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## **FOCI AND BASES OF COMMITMENT: ARE THEY DISTINCTIONS WORTH MAKING?**

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**This study examined the contribution of two concepts to the conventional view of commitment: foci of commitment, the individuals and groups to whom an employee is attached, and bases of commitment, the motives engendering attachment. Commitment to top management, supervisor, and work group were important determinants of job satisfaction, intent to quit, and prosocial organizational behaviors over and above commitment to an organization. Compliance, identification, and internalization as bases of commitment were unique determinants above and beyond commitment to the foci.**

A reconceptualization of employee commitment has emerged within the literature on work-related attachments. Recent authors have argued that it is important to examine various foci and bases of commitment. Foci of commitment are the particular entities, such as individuals and groups, to whom an employee is attached (Reichers, 1985). Bases of commitment are the motives engendering attachment (O'Reilly & Chatman, 1986).

Reichers (1985) used organization theory to build the case that, before the foci of employee attachment can be specified, the various individuals and groups that are relevant to an organization must be specified. Reichers buttressed her argument with findings from research on reference groups and role theory indicating that many organization members are aware of and committed to multiple sets of goals and values. Reichers postulated a number of foci that may be relevant to many employees, including "co-workers, superiors, subordinates, customers, and other groups and individuals that collectively comprise the organization" (1985: 472); in later work, she demonstrated the relevance of some of those foci to organization members (Reichers, 1986). It should be noted that other researchers have recognized at least implicitly the multiple commitments that people may have. For example, in a resurgence of research on union commitment, investigators have studied how commitment to unions is related to commitment to employing organizations (Angle & Perry, 1986; Dalton & Todor, 1982). Such research

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has suggested that commitment may not be a zero-sum game; many employees have a high degree of commitment to both their employing organizations and unions.

O'Reilly and Chatman (1986) argued that commitment has multiple bases. According to Kelman (1958), compliance occurs when people adopt attitudes and behaviors in order to obtain specific rewards or to avoid specific punishments. Identification occurs when people adopt attitudes and behaviors in order to be associated with a satisfying, self-defining relationship with another person or group. Finally, internalization occurs when people adopt attitudes and behaviors because their content is congruent with the individuals' value systems. O'Reilly and Chatman (1986) found that compliance, identification, and internalization, viewed as bases of commitment, were differentially related to prosocial organizational behaviors (behaviors that are intended to promote the welfare of the organization or individuals and groups within the organization) and to turnover and intent to stay with an organization.

The concern for distinguishing the contributions of foci and bases of commitment contrasts markedly with the conventional view of commitment, which is that employee attachment involves "the relative strength of an individual's identification with and involvement in a particular organization" (Mowday, Porter, & Steers, 1982: 27). Commitment so defined has most often been measured via the Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ) developed by Porter, Steers, Mowday, and Boulian in 1974; congruent with the unidimensional view underlying the instrument, the OCQ assesses commitment along a single dimension (Cook, Hepworth, Wall, & Warr, 1981). In summary, the conventional approach, although the most widely used in both research and practice (Mathieu & Zajac, 1990), does not in theory or practice acknowledge the multiple commitments that employees may have, nor does it distinguish among motives for psychological attachment.

Theoretical and empirical studies have linked commitment to withdrawal phenomena such as absenteeism and intent to quit (Clegg, 1983; Cotton & Tuttle, 1986) and to job attitudes, especially job satisfaction (Mowday et al., 1982). Other work has supported the link of organizational commitment to prosocial organizational behavior (Brief & Motowidlo, 1986; Organ, 1988). Research has not supported a significant link between commitment, conventionally defined, and performance and other work outputs (Mathieu & Zajac, 1990; Randall, 1990).

The primary purpose of the current research was to determine whether or not the concepts of foci and bases of commitment add substantively to the conventional perspective. It has not been demonstrated that these concepts add anything to the understanding of the phenomenon of individuals' attachments to organizations beyond what is explained by the conventional view. This is an important issue because if the reconceptualization of commitment, with its complications in theory and measurement, does not more adequately tap employee attachment, the principle of parsimony would sug-

gest that the conventional perspective, with its simpler conceptualization and measurement, is preferable.

