfort-Nachmias et al. (2021) defined descriptive statistics as the process by which data is organized to describe the sample or population. Descriptive statistics allow a researcher to reduce a large population to a sample representing the whole population, whereas inferential statistics allows conclusions to be drawn from analysis of the data (Frankfort-Nachmias et al., 2021).

The research question in this study is “What effects, if any, do remote work arrangements have on the organizational commitment of managers working in the food manufacturing industry?” The variables in this study are organizational commitment and remote work.

*H0*: There is no relationship between organizational commitment and remote work

*Ha*: There is a relationship between organizational commitment and remote work

### **Level of Measurement**

There are four levels of measurement: nominal, ordinal, interval, and ratio. In nominal or categorical data the numbers assigned to each category are there for reference only and are used to label the data (Frankfort-Nachmias et al., 2021). An ordinal scale ranks the data but the variation between the data is not measured: an example is a Likert Scale. In an interval measurement both the order of the data and the distance between the data is meaningful: a commonly used example is temperature (Frankfort-Nachmias et al., 2021). Ratio scales are similar to an interval measurement except ratio scales also have the unique feature of a defined 0.0.

For the variable of organizational commitment, the appropriate level of measurement is the ordinal scale. A copy of the data collection instrument, The TCM Employee Commitment Survey is located in Appendix A. The measure of remote work will be on an ordinal scale as well. The respondent will be asked how many days per week they work remotely this question will be included in the TCM Employee Commitment Survey as an additional qualifying question. This provided the information necessary to conduct a Pearson's correlation analysis followed by a bivariate regression analysis. A Pearson's correlation analysis and a bivariate regression analysis will then be

used to statistically analyze the data and answer the research question. Frankfort-Nachmias et al. (2021) stated that a “bivariate regression examines how changes in one independent variable affect the value of a dependent variable” (p. 402), whereas a Pearson’s correlation is used to measure the strength between two variables. I used the Pearson’s correlation analysis to determine if a linear relationship between remote work and OC exists. Then, a bivariate regression analysis was used to examine the relative strength of the relationship between the two variables.

### **Pearson’s Correlation**

A Pearson’s correlation analysis is used to measure the relative strength of the linear relationship between two variables. Pearson’s correlation establishes a line of best fit through the data points of two variables. The Pearson correlation coefficient,  $r$ , specifies how far away all these data points are to this line of best fit. There are three primary assumptions associated with a Pearson’s correlation analysis. To calculate a Pearson’s correlation both the independent variable and dependent variable must be continuous. The variables must be linearly related (Frankfort-Nachmias et al., 2021), the data must be normally distributed, and there can be no outliers that would distort the mean.

When conducting a Pearson’s correlation test, we are determining the measure of the linear relationship as denoted by Evans (1996), who created a scale for judging for the absolute value of  $r$ :

.00-.19 “very weak”

.20-.39 “weak”

.40-.59 “moderate”

.60-.79 “strong”

.80-1.0 “very strong”

### **Multivariate Analysis of Variance**

A multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) will be used to interpret the data. A MANOVA is a statistical tool used to estimate the means of multiple dependent variables against one factor. The MANOVA is an extension of the univariate analysis of variance (ANOVA). The MANOVA instead of calculating multiple univariate ANOVA's because additional model information is generated based on the correlation between the multiple dependent variables. A MANOVA run in SPSS produces several statistical measures. The Pillai's trace is one of statistical measures produced by a MANOVA in SPSS. The Pillai's trace has a value that ranges from 0 to 1. The closer Pillai's trace is to 1, the greater the evidence that the independent variable (days worked remote) has a statistically significant effect on the values of the dependent variables.

