

Megan R. Waggy, SELF-REPORTED CHANGES IN ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT: THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PRESENT ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT AND ITS PERCEIVED CHANGES OVER TIME (Under the direction of Dr. John Cope) Department of Psychology, April 2014

A sample of 188 university employees was surveyed about present levels of organizational commitment and beliefs about changes in commitment over time. Both present levels of commitment and self-reported increases in each of the three forms of commitment (i.e., affective, continuance, and normative) were negatively associated with turnover intention, with present levels of commitment producing correlations of a significantly greater magnitude. In a simplified model, all present forms of commitment combined with age were found to be significant predictors. A moderation effect was found for continuance commitment, in that as magnitude of beliefs about continuance commitment increasing over time grew, so did the negative relationship of continuance commitment to turnover intention. This effect was only found at low levels of present continuance commitment. Sequential polynomial regression revealed nonlinear relationships of tenure with each form of commitment. Cubic models were adopted for both affective and normative commitment while a quadratic model was adopted for continuance commitment.



SELF-REPORTED CHANGES IN ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT: THE  
RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PRESENT ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT AND ITS  
PERCEIVED CHANGES OVER TIME

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Megan R. Waggy

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## **CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION**

One of the foundations for most research on organizational commitment is Meyer and Allen's (1991) three-component conceptualization. In Meyer and Allen's model, the three components of affective commitment, continuance commitment, and normative commitment are believed to be three specific attitudes that interact and sum together to form an overall attitude of commitment to an organization. To date, research has investigated the ways in which organizational commitment can change over time by looking at changing attributes of an individual, such as increasing age and tenure; however, no research has asked actual members of an organization using self-report style questions whether they believe that their own organizational commitment has decreased, stayed the same, or increased over time and how those beliefs affect present organizational commitment and turnover intention. The present research explored self-reported changes in organizational commitment and the way in which those changes relate to other variables most commonly associated with organizational commitment. Specifically, beliefs about changes in commitment over time were examined in conjunction with measures of present organizational commitment and turnover intention.

### **Organizational Commitment**

Members of an organization develop a unique level of attachment to the organization in which they are employed. The type of attachment each member develops, as well as the magnitude of that attachment, is determined by a number of factors. Research has generally shown that members with a high level of attachment to a group typically outperform members with a low level of attachment with respect to effort towards group goals (Mullen & Copper, 1994). This concept has also been found to apply to organizations in that employees with high levels of commitment generally outperform employees with low levels of commitment in many

work-related aspects (Meyer & Allen, 1997). Additionally, employees with high levels of commitment typically desire to continue to remain a part of their organizations (Mowday et al., 1982). Given the connection between organizational commitment and organizational turnover (Kottke & Sharafinski, 1988) and the desire to reduce the high costs to organizations incurred by employee turnover, much research has been devoted to organizational commitment over the last several decades to further examine what it is that leads employees to leave rather than remain committed to their organizations (Meyer et al., 2002).

**Affective Commitment.** The first component of Meyer and Allen's model is affective commitment. Affective commitment has been described as an employee's identification with and emotional attachment to an organization (Mowday et al., 1979). An employee high in affective commitment stays with an organization because he or she "wants" to do so (Meyer et al., 1989). Multiple positive work aspects have been shown to positively correlate with affective commitment, including role clarity (Allen & Meyer, 1990; Panaccio & Vandenberghe, 2011); distributive justice (Meyer et al., 2002); procedural justice, perceived organizational support, and supervisor satisfaction (Johnson & Chang, 2008); managerial support and coworker relationships (He et al., 2011); and supervisor support, coworker support, ambient conditions, and adequate job resources (Rousseau & Aube, 2010). In addition, many favorable personal characteristics positively correlate with affective commitment, including positive affect (Meyer et al., 2012), self-efficacy (Harris & Cameron, 2005), and extraversion, agreeableness, and conscientiousness (Panaccio & Vandenberghe, 2012). Finally, certain undesirable work aspects also correlate negatively with affective commitment, including role conflict and role ambiguity (Meyer et al., 2002).

**Continuance Commitment.** The second component of Meyer and Allen's model is continuance commitment. Continuance commitment has been described as an employee's "need" to stay with an organization (Meyer et al., 1989). A higher level of continuance commitment occurs when an employee evaluates the costs associated with leaving an organization and, upon concluding that the costs are too high, feels unable to leave. Conversely, employees who reach the conclusion that there is low or no cost to leaving an organization typically have a lower level of continuance commitment. Some have argued that continuance commitment reflects two separate dimensions (McGee & Ford, 1987; Meyer et al., 1990). The first dimension of continuance commitment is related to the personal sacrifice associated with leaving the organization. Loss of salary, loss of friends, and loss of job progress are a few potential sacrifices individuals face when leaving an organization. The second dimension is related to the lack of other employment opportunities available to an individual seeking to leave an organization. If no suitable alternatives are available, the employee feels compelled to stay, which results in higher levels of continuance commitment.

In contrast with affective commitment, many negative work aspects and personal characteristics have been linked to continuance commitment. Negative work aspects that relate positively to continuance commitment include role conflict and role ambiguity (Meyer et al., 2002). Negative personal characteristics that relate positively to continuance commitment include risk aversion and negative affectivity (Vandenberghe et al., 2011). Of particular note, certain characteristics such as self-esteem and self-efficacy that relate positively to affective commitment also relate negatively to continuance commitment (Harris & Cameron, 2005). The same pattern has been found for transferability of skills and education (Meyer et al., 2002).

**Normative Commitment.** The third component of Meyer and Allen's model is normative commitment. Normative commitment has been described as an employee's feelings of obligation to stay with an organization (Meyer & Allen, 1991). An employee high in normative commitment feels that he or she "ought" to stay with an organization (Meyer et al., 1993). Two factors suggested to contribute most to the attitude of normative commitment are the norm of reciprocity and early socialization experiences (Hackett et al., 1994). Under the norm of reciprocity, when an organization invests in an employee, perhaps through training and development, an employee typically feels the need to reciprocate in the relationship by committing themselves to the organization. Early socialization experiences, such as an upbringing focused on learning the value of loyalty or dedication, may lead an employee to feel the need to remain with an organization for trust and allegiance purposes.

Both social and interpersonal relations aspects have been linked to normative commitment, including socialization experiences, receipt of value from the organization (Meyer & Allen, 1991), value internalization, and the norm of reciprocity (Yao & Wang, 2008). Employees who feel a sense of loyalty to their organizations based on personal values or ideas of reciprocity stemming from prior organizational investment will rate highly in normative commitment. Work aspects that have been positively connected to normative commitment include managerial support and coworker relationships (He et al., 2011), organizational support and procedural justice (Meyer et al., 2002), and role clarity (Allen & Meyer, 1990; Panaccio & Vandenberghe, 2011). Role ambiguity has been shown to be negatively related to normative commitment (He et al., 2011; Meyer et al., 2002). Personal characteristics that have been positively connected to normative commitment include positive affect (Meyer et al., 2012) and self-efficacy (Harris & Cameron, 2005).

Despite speculation involving potential overlap of the three components of organizational commitment, with most research looking into the similarities of affective and normative commitment, it has been consistently reported that each factor is distinct and unique from the other two (Hackett et al., 1994; Meyer & Allen, 1991, 1993; Meyer et al., 2002).

### **Job Satisfaction, Performance, and Turnover**

One work aspect frequently associated with organizational commitment is job satisfaction, which has an overall positive relationship with organizational commitment (Cheng et al., 2003; Lambert et al., 2010). Job satisfaction has been shown to be positively related to both affective (Cuyper et al., 2009; Marique & Stinglhamber, 2011; Zhang & Zheng, 2009) and normative commitment (Clugston, 2000; Hackett et al., 1994; Taing et al., 2011; Yao & Wang, 2008). The relationship between job satisfaction and continuance commitment is mixed. For instance, job satisfaction has sometimes been shown to be negatively related to continuance commitment (Clugston, 2000; Hackett et al., 1994), while at other times it has been shown to be positively related (Taing et al., 2011). Wasti (2003) broke down satisfaction into multiple variables (work, supervisor, coworkers, pay, and promotion) and found that while both affective and normative commitment positively correlated with all job satisfaction variables, continuance commitment was positively correlated only with work, coworkers, and promotion variables.

Another work aspect frequently associated with organizational commitment is job performance, which has an overall positive relationship with organizational commitment (Cheng et al., 2003). Meyer and colleagues (2002) reported in a meta-analysis that affective commitment correlated most positively with job performance, followed by normative commitment, and that continuance commitment was negatively correlated. In other research, job performance has similarly been positively associated with affective commitment (Anton, 2009; Luchak &

Gellatly, 2007; Zhang & Zheng, 2009) and negatively associated with continuance commitment (Luchak & Gellatly, 2007).