As discussed above, Reichers (1985) argued that top managers, supervisors, and co-workers are generally important foci for employees. This argument and the findings of research on organizational commitment led me to expect that people would identify their top management, supervisor, work group, and organization as relevant foci of commitment. The theory underlying the multiple commitments literature (Reichers, 1985) suggests that an individual's attitudinal commitment to a workplace cannot be adequately explained by commitment to the organization alone because the coalitional nature of organizations leads employee commitment to be multidimensional. If that is true, commitment to foci other than an organization should help explain variance in key dependent variables. Intent to quit, satisfaction, and prosocial organizational behaviors are central dependent variables in the commitment literature. Given the evidence that high levels of commitment generally have positive implications for organizational outcomes (Mathieu & Zajac, 1990; Randall, 1990), strong commitment to any focus should be negatively related to the intent to quit and positively related to satisfaction and prosocial organizational behavior. Thus,

*Hypothesis 1: Commitment to foci other than an employing organization, specifically to top management, supervisors, and work groups, will be negatively related to intent to quit and positively related to satisfaction and prosocial organizational behaviors and will explain variance in these dependent variables over and above that explained by commitment to the organization.*

The work of O'Reilly and Chatman (1986) and of Caldwell, Chatman, and O'Reilly (1990) has suggested that compliance, identification, and internalization are relevant bases of commitment. If, as the theory underlying the concept of bases of commitment suggests, they are an important dimension of employee attachment and can explain attachment above and beyond the level of overall commitment, bases of commitment should account for unique variance in key dependent variables. Also, the work of those authors has suggested that identification and internalization have positive implications for organizational outcomes, apparently because work-related norms and values accepted by employees have lasting effects. The same work has suggested that compliance has negative implications, apparently because this form of attachment is fleeting and does not involve acceptance of norms and values beneficial to an organization. Therefore,

*Hypothesis 2: Identification and internalization will be negatively related to intent to quit and positively related to satisfaction and prosocial organizational behavior, and compliance will be positively related to intent to quit and negatively related to satisfaction and prosocial organizational behavior; the three bases of commitment (iden-*

*tification, internalization, and compliance) will explain variance in these dependent variables over and above that explained by the foci of commitment.*

In summary, the current study is the first to directly examine the contributions of the foci and bases concepts to the conventional view of commitment and the first to incorporate assessments of both foci and bases within one investigation.

## METHODS

### Survey Methodology and Respondents

Searching for a field site for this research, I selected 30 organizations from an organizational directory for my local area. I sent the presidents of the first 30 organizations in the directory with 500 or more employees a letter of introduction. The letter provided an overview of the research and included a stamped, self-addressed postcard on which a president could indicate interest in hearing more about the research. Through this process, a military supply company and I mutually selected each other.

The company was composed of three divisions containing a total of 1,305 employees. In order to assess test-retest reliabilities and to reduce concerns about common method variance, I collected two waves of survey data from this pool of employees. For the first administration, I sent surveys to all 1,305 employees via the company's internal mail system, including a cover letter that briefly described the purpose of the study, assured the potential respondents of confidentiality, and provided instructions for the completion and return of the questionnaires. Completed surveys were delivered to the firm's mail room, where I retrieved them. Following a reminder memo, 763 usable surveys were returned, for a time 1 response rate of 58.5 percent.

For the second administration, initiated one month after the delivery of the follow-up memo for the first set of surveys, I mailed a second set to the 763 employees who had responded. The same procedure described for the first wave of data collection and the same survey were used. A total of 440 usable surveys were returned, for a time 2 response rate of 57.7 percent and an overall response rate of 33.7 percent. Respondents for whom complete data were available ranged in age from 20 to 70 years, with a mean of 41.5 years, and they ranged in education from 8 to over 16 years completed, with a mean of 13.7. The average employee had been with the company for 9.2 years. Women comprised 58.2 percent of the respondents.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> To examine the issue of nonresponse bias, I compared the demographic variables of age, education, tenure, and gender for time 1 and time 2 respondents. The two groups did not significantly differ with respect to any of these variables.

## Measures

**Foci of commitment.** In order to identify meaningful foci within the company, individual interviews were conducted with 15 employees (five volunteers from each of the three divisions). Interviews included open-ended questions, such as “If I followed you around on a typical day, who would I see you talking to and working with?” and “What kinds of groups exist in this company?” and standardized, closed-ended queries like “Could you name your supervisor?” and “Do you know all the people in your work group?” The standardized questions were based in part on the work of Reichers (1985) and others who have identified certain foci as generally relevant. I also took the organizational structure and formal reporting relationships of the company into consideration.