### **Confidence Intervals**

A confidence interval is the probability that a selected population parameter falls within a specified range (Frankfort-Nachmias et al., 2021). The confidence interval provides the researcher with an upper limit and a lower limit. For instance, when calculating a 95% confidence interval the researcher is claiming with 95% certainty that the mean of the entire population for that variable falls within those limits. The

confidence interval is important in social statistics because it provides a method for the statistical findings from the sample to be applied to the entire population. Morey (2008) described a confidence interval as a method of articulating ambiguity in data that allows the researcher to generalize the findings so that they capture the population mean. In social sciences statistical analyses are primarily used to test a hypothesis (Loftus & Mason, 1994). Using a confidence interval allows the sample data to be expanded and to depict the mean of the entire population being studied.

### **Statistical Significance**

Statistical significance denotes the likelihood that the observed phenomenon occurred by chance or not. The p-value (probability value) is a method of expressing the statistical importance of quantitative research. It measures the probability that an observed statistical difference occurred by chance (Frankfort-Nachmias et al., 2021). It is important to note that significance levels are also referred to as the alpha. For this study the alpha was set at .05.

### **Threats to Validity**

#### **External Validity**

External validity focuses on how effectively the research findings can be generalized in terms of different settings and populations. The primary threat to external validity in this study was a lack of a representative sample. Participants in this study were selected to ensure that the sample is an accurate representation of the population being studied (Frankfort-Nachmias et al., 2021). Sample selection and sample size are threats to

the internal validity in quantitative research, which requires a population and sample. The population is a set of people that share a common characteristic, which is defined in the sampling criteria as provided by the researcher. The sample is the number of persons out of the population that take part in the research. Smaller populations require a smaller sample and likewise larger populations require a larger sample (Kaptein, 2019).

### **Internal Validity**

Internal validity is a means of establishing confidence that the values of the dependent variables are not impacted by any other factors than the ones measured in the study (Frankfort-Nachmias et al., 2021). The threat to internal validity of this study were minimal. The data collection instrument being used is validated and has been used in multiple studies since the mid-1990s.

### **Construct Validity**

Construct validity shows that the study is measuring what it is intended to measure and the data collection instruments are appropriate for the study. To minimize threats to the construct validity of this study I used the 18-item questionnaire created by Allen et al. in 1993 as the data collection and data measurement instrument. Bar-Haim (2019) called the TCM of OC the tool most often used to evaluate OC. Since its creation, it has been used in numerous studies and has been validated multiple times and in multiple cultural contexts (Bar-Haim, 2019). The TCM of OC is the most widely accepted construct in use today (Klein et al., 2009); this has caused the construct validity



of the TCM of OC and the corresponding 18-item questionnaire to be subject to continual academic scrutiny (Meyer & Allen, 1996).

The statistical tool selected for use in this study is the Pearson's correlation analysis. This statistical test is the most appropriate test to measure the relative strength of the linear relationship between the two variables being studied. The data that will be used in this study meet the assumptions of the Pearson's correlation analysis.

### **Ethical Procedures**

In this study the human participants will be treated with the highest degree of ethics. In compliance with the standards set forth by the Walden University Institutional Review Board (IRB) the rights of the participants will be judiciously protected. Prior to participating in the study all participants were provided with all necessary information regarding the study and subsequent information usage and data storage procedures after the conclusion of the study. The participants retained their anonymity throughout the study as the survey used did not collect any data that could reveal the identity of the participants. Before any data was collected approval was obtained from the Walden University IRB. Walden University's approval number for this study is 08-22-22-1030069 and it expires on August 21, 2023.

Participation in this research study was strictly voluntary. Any participant had the option to withdraw from the study at any time for any reason. Participants who begin the survey and then decide to withdraw could simply close the browser window, thus ending their voluntary participation in the study. Any data collected from incomplete surveys

was not included in the analysis and was handled in the same confidential manner as those of participants who completed the survey in its entirety. After the data was collected, and the study completed, the information is only accessible by me. All data collected will be stored for five years in a secured cloud storage.

### **Summary**

This study is structured according to the identified gap in the existing literature focused on organizational commitment and remote work in the food manufacturing industry. The selection of the theoretical framework, the data collection instrument, and subsequent data analysis procedures were selected to ensure alignment throughout the study. The overarching goal of this study is to create positive social change by fostering a better understanding of the factors that impact OC in the remote work segments of the food manufacturing industry.