The pattern of both affective and normative commitment relating positively and continuance commitment relating negatively to common positive work aspects shifts in the opposite direction when examining negative work aspects. As previously discussed, both affective and normative commitment relate negatively and continuance commitment relates positively to role conflict, role ambiguity (Meyer et al., 2002) and lack of both self-esteem and self-efficacy (Harris & Cameron, 2005). For other common negative work behaviors such as turnover and turnover intention, however, the three components of commitment begin to correlate in the same direction. For example, it has been shown that for turnover, affective commitment relates negatively (Stinglhamber et al., 2002), normative commitment relates negatively (Somers, 1995), and that continuance commitment also relates negatively (Somers, 1995). This is again the case for turnover intention with affective commitment relating negatively (Anton, 2009; Glazer & Kruse, 2008; Luchak & Gellatly, 2007), normative commitment relating negatively (Bentein et al., 2005; Harris & Cameron, 2005; Vandenberghe & Tremblay, 2008; Yao & Wang, 2008) and continuance commitment relating negatively (Boros & Curseu, 2013; Luchak & Gellatly, 2007; Stanley et al., 2013; Taing et al., 2011; Valeau et al., 2013).

Despite continuance commitment's general negative connotation, it is still a form of commitment that binds the individual to the organization. Individuals may wish they could leave, but realize that they cannot due to either perceived sacrifice or lack of alternatives. Regardless of the reason, the intention to leave is nonetheless reduced by any of the three forms of



commitment. Based on the findings above, it is expected that this relationship will be repeated in the current sample.

*Hypothesis 1:* Present affective commitment, normative commitment, and continuance commitment will all be negatively related to present turnover intention.

### **Interactive and Additive Effects**

It has often been suggested that the three components of commitment may combine and interact to form a particular commitment profile (Meyer & Allen, 1991; Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001; Somers, 1995). For example, profiles exist such as *component dominant*, in which an individual exhibits a high level of one component of commitment and low levels of the two other components, *combination dominant*, in which an individual exhibits high levels of two components and a low level of the other one component, and *non-committed*, in which an individual exhibits low levels of all three components (Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001). More popular, though, is the interactive effects of commitment components in forming profiles.

For example, Somers (1995) found that although affective commitment was negatively associated with turnover and absence, that relationship was strengthened when continuance commitment was low and weakened when continuance commitment was high. Jaros (1997) found a similar interaction between continuance commitment and normative commitment with respect to turnover in that high continuance commitment weakened the negative correlation of normative commitment and turnover. In a final example, Meyer and colleagues (1990), using a longitudinal analysis, found that in a sample of employees with longer tenure, higher levels of continuance commitment often led to higher levels of affective commitment. They suggested that this may be due to the employee distorting how much they “want” to stay with an organization as a protective measure against feelings of being trapped within an organization, or “needing” to

stay with it. Meyer and colleagues (1990) labeled this change in attitude as a type of cognitive dissonance.

Similar effects have been found with normative commitment. It has been suggested that when high levels of both normative and affective commitment exist, an individual may view normative commitment as a moral action of doing the right thing by remaining committed to the organization (Gellatly et al., 2006; Meyer et al., 2013). In contrast, when high levels of both normative and continuance commitment exist, the individual may instead view normative commitment as an indebted action fueled by feelings of obligation to commit to the organization because it is what is expected. Regardless, it is important to not only view components in isolation, but also in the context of other components.

### **Development of Organizational Commitment**

Research on the development of organizational commitment has generally focused on how organizations themselves can help to foster and increase commitment in their employees. Generally, changes in organizational commitment over time, if they are found to exist, are compared with changes in a separate organizational factor (e.g., perceived organizational support, leadership style) or a unique individual factor (e.g., personality, financial stability), leading the conversation more towards potential antecedents of organizational commitment rather than the development alone (Morrow, 2011). To date, very little research has examined changes in organizational commitment, strictly by itself, at the individual level; however, some of the hallmark commitment theorists have ventured guesses as to how commitment develops, and there have been some more recent discussions as to how such changes take place as well.

Mowday and colleagues (1982), who pioneered much of the research prior to Meyer and Allen's (1991) three-component model, suggested that commitment is developed within the

individual by a cyclical process of reinforced attitudes and behaviors that occur on the job, which then increase one or more components of organizational commitment over time. Meyer and Allen (1991) extended this idea by arguing that there is a greater impact of social exchange between individuals and their organization whereby following some accumulation of positive work experiences the individual will then return the courtesy of commitment to the organization. Some recent work from Bergman and colleagues (2013) expands on similar ideas. They suggested that commitment develops or diminishes for individuals of an organization as they experience micro-level events that either do or do not align with their own personal values. Occurring events that align with the individual's values, as well as the magnitude of values they match up with, accumulate until a formed opinion of the organization is reached by the individual. The individual's opinion of the organization can continue to change over time, so long as the events experienced are sufficient in magnitude to counter any previously formed opinions (Bergman et al., 2013).

Based on research utilizing cross-sectional or longitudinal analysis, Beck and Wilson (2000) discuss the trajectory of affective commitment specifically. They suggest that new employees' commitment will initially decrease as the employees adjust to their new work setting; during this adjustment period, the new employee will likely encounter some negative, unforeseen experiences. This is best thought of as a "honeymoon period". However, after a period of time during which employees further integrate socially into the organization and increase in competence of job performance, employees' commitment begins to increase slightly. Meyer and Allen (1988) as well as Vandenberghe and colleagues (2010) similarly found a distinct decline in commitment throughout the first months of employment. Morrow (2011), following a conclusive review of longitudinal studies regarding changes in organizational

commitment, suggests that despite the progress made, with an obvious focus on affective commitment given its stronger associations with other variables, there is still relatively little known about development of organizational commitment.

**Tenure and Age.** Given the difficult nature of evaluating organizational commitment as it pertains to a specific event in an organization (e.g. change in leadership, mergers) and conducting longitudinal studies in general, other researchers have chosen instead to focus on both age and tenure when attempting to look at changes in organizational commitment over time, adopting the assumption that age is highly correlated with tenure. In one of the largest reported meta-analyses on organizational commitment, Meyer and colleagues (2002) found that both age and tenure had weak positive associations with all three components of commitment. In looking at other research, some studies found a significant positive correlation between organizational commitment and age (Eisenberger et al., 2010; Hwang & Hopkins, 2012) while others found a significant negative correlation between organizational commitment and age (Farndale et al., 2011). The same applies to tenure, wherein some studies found significant positive correlations (Eisenberger et al., 2010; Loi et al., 2006; Shepherd et al., 2011) while others found significant negative correlations (Farndale et al., 2011; Lambert et al., 2012). In contrast to the above, many studies have found no significant correlation with either age (Banks et al., 2012; Ehrhardt et al., 2011; Lambert et al., 2012) or tenure (Djibo et al., 2010; Flynn & Shaumberg, 2012; Giffords, 2009). With negative correlations in the minority, the research appears to lean towards either no relationship or a positive relationship of organizational commitment with both age and tenure.

When looking at specific components of commitment, affective commitment has been shown to have positive correlations with age (Meyer et al., 2002; Shore et al., 2008) and tenure (Gellatly et al., 2009; Maertz et al., 2007), normative commitment has been shown to have

positive correlations with age (Tang et al., 2012) and tenure (Maertz et al., 2007), and it is also the case that continuance commitment has been shown to have positive correlations with age (Panaccio & Vandenberghe, 2012; Shore et al., 2008) and tenure (Meyer et al., 2012; Panaccio & Vandenberghe, 2011; Vandenberghe et al., 2011). Overall these findings would suggest that older employees, likely employees with a longer tenure who have been with their organization for an extended period of time, may report stronger feelings of commitment towards their organization, whether that be affective, normative, or continuance commitment.

**Self-Reported Changes.** Rather than viewing age and tenure alone, the present study examines employees' self-reported changes in commitment over time. Specifically, a comparison is made between present levels of commitment and commitment following the employee's first year of employment. It may in fact be the case that numerous changes in commitment may have taken place between an employee's first year and later states of employment; however, for purposes of this research, participants were asked to make a simple comparison between the present and a specific time in the past. In other words, findings strictly concern current beliefs that participants hold about the development of their own personal commitment, whether that belief represents an actual change in commitment over time or not. In this case, comparisons were made to the end of the first year of employment. This span of time somewhat accounts for each individual's length of tenure in the organization. Like other forms of present commitment, it was hypothesized that a perceived increase in commitment would have a similar relationship with turnover intention.

