

## LEVEL 7 ASSESSMENT SPECIFICATION

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| Academic honesty / referencing: | <p>Academic honesty is required. In the main body of your submission you must give credit to authors on whose research and ideas your work is based. Append to your submission a reference list that indicates the books, articles, etc. that you have used, cited or quoted in order to complete this assessment.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |                                                      |                   |

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| <b>Module Learning Outcomes<br/>(from module syllabus)</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| <p>By the end of this module the student should be able to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Critically reflect on the role of theory, epistemology, ontology and axiology in shaping and interpreting research;</li><li>2. Critically discuss approaches to reliability, validity and bias in social research;</li><li>3. Examine fully the ethical considerations in social research and develop research designs that meet a high standard of ethical practice; and</li><li>4. Critically analyse communications and communicate scholarship effectively.</li></ol> |

**University of Wales Trinity Saint David**

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Approaches to Research and Academic Communication SBPD7001

**Title of Research Paper**

A Literature Review on Organizational Commitment

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## Abstract

Organizational commitment has been an extensively research topic for researchers and practitioners since 1970s. However, scholars studying organizational commitment have diverse views on the issue's nature and development. Practitioners have been examining how to apply organizational commitment from the human resources perspective to recruit, retain and develop employees as well as to enhance their performance together with other constructs (Mercurio, 2015). The objectives of this paper are to conduct a literature review on a collection of 17 journals on this topic being studied over the past 15 years and to find out the core essence of organizational commitment, its relations with job satisfaction, organizational justice, organizational citizenship behaviour, psychological contract, employee engagement initiatives and transformational leadership under the backdrop and potential driver of the increased attention and focus on employee commitment due to globalization, economic uncertainty and mobile millennial generations. It is also aimed to examine the research philosophy and how this phenomenon is captured, assessed or analysed under an organizational structure, in particular in the law enforcement and police organization context. The second part will focus on a chosen journal on a longitudinal quanti-qualitative study on organizational commitment, psychological contract fulfilment and job performance by Maia and Bastos (2015) and examine the research philosophy, ethics, reliability and validity of the study.

**Keywords:** organizational commitment, law enforcement, police organization, job satisfaction, procedural justice, psychological contract, employee engagement initiatives, transformational leadership

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## 1. Literature Review on Organizational Commitment

### 1.1 Introduction

The objectives of this paper are to conduct a critical literature review on 'organizational commitment' over the last 15 years and to find out the core essence of organizational commitment, its relations with job satisfaction, organizational justice, organizational citizenship behaviour, psychological contract, employee engagement initiatives and transformational leadership. Due to the external environment of economic uncertainty, globalization and mobile millennial generations,

it was found that employee commitment have been gaining increased attention and focus. Organizational commitment has been extensively researched and studied by researchers and practitioners for the past decades but scholars studying this topic still have diverse views on the issue's nature and development. This collection of literature comprises of 17 journals that addressed the research on the development of organizational commitment dated from 2005 to 2019. Eleven journals covered research and studies on law enforcement or police organizations across the globe including the US Army, police organizations in the US, England and Wales, Switzerland, the Netherlands and India. This is mainly due to the special interest of the reviewer on how organizational commitment can be applied in law enforcement agencies especially under the police context. The unique nature of police work and the culture of police organizations present a different perspective when looking at organizational commitment. Scholars found that overall organization competitiveness was directly related to police officers' commitment levels to the organization (Moon and Jonson, 2012). They argued that officers who were not committed to the organization would generate negative emotions in the workplace (Jaramillo et al., 2005), increase turnover intention (Koslowsky, 1991), and may increase misbehaviour among colleagues (Haarr, 1997). It is important to study organizational commitment in the police organization because unlike the private sector, recruit police officers will undergo paid training before they are formally appointed as police officers to carry out their duties. In the case of Hong Kong Police, for example, a probationary inspector of police and a probationary police constable will undergo 36-week and 27-week of foundation training respectively before they are deployed to a police district to perform their constabulary duty. Therefore, the issue of organizational commitment is especially important to a police organization as the cost of having an officer leaving the Force is higher than that of a private company. The remaining six journals included a review on 'affective commitment as a core essence of organizational commitment', empirical researches on the relations between organizational commitment and other constructs such as job satisfaction, procedural justice, psychological contract and employee engagement initiatives in companies in Australia, Brazil, Indonesia and the US. Older references will be used and included in the discussion as they are considered foundational for the more recent research. These journals were chosen due to the fact that their studies or researches were conducted in the past 15 years and gave the readers a whole picture of the development of the theory. The journals also detailed the strengths and limitations of their studies and guided researchers and practitioners on what future studies were needed.

In order to understand the epistemological development of the theory of organizational commitment, its relations between the concepts and categories in an organizational structure including law enforcement and police organizations, as well as to examine the research philosophy

namely, how a phenomenon is captured, assessed or analysed. The reviewer applied the basic methods of summarizing, comparing, analysing and drawing inference. Ethical issues such as whether the researchers had the consent of respondents, they were voluntary, they were briefed about the purpose of research and whether and how the researchers kept the confidentiality of respondents. Finally, the conclusion will highlight and discuss the research gaps and the direction of future studies on the topic.

## 1.2 Definition of organizational commitment

Employee commitment to an organization is mainly referred to an attitude or an orientation linking the identity of a person to the organization he or she works in. This involves the process when the individual becomes aligned with the goals of the organization. This may also involve the perceived rewards associated with the continued participation in an organization, the costs associated with leaving and an obligation to remain in the organization as a member (Fields, 2002). Meyer and Allen's (1991) three-component model of organizational commitment, namely affective commitment, continuance commitment and normative commitment, has been widely used and recognized by the majority of researchers and practitioners as the basic foundation of this construct (Mercurio, 2015).

Affective commitment is always referred to an employee's liking for an organization which includes an identification with and involvement in the organization (Fields, 2002). This refers to the emotional attachment of a member to an organization in terms of identification and engagement (Noor, 2014). Mowday, et al, further explained this emotional affective commitment as the bonding of employees to the organization resulting in an alignment of employees' personal goals with the organizational goals (Mowday, et al, 1979). On the other hand, continuance commitment generally refers to the costs associated with leaving the organization and the decision of an employee whether to remain or leave the organization is based on the cost-benefit considerations (Noor, 2014). These costs, or sometimes investments with the organization include salaries, bonuses, pension, seniority, social connections or non-transferable skills (Meyer & Allen, 1990). Continuance commitment may lead to a feeling of being trapped in an organization even though an employee hates to work for the organization, which indicates a demand rather than a choice (Lambert, et al, 2017). Finally, normative commitment is defined as a feeling of obligation to stay in the organization because employees with a high level of normative commitment feel or believe that they have a responsibility to keep working or to remain with the organization (Fields, 2002; Noor, 2014). This concept is sometimes reported as an 'internalized normative pressure' exerted on an employee to put the goals and interests of the organization in front of his or her own ones. This is also because the employee

considers this as the right thing to do morally, regardless of his or her feelings to the organization (Noor, 2014). However, normative commitment has received less attention from researchers when looking at the previous studies conducted in the past decades.