The 18-item questionnaire created by Allen and Meyer (1990) will be critical to this study and perfectly complements the theoretical framework because the survey incorporates questions that identify the participants' level of OC. The extensive use of the 18-item questionnaire measuring the TCM of OC in numerous other studies has assured the reliability and validity of this instrument. The characteristics of the population and sample are inherent to the intent of this study. The privacy of participants was protected through the use of anonymous survey responses. I did not have contact with any of the participants, and information obtained in response to the study will be kept confidential. Informed consent was obtained with an introductory letter provided to participants that

contained information on the intent of the study and the scope of their participation in the study. The significance of the study will be discussed in detail in Chapter 4.

## Chapter 4: Results

The purpose of this quantitative study with a correlational design was to examine if organizational commitment is influenced by the transition to remote work. The research question was, “What effects, if any, do remote work arrangements have on the organizational commitment of managers working in the food manufacturing industry?” The approach included grounding the research in the existing theory of the three-dimension model of OC created by Allen and Meyer (1990).

The variables were organizational commitment and remote work. The null and alternative hypotheses were as follows:

$H_0$ : There is no relationship between organizational commitment and remote work.

$H_a$ : There is a relationship between organizational commitment and remote work.

As demonstrated in the literature review section of this study, OC has a substantial body of research dating back to 1950 (Bar-Haim, 2019). No found studies focused on the OC of managers in the food manufacturing industry. The food manufacturing industry is often overlooked until the food supply chain systems of the United States experience operational difficulties. The goal of this study was to aid in closing the identified gap and create positive social change by fostering a better understanding of the effects of remote work on the OC of managers in a life sustaining but often overlooked industry. Chapter 4 includes the data collection methods, data

analysis, statistical findings of the research, description of the data, descriptive statistics, inferential statistics, and a summary of the data.

### **Data Collection**

The TCM of OC 18-item questionnaire developed by Allen et al. (1993) was the data collection instrument for measuring the OC of the respondents. Several validated surveys are in use today; however, the Allen and Meyer 18-item questionnaire focusing on the three components of OC is the most widely accepted and most widely used data collection instrument to evaluate OC (Bar-Haim, 2019). The survey was uploaded to the Survey Monkey website. Survey Monkey allowed creation of a link to the survey and embedding into the introduction E-mail. The survey was posted on Facebook and LinkedIn. These social media sites have groups dedicated to the professional development of managers working in the food manufacturing industry. The following groups were joined on LinkedIn: *Food Manufacturing Industry Professionals*, *Food Manufacturing Professionals*, *Food Manufacturing Industry Group*, and *Food Manufacturing Careers*. The following groups were joined on Facebook: *Food Industry*, *Food Manufacturing*, and *Food Manufacturing and Food Packaging Industry*.

The data collection occurred over a 10-day period from August 23, 2022, until September 1, 2022. By the conclusion of the data collection period, the survey received 143 responses. The survey was closed using Survey Monkey, preventing any additional responses from being submitted. The data was downloaded into Statistical Package of Social Science Software (SPSS) for statistical analysis and interpretation.

## **Study Results**

Data was collected from a convenience sample of 143 respondents. One hypothesis was tested to answer the research question “What effects, if any, do remote work arrangements have on the organizational commitment of managers working in the food manufacturing industry?” The statistical software package SPSS was used to perform the analyses necessary to interpret the data. The analyses performed were (a) descriptive statistics used to provide summaries and frequencies of the variables, (b) Pearson correlation analysis to assess the relationship between the variables, (c) multivariate analysis of variance to assess the effect of remote work on the variable of OC.

