

Employee Commitment and Motivation: A Conceptual Analysis and Integrative Model

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Theorists and researchers interested in employee commitment and motivation have not made optimal use of each other's work. Commitment researchers seldom address the motivational processes through which commitment affects behavior, and motivation researchers have not recognized important distinctions in the forms, foci, and bases of commitment. To encourage greater cross-fertilization, the authors present an integrative framework in which commitment is presented as one of several energizing forces for motivated behavior. E. A. Locke's (1997) model of the work motivation process and J. P. Meyer and L. Herscovitch's (2001) model of workplace commitments serve as the foundation for the development of this new framework. To facilitate the merger, a new concept, goal regulation, is derived from self-determination theory (E. L. Deci & R. M. Ryan, 1985) and regulatory focus theory (E. I. Higgins, 1997). By including goal regulation, it is acknowledged that motivated behavior can be accompanied by different mindsets that have particularly important implications for the explanation and prediction of discretionary work behavior.

Organizational scientists and practitioners have long been interested in employee motivation and commitment. This interest derives from the belief and evidence that there are benefits to having a motivated and committed workforce (Locke & Latham, 1990; Meyer & Allen, 1997; Pinder, 1998). Surprisingly, however, the commitment and motivation literatures in organizational psychology have evolved somewhat independently. Although commitment is discussed by motivation researchers and motivation by commitment researchers, neither concept is dealt with at the level of complexity that it is within its own domain. Moreover, there have been few attempts to integrate the two literatures; to demonstrate how the concepts are similar, different, and related; or to examine how commitment and motivation combine to influence behavior. These are our objectives.

One explanation for the relative independence of the two bodies of work might be the differences in origin and objectives. Theories of work motivation evolved out of more general theories of motivation (see Steers, Porter, & Bigley, 1996) and have largely been applied to explain task performance. This emphasis is perhaps

most evident in goal-setting theory (Locke & Latham, 1990), which is arguably the dominant theory in the work motivation literature (Miner, 2003). In contrast, commitment had its origins in sociology (e.g., H. S. Becker, 1960; Kanter, 1968) and social psychology (e.g., Kiesler, 1971), and gained prominence in the organizational behavior literature as a potential predictor of employee turnover (cf. Mowday, Porter, & Steers, 1982). However, motivation theories have since been used to explain turnover (e.g., Prestholdt, Lane, & Mathews, 1987; Richer, Blanchard, & Valleurand, 2002), and commitment has been examined as a determinant of job performance (e.g., T. E. Becker, Billings, Eveleth, & Gilbert, 1996; Meyer, Paunonen, Gellatly, Goffin, & Jackson, 1989; Somers & Birnbaum, 1998) and organizational citizenship behavior (e.g., Bentein, Stinglhamber, & Vandenberghe, 2002; Shore & Wayne, 1993). This begs the questions, Is there a difference between motivation and commitment? Are both concepts worth retaining? If so, how are they related, and how do they combine to influence work behavior?

In this article, we argue that commitment and motivation are distinguishable, albeit related, concepts. More specifically, we suggest that commitment is one component of motivation and, by integrating theories of commitment and motivation, we gain a better understanding of the two processes themselves and of workplace behavior. For example, because commitment often involves psychological attachment to social foci, incorporating commitment as an independent aspect of motivation should allow enhanced understanding of behaviors that have broader social implications. It might also help to answer the call for motivation theories that explain work behavior in more collectivist societies (e.g., Boyacigiller & Adler, 1991; Shamir, 1991). Similarly, by embedding commitment within a more general motivation framework, a

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clearer picture of how workplace commitments exert their influence on behavior may be obtained, as well as a better understanding of how and when multiple commitments can complement or conflict with one another.