*Hypothesis 2:* Perceived increase in affective, continuance, and normative commitment will all relate negatively to present turnover intention

Here it is proposed that older, more tenured, employees of an organizational will justify their present levels of commitment by reporting either increases or decreases in commitment over time. Essentially, the outcome is something of a polarization effect in that employees who are considering a behavior they have exhibited for a long period of time (i.e., longer tenure) will report holding a stronger attitude, by way of greater reported increase or decrease in commitment, than those employees who are attempting to rationalize a behavior that has been exhibited for a shorter amount of time (i.e., shorter tenure). The theory being drawn upon here is cognitive dissonance theory (Festinger, 1957). The idea is that employees feel the need to justify their behavior by matching appropriate attitudes and cognitions. Here the behavior is being present at the organization and the cognition is beliefs about changes in commitment over time. Perceived increase in commitment will be collapsed to create reported change in commitment variables. Change in commitment will reflect the absolute value of reported change (increase or decrease) over time as reported by employees. A relationship of tenure and age being positively related to stronger attitudes (i.e. greater reported absolute change in commitment) is suggested to occur regardless of whether actual differences in measured organizational commitment across age and tenure exist.

*Hypothesis 3:* Tenure will be positively related to the absolute value of reported changes in commitment over time

*Hypothesis 4:* Age will be positively related to the absolute value of reported changes in commitment over time

Extending the potential effects of cognitive dissonance theory further, it is suggested that beliefs about commitment changing over time and the attitude of organizational commitment will alter the additional cognition of turnover intention. Specifically, it is now proposed that the

magnitude of the negative relationships may be strengthened by a reported increase in any of the three forms of commitment over time. For example, the negative relationships of affective commitment to turnover intention may increase in magnitude in the context of a belief that affective commitment has increased over time. Alternatively, that same relationship may decrease in magnitude in the context of a belief that affective commitment has decreased over time. In other words and again drawing on cognitive dissonance theory, the additional cognition of turnover intention is altered to become consistent with previously reported beliefs about commitment changing over time. Given that all forms of commitment have been shown to be negatively related to turnover intention, this effect is proposed for all three components.

*Hypothesis 5: Reported changes in commitment will moderate the effect of present organizational commitment on present turnover intention*

## CHAPTER II: METHODS

### Method

**Participants.** The sample consisted of faculty and staff at a large southeastern university. Eligibility criteria included being a full-time employee who had worked at the university for a period of no less than two years. A total of 869 individuals received survey invitations through university email accounts (faculty:  $n = 429$ ; staff:  $n = 440$ ). Email addresses were obtained from East Carolina University's Survey Review and Oversight Committee (SROC). Each individual received a link to a Qualtrics webpage survey that explained the purpose of the study, requested consent, and provided a total of 44 items to be completed. The survey was made available to individuals over a period of three and a half weeks. One reminder request was sent after the first two weeks. Data were downloaded to and analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics 20 software.

**Demographics.** Of those contacted, 188 participants (28%) were included in the final sample. Fifty-eight percent were women and age ranged from 21 to 73 years ( $M = 49.34$ ,  $SD = 11.90$ ). Length of time working at the university (i.e. tenure) ranged from 2 to 44.5 years ( $M = 12.12$ ,  $SD = 9.03$ ). Participants were identified as either faculty (65.4%) or staff (34.6%). Of the faculty participants, employment status was most often reported as tenured ( $n = 74$ ) followed by fixed term ( $n = 17$ ) and tenure-track ( $n = 28$ ). Faculty ranks included professor ( $n = 36$ ), associate professor ( $n = 43$ ), assistant professor ( $n = 20$ ), teaching assistant professor ( $n = 5$ ), and instructor ( $n = 14$ ).



## Measures

**Organizational Commitment.** Affective commitment (AC), continuance commitment (CC), and normative commitment (NC) were measured using Meyer and colleagues' (1993) three 6-item scales developed for each of the components. Sample statements included "I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career with this organization" for affective commitment, "I am not afraid of what might happen if I quit my job without having another one lined up" for continuance commitment, and "I was taught to believe in the value of remaining loyal to one organization" for normative commitment (Allen & Meyer, 1990). Participants selected from the following response options: *Strongly Disagree*, *Disagree*, *Neither Agree nor Disagree*, *Agree*, or *Strongly Agree*.

**Self-Reported Change in Organizational Commitment.** For each question regarding present organizational commitment, participants were asked the additional question of "Compared to your first year of employment, do you believe your agreement with this statement has increased, decreased, or stayed the same?" Participants were given the option of indicating *Decreased greatly*, *Decreased*, *No change*, *Increased*, or *Increased greatly*. Two variables were created from these scales for each form of commitment. The first represents perceived increase in commitment (IAC; ICC; INC) and is based off of the 5-point scale. The second represents the absolute value of change in commitment (CAC; CCC; CNC). In other words, the magnitude of perceived change was assessed regardless of whether it was reported as an increase or decrease over time. This was collapsed to a 3-point scale (1 = *No Change*; 2 = *Decreased/Increased*; 3 = *Decreased greatly/Increased greatly*).

**Turnover Intention.** Turnover intention (TI) was measured using 3 items developed following recommendations from Jaros (1997) and Meyer and colleagues' (1993). Participants

were asked to indicate their level of agreement with each of the following statements on a 5-point scale: “I think about leaving this organization”; “I explore other career opportunities”; “I plan to leave the organization soon”. Response options included *Strongly Disagree*, *Disagree*, *Neither Agree nor Disagree*, *Agree*, and *Strongly Agree*.

## CHAPTER III: RESULTS

### Results

**Descriptives.** Means, standard deviations, and correlations of all variables are presented in Table 1. Reliability analysis was conducted for each of the six commitment scales, both present and perceived increase over time. Affective commitment ( $\alpha = .885$ ), continuance commitment ( $\alpha = .760$ ), and normative commitment ( $\alpha = .884$ ) were all found to have good measures of internal consistency (Cronbach, 1951). Additionally, the perceived increase in commitment variables also produced similar measures of reliability. Internal consistency was as follows: perceived increase in affective commitment ( $\alpha = .784$ ), perceived increase in continuance commitment ( $\alpha = .841$ ), and perceived increase in normative commitment ( $\alpha = .833$ ). Turnover intention also displayed suitable internal consistency ( $\alpha = .809$ ).

Table 1

*Descriptive Statistics and Correlations among Variables*

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>AC</i>	<i>CC</i>	<i>NC</i>	<i>IAC</i>	<i>ICC</i>	<i>INC</i>	<i>CAC</i>	<i>CCC</i>	<i>CNC</i>	<i>TI</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>Gender</i>
<b>AC</b>	3.39	0.90	(.89)											
<b>CC</b>	3.03	0.85	.09	(.76)										
<b>NC</b>	2.80	0.96	.69**	.16*	(.88)									
<b>IAC</b>	3.08	0.78	.63**	.11	.49**	(.78)								
<b>ICC</b>	3.11	0.82	.09	.66**	.13	.11	(.84)							
<b>INC</b>	2.84	0.82	.67**	.08	.70**	.64**	.16*	(.83)						
<b>CAC</b>	0.87	0.55	-.25**	.24**	-.19*	-.03	.08	-.25**	-					
<b>CCC</b>	0.81	0.59	-.22**	.27**	-.24**	-.06	.10	-.26**	.51**	-				
<b>CNC</b>	0.82	0.62	-.35**	.16*	-.25**	-.26**	.02	-.41**	.68**	.59**	-			
<b>TI</b>	3.13	1.03	-.55**	-.29**	-.59**	-.41**	-.28**	-.47**	.17*	.17*	.25**	(.81)		
<b>Age</b>	49.34	11.90	.04	.05	-.01	-.07	.08	-.07	.06	.01	-.03	-.21**	-	
<b>Gender</b>	1.58	.50	.09	.00	.07	.05	-.12	.09	.11	.04	.05	.00	-.08	-
<b>Tenure</b>	12.12	9.03	.11	.05	.05	.13	.03	.07	-.03	.13	-.05	-.23**	.50**	-.07

\* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .001$

(Note. AC=Affective Commitment; CC=Continuance Commitment; NC=Normative Commitment; IAC=Increase in Affective Commitment; ICC=Increase in Continuance Commitment; INC=Increase in Normative Commitment; CAC=Absolute Change in Affective Commitment; CCC=Absolute Change in Continuance Commitment; CNC=Absolute Change in Normative Commitment; TI=Turnover Intention. Gender: Male=1, Female=2. Alpha coefficients are reported on the main diagonal)

**Hypotheses 1 and 2: Present Organizational Commitment and Perceived Change in Organizational Commitment.** Items for each dimension of commitment, both present and perceived increase, were summed and averaged within scales to produce mean scores for each subject. As shown in Table 1, strong support was found for both Hypotheses 1 and 2. All three present commitment variables were found to be significantly, negatively related to turnover intention. It was additionally found that all perceived increases in commitment variables were significantly, negatively related to turnover intention. For both present levels and perceived increase, the normative commitment component produced the strongest correlations,  $r = -.585$  and  $r = -.473$ , respectively. It was also found that both age and tenure (in years) related negatively to turnover intention,  $r = -.214$  and  $r = -.226$ , respectively, while seemingly being unrelated to all six commitment variables.