### **Descriptive Statistics**

The TCM of OC (Allen et al., 1993) was used as the data collection instrument. The three components of OC were used to assess six questions, which were answered using a Likert scale allowing the respondents to select a response ranging from 1 (strongly agree) to 7 (strongly disagree). A copy of the TCM of OC survey is in Appendix A. In the survey, Questions 3, 4, and 5 in the affective commitment scale, as well as Question 1 in the normative commitment scale, were reversed key questions intended to control for acquiescence response bias. The variables were reflected in SPSS to be reversed (i.e., 1=7 and 7=1). Demographic data was not collected during the survey and therefore was not included in the descriptive statistics. To appropriately code the data

in SPSS for the question “days worked remotely” the number of days worked remotely is 0 to 5, which results in a range of 1 to 6.

### **Correlation Analysis**

Pearson’s correlation analysis was used to measure the relative strength of the linear relationship between two variables. Pearson’s correlation establishes a line of best fit through the data points of two variables. The Pearson correlation coefficient,  $r$ , has values ranging from -1 to +1. A negative correlation indicates an inverse relationship between the two variables: as one variable increases, the other decreases. A positive correlation indicates a correlated relationship: an increase or decrease in one variable results in a similar change in the other variable. A correlation analysis is used for assessing relationships among continuous variables. Using a correlation analysis for ordinal variables produces an approximation and therefore, the results are approximate.

Pearson product correlation of remote work and affective OC was very weak. Questions 1 and 4 were deemed statistically significant with the alpha at .05. The weak correlations were not taken too seriously because the application of correlation analysis is itself an approximation. Table 2 displays the results of the Person’s correlation analysis. Pearson product correlation of remote work and continuous OC was slightly stronger than affective OC; however, the value of  $r$  was determined weak with Questions 3 and 5 deemed statistically significant with the alpha at .05. A .05 alpha is referred to as the significance level, a .05 alpha means that there exists a 5% chance the results of the analysis were generated randomly. The lower the alpha, the higher the probability that the

relationship observed is not generated randomly. Table 3 displays the results of the Pearson's correlation analysis. Pearson product correlation of remote work and normative OC was determined weak based on the low  $r$  value displayed through the six questions. Questions 2 and 4 were deemed statistically significant with the alpha at .05. Table 4 displays the results of the Pearson's correlation analysis.



**Table 1***Descriptive Statistics*

	<i>N</i>	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Days worked remotely	143	1.00	6.00	3.0211	1.94414
Affective Commitment Scale Q1	143	1.00	7.00	4.4126	1.84364
Affective Commitment Scale Q2	143	1.00	7.00	4.0559	1.88686
Affective Commitment Scale Q3	143	1.00	7.00	3.8881	1.86179
Affective Commitment Scale Q4	143	1.00	7.00	4.0000	1.88769
Affective Commitment Scale Q5	143	1.00	7.00	3.6154	1.89857
Affective Commitment Scale Q6	143	1.00	7.00	4.4476	1.78680
Continuance Commitment Scale Q1	143	1.00	7.00	4.8042	1.66259
Continuance Commitment Scale Q2	143	1.00	7.00	4.5315	1.79908
Continuance Commitment Scale Q3	143	1.00	7.00	4.7902	1.81486
Continuance Commitment Scale Q4	143	1.00	7.00	4.2657	1.90607
Continuance Commitment Scale Q5	143	1.00	7.00	4.0000	1.89885
Continuance Commitment Scale Q6	143	1.00	7.00	4.3706	1.91244
Normative Commitment Scale Q1	143	1.00	7.00	4.1818	1.82176
Normative Commitment Scale Q2	143	1.00	7.00	4.2797	1.87047
Normative Commitment Scale Q3	143	1.00	7.00	4.0979	1.91846
Normative Commitment Scale Q4	143	1.00	7.00	4.3916	1.81556
Normative Commitment Scale Q5	143	1.00	7.00	4.3497	1.86615
Normative Commitment Scale Q6	143	1.00	7.00	4.1608	1.82182