On the basis of the frequency with which they appeared in transcripts of the taped interview, the following foci were selected for inclusion in the study: the organization, its top management, immediate supervisors, and immediate work groups. Commitment to the organization was measured via the OCQ (Mowday et al., 1982); because of criticisms that several OCQ items inflate concept redundancy between organizational commitment and intent to quit (Reichers, 1985: 469), I used two of the items normally included in the 15-item instrument as part of a measure of intent to quit instead; this measure is described below. To check the validity of this change, I conducted analyses with both the 13- and 15-item scales; results were essentially the same. Only results based on the 13-item scale are reported in this article. Commitment to the other foci was assessed by asking respondents, “How attached are you to the following people and groups?” (top management, supervisor, and work group). Responses were given on a seven-point scale ranging from “not at all” to “completely.”

**Bases of commitment.** O'Reilly and Chatman's (1986) measure of the bases of commitment to an organization was used as a guide in writing items designed to assess the bases of commitment to each focus. I wrote an additional five items for each focus using a scale measuring social identification developed by Mael (Ashforth & Mael, 1989) as a guide. I added these items to the O'Reilly and Chatman measure because some research has indicated an inability of this measure to separate identification and internalization (Caldwell et al., 1990). I hoped that the additional items would promote a cleaner distinction between identification and internalization.

All in all, 17 items designed to assess compliance, identification, and internalization were written for each of the foci, including the organization. Responses were given on a seven-point scale ranging from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree.” Given the possibility that some respondents would indicate that they were “not at all” committed to certain foci, asking about the bases of commitment to these foci would be nonsensical; therefore, the escape option “not applicable” was supplied in the bases of commitment section. Via a series of factor analyses, I developed eight scales assessing the

bases of commitment. These were identification and internalization with respect to organization, supervisor, and work group; normative commitment to top management; and overall compliance, without regard to foci. Scale scores were computed by summing across items within scales. Complete information on scale development is available upon request.

**Satisfaction.** The 20-item version of the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (Weiss, Dawis, England, & Lofquist, 1967) was used to measure overall job satisfaction, intrinsic satisfaction, and extrinsic satisfaction. Responses were given on a seven-point scale ranging from "very dissatisfied" to "very satisfied." I computed scale scores by summing across items.

**Intent to quit.** Intent to leave the organization was measured in part by two items from the Michigan Organizational Assessment Questionnaire (Cammann, Fichman, Jenkins, & Klesh, 1979). They were "It is likely that I will actively look for a new job in the next year," and "I often think about quitting." I took two additional items from the OCQ: "It would take very little change in my present circumstances to cause me to leave this organization," and "There's not too much to be gained by sticking with the organization indefinitely." Responses were given on a seven-point scale ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree." Intent to quit was assessed by summing across the four items.

**Prosocial organizational behaviors.** A slightly revised version of the 15-item Smith, Organ, and Near (1983) instrument served as part of the measure of prosocial organizational behavior; following Brief and Motowidlo (1986), I conceptualized organizational citizenship behavior as a subset of prosocial organizational behaviors. In addition, I created 10 new items based upon group interviews with employees. Creation of these items was a response to the call for additional development of measures of prosocial organizational behavior (Brief & Motowidlo, 1986), especially site-specific ones (Organ, 1988: 106–107). Responses to the 25 items were given on a five-point scale ranging from "never" to "always." Congruent with prior research (Williams, Podsakoff, & Huber, 1986), factor analyses suggested three types of prosocial organizational behavior: altruism, conscientiousness, and nonidleness, reverse-scored. I developed scales for each behavior and derived scale scores by summing across items; complete information on scale development is available upon request.

Respondents and their peers and supervisors provided ratings of prosocial organizational behavior. Over 95 percent of the respondents to both survey administrations supplied self-ratings. At least one other rating from a supervisor or peer was gathered for 80.2 percent of the respondents. I averaged values across raters to measure prosocial organizational behavior for each respondent. Research demonstrating that various sources of ratings, including self-assessments, are different but potentially valid measures of behavior supported the use of this method (Vance, MacCallum, Coovert, & Hedge, 1988).