Allen and Meyer (1996) however found that affective commitment had been receiving more focus and attention in past research on organizational commitment, which was proven to have strong ties to employees' and organizational performance. Therefore, many of the studies in the past 15 years focused on affective commitment and its relationship with other work variables such as job satisfaction, job involvement, job stress and turnover. This finding is especially important to public service and police organization because unlike the private sector, governments seldom offer monetary rewards as the motivating factor to increase job satisfaction or to reduce turnover, for example. Organizational commitment becomes an important indicator to predict how strong an employee wants to continue his or her employment with the organization (Fields, 2002). On the contrary, studies found that continuance commitment had a negative relationship with performance while normative commitment was found to be correlated with the performance aspect of an employee. Nevertheless, research on this relationship was far less than the other two areas (Noor, 2014). Fields (2002) reviewed that the studies on organizational commitment in the 1990s suggested a growing consensus on the multi-dimensional nature of this construct. It certainly included the affective dimension and elements that reflected normative pressures as well as the costs of leaving an organization. In the following section, the reviewer will try to summarize, compare and contrast the 17 journals and review the paradigm shift and building of the knowledge on organizational commitment with other constructs in the past 15 years.

### 1.3 Relationship of organizational commitment and other constructs

Successful organizations including law enforcement agencies such as police organizations rely on committed and devoted workers with satisfaction. Lambert (2017) opined that 'the concepts of job involvement (i.e., connection with the job), job satisfaction (i.e., affective feeling toward the job), and organizational commitment (i.e., bond with the employing organization) have been shown and empirically proven to be positively correlated.' The three-component model of organizational commitment, i.e. affective commitment, continuance commitment and normative commitment, has been conceptually criticized due to the fact that the three areas are, to a certain extent, three distinct constructs (Mais & Bastos, 2015). Many researchers were especially interested in affective commitment rather than the other two. This literature review focused on a collection of 17 peer-reviewed journal papers on the topic of organizational commitment over the past 15 years ranging

from 2005 to 2019 with a view to summarizing how organizational commitment have been studied. The context and categories of the literature is organized in chronological order in **Table 1** as follows:

**Table 1** The categories of journals on organizational commitment

| No. | Context                                                   | Affective commitment      | Continuance commitment | Normative commitment |
|-----|-----------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|----------------------|
| 1.  | Influence of mentoring                                    | Payne & Huffman (2005)    | Payne & Huffman (2005) |                      |
| 2.  | Use of force                                              | Manzoni & Eisner (2006)   |                        |                      |
| 3.  | Employee support programs                                 | Grant, et al (2008)       |                        |                      |
| 4.  | Procedural justice                                        | Noor (2014)               |                        |                      |
| 5.  | Literature review on affective commitment as core essence | Mercurio (2015)           |                        |                      |
| 6.  | Influence of supervisor feedback and support              | Johnson (2015)            |                        |                      |
| 7.  | Psychological contract fulfilment                         | Maia & Bastos (2015)      |                        |                      |
| 8.  | Transformational leadership                               | Shim, et al (2015)        | Shim, et al (2015)     |                      |
| 9.  | Work engagement                                           | Van Gelderen & Bik (2016) |                        |                      |
| 10. | Supervisor feedback and organization support              | Perez, et al (2016)       |                        |                      |
| 11. | Employee engagement initiatives                           | Davis, et al (2016)       |                        |                      |
| 12. | Organizational justice                                    | Qureshi, et al (2017)     |                        |                      |
| 13. | Perceptions of organizational structure                   | Lambert, et al (2017)     |                        |                      |
| 14. | Organizational citizenship behaviour                      | Wombacher & Felfe (2017)  |                        |                      |

|     |                                      |                        |                       |  |
|-----|--------------------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|--|
| 15. | Supervisor-subordinate relationships | Brunetto, et al (2017) |                       |  |
| 16. | Job stress and burnout               | Lambert, et al (2018)  | Lambert, et al (2018) |  |
| 17. | Organization knowledge               | Boag-Munroe (2019)     |                       |  |

According to **Table 1**, it is revealed that among the 17 journals under review, all except three focused mainly on the correlation between affective commitment and other constructs while the remaining three journals included both affective commitment and continuance commitment in the epistemological and ontological discussion of the theory. From the collection of journals, they can be categorized into three main areas. The first category concerned the influence of mentoring, supervisor feedback, employee support, employee engagement, supervisor-subordinate relationships and leadership, in which eight out of 17 journals are under this category. The second category focused on organizational justice including distributive, procedural and interactional justice and two journals belonged to this category. Finally, four journals discussed the psychological contract, perceptions of organizational structure, organizational citizenship behaviour and organization knowledge. There are three journals being the outliers which discussed use of force, job stress and burnout and the last one is a literature review on affective commitment as the core essence.

#### 1.4 Paradigm of shift

##### 1.4.1 Organizational commitment with employee support, feedback and leadership

In this review, it is observed that eight out of the 17 journals on organizational commitment have conducted empirical research on the influence of employee-oriented programs or initiatives upon organizational commitment of employees. The studies include mentoring, supervisor feedback, organization support, employee engagement initiatives, supervisor-subordinate relationships as well as transformational leadership. An employee's level of organizational commitment is always influenced by specific characteristics of an organization. These organizational characteristics consist of 'supervisor feedback, perceived organizational support and cohesion amongst the employees' (Perez, et al, 2016, p. 324). Supervisor feedback and perceived organizational support are two of the strongest predictors of organizational commitment (Johnson, 2015). It is important that supervisors will communicate expectations to their subordinate who will know how to meet them. This will also reduce ambiguities and allow subordinate to adjust or correct their behaviour resulting in higher organizational satisfaction (Johnson, 2015). Employee engagement (EE) initiatives were being

looked at from human resources perspective and gained momentum over the past five or six years but its profile, importance and benefits received less attention (Davis, 2016). The common focus of the definition of EE has been on the manifestation of engagement including an individual employee's cognitive, emotional and behavioural state directed toward a desirable organizational outcome (Davis, 2016). EE continued to evolve as an import and valued concept in the fields of business, management, industrial psychology and human resources development but little is known about the antecedents of EE initiatives leaving a large unexplored aspect of EE (Davis, 2016).