Further inspection of scatterplots including tenure with each of the three forms of commitment was performed to explore potential curvilinear relationships. Sequential polynomial regression was employed to investigate the nature of each relationship. After evaluating a linear model, each additional step involved entering the next highest power of the predictor (tenure, in years). This continued until the addition of the next highest power increased the fit of the model to the data by an insignificant or otherwise trivial amount. As shown in Tables 2 and 3, adding a quadratic component to both the affective and normative commitment models did not produce a significant increase in fit. Adding a cubic component, however, did significantly increase the model's fit to the data. For continuance commitment, adding a quadratic component to the model did produce a significant increase in fit, while adding a cubic component did not. Model comparisons for continuance commitment are shown in Table 4. Accordingly, cubic models were adopted for both affective and normative commitment  $F(3, 183) = 3.600, p = .015, R^2 = .056$  and

$F(3, 183) = 2.757, p = .044, R^2 = .043$ , respectively; while a quadratic model was adopted for continuance commitment,  $F(2, 184) = 5.500, p = .005, R^2 = .056$ .

As shown in Figure 1, affective commitment decreased among participants as tenure increased to a level of about 10 years, then began to increase until a level of about 30 years, and then dropped again for remaining years. A similar cubic relationship was found with normative commitment. The repeated trend of commitment decreasing over the first 10 years, increasing until roughly 30 years, and decreasing for remaining years is displayed in Figure 2. As for continuance commitment (the quadratic model), there were increases in commitment as participant tenure moved towards roughly 15 years and then decreases for all remaining years. This relationship is demonstrated in Figure 3.

Table 2

*Predicting Affective Commitment from Years of Tenure*

Step	$\Delta R^2$	$F$ for $\Delta R^2$	$df$	$p$
1. Linear	.013	2.358	1, 185	.126
2. Quadratic	.014	2.711	1, 184	.101
3. Cubic	.029	5.582	1, 183	.019

Figure 1

*Cubic Model of Tenure with Affective Commitment*

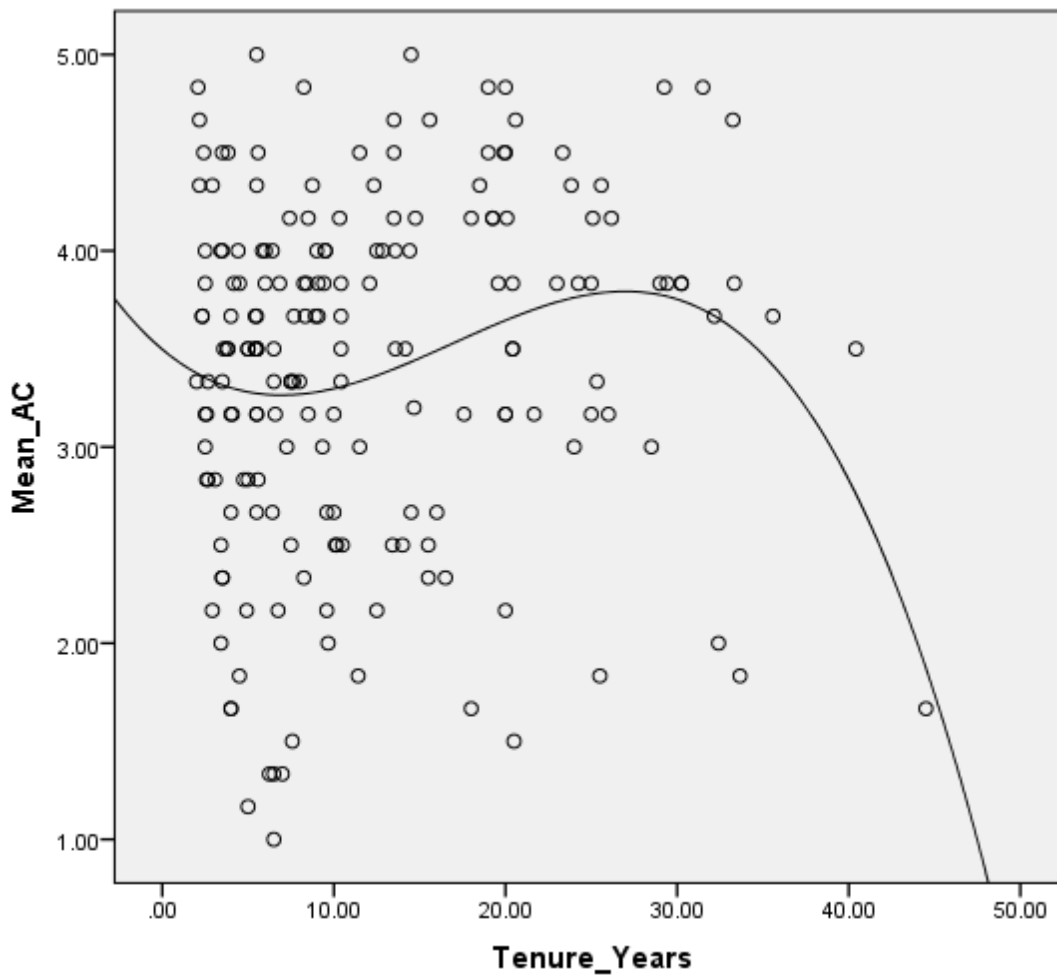


Table 3

*Predicting Normative Commitment from Years of Tenure*

Step	$\Delta R^2$	$F$ for $\Delta R^2$	$df$	$p$
1. Linear	.002	.436	1, 185	.510
2. Quadratic	.000	.000	1, 184	.992
3. Cubic	.041	7.820	1, 183	.006