We begin our attempt at integration by providing a broad overview of theory and research pertaining to workplace motivation and commitment. Both are complex concepts, and therefore a comprehensive analysis is beyond the scope of this article. Fortunately, however, both literatures have been reviewed recently with the objective of providing a general theoretical framework. Specifically, Locke (1991, 1997) incorporated theory and research on work motivation into a general model of the motivation process. Similarly, Meyer and Herscovitch (2001) provided a model that incorporates recent theory and research pertaining to the multiple forms and foci of workplace commitment. We briefly describe these models and use them as the basis for the development of our integrative framework.

Incorporating a multidimensional conceptualization of commitment as part of the general motivation process necessitated some modifications to Locke's (1997) model. The two most substantial changes involved (a) the introduction of a new concept, goal regulation, as a linchpin and (b) drawing a distinction between two forms of motivated behavior: nondiscretionary and discretionary. *Goal regulation* refers to a motivational mindset reflecting the reasons for, and purpose of, a course of action. The concept derives from, and builds on, self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Ryan & Deci, 2000) and regulatory focus theory (Higgins, 1997, 1998). Both of these theories developed outside the mainstream work motivation literature but have recently been found to contribute to our understanding of workplace behavior (e.g., Brockner & Higgins, 2001; Richer et al., 2002; Van-Dijk & Kluger, 2004). By incorporating goal regulation into Locke's model, we acknowledge that motivated behavior can be accompanied by different psychological states, or mindsets, comparable to those found to characterize different forms of commitment (e.g., Meyer & Allen, 1991, 1997).

Acknowledging that commitment and motivation can be characterized by different mindsets becomes particularly important when considering behaviors that are not required of a person (i.e., not included in the terms of the commitment or specifically identified as the intended outcome of motivated behavior). For example, mindsets matter when it is not possible to specify everything that is required for effective performance and employees are expected to make decisions and modify their behaviors in accord with changing conditions. It is for this reason that we introduce the distinction between nondiscretionary and discretionary behavior.

Our model represents the first attempt to integrate motivation and commitment theory. Although generally well-grounded in existing theory and research, the model introduces new variables and relations between variables. Therefore, as we describe the model, we offer a set of propositions to serve as a guide for future research. If supported, the model has implications for both theory and practice. We conclude by discussing some of these implications.

Theories of Motivation and Commitment: A Brief Overview

To set the stage for the development of our integrative model, we provide a brief overview of existing theory, first for motivation

and then for commitment. This allows us to identify similarities and differences between the two concepts and to explain our rationale and strategy for integration.

Motivation

Motivation has been a difficult concept to properly define, in part because there "are many philosophical orientations toward the nature of human beings and about what can be known about people" (Pinder, 1998, p. 11). Although some have argued that the term defies definition (e.g., Dewsbury, 1978), in an extensive multidisciplinary review Kleinginna and Kleinginna (1981) identified approximately 140 attempts. Pinder (1998) provided a definition that nicely accommodates the different theoretical perspectives that have been brought to bear in the explanation of work motivation:

Work motivation is a set of energetic forces that originates both within as well as beyond an individual's being, to initiate work-related behavior, and to determine its form, direction, intensity, and duration. (p. 11)

There are two noteworthy features of this definition. First, motivation is identified as an energizing force—it is what induces action in employees. Second, this force has implications for the form, direction, intensity, and duration of behavior. That is, it explains what employees are motivated to accomplish, how they will attempt to accomplish it, how hard they will work to do so, and when they will stop.

Many theories have been set forth to explain employee motivation (see Kanfer, 1990; Pinder, 1998). None are complete, but most make meaningful contributions to our understanding of what is obviously a complex process. Locke (1991, 1997) noted that each of the different theoretical orientations offers a unique perspective and can be combined to form a general model. We present a simplified depiction for the motivation process as described by Locke (1997) in Figure 1.