**Demographic variables.** The opening section of the survey asked the

respondents for demographic information. The variables included were selected on the basis of prior research tying them to commitment phenomena. The variables and examples of research indicating their relevance are: age (Morrow & McElroy, 1987), education (Glisson & Durick, 1988), gender (Fry & Greenfeld, 1980), tenure in the company and current job (Luthans, McCaul, Harriette, & Dodd, 1985), and organizational unit (Decotiis & Summers, 1987).

## RESULTS

Table 1 contains the data set sizes, means, and standard deviations for all the variables. The table also presents coefficient alphas for the multi-item measures and coefficients of stability across questionnaire administrations for each measure. Table 2 shows the correlations among the variables.<sup>2</sup> Commitment to each of the foci is negatively correlated with intent to quit and positively correlated with satisfaction and prosocial organizational behavior, supporting the directional predictions of Hypothesis 1. Identification and internalization with respect to organization, supervisor, and work group are negatively correlated with intent to quit and positively correlated with satisfaction and prosocial organizational behavior; compliance is positively correlated with intent to quit and negatively correlated with satisfaction and prosocial organizational behavior. Those correlations support the directional predictions of Hypothesis 2.

Hypothesis 1 predicts that an employee's commitment to foci other than an organization will account for variance in the dependent variables over and above the variance accounted for by commitment to the organization. Hypothesis 2 predicts that the bases of commitment will account for variance in the dependent variables over and above variance accounted for by the foci. To test these predictions, I used hierarchical regression analysis.

First, I entered the demographic variables into the equation. The logic for entering these variables first was that they were not of central interest to this study and were, in fact, nuisance variables that needed to be controlled. Second, I added commitment to the organization. Since a central purpose of this study was to examine whether or not commitment to work-related foci

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<sup>2</sup> Although there is multicollinearity between the foci and bases of commitment measures, there also appears to be evidence for the discriminant validity of the two sets of variables. The mean across the 28 correlations of the foci and bases measures is .435, which leaves an average 81 percent of the variance in the foci and bases unaccounted for by their intercorrelation. Even computing the correlations between the congruent foci and bases—a top management focus with normative commitment to top management, or a work group focus with work group identification—an average 57 percent of the variance remains unexplained. In addition, the hierarchical regression analyses discussed below indicate that the foci and bases account for unique variance in dependent variables; such results would not occur if the foci and bases measures were assessing essentially the same constructs.

**TABLE 1**  
**Descriptive Statistics**

Variables	N	Means	s.d.	$\alpha$	$r^a$
Foci of commitment					
Organization	424	4.32	1.18	.91	.84
Top management	388	2.62	1.48		.69
Supervisor	393	3.89	1.75		.76
Work group	390	4.44	1.57		.68
Bases of commitment					
Organizational internalization	411	2.92	1.22	.94	.80
Organizational identification	412	4.32	1.37	.92	.77
Normative commitment to top management	415	3.32	1.30	.95	.78
Supervisor-related internalization	412	4.44	1.51	.93	.77
Supervisor-related identification	412	3.74	1.44	.93	.80
Work-group-related internalization	413	4.51	1.30	.91	.78
Work-group-related identification	413	5.08	1.12	.89	.74
Overall compliance	419	2.97	0.91	.82	.64
Dependent variables					
Intent to quit	424	3.50	1.53	.81	.74
Overall satisfaction	419	4.66	1.02	.92	.81
Intrinsic satisfaction	419	5.08	1.06	.90	.76
Extrinsic satisfaction	419	4.01	1.30	.80	.81
Overall prosocial behavior	428	3.53	0.47	.91	.69
Altruism	426	2.92	0.68	.88	.72
Conscientiousness	427	3.69	0.65	.87	.62
Idleness	426	3.86	0.56	.88	.66

<sup>a</sup> Statistics shown are coefficients of stability across the two administrations.

other than an organization and the bases of commitment add substantially to organizational commitment conventionally conceived, that variable had to be entered into the regression equation before the other foci.

Third, I added commitment to the other foci (top management, supervisor, and work group). There were two reasons for entering the foci of commitment prior to information on the bases. First, an employee must be at least nominally committed to a person or group for it to make sense to speak of motives for that commitment. Second, the evidence to date on the relevance of multiple foci outweighs that for multiple bases (Mathieu & Zajac, 1990) and thus supports the ordering of the analysis on the grounds of research relevance.