**Table 2***Pearson's Correlation of Affective Commitment Scale*

	Days worked remotely	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6
Days worked	1						
remotely							
ACS Q1	.171*	1					
ACS Q2	.086	.503**	1				
ACS Q3	.120	-.136	-.118	1			
ACS Q4	.212*	-.249**	-.140	.699**	1		
ACS Q5	.079	-.184*	-.049	.695**	.646**	1	
ACS Q6	.097	.568**	.559**	-.216**	-.338**	-.229**	1

\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

\*\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

**Table 3***Pearson's Correlation of Continuance Commitment Scale*

	Days worked remotely	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6
Days worked	1						
remotely							
CCS Q1	.117	1					
CCS Q2	.142	.527**	1				
CCS Q3	.170*	.511**	.602**	1			
CCS Q4	.103	.403**	.404**	.505**	1		
CCS Q5	.203*	.315**	.449**	.372**	.383**	1	
CCS Q6	.154	.459**	.386**	.467**	.661**	.456**	1

\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

\*\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

**Table 4***Pearson's Correlation of Normative Commitment Scale*

	Days worked remotely	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6
Days worked	1						
remotely							
NCS Q1	.123	1					
NCS Q2	.210*	-.125	1				
NCS Q3	.123	-.209*	.693**	1			
NCS Q4	.180*	-.120	.689**	.715**	1		
NCS Q5	.049	-.100	.623**	.626**	.629**	1	
NCS Q6	.159	.004	.497**	.606**	.677**	.686**	1

\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

\*\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The analysis of the Pearson's product correlation of days worked remote against the three components of OC (affective, continuance, and normative) revealed a weak correlation between all three components of OC and remote work. The relative strength of the linear relationship between remote work and OC was classified as weak based on the scale created by Evans (1996), which defines an r value of .00-.19 as a very weak correlation.

## **Multivariate Analysis of Variance**

A multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) is a statistical tool used to estimate the means of multiple dependent variables against one factor. The MANOVA is an extension of the univariate analysis of variance (ANOVA). The MANOVA instead of calculating multiple univariate ANOVAs because additional model information is generated based on the correlation between the multiple dependent variables. The MANOVA is used for assessing relationships among continuous variables and it is applied in this study to assess the relationship between ordinal variables, therefore, the results are approximate. A MANOVA run in SPSS produces several statistical measures. The Pillai's trace is one of the statistical measures produced by a MANOVA in SPSS. The Pillai's trace has a value ranging from 0 to 1. The closer Pillai's trace is to 1, the greater the evidence that the independent variable (days worked remote) has a statistically significant effect on the values of the dependent variables. Pillai's offers the greatest protection against Type I errors with smaller sample sizes. Pillai's trace is the sum of the variance, which can be explained by the calculation of discriminant variables. Pillai's trace determines the amount of variance in the dependent variable, accounted for by the greatest separation of the independent variables. Three MANOVA tests were conducted, one for each of the three components of OC. Each test used the dependent variable of days worked remote.

The ACS component of OC produced a Pillai's trace value of .334 with a statistical significance of .022. With the alpha set at .05, the results were proven

statistically significant. The Pillai's trace value was relatively low, indicating that the effects contribute less to the model. Table 5 displays the results of the MANOVA for ACS. The CCS component of OC produced a Pillai's trace value of .193 with a statistical significance of .167. With the alpha set at .05, the results were proven not statistically significant. Again, Pillai's trace value was low, indicating that the effects contribute less to the model. Table 6 displays the results of the MANOVA for NCS.

The NCS component of OC produced a Pillai's trace value of .324 with a statistical significance of .030. With the alpha set at .05, the results were proven statistically significant. The Pillai's trace value was relatively low, indicating that the effects contribute less to the model. Table 7 displays the results of the MANOVA for ACS.