At the heart of the motivation process is goal setting. Presumably all consciously motivated behavior is goal-oriented, whether the goals are self-generated or assigned by others. Naturally occurring goals derive from the activation of basic human needs, personal values, personality traits, and self-efficacy perceptions shaped through experience and socialization. Individuals also set, or accept, goals in response to external incentives. The goals individuals choose can vary in difficulty and specificity, and these attributes, in combination with perceptions of self-efficacy, help determine the direction of behavior, the amount of effort exerted, the degree of persistence, and the likelihood that individuals will develop strategies to facilitate goal attainment. The latter serve as the mechanisms by which goal choices and efficacy beliefs influence behavior (Locke & Latham, 1990, 2002). According to Locke (1997), the performance that results from these efforts affects the level of satisfaction experienced, which, along with organizational commitment, can lead to other forms of action (e.g., job and work avoidance, deviance, adjustment). In addition to this causal chain from internal and external inducements, to goals, and, ultimately, to performance and satisfaction, Locke identified a set of moderating conditions that are necessary for goal accomplishment: feedback, goal commitment, ability, and task complexity.

Goal setting is among the most dominant theories of work motivation (Miner, 2003), and Locke's general model is one of the

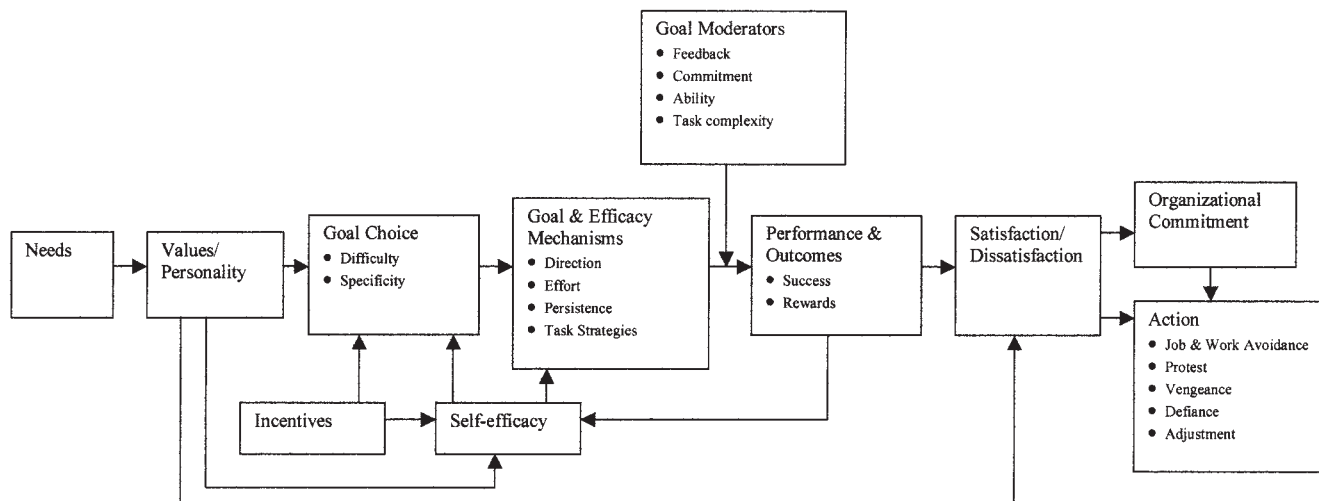


Figure 1. The motivation process. Reprinted from "The Motivation to Work: What We Know" by E. A. Locke, in *Advances in Motivation and Achievement*, Vol. 10, M. L. Maehr & P. R. Pintrich (Eds.), p. 402, Copyright 1997, with permission from Elsevier.

most comprehensive to date. Perhaps more important, the causal connections it proposes are generally well supported by empirical evidence (Locke, 1997; Pinder, 1998). For this reason, with the modifications described below, Locke's model provides an excellent foundation for integrating the motivation and commitment processes.

Commitment

Like motivation, commitment has been a difficult concept to define. Meyer and Allen (1991, 1997; Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001) compiled a list of definitions and analyzed the similarities and differences. The similarities served as the basis for a definition of what they considered the "core essence" of commitment:

Commitment is a force that binds an individual to a course of action that is of relevance to a particular target. (Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001, p. 301)

The differences in definitions of *commitment* led them to conclude that commitment can take different forms. We elaborate on these differences below.