Another conceptual framework is about how organizational culture mediates the relation between organizational commitment and police transformational leadership. Scholars indicate that the overall organizational competitiveness is directly related to the level of employees' commitment to the organization (Shim, et al, 2015). One of the important organizational determinants of commitment is transformational leadership because transformational leaders are able to inspire employees to forsake their own self-interest for the overall good of the organization (Shim, et al, 2015). Shim, et al, conducted a survey with 358 South Korean police officers to explore and analyse four types of 'organizational orientations', namely 'group, developmental, hierarchical and rational' as mediators in the correlation between transformational leadership and organizational commitment (2015, p. 766). Their findings have an important practical implication on organizational commitment and prove that an officer's level of affective commitment is influenced by his or her transformational leader. In addition, group culture fully mediates the relation between transformational leadership and affective commitment (Shim, et al, 2015). This study paved the way for further research on the leadership-culture-commitment dynamics and the authors suggested future research direction of whether there are either any mediators or moderators between leadership and culture or between culture and commitment (Shim, et al, 2015).

#### 1.4.2 Organizational commitment and organizational justice

The concept of organizational justice has been playing a central role in previous research on law enforcement and organizational commitment. 'Employees' justice perceptions' are an important research area of organizational behaviour and contribute to better organizational functioning. These perceptions predict individual and organizational outcomes (Qureshi, et al, 2017). Organizational justice comprises three different elements, namely distributive justice, procedural justice and interactional justice. Distributive justice represents the efforts that an individual puts in and the subsequent rewards received (Perez, et al, 2016). Procedural justice concerns more about the decision-making process in which employees desire to have input and to follow certain ethical codes

(Perez, et al, 2016). The fact that procedural justice predicts organizational commitment is supported by research. Some researchers argue that ‘procedural justice is more related to the evaluation of the system in an institution while distributive justice is more related to the evaluation of a specific output’ (Noor, 2014, p. 115). Finally, interactional justice refers to how an individual perceives the respect that he or she gets from supervisors and whether there are clear agency directives and performance feedback available in an organization (Colquitt, 2008).

Previous study indicated that police officers’ attitudes towards their own organization were being affected by their perceptions of organizational justice. The research conducted by Qureshi, et al (2017) among Indian police officers, examined the association among perceptions of organisational justice, job satisfaction and organisational commitment. In this particular study, two dimensions of organizational justice were included, namely ‘distributive justice (fairness in outcomes) and procedural justice (fairness in procedures/processes)’ (Qureshi, et al., 2017, p. 3). The quantitative research indicated that perceptions of distributive justice and procedural justice, being independent variables, had significant positive impact on both dependent variables, job satisfaction and affective organisational commitment. The findings from Indian police officers in this study supported the hypothesis that affective organizational commitment were linked to both forms of organizational justice (Qureshi, et al, 2017). Noor (2014) conducted another quantitative research by using the survey data of 195 staff of a state-owned hotel in Indonesia and indicated that procedural justice positively predicted affective organizational commitment. These studies have contributed to enriching the knowledge of organizational commitment with the western value, organizational justice, in the Asian context.

#### 1.4.3 Organizational commitment with organizational citizenship behaviour, psychological contract, perceptions of organizational structure and organizational knowledge

The last category of journals on organizational commitment mainly focused on the organizational level of constructs including organizational citizenship behaviour, psychological contract, perceptions of organizational structure and organizational knowledge. A total of four journals belonged to this category. Organ (1988) defined organizational citizenship behaviour as discretionary individual behaviour where the formal reward system would not directly or explicitly recognize, but promote the effective functioning of the organization. This concept has been studied since 1970s and represents a voluntary commitment of an employee within an organization which is not part of his or her contractual task. The study conducted by Wombacher & Felfe (2017) confirmed that affective team and organizational commitment added to and enhanced each other’s target-

specific effects on organizational citizenship behaviour. Another concept was about the linkage between psychological contract and organizational commitment because scholars believed that a psychological contract began to form before a person joined an organization and both parties were bound by the job agreement (Maia & Bastos, 2015). Maia and Bastos conducted a longitudinal quanti-qualitative study on organizational commitment, psychological contract fulfilment and job performance which found that the development of organizational commitment and psychological contract might result in 'trajectories of weakening, strengthening or stabilizing' (2015, p. 253). Psychological contracts being violated had close association with lower level of organizational commitment affecting job performance as a result (Maia & Bastos, 2015). This journal will be further discussed in the second part of this literature review focusing on its research philosophy, ethics, reliability and validity of research.

The study conducted by Lambert, et al, explored how police officers' job involvement, job satisfaction and organizational commitment were being affected by perceptions of work environment factors in India (2017). These independent variables included organizational support, formalization (i.e. written rules and guidelines), promotional opportunities, institutional communication (i.e. transmission of salient work information within the command structure) and input into decision-making process. The results of this study provide support for the assumption that perception of organizational structure variables may influence organizational commitment, job involvement and job satisfaction of the surveyed Indian police officers (Lambert, et al, 2017). The final journal under this category was conducted by Boag-Munroe on the relationship between recent police recruits' existing police knowledge and organizational commitment in England and Wales (2019). Scholars commented that affective organizational commitment, being referred to as the psychological bond between an employee and an organization, had received increased attention in policing research in the past 15 years and therefore, Boag-Munroe focused his study on affective commitment (Boag-Munroe, 2019). The study investigated three types of existing knowledge of the police service in the UK, which included 'prior paid work experience as a Police Community Support Officer, prior voluntary work experience as a Special Constable and formal pre-join police training'; and how these sources of police knowledge linked to the development of a sense of organizational commitment (Boag-Munroe, 2019). It was confirmed that recruits without prior work experience had significantly lower level of commitment to the police service than recruits with prior work experience (limited difference between paid work experience or voluntary work experience). Finally, researchers observed that pre-entry training had a negative relationship with organizational commitment, which was unexpected in the findings (Boag-Munroe, 2019).

## 1.5 Discussion

Organizational commitment, particularly affective commitment, has been receiving most of the research attention of researchers and practitioners in the field of organizational psychology but police officers' commitment research has been receiving less attention (Boag-Munroe, 2019). In this review, a collection of 17 journals was selected for review, while all except three focused mainly on the correlation between affective commitment and other constructs. The remaining three journals studied both affective commitment and continuance commitment in the epistemological and ontological discussion of the theory. The journals were summarized in chronological order in **Table 1**. The collection of journals can be categorized into three main areas. Eight out of 17 journals belonged to the first category which concerned the influence of mentoring, supervisor feedback, employee support, employee engagement, supervisor-subordinate relationships and leadership on organizational commitment. Two journals belonged to the second category which focused on organizational justice including distributive, procedural and interactional justice and its relationship with organizational commitment. Four journals belonged to the last category which discussed the influence of organizational citizenship behaviour, psychological contract, perceptions of organizational structure, and organization knowledge on organizational commitment. Three journals being the outliers discussed use of force, job stress and burnout and the last one was a literature review on affective commitment as the core essence.