Table 3 reports the findings from the regression analysis of the time 2 dependent variables on the four sets of independent variables from time 1, giving the squared multiple correlation ( $R^2$ ), increment in  $R^2$ , and results of the appropriate  $F$ -test for each step. As the table indicates, each set of variables accounts for a significant amount of unique variance in the overall satisfaction and intent to quit measures. Further, the demographic variables, commitment to the organization, and commitment to foci other than the

**TABLE 2**  
Correlations<sup>a,b</sup>

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
1. Organization																			
2. Top management	.50																		
3. Supervisor	.46	.49																	
4. Work group	.36	.37	.60																
5. Organizational internalization	.78	.48	.38	.31															
6. Organizational identification	.62	.43	.29	.31	.84														
7. Normative commitment to top management	.64	.65	.39	.28	.72	.65													
8. Supervisor-related internalization	.44	.31	.74	.34	.44	.35	.42												
9. Supervisor-related identification	.46	.38	.70	.39	.51	.49	.52	.84											
10. Work-group-related internalization	.31	.22	.32	.61	.39	.35	.32	.39	.45										
11. Work-group-related identification	.30	.20	.33	.57	.39	.45	.32	.37	.47	.77									
12. Overall compliance	-.16	-.10	-.09	-.14	-.08	-.07	.02	-.09	-.01	-.02	-.11								
13. Intent to quit	-.61	-.34	-.28	-.15	-.44	-.36	-.27	-.26	-.22	-.09	-.13	.21							
14. Overall satisfaction	.53	.37	.43	.31	.44	.33	.42	.49	.42	.27	.29	-.21	-.48						
15. Intrinsic satisfaction	.45	.29	.32	.25	.37	.28	.33	.35	.28	.22	.27	-.20	-.43	.93					
16. Extrinsic satisfaction	.53	.38	.51	.28	.44	.32	.46	.59	.53	.21	.20	-.18	-.46	.86	.62				
17. Overall prosocial behavior	.22	.22	.23	.18	.20	.20	.13	.21	.21	.16	.22	-.18	-.12	.22	.23	.16			
18. Altruism	.18	.23	.26	.27	.16	.15	.12	.19	.20	.18	.24	-.16	-.05	.18	.19	.14	.84		
19. Conscientiousness	.12	.09	.19	.16	.10	.16	.02	.16	.15	.15	.24	-.09	-.07	.13	.15	.07	.76	.57	
20. Idleness	.25	.20	.08	.01	.18	.17	.16	.11	.13	.02	.01	-.11	-.21	.18	.18	.14	.52	.14	.21

<sup>a</sup> Correlations greater than .09 are significant at .05. Data set sizes ranged from 376 to 428.

<sup>b</sup> Correlations between independent and dependent variables are based on commitment variables at time 1 and dependent variables at time 2.

**TABLE 3**  
**Results of Hierarchical Regression Analyses**

Variables	<i>N</i>	<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>	$\Delta R^2$	<i>F</i>
Overall satisfaction				
Demography	381	.120		5.61***
Organization	381	.362	.243	140.76***
Other foci	360	.413	.050	9.88***
Bases	350	.465	.052	4.01***
Intrinsic satisfaction				
Demography	381	.134		6.61***
Organization	381	.300	.161	84.68***
Other foci	360	.316	.017	2.93*
Bases	350	.351	.035	2.22*
Extrinsic satisfaction				
Demography	381	.047		2.01*
Organization	381	.316	.270	145.69***
Other foci	360	.422	.110	21.06***
Bases	350	.506	.085	7.01***
Overall prosocial behavior				
Demography	390	.088		4.09**
Organization	390	.130	.041	17.98**
Other foci	368	.168	.038	5.42*
Bases	358	.195	.027	1.42
Altruism				
Demography	389	.075		3.41***
Organization	389	.096	.021	8.58**
Other foci	367	.151	.055	7.69***
Bases	357	.175	.024	1.21
Conscientiousness				
Demography	390	.072		3.29***
Organization	390	.082	.010	4.16*
Other foci	368	.120	.038	5.10*
Bases	358	.156	.036	1.78†
Idleness				
Demography	389	.096		4.49***
Organization	389	.149	.053	23.43***
Other foci	367	.175	.025	3.61†
Bases	357	.195	.020	1.05
Intent to quit				
Demography	386	.050		2.07*
Organization	386	.397	.348	216.38***
Other foci	363	.416	.018	3.66*
Bases	353	.461	.045	3.47***