Perhaps the most significant developments in commitment theory over the past two decades have been the recognition that commitment (a) can take different forms (e.g., T. E. Becker & Billings, 1993; Jaros, Jermier, Koehler, & Sincich, 1993; Meyer & Allen, 1991; O'Reilly & Chatman, 1986) and (b) can be directed toward various targets, or foci (e.g., T. E. Becker et al., 1996; Cohen, 2003; Reichers, 1985). We consider differences in form first, followed by differences in foci. We then describe a general model of workplace commitment developed by Meyer and Herscovitch (2001) that incorporates both of these developments.

As noted above, several authors have made the argument that commitment can take different forms. Although there is considerable overlap in the various models that have developed to explain these differences, there are also important differences (see Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001, for more detail). For our purposes, we focus on the three-component model developed by Meyer and Allen

(1991, 1997). This model has been subjected to the greatest empirical scrutiny and has arguably received the greatest support (see Meyer & Allen, 1997, and Meyer, Stanley, Herscovitch, & Topolnytsky, 2002, for reviews). It also has been adapted recently to account for multiple foci of workplace commitment and therefore provides a useful general framework for the development of our integrative model.

Meyer and Allen (1991; Allen & Meyer, 1990) initially developed their three-component model to address observed similarities and differences in existing unidimensional conceptualizations of organizational commitment (e.g., H. S. Becker, 1960; Mowday et al., 1982; Wiener, 1982). Common to all, they argued, was the belief that commitment binds an individual to an organization and thereby reduces the likelihood of turnover. The main differences were in the mindsets presumed to characterize the commitment. These mindsets reflected three distinguishable themes: affective attachment to the organization, obligation to remain, and perceived cost of leaving. To distinguish among commitments characterized by these different mindsets, Meyer and Allen labeled them "affective commitment," "normative commitment," and "continuance commitment," respectively.

Meyer and Allen (1991) argued that one of the most important reasons for distinguishing among the different forms of organizational commitment was that they have very different implications for behavior. Although all three forms tend to bind employees to the organization, and therefore relate negatively to turnover, their relations with other types of work behavior can be quite different (see Meyer et al., 2002). Indeed, research shows that affective commitment has the strongest positive correlation with job performance, organizational citizenship behavior, and attendance, followed by normative commitment. Continuance commitment tends to be unrelated, or negatively related, to these behaviors.

The second major development in commitment theory has been the recognition that commitment can be directed toward various targets, or foci, of relevance to workplace behavior, including the organization, occupation, supervisor, team, program, customer,

and union (e.g., T. E. Becker, Randall, & Riegel, 1995; Bishop & Scott, 2000; Morrow, 1993; Neubert & Cady, 2001; Reichers, 1985). Commitments to these foci have all been the subject of empirical investigation, either alone or in combination. It is generally believed that these commitments have the potential to both complement and conflict with one another, although when, why, and how these opposing effects can be expected is still not well understood (Meyer & Allen, 1997).

Recently, Meyer and Herscovitch (2001) developed a general model of workplace commitment to account for differences in both form and focus. As mentioned earlier, this model is an extension of Meyer and Allen's (1991, 1997) three-component model of organizational commitment. Development of the model was stimulated, in part, by an increase in the number of studies applying the three-component model to explain commitment to other foci, including occupations (Irving, Coleman, & Cooper, 1997; Meyer, Allen & Smith, 1993; Snape & Redman, 2003), supervisors and work groups (T. E. Becker & Kernan, 2003; Clugston, Howell, & Dorfman, 2000; Stinglhamber, Bentein, & Vandenberghe, 2002; Vandenberghe, Stinglhamber, Bentein, & Delhaise, 2001), customers (Stinglhamber et al., 2002), and organizational change (Herscovitch & Meyer, 2002).