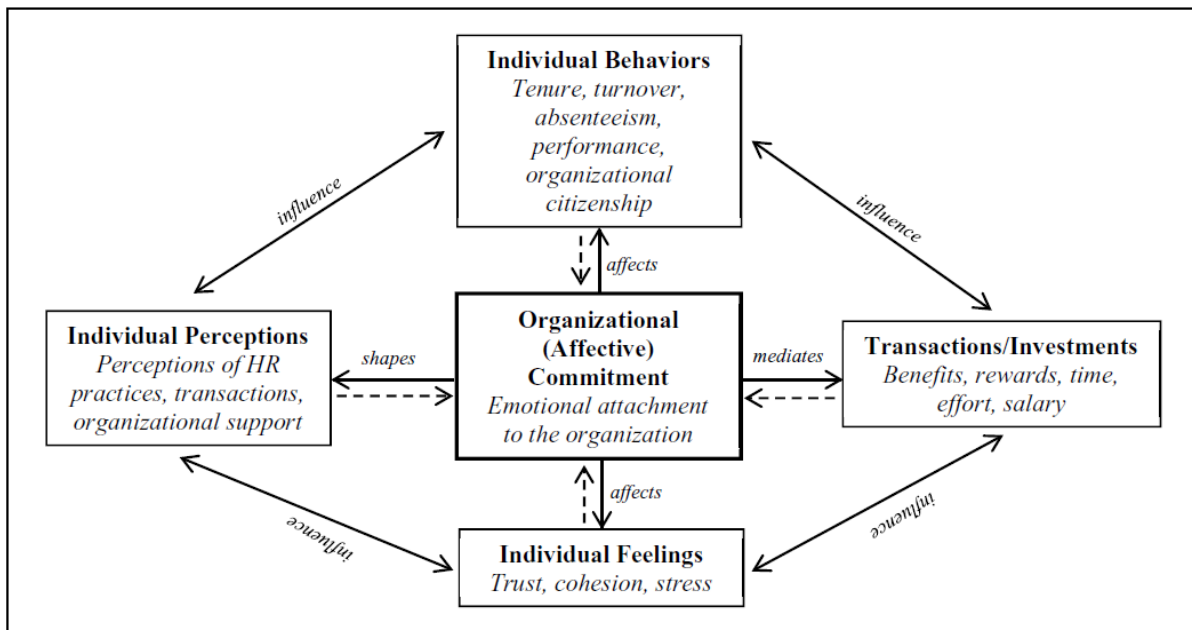
Amongst the 17 journals, except for the one on an integrative literature review on 'affective commitment as a core essence of organizational commitment' by Mercurio (2015), all journals presented the results from surveys by using the quantitative research method. The paper by Maia and Bastos (2015) also included a triangulation of methods with quantitative and qualitative longitudinal study simultaneously to enhance the quality and validity of the theoretical contributions. Six papers were found to present their findings with hypothesized models. All journal authors mentioned the purpose of their studies, the research design and methodology, number of surveys distributed, results of findings and implications. However, only five journals explicitly mentioned the ethical issues such as how consent of participants of surveys was obtained, how confidentiality of responses was protected, whether clear instructions or briefing were given, whether participants could withdraw from the survey as well as the protection of data security. The majority of the journals highlighted and discussed their research gaps, limitations of their studies and gave suggestions for future research direction. The research gaps and limitations include low response rate resulting in small sample size and concerns raised about the representativeness, limited statistics obtained, single-source and cross-sectional design of research being unable to establish causal relationship, and sometimes low validity

due to low Cronbach alpha values. As a result, most scholars suggested to conduct longitudinal studies in future research with a view to demonstrating causality (Boag-Munroe, 2019; Lambert, et al, 2017; Perez, et al, 2016; Van Gelderen & Bik, 2016; Lambert, et al, 2018).

## 1.6 Conclusion

In this literature review on organizational commitment, affective commitment which means an employee's bonding with an organization or a sense of loyalty towards an agency has been the focus of research. In past studies conducted in the 1980s to 1990s, work-related outcomes including job satisfaction, job involvement, organization performance, turnover, absenteeism and intention to leave have been connected to organizational commitment (Perez, et al, 2016). As such, human resources practitioners or company administrators tended to focus on variables that may affect individual's organizational commitment. Since scholars studying organizational commitment had diverse views on the nature and development of this construct, Mercurio (2015) responded to the call for a comprehensive review on the 'competing and overlapping theoretical frameworks' with a view to identifying the '*core essence* of organizational commitment' (p. 391). His review confirmed that affective commitment, also referred to as emotional attachment, to an organization was regarded as 'an important core essence of organizational commitment' (p. 391). In this regard, Mercurio (2015) proposed a new conceptual model of affective commitment as the core essence of organizational commitment to depict his findings (**Figure 1**). This concept was also supported by this literature review of 17 journals mainly focused on affective commitment.

**Figure 1** Concept map of affective commitment as the core essence of organizational commitment (Mercurio, 2015, p. 406)



Note. HR = human resource

Another important finding from this review indicated that research on organizational commitment had been shifted to building up its co-relation with employee-oriented programs or initiatives such as mentoring, supervisor feedback, organizational support, supervisor-subordinate relationships and transformational leadership. This emphasis on employee engagement corresponds to the fact that due to the modern environment of economic uncertainty, globalization and mobile millennial generations, administrators or practitioners have to think of non-conventional ways to attract, retain and develop employees from human resources perspective (Mercurio, 2015). This is especially critical to the public sector, especially the police organization, due to the fact that stability of employees is crucial and practitioners have to look for new ways to attract, recruit and retain employees. Finally, it has been revealed that little attention has been placed on organizational commitment within the policing research probably due to the unique law enforcement environment as well as the extremely complex nature of police job and task ambiguity (Johnson, 2015). It is not easy for academia or researchers to have access to data within a police organization, in particular in Asian countries, due to the comparatively conservative mindset and sensitive nature of police work. These limit the ability of supervisor to offer constructive feedback on the work the police officers, especially those on patrol and frontline duties, perform. Therefore, scholars pointed out the research gap on how organizational commitment could be measured and studied in the policing context, in particular in non-western jurisdiction. In addition, future research needs to guarantee causal ordering among constructs by using a longitudinal research design.

## **2. Discussion on a chosen article on organizational commitment**

### **2.1 The chosen journal paper**

In this section, a detailed discussion will be conducted on one of the peer-reviewed journals mentioned in the previous section on organizational commitment. The title of the article is ‘Organizational Commitment. Psychological Contract Fulfillment and Job Performance: A Longitudinal Quanti-qualitative Study’ by Maia and Bastos (2015). This journal paper was selected for detailed review and discussion because this was the only journal paper among the collection of 17 journals that adopted a triangulation of methods by conducting a quantitative and qualitative longitudinal study simultaneously. This journal paper was published four years ago and was a recent research conducted on organizational commitment. The constructs of both organizational commitment and psychological contracts have been developed over time but this research attempted to link the two constructs together to confirm ‘the assumption that the fulfilment of a psychological contract by the employer and high levels of organizational commitment among employees will have desirable consequences such as better job performance’ (Maia & Bastos, 2015, p. 252). The review will focus on the research philosophy, format and style, research methods and design, ethics, reliability and validity.