†  $p < .10$

\*  $p < .05$

\*\*  $p < .01$

\*\*\*  $p < .001$

organization result in a significant increment in  $R^2$  in the measures of prosocial organizational behaviors, although the contribution of the foci to explaining variance in idleness is only marginally significant. In contrast, the bases of commitment do not account for significant increments in  $R^2$  in these

analyses, except for conscientiousness, for which the contribution is marginally significant.<sup>3</sup>

## DISCUSSION

The conventional view of work-related commitment is concerned exclusively with organizational commitment and is vague with respect to the role of bases of commitment. As previously noted, researchers have commonly used the OCQ to measure conventionally conceived commitment. By demonstrating that commitment to foci other than an organization, and bases of commitment, account for variance in key dependent variables above and beyond that accounted for by the OCQ, the results of this research support the reconceptualization of employee attachment as a phenomenon with multiple foci and bases.

These results suggest that researchers and practitioners should revise their views and measures of commitment. First, a greater recognition of the importance of multiple foci and bases of commitment is clearly warranted. The implication is that the OCQ should probably be used less frequently than is currently the case. Second, the relevance of particular foci and bases depend upon the criterion of interest. Here, for example, foci and bases of commitment helped to predict satisfaction and intent to quit, but the bases of commitment did not aid in the prediction of prosocial organizational behavior. Future work needs to explore the relevance of multiple foci and bases of commitment with regard to such other criteria as performance. A final suggestion is that future researchers attempt to match the focus of their independent variable with the focus of their dependent variable. For instance, attention to the intended target of prosocial acts would certainly seem relevant in anticipating the focus of commitment relevant to the prediction of such behavior. A researcher interested in, say, altruistic behavior directed toward a work group would be well advised to focus on commitment to the work group rather than on commitment to top management, supervisor, or organization.

Two strengths of this study serve to reinforce these conclusions. First, the psychometric properties of the measures of foci and bases of commitment developed in this study were generally acceptable: alpha coefficients for the multi-item measures were high, test-retest reliabilities for the commitment scales were acceptable, and criterion validities were significant. The only caveat here is that foci other than the organization were measured with single-item scales. Future work needs to create scales more amenable to tests of reliability. Second, the concern for common method variance often raised in self-report investigations such as this one was reduced by using data on commitment variables from one point in time and data on the dependent variables from another.

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<sup>3</sup> I conducted the analyses of overall prosocial organizational behavior, altruism, conscientiousness, and idleness reported in Table 3 again using averaged supervisor and peer ratings of prosocial behaviors and eliminating self-ratings. The results were very similar in terms of tests of significance and the  $R^2$  and increment to  $R^2$  for each dependent variable.

Although the central set of results supported the hypotheses, the amount of unique variance accounted for by commitment to the foci and the bases was small in some cases. For example, in the hierarchical regression equation involving intrinsic satisfaction, commitment to foci other than the organization accounted for only 1.7 percent of the variance uniquely. This finding was statistically significant, but it is reasonable to question the practical ramifications of such a small increment in explained variance. Although this concern should not be ignored, it should be noted that the foci and bases of commitment did account for relatively large proportions of variance in some of the variables; for example, commitment to the various foci accounted for 11 percent of the variance in extrinsic satisfaction, over and above the contribution of the demographic variables and the OCQ items. In addition, it should be remembered that the hierarchical approach taken in this study was a stringent one. To be considered useful, the sets of foci and bases of commitment had to account for unique variance after two previous sets, containing a total of nine variables, had been entered into the equation. In all instances, this procedure reduced the amount of variance available to be explained by the last two sets of variables.

A final issue raised by expanding the study of individual attachment to include the foci and bases of commitment is the creation of commitment profiles. Commitment profiles might be developed by classifying individuals into the cells of a foci-by-bases matrix; for some people, for example, identification with the work group might be central to their attachment to the workplace, and for others, internalization of their supervisor's values might be critical. Empirical validation of such an approach would provide evidence regarding the usefulness of specific foci and bases. Future work should pursue this idea of conceptually and empirically linking the foci and bases constructs.

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