Figure 2

*Cubic Model of Tenure with Normative Commitment*

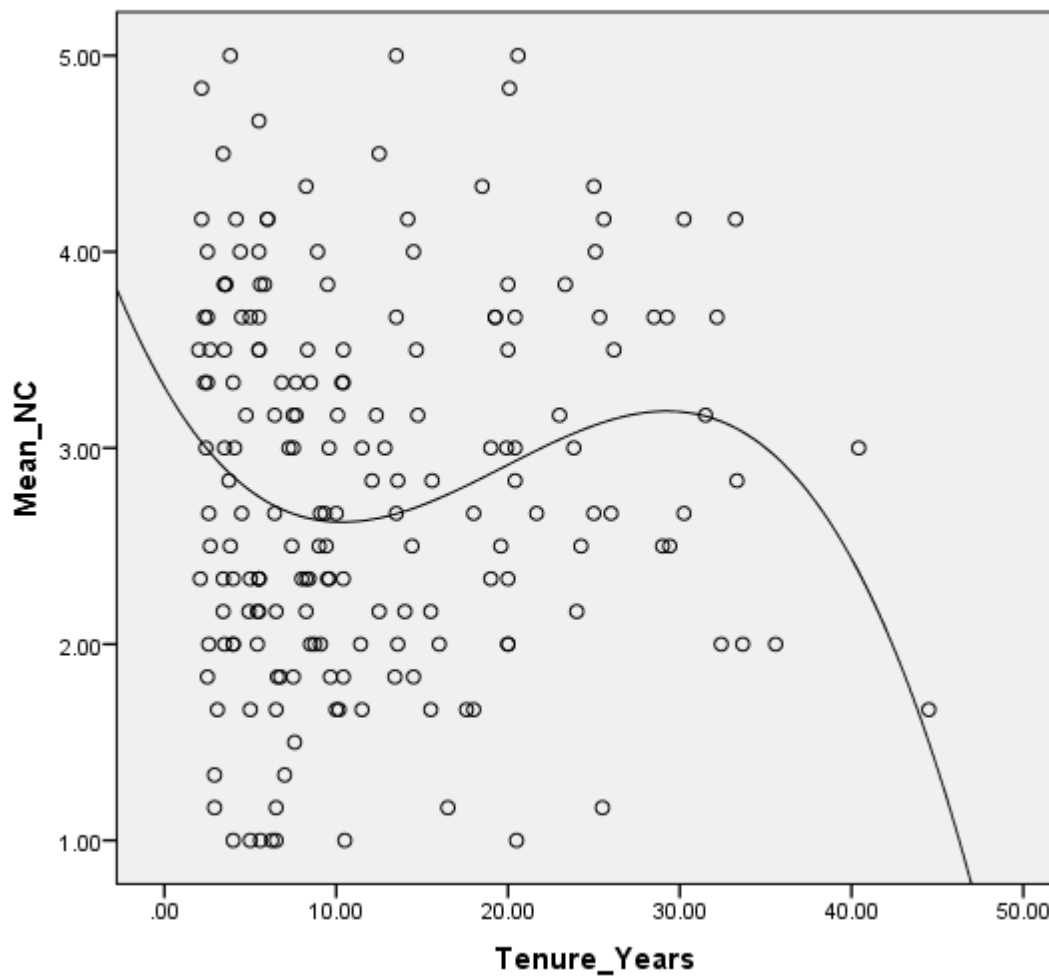




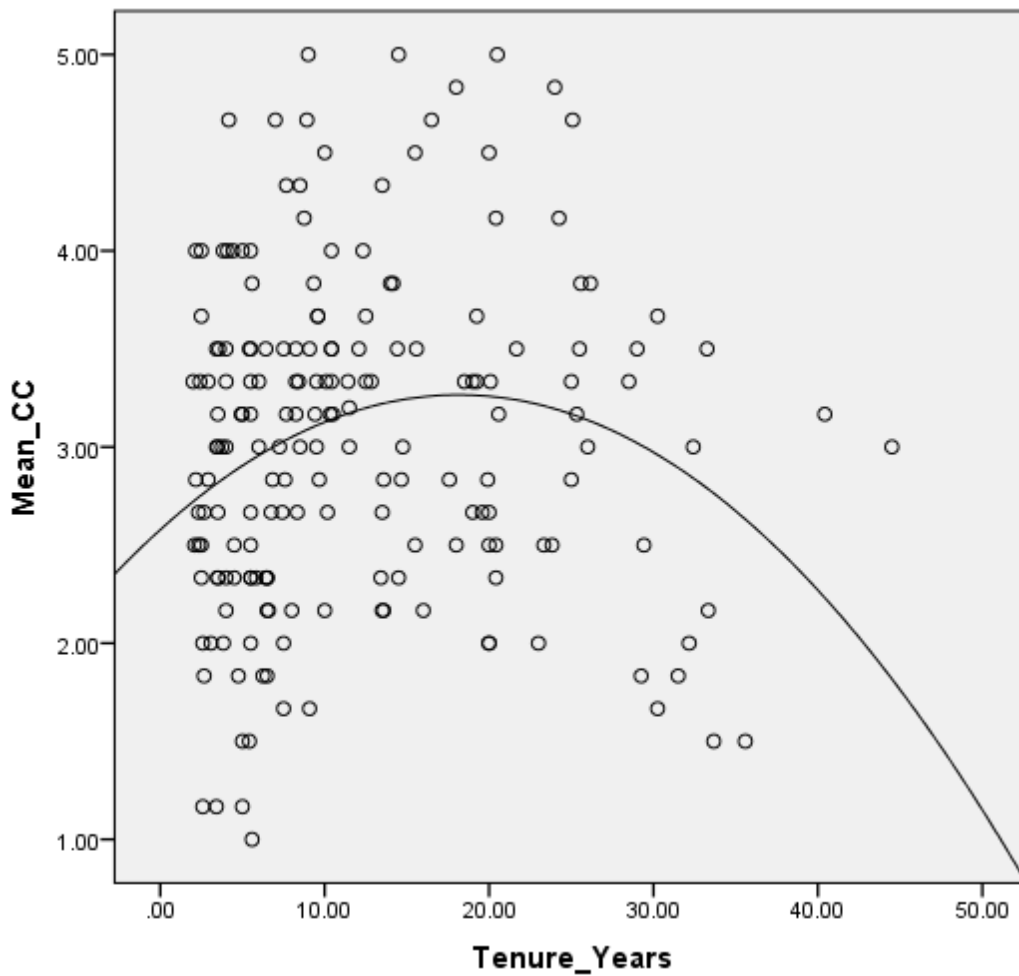
Table 4

*Predicting Continuance Commitment from Years of Tenure*

Step	$\Delta R^2$	F for $\Delta R^2$	df	p
1. Linear	.002	0.388	1, 185	.534
2. Quadratic	.054	10.591	1, 184	.001
3. Cubic	.013	2.589	1, 183	.109

Figure 3

*Quadratic Model of Tenure with Continuance Commitment*



**Hypotheses 3 and 4: Age and Tenure.** To test for effects described in Hypotheses 3 and 4, perceived increase in commitment scores were transformed to reflect absolute value changes. A response of *no change* was altered to reflect a score of 0, a response of *decreased somewhat* or *increased somewhat* was altered to reflect a score of 1, and a response of *decreased greatly* or *increased greatly* was altered to reflect a score of 2. Following a correlation analysis of age and tenure with each of the transformed perceived increase in commitment variables, it was found that there was no support for either of the two hypotheses, as all correlations either fell short of or were far beyond significance (see Table 1).

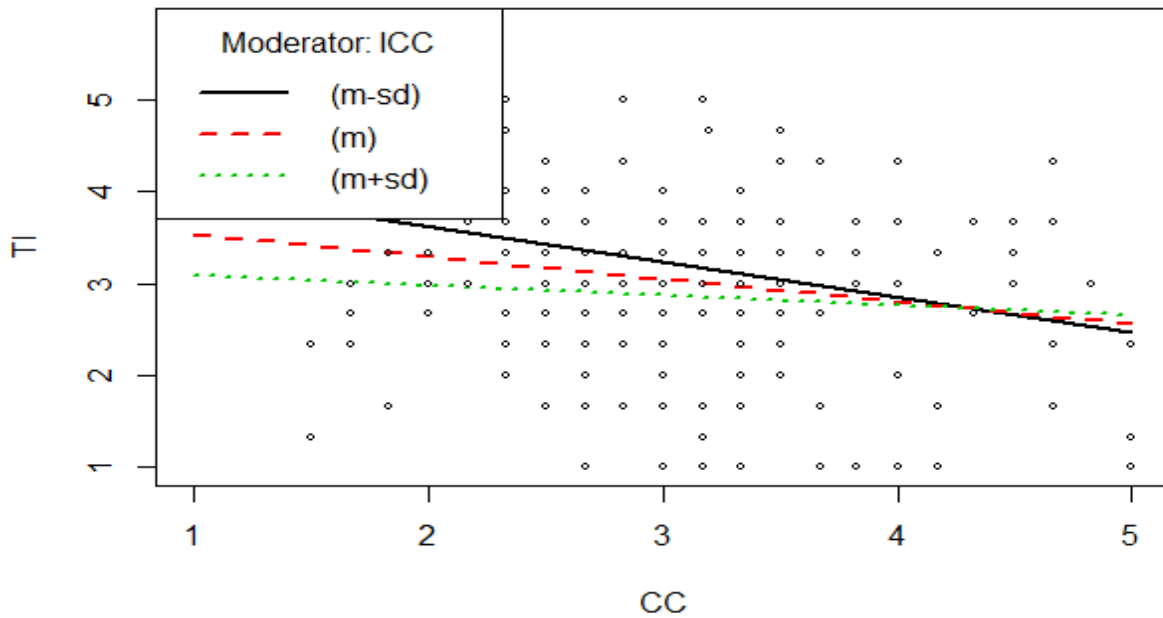
In addition to looking at age and tenure, more inspection was given to other relationships involving the absolute change in commitment variables. It was found that participants were significantly more likely to report a change in commitment for each of the three commitment variables when their present continuance commitment was higher. For both affective and normative commitment, the opposite effect was found. Participants with higher levels of present affective or normative commitment were significantly less likely to report a change in commitment for each of the three types of commitment. Correlations are shown in Table 1.

**Hypothesis 5: Interactions of Present Commitment and Perceived Increase in Commitment.** To test the hypothesis that perceived increase in commitment may moderate the effect of present commitment on turnover intention, three interaction variables were created, one for each component of commitment to be tested in separate models. Each interaction variable was added to a regression model of the respective component's present level and reported increase variables predicting turnover intention. A significant moderation effect was found only for the interaction of the continuance commitment components ( $\beta = .808, p = .042$ ). When present continuance commitment was low, perceptions about increases in commitment over time

had a significant impact on turnover intention; however, these effects were nonexistent at high levels of present continuance commitment. In other words, participants low in present continuance commitment who believed that continuance commitment had decreased over time (m-sd) reported greater turnover intention than those participants who believed continuance commitment had increased (m+sd) over time. Those participants who believed continuance commitment had remained relatively stable (m) over time fell somewhere in-between. See Figure 4 for an illustration.

Figure 4

*Interaction of Perceived Increase in Continuance Commitment and Present Continuance Commitment in Predicting Turnover Intention*



## Models

**Present Organizational Commitment.** In recreating previous research, affective, continuance, and normative commitment were simultaneously entered into a linear regression model predicting turnover intention. As shown in Table 5, all three commitment variables were found to be significant predictors,  $F(3, 184) = 45.841, p < .001, R^2 = .428$ . Of the three forms, normative commitment was found to be the strongest predictor, contributing uniquely to more than 6% of the variance in turnover intention.