### **2.2 Format and Style**

This journal paper was published on the Brazilian Administration Review and was available online (<http://www.anpad.org.br/bar> on 30 September 2015). It adopted the format and style of a standard academic journal paper beginning with an abstract, followed by an introduction, theoretical framework, method, research context, quantitative assessment, qualitative assessment, analytic strategy, results (in three parts), discussion (in two parts), limitations and suggestions for future research as well as conclusion (Maia & Bastos, 2015). However, there was no section called ‘literature review’ but the constructs of organizational commitment, psychological contract and performance management were discussed under the section of ‘Theoretical framework’.

#### **2.2.1 Title and abstract**

The title of this journal paper was able to state the three constructs to be tested in the research, namely organizational commitment, psychological contract fulfilment and job performance. It also informed the readers that it was a longitudinal study using both quantitative and qualitative research

methods. However, the title failed to indicate the context of the research for example whether the study concerns a private company or in the public sector, the nature and location of the company and the target participants of the research. Therefore, the information of the title was observed to be incomplete or insufficient for the reader to form an initial idea of the research context. In the abstract, the authors mentioned the goals of the study and gave a brief description of the findings. However, it only mentioned that the study was conducted with ‘newcomers over three years’. The readers were again unable to figure out the nature of the company or organization, from what year to what year that the study was conducted and how many newcomers participated in the research. Only when the readers read the keywords that the study was found to be conducted in the public sector. The location of the organization would be assumed in Brazil as the journal paper was published on the Brazilian Administration Review.

### 2.2.2 Introduction

The journal paper introduced a clear objective that the research would focus on the two main constructs, organizational commitment and psychological contract. It pointed out the assumption that employers’ psychological contract fulfilment and high employees’ organizational commitment would result in better job performance (Maia & Bastos, 2015). The authors further explained that while these three constructs, namely psychological contracts, organizational commitment and job performance, had been studied separately for a long period of time, there were very few research linking them together as they were relatively isolated (Maia & Bastos, 2015). Therefore, this paper would report the findings of a qualitative study linking the three constructs together in order to find out how psychological contracts and organizational commitment influenced the job performance of newcomers during the first three years of their employment in a Brazilian public sector agency. The interview results of the participants would be supported by a longitudinal quantitative survey with the same group of newcomers. Results from both quantitative research and qualitative data would be examined together (Maia & Bastos, 2015). However, the authors of this paper did not put up a very clear research question and again did not state the relevant information regarding the period (which years) when the research was conducted and the number of participants involved.

### 2.2.3 Literature review under ‘Theoretical framework’

Literature review forms an important part of a research paper as it provides sufficient background for readers to understand what work had been done previously in relation to the constructs being examined in this journal paper. Under the section of ‘Theoretical framework’, the

authors started to introduce the definition of organizational commitment as ‘a linkage, bond or attachment of an individual to an organization’ quoting from Klein, et al (Maia & Bastos, 2015, p. 252). The ‘three-component model of organizational commitment’, i.e. affective, normative and continuance, was further elaborated and explained. Then, it went on to state that the authors were especially interested in affective organizational commitment because this type of bond had the strongest linkage and correlations with positive behaviours at work while the other two types of organizational commitment had a negative correlation with job performance (Maia & Bastos, 2015). In addition, the authors wanted to emphasize the importance of taking affective organizational commitment as a dynamic phenomenon rather than a static concept by observing how it changed over time. At the same time, they intended to broaden the perspective not only on how to increase affective organizational commitment, but also to research on low affective organizational commitment and how this decrease happened. It then made reference to a study conducted by Solinger, et al, in 2013 on a longitudinal study with newcomers identifying ‘trajectories of weakening, strengthening and stabilizing organizational commitment’ (Maia & Bastos, 2015, p. 253).

In the second part, it started to explain the concept of psychological contract and how it was linked to organizational commitment. The psychological contract was formed when there was a belief about the mutual obligations between an individual and his or her organization. If the psychological contract was breached or violated, it would lead to disappointment, frustration and resentment that would negatively correlated to organizational commitment (Maia & Bastos, 2015). The authors then based the discussion on previous studies and the general conclusions confirmed that the fulfilment of a psychological contract would positively impact on affective organizational commitment of public sector employees. Finally, organization-related outcomes such as organizational citizenship behaviour and job performance was closely related to affective organizational commitment. However, it concluded that based on previous studies, the relationship between commitment and performance was ‘non-conclusive’ (Maia & Bastos, 2015, p. 254).

#### 2.2.4 Method and research context

In these two sections, the authors stated that both quantitative and qualitative longitudinal studies were conducted simultaneously. In order to maximize the quality and validity of the current study, a triangulation of methods was adopted (Maia & Bastos, 2015). However, the paper only gave a brief description of the federal government agency but did not give details of why it was chosen. Regarding the quantitative assessment, the authors mentioned that the affective organizational commitment was calibrated with an instrument composed of 4 items from the Organizational

Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ) developed by Mowday, et al, in 1979 and 3 items from the Affective Commitment Scale (ACS) developed by Allen and Meyer (1990). Maia and Bastos developed an instrument composed of 20 items in 2014 on the psychological contract. It did not mention the sample size of the survey participants and how they selected these newcomers. There was no mentioning of a randomized sample and the response rate. Readers were unable to follow the methods in sufficient detail to evaluate whether the authors had made the best data collection and analysis choices for this research question. The authors only described that the newcomers received an invitation email with a link to the questionnaire during the orientation training (t1=Time 1), then approximately one year after entry (t2) and finally about three years after entry (t3) (Maia & Bastos, 2015). However, no details were available in the paper on whether the same group of participants returned all three surveys and no data concerning the quantitative research was presented.

Since the authors mentioned earlier that the qualitative method was the main approach in this study, the interviewee selection and procedure were more detailed. A total of 142 people volunteered to be interviewed and 18 individuals were selected due to the fact that they were the extreme cases with the highest and lowest levels of affective organizational commitment. They were first interviewed on the first and second days at work (t1) and the same group of 18 individuals were interviewed again one year later (t2). Finally, a few months before they completed three years of probation (t3), 13 individuals were interviewed due to the withdrawal of some participants (Maia & Bastos, 2015). The 49 interviews were recorded and fully transcribed. To protect the confidentiality of the information and to ensure the anonymity of the interviewees, personal information such as age, gender, marital status, department of the interviewees and work experience were not disclosed (Maia & Bastos, 2015). The data was analysed by using content analysis in order to categorize the themes. The authors then presented the most extreme cases because they opined that there would be greater potential contribution to the interpretation of the phenomena in the current study (Maia & Bastos, 2015).