**Table 5**

*MANOVA with ACS as Dependent and Remote Work an Independent Variable*

Effect		Value	F	Hypothesis df	Error df	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Intercept	Pillai's Trace	.939	338.058 <sup>b</sup>	6.000	131.000	.000	.939
Remote Work	Pillai's Trace	.334	1.611	30.000	675.000	.022	.067

a. Design: Intercept + Remote Work

b. Exact statistic

c. The statistic is an upper bound on F that yields a lower bound on the significance level.

**Table 6***MANOVA with CCS as Dependent and Remote Work as an Independent Variable*

Effect		Value	F	Hypothesis df	Error df	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Intercept	Pillai's Trace	.900	196.489b	6.000	131.000	.000	.900
Remote Work	Pillai's Trace	.193	.903	30.000	675.000	.617	.039

a. Design: Intercept + Remote Work

b. Exact statistic

c. The statistic is an upper bound on F that yields a lower bound on the significance level.

**Table 7***MANOVA with NCS as Dependent and Remote Work as an Independent Variable*

Effect		Value	F	Hypothesis df	Error df	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Intercept	Pillai's Trace	.922	258.695b	6.000	131.000	.000	.922
Remote Work	Pillai's Trace	.324	1.557	30.000	675.000	.030	.065

a. Design: Intercept + Remote Work

b. Exact statistic

c. The statistic is an upper bound on F that yields a lower bound on the significance level.

## **Interpretation**

Based on the results of the Pearson's correlation and the MANOVA, the null hypothesis was rejected, as the statistical analysis revealed a weak but statistically significant relationship between remote work and OC. CCS produced the strongest values in the Petersons correlation testing with statistical significance revealed in questions 3 and 5. The relationship found between remote work and CCS was a positive correlation. This means that participants who work more days remotely per week are likely to have higher levels of CCS. The MANOVA uncovered that Pillai's trace value was the highest in ACS with a significance level of .022. While the overall relationship uncovered between remote work and OC is statistically weak, it does exist.

## **Summary**

The purpose of this quantitative correlation study was to determine if remote work affected the OC of managers working in the food manufacturing industry. The research question was formulated to align with the research purpose. Using anonymous surveys, data was collected from 143 respondents using the 18-item TCM Employee Commitment Survey developed by Allen et al. (1993). The data was analyzed using IBM's Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS).

Using statistical analysis, including the Pearson's correlation and the MANOVA, the null hypothesis was rejected. This research revealed a weak but statistically significant relationship between remote work and the OC of managers working in the food manufacturing industry.

## Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

The purpose of this quantitative correlation study was to determine if remote work affected the OC of managers working in the food manufacturing industry. The social problem that led to an identified gap in the existing literature was the shift in business operating practices because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Polling conducted by Parker et al. (2020) revealed a 51% increase in remote work post-COVID-19. These shifts in business operating practices have not been thoroughly researched which led to the discovery of the gap in existing literature. As demonstrated in Chapter 4, using statistical testing a relatively weak but statistically significant relationship was uncovered between remote work and OC. This research was conducted to aid in narrowing the identified gap in the literature and contribute to positive social change by fostering a better understanding of the effect of remote work on OC.

### **Interpretation of Findings**

This study was guided by one research question: What effects, if any, do remote work arrangements have on the organizational commitment of managers working in the food manufacturing industry? The scope of this study was the food manufacturing industry, focusing on managers. The statistical analysis revealed that remote work arrangements have a weak but statistically significant effect on the OC of managers working in the food manufacturing industry. The goal of this study was to narrow the gap in literature and foster the creation of positive social change through a better understanding of the effects of remote work on managers in an often overlooked industry.



Researchers have investigated OC since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. Chenji and Raghavendra (2021) focused on the challenges faced by remote workers. Wang et al. (2020) found that remote workers might experience feelings of isolation, reducing OC. Matli (2020) indicated a relationship between remote work and OC. The results of these studies have prompted further investigation into the ramifications of remote work on employee wellbeing and work performance.