Table 5

*Present Organizational Commitment Predicting Turnover Intention*

	<i>r</i>	$\beta$	<i>sr</i> <sup>2</sup>
<b>AC</b>	-.552**	-.290**	.044
<b>CC</b>	-.292**	-.212**	.044
<b>NC</b>	-.585**	-.351**	.063

\* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .001$

**Perceived Increase in Organizational Commitment.** Using linear regression, all perceived increase in commitment variables were simultaneously entered into a model predicting turnover intention. As shown in Table 6, all three commitment variables were found to be significant predictors,  $F(3, 184) = 24.406, p < .001, R^2 = .285$ . Similar to present levels of organizational commitment, the normative component in this particular model was again the strongest predictor, contributing to just over 6% of unique variance in turnover intention. Different from the first model, here the continuance component is the next strongest predictor. The affective component, though still contributing strongly, predicted the least amount of variance in turnover intention.

Table 6

*Perceived Increase in Organizational Commitment Predicting Turnover Intention*

	<i>r</i>	$\beta$	<i>sr</i> <sup>2</sup>
<b>IAC</b>	-.405**	-.171*	.017
<b>ICC</b>	-.280**	-.210**	.043
<b>INC</b>	-.473**	-.331**	.065

\* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .001$

**Full Model of Organizational Commitment.** To examine the potential added value of perceived increase in commitment over time to present commitment's ability to predict turnover intention, all commitment variables, both present and perceived increase, were entered simultaneously into a model,  $F(6, 181) = 23.448, p < .001, R^2 = .437$ . As shown in Table 7, only affective commitment and normative commitment were found to be significant predictors, both together contributing to nearly 8% of the unique variance in turnover intention. The 6-predictor model as a whole contributed to roughly 44% of the overall variance in turnover intention.

Table 7

*Full Model Predicting Turnover Intention*

	<i>r</i>	$\beta$	<i>sr</i> <sup>2</sup>
<b>AC</b>	-.552**	-.266**	.028
<b>CC</b>	-.292**	-.129	.009
<b>NC</b>	-.585**	-.351**	.050
<b>IAC</b>	-.405**	-.044	.001
<b>ICC</b>	-.280**	-.123	.008
<b>INC</b>	-.473**	.011	.000

\* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .001$

**Full Model with Demographics.** Finally, all commitment variables, both present and perceived increase, and demographic variables were entered simultaneously into the model,  $F(9, 172) = 18.432, p < .001, R^2 = .491$ . See Table 8 for model statistics. Here, it is again shown that normative commitment performed as the strongest predictor, with affective commitment and age as the other significant predictors. Increase in normative commitment; however, was arguably the weakest predictor, though not differing much from gender in this particular model.

Table 8

*Full Model with Demographics Predicting Turnover Intention*

	<i>r</i>	$\beta$	<i>sr</i> <sup>2</sup>
<b>AC</b>	-.552**	-.234**	.023
<b>CC</b>	-.292**	-.124	.008
<b>NC</b>	-.585**	-.353**	.052
<b>IAC</b>	-.405**	-.046	.001
<b>ICC</b>	-.280**	-.101	.005
<b>INC</b>	-.473**	-.022	.000
<b>Age</b>	-.214**	-.156**	.017
<b>Gender</b>	.00	.015	.001
<b>Tenure</b>	-.226**	-.089	.006

\* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .001$

(Gender: 1=Male, 2=Female. Tenure = years)

**Final Model.** A backwards elimination procedure was employed to reduce the number of predictor variables. Variables were removed one at a time from the full model of all commitment variables and demographic variables to examine significant differences in fit by using fewer predictors. Variables were removed one at a time based on least amount of contribution in the context of all other predictors. First removed was gender, followed in order by increase in normative commitment, increase in affective commitment, increase in continuance commitment, and tenure. Continuance commitment became significant following the fourth variable removal. The final result was a simpler, 4-predictor model of affective commitment, continuance commitment, normative commitment, and age,  $F(4, 177) = 40.117, p < .001, R^2 = .476$ . The model is described in Table 9.

Table 9

*Full Model - Simplified Model Predicting Turnover Intention*

	<i>r</i>	$\beta$	<i>sr</i> <sup>2</sup>
<b>AC</b>	-.552**	-.278**	.042
<b>CC</b>	-.292**	-.196**	.037
<b>NC</b>	-.585**	-.364**	.070
<b>Age</b>	-.214**	-.200**	.040

\* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .001$



## **CHAPTER IV: DISCUSSION**

Hypotheses 1 and 2 were both supported in the present study; however, there was no support for Hypotheses 3 and 4, and Hypothesis 5 was only partially supported. All forms of commitment, both present and perceived increase, were negatively associated with turnover intention; however, age and tenure were unrelated to absolute change in commitment. Though originally appearing unrelated, tenure was found to produce curvilinear relationships with each of the three forms of present commitment. Finally, a moderation effect of perceived increase on the relationship between present commitment and turnover intention existed only for continuance commitment.

### **Theoretical Implications**

In contrast to previous research, the present results suggested that normative commitment rather than affective commitment had the strongest negative relationship with turnover intention. This occurred in both the present organizational commitment and perceived increase in organizational commitment variables. Given that affective commitment was reported as the most present form overall by the group, one might suspect that it would retain the strongest negative relationship to turnover intention, however in this specific sample, that was not the case. Even so, it should be noted that the relationships between affective and normative commitment with turnover intention were close in magnitude. For continuance commitment, the expected finding of a significant negative relationship with turnover intention was found with the current sample, however the correlation was much weaker than that of both affective and normative commitment with turnover intention.

Again one might suspect that given that continuance commitment was reported as the second most present form of commitment, it might be second most negatively related to turnover

intention, and not the least related. In thinking about the nature of continuance commitment, however, it may represent a negative cognition that binds an individual to the organization due to perceived sacrifice and lack of alternatives. The focus here is on what could be forfeited by leaving an organization rather than what is achieved by staying. The current sample represented faculty and staff at a university, a group in which at least half of employees have likely has chosen their jobs more on the basis of intrinsic motives relating to teaching and/or research rather than extrinsic motives of money. This commitment to the profession perhaps passes over into commitment to the organization. Also, the unique organizational culture may play a role in highlighting the attitude of normative commitment. It is likely the case that despite whatever levels of continuance commitment are present, these individuals would not let it solely guide their beliefs about intent to leave the relative safety of long-term employment. It might make better sense that the intrinsic components of affective and normative commitment would influence thoughts, which is exactly what the present results showed, again with normative commitment appearing to be the stronger predictor.

The same pattern was found for the perceived increase in organizational commitment variables. The normative component related most negatively to turnover intention, followed by the affective component, and again lastly the continuance component. Here again the normative and affective relationships with turnover intention were close in magnitude. For present commitment, affective commitment was reported as most present followed by continuance commitment. For perceived increase in commitment though, continuance commitment was reported to have increased the most, followed second by affective commitment. Normative commitment remained both the least present and least reported having increased (it was actually

reported as leaning more towards decreasing rather than increasing overtime by the sample as a whole).

These findings may again point towards the specific nature of the current sample. Normative commitment, regardless of present magnitude or potential changes over time, may simply better reflect the beliefs of employees working in education. The natural culture and environment of a university may lead employees to focus more on loyalty than other values. For example, becoming attached to sports teams, mascots, and a competitive name in a vast group of other universities could likely instill a sense of allegiance. One can also not discard the clear attitude of learning that is promoted by most universities. It would be very easy to view the university environment as a place of education and investment, thus promoting a return on that investment by the organization's employees. This is highly reflective of the normative commitment component. Though staff employees likely do not have the same exact motives for committing to the organization as faculty employees might, it is reasonable to believe that the culture of universities may be enough to blend similar, general motives across staff and faculty employees.

In an attempt to reconcile the previous research concerning age and tenure and their relationships to organizational commitment, these variables were again examined in the present research. It was found that age was essentially unrelated to all forms of commitment, both present and perceived increase. For tenure, various curvilinear relationships were produced with each of the three forms of present commitment. While both affective and normative commitment were classified as cubic, continuance commitment was viewed instead as quadratic. Affective and normative commitment decreased among participants as tenure increased until a level of

roughly 10 years. Between 10 and 30 years of tenure, commitment began to increase. Finally, after 30 years of tenure, commitment again decreased.