#### 2.2.5 Ethical issues

Although the journal paper mentioned the procedures and measures of how the research was conducted, we were unable to confirm that the ethical issues were being taken into consideration. There was no information about how the authors protect the confidentiality of the survey participants. There was no mention of any briefings or instructions on the purpose of the surveys given to the participants. The samples of the questionnaires were not provided and we could not comment on the

contents of the questions. We did not know whether the participants could withdraw from the survey anytime and how the authors ensured the data security.

Regarding the qualitative research process, the situation was much better. The authors mentioned that the interviewees were voluntary and they were allowed to withdraw as five people withdrew in t3 for various reasons. The interviewers emphasized that the survey was conducted under academic supervision and it was not related to the human resources department in the organization (Maia & Bastos, 2015). The purpose was to ensure confidentiality formally so that participants were free to relay their experience in their own way. The anonymity of the interviewees was protected by replacing their names with those of the famous painters. However, there was insufficient information in the journal paper to assess how the authors protected the data security.

#### 2.2.6 Reliability and Validity

Regarding the reliability of the quantitative research, the items from the OCQ and ACS were validated scales. The coefficient alpha values of the OCQ ranged from .81 to .93 which could be interpreted as high reliability. There was a number of ways to measure convergent validity for the OCQ. Firstly, the OCQ was 'related to other instruments designed to measure similar affective responses' (Mowday, et al., 1979, p.234). Secondly, a single item tapping an employee's behavioural intention to leave formed part of the survey in five organizations. Given the definition of commitment included the intention to remain in an organization, people would expect a correlation between the OCQ and this measure. However, some questions of the overall predictive ability of the OCQ were raised due to the correlations only ranging from .63 to .68. Thirdly, commitment should be related to motivation but according to a few studies, relationship between the OCQ and motivation was only moderate (Barge & Schlueter, 1988). On the other hand, the coefficient alpha values for ACS ranged from .77 to .88 (Fields, 2002) which were comparatively lower but the reliability was still considered to be acceptable. This information, however, was not available in the journal paper. For the 20-item instrument developed by Maia and Bastos (2014) on psychological contract, the paper did not mention the validity of the scale and it was difficult to confirm the reliability either due to the missing information of the coefficient alpha values.

In the discussion section of the paper, development of organizational commitment was presented in four different patterns, namely Learning to Love, High Match, Honeymoon Hangover and Learning to Hate (Maia & Bastos, 2015). The findings of the research presented the analysis of the extreme trajectories, Learning to Love and Learning to Hate, to answer the question of how

fulfilment of the psychological contract impacted on affective organizational commitment and job performance. High correlations between the test scores would be evidence of convergent validity. The results in the paper suggested that the employer's psychological contract fulfilment had a positive correlation with affective organizational commitment. It also suggested that a breach or violation of the psychological contract had a negative impact on affective organizational commitment. These findings corroborated with the results of previous studies (Maia & Bastos, 2015).

#### 2.2.7 Philosophical underpinnings

The goals of this study were to contribute to the understanding of the development of affective organizational commitment and to explore its relations with psychological contract fulfilment and job performance. It reported the findings of a longitudinal study by using both quantitative and qualitative methods. The authors identified four trajectories of commitment development, namely Learning to Love, High Match, Honeymoon Hangover and Learning to Hate. Learning to Hate which represented an individual who had high commitment level at the beginning of work but experienced a dramatic decrease of affective organizational commitment over time was initially proposed in the study (Maia & Bastos, 2015). The authors started from qualitative analysis to identify different patterns suggested in previous studies and then went to the quantitative results to verify the frequency of patterns. Therefore, the quantitative results were used to contribute to the interpretation of the interview findings. A total of 142 people volunteered to be interviewed and 18 individuals were selected. In the end, only 10 individuals were interviewed on all three occasions. The results were presented in three parts. The authors presented the first part of the results and identified the four patterns by using representative cases for each pattern. Secondly, the authors related the quantitative result of affective organizational commitment, psychological contract fulfilment and job performance of the interviewees grouped by trajectories. Finally, they related the qualitative data, categorized under the four patterns to explain the relationships among the three constructs (Maia & Bastos, 2015).

Two individuals who had increased levels of affective organizational commitment at all times belonged to the first pattern, Learning to Love. Three individuals had a stable trajectory and maintained the bonding with the organization over a period of time belonged to the second pattern, High Match. Another three individuals with steadily decreasing commitment was referred to as Honeymoon Hangover. Two individuals whose affective organizational commitment levels decreased dramatically over the research period represented the fourth pattern named Learning to Hate (Maia & Bastos, 2015). As a result, it is reasonable to comment that the findings were a reasonable interpretation of the evidence presented because they were identified during the interviews

and verified by the surveys. The findings also suggested some factors that could enhance employees' commitment to an organization, for example human resources practices, management practices, the organizational environment and the relationship among colleagues. One interesting finding on the debate regarding how to address cases of low organizational commitment, the Honeymoon Hangover trajectory proved that not all decrease in affective organizational commitment case should be considered alarming for the management. It in turn suggested that it might be more important for managers to try to prevent a dramatic decrease of organizational commitment.

## 2.3 Evaluation and Conclusion

This journal paper attempted to contribute to the understanding of the development of organizational commitment and to explore the relationship among psychological contract fulfilment, organizational commitment and job performance, by using a longitudinal design (Maia & Bastos, 2015). The studies and the findings were grounded on a number of foundational theories and researches conducted in the past on the three constructs and their correlations. However, the discussion in the latter part was mainly focused on the qualitative research on the four trajectories, namely, Learning to Love, High Match, Honeymoon Hangover and Learning to Hate. The authors were only using simple case studies to support their propositions. The hypotheses were not supported by the quantitative research or from the discussion and findings of the paper, readers were unable to find out how the arguments were supported by valid data because the paper did not include the quantitative research information such as the means, standard deviations and correlations for all variables in this study.

The most important thing that I have learnt so far from the review on this journal paper on organizational commitment is how to develop an in-depth understanding of the philosophy, practice and communication of an academic research. Although the journal paper tried to use a triangulation method to improve and maximize the quality and validity of the study, the findings were not fully explained or supported by valid data collected from the quantitative research. Furthermore, apart from the quantitative and qualitative researches, the authors did not mention any secondary data to supplement their findings.

In conclusion, this review has been a useful tool for me to consider how I could use the literature and materials on organizational commitment as part of my future dissertation. The research gaps presented by different authors and what has been missing in previous studies enabled me to

think how I formulate my research question regarding organizational commitment in a police organization context and plausible future research trend of this topic.