The results of this study contradict the research conducted by De Klerk et al. (2021) who examined the effects of the pandemic on remote work. Their research focused on the impact of remote work on employee work engagement. De Klerk et al. contended that remote work leads to a lack of personal interaction, negatively affecting the employee's ability to collaborate with fellow professionals and increasing feelings of isolation. As remote work becomes a staple in the food manufacturing industry and other industries, the continued research and understanding of the relationship between remote work and OC will become increasingly important.

### **Limitations of the Study**

Limitations are weaknesses in a study design or methodology (Burkholder et al., 2020). The primary limitation of this study was experienced during the data collection phase. Obtaining a sample representative of the studied population proved more challenging than anticipated. Responses to online surveys posted on professional social networking websites did not receive the anticipated response rate. Due to the of the lack of participation, SurveyMonkey's paid response audience was used to collect data.

Anonymous online surveys were used to collect the data and there is no way of guaranteeing that the participants met the requirements to participate in the study and therefore may not be an accurate representation of the studied population.

Demographic data was not collected as a component of this research. It is unknown if gender, age, or ethnicity impacted the findings. The results of this study may not apply to employees in the food manufacturing industry who are not in managerial positions. This study focused solely on managers and did not include lower-level employees or senior-level leaders.

Another limitation of the study is that correlation analysis and MANOVA are normally used for assessing relationships among continuous variables. I applied these techniques for ordinal variables as an approximation and therefore my results are approximate.

### **Recommendations**

Several studies supported the use of OC as a predictor of employee turnover (Bar-Haim, 2019). Employers now use OC to gauge employee engagement as well as employee retention (Cobbinah et al., 2020; Rawashdeh & Tamimi, 2019; Satardien et al., 2019; Živković et al., 2021). Ahmad (2018) indicated that productive employee behavior is increased as the employee's OC increases.

OC has traditionally been viewed as a measure to predict employee turnover based on job satisfaction (Bar-Haim, 2019). To better understand the effect of remote work within the food manufacturing industry, future studies should collect demographic

data to include gender, age, and ethnicity to determine if these variables impact the OC of the respondents within each demographic group. This research was conducted with only respondents from the United States, so cultural differences may impact the findings. As a recommendation, future studies should collect data from abroad and domestically to further determine the impacts of cultural differences on the organizational commitment of remote workers in the food manufacturing industry.

### **Implications**

O’Cass and Griffin (2015) stated that social change requires people to act. Change is a constant part of life, and just as our individual lives change, our society changes over time. As social problems emerge, the solutions to those problems create social change. Positive social change is the creation of solutions to social problems that improve, enrich, or extend the lives of those affected.

This study was designed to better understand what proactive steps leaders of food manufacturing organizations can take to retain employees while successfully transitioning their eligible workforce into remote work positions. An increase in OC and reduction in voluntary turnover would create positive social change at the individual, family, and organizational levels in our society.

Organizational commitment can help gauge an employee’s contribution to an organization as well as their intent to remain with the organization (Ahmad & Raja, 2021). Lee et al. (2015) concluded that positive employee behavior outcomes are a byproduct of increased OC. The implications for positive social change at the individual,

family, and organizational levels are within the boundaries of this study. The findings from this study are promising for the continued and future use of remote working structures in the food manufacturing industry without risking the commitment of the employee.

The implication for relational cohesion theory is that while traditionally relational cohesion theory has been centered on face-to-face interactions, electronic interactions also produce positive emotional responses. Lawler and Yoon (1996) stated that commitment behaviors in the workplace are byproducts of relational cohesion. This study confirmed this statement while introducing remote occurring electronic interactions.

### **Conclusions**

Neoclassical management theory increased practitioner and scholarly interest in the study of OC. The pandemic accelerated the acceptance of remote work as a normal business operating practice across many industries. A goal of this study was to better understand the impacts of remote work and OC in an often overlooked but critical industry, the food manufacturing industry. Using a quantitative correlation design, this study confirmed the relationship between remote work and the OC of managers working in the food manufacturing industry.