The natural decrease in commitment following the beginning stages of employment is known as the *honeymoon-hangover effect* (Boswell et al., 2005). Employees originally join the organization with high expectations and are hopeful for positive outcomes. Following some period of time, employees are naturally exposed to negative information that contradicts original expectations. The next shift in commitment (an increase) occurs in the portion of this sample that is reflected in the 10 to 30 year tenure range. One reason for this finding may be that employees who are less committed to the organization leave after a period of about 10 years. As affective and normative commitment naturally decrease, those employees who are much less committed than others decide to leave the organization and pursue other interests. Who then remains in the 10-30 year tenure range are those that have higher levels of affective and normative commitment. As for why the decrease following 30 years of tenure occurs, one reason may be that as employees get closer to retirement they naturally begin to detach from their organization.

A separate rationale may emerge for the quadratic relationship of continuance commitment with tenure. Here commitment increases until a tenure of about 15 years. Given the nature of continuance commitment and its core concern regarding perceived sacrifice of leaving the organization, it makes sense that as employees work at the organization for a longer period of time, that their investment continually increases as well as potential losses incurred for dropping that investment. Beyond 15 years, employees are either at a very secure place in their lives regarding job security, savings, and transferability of skills, or instead are getting closer to retirement. There is less sacrifice associated with leaving the organization, and thus a decrease in continuance commitment over time.

It was hypothesized that those older and/or more tenured employees (in terms of years) would report either greater increases or greater decreases in commitment over time as an attempt to justify their length of time present in the organization. In other words, to rationalize years of service an employee would report that their affective commitment had increased significantly over time. On the other hand, to rationalize years of service an employee may report that their continuance commitment had decreased significantly over time. In the full sample, this effect was not found; however, when looking at staff employees specifically a strong positive relationship emerged between tenure in years and greater reported changes in continuance commitment over time ( $r = .292, p = .02$ ). It was not necessarily that staff employees reported increases in continuance commitment over time, as this relationship was not significant ( $r = .136, p = .292$ ), but rather that staff employees reported either greater increases or greater decreases over time. For all other forms of commitment for staff, and all three forms of commitment for faculty, this effect was not found, and again age and tenure were essentially unrelated to any reported changes in commitment over time. Age and tenure were, however, both negatively related to turnover intention.

It was also hypothesized that beliefs about changes in commitment over time would moderate the relationship between present organizational commitment and turnover intention. For example, believing that one's affective commitment had increased over time might result in that individual being even less likely to report intent to leave than an individual who believed that their affective commitment had decreased over time. This effect only emerged for continuance commitment. When present continuance commitment was low, beliefs the individual held about their commitment changing over time were a major factor in determining turnover intention. If it was believed that continuance commitment had increased since the first

year of employment, individuals then reported significantly less intent to turnover than those individuals who believed that their continuance commitment had stayed the same. Additionally, those individuals who believed that their continuance commitment had stayed the same since their first year of employment reported significantly less intent to turnover than those who believed that their continuance commitment had decreased. When present continuance commitment was high, however, beliefs about change in commitment over time had no effect on turnover intention. As for affective and normative commitment, regardless of whether present levels were high or low, beliefs about changes in each of those two components had no effects on turnover intention. Beliefs were only found to influence turnover intention when present continuance commitment was low.

One interesting finding with regard to the change in commitment variables was that present organizational commitment was highly related to whether or not participants reported either a decrease or increase in commitment over time. Looking at increases specifically, it was found that higher levels of affective commitment were positively associated with beliefs that affective and normative commitment had increased over time. The same pattern was displayed for normative commitment, in that high present levels were positively associated with beliefs that normative and affective commitment had increased over time. Again, this finding was produced with continuance commitment where higher present levels were positively associated with reported increases of continuance commitment over time. Higher levels of present continuance commitment were unrelated to reported increases in affective and normative commitment, and higher levels of present normative and affective commitment were unrelated to reported increases in continuance commitment. This may be expected given the general overlap between affective and normative commitment. In this study, the two were again highly related.

Looking at cross component effects, it was found that participants who reported high present levels of continuance commitment more often reported changes in all three forms of commitment over time. It may be that there are two ways that individuals can cope with their high levels of continuance commitment. The first would be that the motivation is primarily external with little to no presence of intrinsic motives (affective and normative). In this case continuance would be reported as high, and both affective and normative would be present in smaller extents. The second would be to justify their high continuance commitment by building up the other two positive forms of commitment (affective and normative) to justify their presence in the organization. This is a cognitive dissonance effect originally discussed by Meyer and colleagues (1990). Emphasizing positive reasons for staying with an organization helps reduce the dissonance caused by feelings of being forced to stay with an organization.

It was also found that participants who reported high present levels of affective or normative commitment reported little to no changes in all three forms of commitment over time. For these components, it may be that feelings of high present commitment have always existed, and thus changes are less likely to be reported, or it may be that there is some satisfaction and happiness added by maintaining a belief that the same level of commitment has existed over time. In other words, believing that you have always been intrinsically committed to your job may be a preferred method for protecting self-esteem and preserving motivation.

In predicting turnover intention, it was found that all three forms of present organizational commitment and age combined to form the strongest and simplest model. Though each of the perceived increases in organizational commitment variables were significant predictors by themselves, in the context of present commitment, these effects fell short of significance. When all commitment variables and demographics were included in a model

predicting turnover intention, only present affective commitment, present normative commitment, and age were found to be significant predictors. Following a backwards elimination procedure of removing one by one the least significant predictors, present continuance commitment again became a significant predictor. This final model accounted for nearly half of the overall variance in predicting turnover intention.

### **Limitations and Future Research**

The present research sought to examine personal beliefs about how organizational commitment changes over time. The results show that levels of present organizational commitment often determined whether or not individuals would report beliefs about commitment changing over time. At this point, we can only hypothesize as to why an individual may or may not report their commitment has changed, and therefore more work should be done to understand some of the underlying factors at play. Possible reasons for individuals justifying high present continuance commitment with reported increases in affective and normative commitment over time should be further investigated. Additionally, taking a deeper look at those individuals who are able to accept their high continuance commitment without justifying it with higher levels of the other two forms of commitment should be examined.

Longitudinal work should also be initiated to assess how commitment actually changes over time in relation to how an individual perceives it to change. It could be that commitment fluctuates significantly over time, but the individual views it as relatively stable, or vice versa. This research asked participants to make a static comparison between the present and a specific time in the past. Asking employees to describe changes over the course of a set period of time, say each month over the course of one year, may lead to different conclusions.



This research was conducted using a sample of faculty and staff from a local university. Given the unique nature of university environments and the tenure processes in place for faculty at most universities, these findings may not generalize to other organizations in the public and private world. Exploring beliefs about changes in commitment over time need also be assessed within other samples to look for either consistency or major group differences. Additionally, researchers should examine any potential curvilinear relationships of tenure with organizational commitment in other samples to see if similar patterns from this research are found to exist.

Aside from sample and survey design issues, more variables should be included to answer why it is that employees would report changes in commitment over time. Potential personality traits, values, or other individual characteristics should be included for assessment. For those individuals who may feel the need to justify high present levels of continuance commitment with reported increases in affective and normative commitment, it may be that they desire to value their job and feel the need to reduce dissonance by affirming the more positive components. For those individuals who simply report high levels of continuance commitment and have less concern over building up other positive forms of commitment, it may be that they value aspects of their life outside the job and have their needs met in other forms.

## **Conclusions**

This research explored employee perceptions about organizational commitment. While reaffirming previous research on present organizational commitment and its relation to turnover intention, it also takes an attempt to explore how individuals conceptualize commitment changing over time. Results showed that although all beliefs had significant value in predicting turnover intention, present forms of organizational commitment served as the strongest

predictors. A final model additionally included age with each of the three forms of present commitment.

Tenure produced an interesting relationship with each form of commitment. While affective and normative commitment were initially found to decrease as tenure increased, continuance commitment was found to increase. Continuance commitment moved on to decrease after a tenure period of roughly 15 years, while affective and normative commitment began to increase following a tenure period of roughly 10 years. Additionally, following another 20 years of tenure, both the affective and normative components switched for a third time in direction and began to decrease again.

Present forms of commitment were found to be valuable in predicting how individuals conceptualized commitment changing over time. High levels of present continuance commitment more often resulted in reported changes (either increase or decrease) in all three forms of commitment over time. High levels of either affective or normative commitment more often resulted in no reported changes over time. In the vast depth of organizational commitment research, this begins to shed a small bit of light on some of the thought processes that underlie the commitment employees hold to their organizations.

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## Appendix A: Survey Instrument

Q1 Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements.

	Current level of agreement				
	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career with this organization	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I really feel as if this organization's problems are my own	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I do not feel like 'part of the family' at my organization	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I do not feel 'emotionally attached' to this organization	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
This organization has a great deal of personal meaning for me	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I do not feel a strong sense of 'belonging' to my organization	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It would be very hard for me to leave my organization right now, even if I wanted to	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Too much in my life would be disrupted if I decided I wanted to leave my organization now	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Right now, staying with my organization is a matter of necessity as much as desire	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q2 Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements.