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University of Wales Trinity Saint David  
DBA Programme

# A Literature Review on Organisational Commitment

**Approaches to Research and  
Academic Communication SBPD7001**  
**Oral presentation**

Submitted to Dr. Millissa Cheung

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Conducted on 2<sup>nd</sup> August 2019

- I. Abstract
- II. Introduction
- III. Literature Review
  - The review
  - Philosophical considerations
  - Conclusions
- IV. The chosen journal paper
  - Philosophical considerations
  - Conclusions
- V. References

# Contents

# I. Abstract

Organizational commitment has been an extensively research topic for researchers and practitioners since 1970s. However, scholars studying organizational commitment have diverse views on the issue's nature and development. Practitioners have been examining how to apply organizational commitment from the human resources perspective to recruit, retain and develop employees as well as to enhance their performance together with other constructs (Mercurio, 2015). The objectives of this paper are to conduct a literature review on a collection of 17 journals on this topic being studied over the past 15 years and to find out the core essence of organizational commitment, its relations with job satisfaction, organizational justice, organizational citizenship behaviour, psychological contract, employee engagement initiatives and transformational leadership under the backdrop and potential driver of the increased attention and focus on employee commitment due to globalization, economic uncertainty and mobile millennial generations. It is also aimed to examine the research philosophy and how this phenomenon is captured, assessed or analysed under an organizational structure, in particular in the law enforcement and police organization context. The second part will focus on a chosen journal on a longitudinal quanti-qualitative study on organizational commitment, psychological contract fulfilment and job performance by Maia and Bastos (2015) and examine the research philosophy, ethics, reliability and validity of the study.

## II. Introduction

### Objectives of this paper

- To conduct a critical literature review on 'organizational commitment' over the last 15 years;
- To find out the *core essence* of organizational commitment, its relations with job satisfaction, organizational justice, organizational citizenship behaviour, psychological contract, employee engagement initiatives and transformational leadership;

## II. Introduction

- 17 journals that addressed the research on the development of organizational commitment dated from 2005 to 2019.
- 11 journals covered research and studies on law enforcement or police organizations across the globe including the US Army, police organizations in the US, England and Wales, Switzerland, the Netherlands and India.
- 6 journals included a review on 'affective commitment as a core essence of organizational commitment', empirical researches on the relations between organizational commitment and other constructs such as job satisfaction, procedural justice, psychological contract and employee engagement initiatives in companies in Australia, Brazil, Indonesia and the US.

## II. Introduction

Why did I choose these journals?

- Due to the special interest on how organizational commitment can be applied in law enforcement agencies especially under the police context.
- The unique nature of police work and the culture of police organizations present a different perspective when looking at organizational commitment.

## II. Introduction

### Methodology

- To understand the epistemological development of the theory of organizational commitment
- To examine the research philosophy namely, how a phenomenon is captured, assessed or analysed
- To apply the basic methods of summarizing, comparing, analysing and drawing inference.

## III. Literature Review

Employee commitment to an organization is mainly referred to an attitude or an orientation linking the identity of a person to the organization he or she works in.

This involves the process when the individual goals become aligned with those of the organization.

This may also involve the perceived rewards associated with the continued participation in an organization, the costs associated with leaving and an obligation to remain in the organization as a member.

(Fields, 2002)

# III. Literature Review

Meyer and Allen's (1991) **three-component model** of organizational commitment, namely affective commitment, continuance commitment and normative commitment, has been widely used and recognized by the majority of researchers and practitioners as the basic foundation of this construct (Mercurio, 2015).

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# III. Literature Review

**Affective commitment** is always referred to an employee's liking for an organization which includes an identification with and involvement in the organization (Fields, 2002).

**Continuance commitment** generally refers to the costs associated with leaving the organization and the decision of an employee whether to remain or leave the organization is based on the cost-benefit considerations (Noor, 2014).

**Normative commitment** is defined as a feeling of obligation to stay in the organization because employees with a high level of normative commitment feel or believe that they have a responsibility to keep working or to remain with the organization (Fields, 2002; Noor, 2014).

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## III. Literature Review

- Allen and Meyer (1996) however found that most research on organizational commitment had focused mainly on **affective commitment**, which was proven to have strong ties to employees' and organizational performance.
  - Many studies in the past 15 years focused on **affective commitment** and its relationship with other work variables such as job satisfaction, job involvement, job stress and turnover.
-

**Table 1 - The categories of journals on organizational commitment**

| No. | Context                                                      | Affective<br>Commitment   | Continuance<br>Commitment | Normative<br>Commitment |
|-----|--------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1.  | Influence of mentoring                                       | Payne & Huffman (2005)    | Payne & Huffman (2005)    |                         |
| 2.  | Use of force                                                 | Manzoni & Eisner (2006)   |                           |                         |
| 3.  | Employee support programs                                    | Grant, et al (2008)       |                           |                         |
| 4.  | Procedural justice                                           | Noor (2014)               |                           |                         |
| 5.  | Literature review on affective<br>commitment as core essence | Mercurio (2015)           |                           |                         |
| 6.  | Influence of supervisor feedback<br>and support              | Johnson (2015)            |                           |                         |
| 7.  | Psychological contract fulfilment                            | Maia & Bastos (2015)      |                           |                         |
| 8.  | Transformational leadership                                  | Shim, et al (2015)        | Shim, et al (2015)        |                         |
| 9.  | Work engagement                                              | Van Gelderen & Bik (2016) |                           |                         |

**Table 1 - The categories of journals on organizational commitment (Cont'd)**

| No. | Context                                      | Affective<br>Commitment  | Continuance<br>Commitment | Normative<br>Commitment |
|-----|----------------------------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|
| 10. | Supervisor feedback and organization support | Perez, et al (2016)      |                           |                         |
| 11. | Employee engagement initiatives              | Davis, et al (2016)      |                           |                         |
| 12. | Organizational justice                       | Qureshi, et al (2017)    |                           |                         |
| 13. | Perceptions of organizational structure      | Lambert, et al (2017)    |                           |                         |
| 14. | Organizational citizenship behaviour         | Wombacher & Felfe (2017) |                           |                         |
| 15. | Supervisor-subordinate relationships         | Brunetto, et al (2017)   |                           |                         |
| 16. | Job stress and burnout                       | Lambert, et al (2018)    | Lambert, et al (2018)     |                         |
| 17. | Organization knowledge                       | Boag-Munroe (2019)       |                           |                         |

# III. Literature Review

## a) Organizational commitment with employee support, feedback and leadership

- eight journals have conducted empirical research on the influence of employee-oriented programs or initiatives upon organizational commitment of employees. The studies include mentoring, supervisor feedback, organization support, employee engagement initiatives, supervisor-subordinate relationships as well as transformational leadership.
-

# III. Literature Review

## b) Organizational commitment and organizational justice

- Organizational justice consists of three components, namely distributive, procedural and interactional justice.
  - Distributive justice represents the efforts that an individual puts in and the subsequent rewards received (Perez, et al, 2016).
  - Procedural justice concerns more about the decision-making process in which employees desire to have input and to follow certain ethical codes (Perez, et al, 2016).
  - Interactional justice refers to the respect an individual perceives from his or her supervisors and whether the agency directives and performance feedback are clear (Colquitt, 2008).
-