The results of this study may aid business leaders and human resource professionals in fostering a better understanding of the effects of remote work arrangements on the OC of managers working in the food manufacturing industry. Employees are more committed to the organization they work for and less likely to leave

the organization when personal and organizational needs are unified (Martin & Roodt, 2008). Organizations that understand what factors influence their employees' sense of OC and can increase those feelings of commitment may cultivate more productive and engaged employees. This research study may provide reliable information for business practitioners to develop programs and work arrangements geared toward increasing employee OC, which may decrease employee turnover intentions.

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## Appendix A: TCM Employee Commitment Survey

### **Commitment Scales**

#### **Instructions**

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

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

#### **Revised Version (Meyer, Allen, & Smith, 1993)**

##### **Affective Commitment Scale**

1. I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career with this organization.
2. I really feel as if this organization's problems are my own.
3. I do not feel a strong sense of "belonging" to my organization. (R)
4. I do not feel "emotionally attached" to this organization. (R)
5. I do not feel like "part of the family" at my organization. (R)
6. This organization has a great deal of personal meaning for me.

##### **Continuance Commitment Scale**

1. Right now, staying with my organization is a matter of necessity as much as desire.
2. It would be very hard for me to leave my organization right now, even if I wanted to.
3. Too much of my life would be disrupted if I decided I wanted to leave my organization now.
4. I feel that I have too few options to consider leaving this organization.
5. If I had not already put so much of myself into this organization, I might consider working elsewhere.
6. One of the few negative consequences of leaving this organization would be the scarcity of available alternatives.

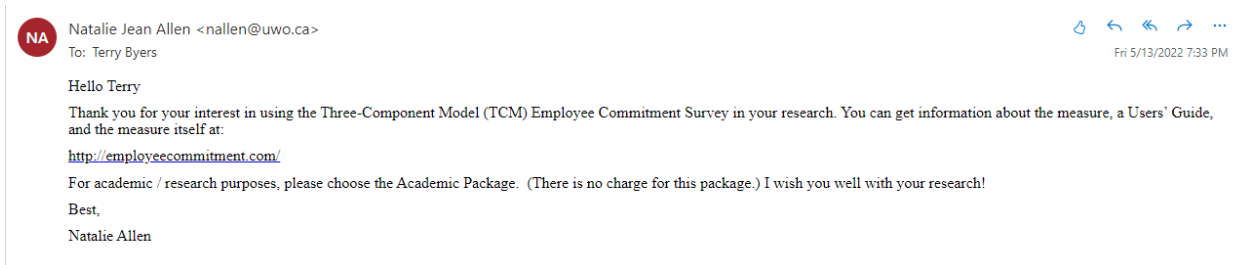
**Normative Commitment Scale**

1. I do not feel any obligation to remain with my current employer. (R)
2. Even if it were to my advantage, I do not feel it would be right to leave my organization now.
3. I would feel guilty if I left my organization now.
4. This organization deserves my loyalty.
5. I would not leave my organization right now because I have a sense of obligation to the people in it.
6. I owe a great deal to my organization.

**Note. (R) indicates a reverse-keyed item. Scores on these items should be reflected (i.e., 1 = 7, 2 = 6, 3 = 5, 4 = 4, 5 = 3, 6 = 2, 7 = 1) before computing scale scores.**



## Appendix B: Approval to use TCM Employee Commitment Survey



### **TCM Employee Commitment Survey Academic Users Guide**

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 (affective commitment), obligation-based (normative commitment) and cost-based (continuance commitment). The survey includes three well-validated scales, the Affective Commitment Scale (ACS), the Normative Commitment Scale (NCS) and the Continuance Commitment Scale (CCS). Each is scored separately and can be used to identify the "commitment profile" of employees within an organization.

This academic version of the TCM Employee Commitment Survey was prepared for those who intend to use the commitment scales for academic research purposes. Original and revised versions of the scales are provided in Appendix A. This guide provides background information on the development of the commitment scales and addresses general issues pertaining to their use. Appendix B provides a list of references that you can consult for more information.