	Current level of agreement				
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither	Agree	Strongly Agree
I feel that I have too few options to consider leaving this organization	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
One of the few serious consequences of leaving this organization would be the scarcity of available alternatives	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
If I had not already put so much of myself into this organization, I might consider working elsewhere	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I do not feel any obligation to remain with my current employer	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Even if it were to my advantage, I do not feel it would be right to leave my organization now	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I would feel guilty if I left my organization now	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
This organization deserves my loyalty	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I would not leave my organization right now because I have a sense of obligation to the people in it	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I owe a great deal to my organization	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q3 Please indicate your sex:

- Male
- Female

Q4 Please provide your age in years.

Q5 How long have you been an employee at ECU? Please provide your answer in years and months.

Years

Months

Q7 What is your current employment status at ECU?

- Staff
- Faculty

Q8 What is your current faculty status?

- Tenure
- Tenure-track
- Fixed term

Q9 What is your current faculty rank?

- Professor
- Associate professor
- Assistant professor
- Teaching assistant professor

Q10 NOTE: Change of instructions Please indicate whether your level of agreement with each statement has decreased greatly, decreased, not changed, increased, or increased greatly since your first year of employment.

	Agreement now compared to 1st year of employment				
	Decreased greatly	Decreased	No change	Increased	Increased greatly
I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career with this organization	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I really feel as if this organization's problems are my own	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I do not feel like 'part of the family' at my organization	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I do not feel 'emotionally attached' to this organization	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
This organization has a great deal of personal meaning for me	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I do not feel a strong sense of 'belonging' to my organization	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It would be very hard for me to leave my organization right now, even if I wanted to	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Too much in my life would be disrupted if I decided I wanted to leave my organization now	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Right now, staying with my organization is a matter of necessity as much as desire	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q11 Please indicate whether your level of agreement with each statement has decreased greatly, decreased, stayed the same, increased, or increased greatly since your first year of employment.

	Agreement now compared to 1st year of employment				
	Decreased greatly	Decreased	No change	Increased	Increased greatly
I feel that I have too few options to consider leaving this organization	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
One of the few serious consequences of leaving this organization would be the scarcity of available alternatives	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
If I had not already put so much of myself into this organization, I might consider working elsewhere	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I do not feel any obligation to remain with my current employer	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Even if it were to my advantage, I do not feel it would be right to leave my organization now	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I would feel guilty if I left my organization now	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
This organization deserves my loyalty	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I would not leave my organization right now because I have a sense of obligation to the people in it	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I owe a great deal to my organization	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



Q12 Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I explore other career opportunities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I think about leaving this organization	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I plan to leave the organization soon	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

## Appendix B: Recruitment Documents

### Invitation to Participate

Good morning,

My name is Megan Waggy and I am a second year master's student in the Industrial/Organizational Psychology program. I am contacting you today in hopes that you will help contribute to the success of my master's thesis by taking part in a relatively quick online survey. You will be asked a series of questions about your employment at ECU and how you feel your attitudes towards the organization as a whole have changed over time. These data will never be linked to you personally or used as any sort of official, evaluative tool. Additionally, these data will be analyzed only by myself and other faculty members of my thesis committee. Please know that your participation contributes invaluablely to my educational experience of thesis research here at ECU.

Thank you in advance for your participation!

#### **Follow this link to the Survey:**

[\\${1://SurveyLink?d=Take the Survey}](#)

Or copy and paste the URL below into your internet browser:

[\\${1://SurveyURL}](#)

Follow the link to opt out of future emails:

[\\${1://OptOutLink?d=Click here to unsubscribe}](#)

- Megan

Megan Waggy  
Graduate Student  
Center for Survey Research  
Industrial/Organizational Psychology  
East Carolina University  
waggym12@students.ecu.edu

## Reminder Notification

Good morning,

***Final request: If you have a chance to participate in this IRB-approved student master's thesis, please do so by Monday, February 10th. If you are not willing to participate, this will be my last request and you may disregard this notice. Thank you for your time.***

***Original notice:*** My name is Megan Waggy and I am a second year master's student in the Industrial/Organizational Psychology program. I am contacting you in hopes that you will help contribute to the success of my master's thesis by taking part in a relatively quick online survey. You will be asked a series of questions about your employment at ECU and how you feel your attitudes towards the organization as a whole have changed over time. These data will never be linked to you personally or used as any sort of official, evaluative tool. Additionally, these data will be analyzed only by myself and other faculty members of my thesis committee. Please know that your participation contributes invaluablely to my educational experience of thesis research here at ECU.

Thank you in advance for your participation!

### **Follow this link to the Survey:**

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[\\${1://OptOutLink?d=Click here to unsubscribe}](#)

- Megan

Megan Waggy  
Graduate Student  
Center for Survey Research  
Industrial/Organizational Psychology  
East Carolina University  
waggym12@students.ecu.edu

## Appendix C: Informed Consent Document

You are being invited to participate in a **research** study titled “Self-Reported Changes in Organizational Commitment over Time: The Role of Cognitive Dissonance on Turnover Intention” being conducted by Megan Waggy, a graduate student at East Carolina University in the Industrial/Organizational Psychology department. The goal is to survey 250 individuals at East Carolina University. The survey will take approximately 10-15 minutes to complete. It is hoped that this information will assist us to better understand employee beliefs about changes in organizational commitment over time. The survey is anonymous, and responses will never be linked to individuals personally. Your participation in the research is **voluntary**. You may choose not to answer any or all questions, and you may stop at any time. There is **no penalty for not taking part** in this research study. Please call or email Megan Waggy at 918-691-6820 or [waggym12@students.ecu.edu](mailto:waggym12@students.ecu.edu) for any research related questions or the Office for Human Research Integrity (OHRI) at 252-744-2914 for questions about your rights as a research participant.

Please indicate below if you are willing to participate.

- Yes, I will participate
- No, I would not like to participate

## Appendix D: IRB and Other Approval Documentation

Both the Institutional Review Board (IRB) and Institutional Planning and Assessment (IPAR) Departments were contacted for approval of research. IRB approval was obtained per university ethics policies and IPAR approval was obtained per university permissions regarding use of a faculty and staff employee sample.

### Institutional Review Board Approval



**EAST CAROLINA UNIVERSITY**  
**University & Medical Center Institutional Review Board Office**  
4N-70 Brody Medical Sciences Building · Mail Stop 682  
600 Moye Boulevard · Greenville, NC 27834  
Office **252-744-2914** · Fax **252-744-2284** · [www.ecu.edu/irb](http://www.ecu.edu/irb)

### Notification of Exempt Certification

From: Social/Behavioral IRB  
To: [Megan Waggy](#)  
CC: [John Cope](#)  
[Megan Waggy](#)  
Date: 11/25/2013  
Re: [UMCIRB 13-002450](#)  
Self-Reported Changes in Organizational Commitment

I am pleased to inform you that your research submission has been certified as exempt on 11/22/2013. This study is eligible for Exempt Certification under category #2.

It is your responsibility to ensure that this research is conducted in the manner reported in your application and/or protocol, as well as being consistent with the ethical principles of the Belmont Report and your profession.

This research study does not require any additional interaction with the UMCIRB unless there are proposed changes to this study. Any change, prior to implementing that change, must be submitted to the UMCIRB for review and approval. The UMCIRB will determine if the change impacts the eligibility of the research for exempt status. If more substantive review is required, you will be notified within five business days.

The UMCIRB office will hold your exemption application for a period of five years from the date of this letter. If you wish to continue this protocol beyond this period, you will need to submit an Exemption Certification request at least 30 days before the end of the five year period.

The Chairperson (or designee) does not have a potential for conflict of interest on this study.

---

IRB00000705 East Carolina U IRB #1 (Biomedical) IORG0000418  
IRB00003781 East Carolina U IRB #2 (Behavioral/SS) IORG0000418

## Institutional Planning and Assessment Approval

### INSTITUTIONAL PLANNING, ASSESSMENT, AND RESEARCH

#### **Institutional Assessment Workflow Notification**

Your request to administer the survey "Self-Reported Changes in Organizational Commitment over Time: The Role of Cognitive Dissonance on Turnover Intention" has been approved by the IPAR Survey Analyst. Your survey does not require approval of the Survey Review and Oversight Committee (SROC).

Institutional Assessment Comments:

You may proceed with the administration of your survey.



Institutional Planning, Assessment, and Research  
Greenville Centre, Suite 2700 | 2200 South Charles Blvd.  
Greenville NC, 27858 | (252) 328-9492