# III. Literature Review

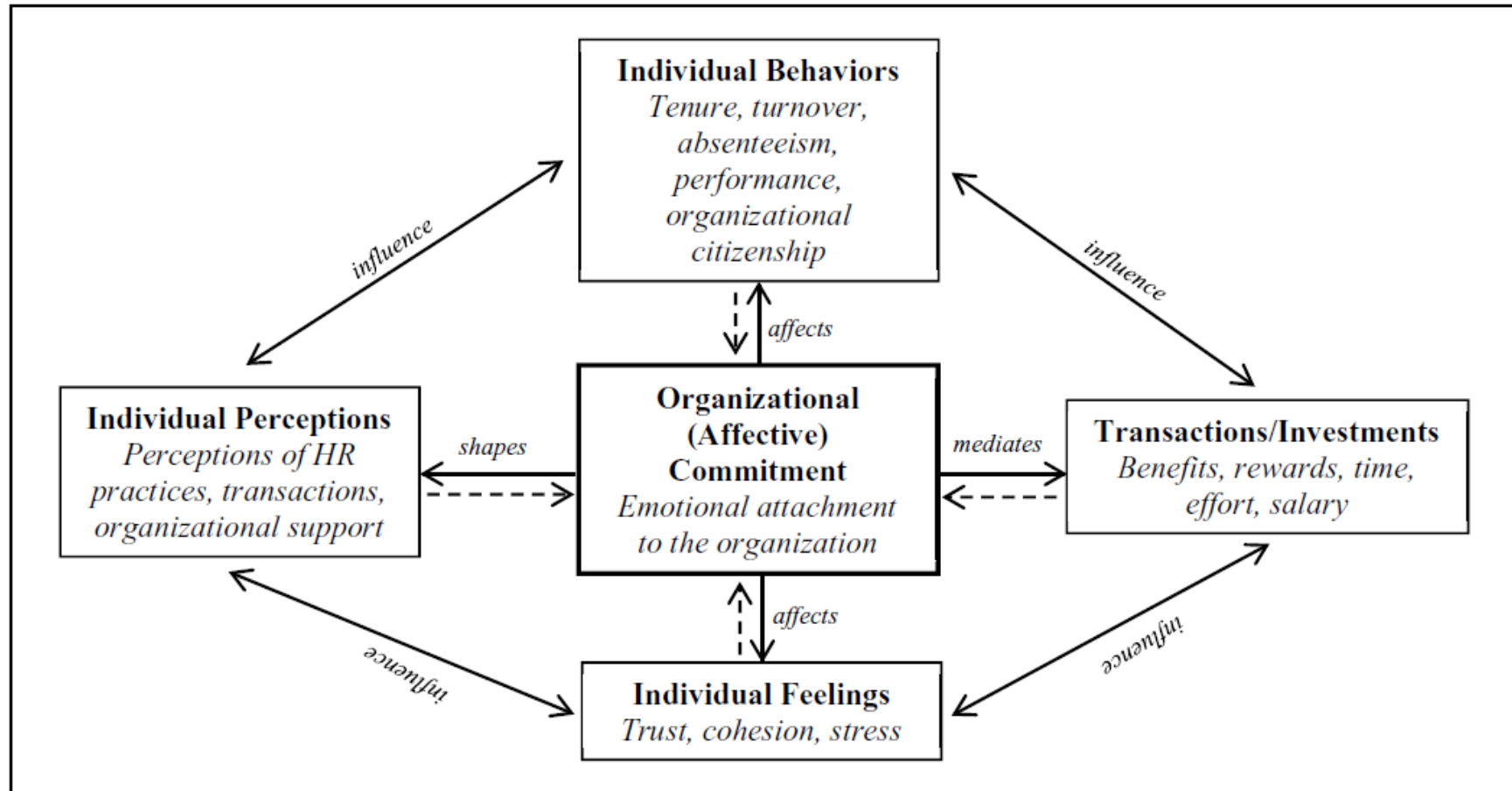
- c) Organizational commitment with organizational citizenship behaviour, psychological contract, perceptions of organizational structure and organizational knowledge
- A total of four journals belonged to this category.
  - Organ (1988) defined organizational citizenship behaviour as discretionary individual behaviour where the formal reward system would not directly or explicitly recognize, but promote the effective functioning of the organization.
-

# III. Literature Review

- c) Organizational commitment with organizational citizenship behaviour, psychological contract, perceptions of organizational structure and organizational knowledge (Cont'd)
- The concept of psychological contract is linked to organizational commitment because scholars believe that both parties were bound to a certain set of obligations and a psychological contract begins to form before a person joins an organization (Maia & Bastos, 2015).
  - The study conducted by Lambert, et al, explored how perceptions of work environment factors affect police officers' job involvement, job satisfaction and organizational commitment in India (2017).

# Conclusion

Figure 1 - Concept map of affective commitment as the core essence of organizational commitment (Mercurio, 2015, p. 406)



Note. HR = human resource

## IV. The chosen journal paper

### Title of the article

‘Organizational Commitment. Psychological Contract Fulfillment and Job Performance: A Longitudinal Quanti-qualitative Study’ by Maia and Bastos (2015).

- published on the Brazilian Administration Review and was available online at <http://www.anpad.org.br/bar> on 30 September 2015.
- adopted the format and style of a standard academic journal paper with an abstract, followed by an introduction, theoretical framework, method, research context, quantitative assessment, qualitative assessment, analytic strategy, results (in three parts), discussion (in two parts), limitations and suggestions for future research and conclusion.

## IV. The chosen journal paper

- This journal paper was selected for detailed review and discussion because this was the only journal paper among the collection of 17 journals that adopted a triangulation of methods by conducting a quantitative and qualitative longitudinal study simultaneously.
- It was published four years ago and a quite recent research conducted on organizational commitment in the public sector.

# IV. The chosen journal paper

## Philosophical considerations

### Abstract & Introduction

- A longitudinal study using both quantitative and qualitative research methods
- Failed to indicate the context of the research

### Research methods and design /ethical issues / reliability and validity

- No mentioning of a randomized sample and the response rate
- Unable to follow the methods in sufficient detail to evaluate whether the authors had made the best data collection and analysis choices for this research question
- No idea on confidentiality, no briefings or instructions, no regression table or factor analysis
- Coefficient alpha values of the Organizational Commitment Questionnaire & Affective Commitment Scale not available

## IV. The chosen journal paper

### Conclusions

- Findings were grounded on foundational theories and researches conducted in the past
- Findings mainly supported by qualitative research, supplemented by quantitative with insufficient details
- How to develop an in-depth understanding of the philosophy, practice and communication of an academic research
- A useful tool for me to consider how I could use the literature and materials on organizational commitment as part of my future dissertation.

# V. References

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# A Literature Review on Organisational Commitment

# Thank you