On the basis of the findings of this research, Meyer and Herscovitch (2001) offered a general set of predictions concerning the consequences of commitment. Specifically, they argued that regardless of the target of commitment, all three forms of commitment bind an individual to a course of action specified within the terms of the commitment, which the authors referred to as "focal behavior." They proposed that the differences will be seen primarily in effects on related behavior that, though not clearly specified in the terms of the commitment, would nevertheless be beneficial to the target of the commitment. For example, commitment to an organization (as it is typically conceptualized) binds an individual to stay and to comply with minimum requirements for employment. Although not required by the terms of the commitment, speaking positively about the organization to outsiders or helping to socialize newcomers would also be of benefit to the organization. Depending on the nature and strength of their commitment, employees can freely choose whether to expand its implications to include these or other beneficial behaviors. The likelihood of their making such choices should increase with the strength of their affective commitment and, to a lesser extent, their normative commitment. The tendency for employees to voluntarily expand the implications of their commitment should be unrelated, or even negatively related, to the strength of their continuance commitment.

Research concerning the development of organizational commitment has been extensive but relatively unsystematic (Meyer & Allen, 1997; Reichers, 1985). Nevertheless, on the basis of theoretical considerations and accumulated evidence, Meyer and Herscovitch (2001) also identified several bases for the development of each of the three forms of commitment. They argued that the primary bases for the development of affective commitment are personal involvement, identification with the relevant target, and value congruence (cf. T. E. Becker, 1992; T. E. Becker et al., 1996). In contrast, normative commitment develops as a function of cultural and organizational socialization and the receipt of benefits that activate a need to reciprocate (Scholl, 1981; Wiener, 1982). Finally, continuance commitment develops as the result of accumulated investments, or side bets (H. S. Becker, 1960), that

would be lost if the individual discontinued a course of action, and as a result of lack of alternatives to the present course (Powell & Meyer, 2004).

In sum, theory and research over the past two decades supports distinctions among foci, forms, and bases of commitment. These distinctions have been incorporated into Meyer and Herscovitch's (2001) general model of workplace commitment. Therefore, in the integration of motivation and commitment theory, this model serves as an important guide.

Motivation and Commitment: A Comparison

Comparing the definitions of motivation and commitment reveals an obvious similarity: Both have been described as energizing forces with implications for behavior. Note, however, that Pinder (1998) described motivation as a set of energizing forces and that Meyer and Herscovitch (2001) defined commitment as a force that binds an individual to a course of action. This implies that motivation is a broader concept than commitment and that commitment is one among a set of energizing forces that contributes to motivated (intentional) behavior. However, the binding nature of commitment makes it rather unique among the many forces. Indeed, if we consider its use in everyday language, we see that the term *commitment* is generally reserved for important actions or decisions that have relatively long-term implications (e.g., commitment to a marriage; commitment to improving employee productivity or satisfaction). By contrast, we refer to an individual as being motivated to do something even in cases that have relatively trivial and shorter-term implications (e.g., getting motivated to turn off the TV and do some work).

Of course, even when commitment is involved, motivation can ebb and flow over time as commitment increases and decreases in salience. For example, a commitment to obtain a university degree should contribute to generally high levels of motivation to study, but day-to-day behavior will also be shaped by other sources of motivation (e.g., needs, values, incentives) that intrude and make the long-term commitment momentarily less salient. Nevertheless, we argue that commitment can serve as a particularly powerful source of motivation and can often lead to persistence in a course of action, even in the face of opposing forces (cf. Brickman, 1987; Scholl, 1991).

As another point of comparison, it is clear from our discussion of motivation and commitment theory that both developed in an attempt to understand, predict, and influence employee behavior. As we noted at the outset, however, motivation theorists have generally been more concerned with explaining task performance. This is clearly reflected in Locke's (1997) model (see Figure 1). In contrast, commitment theorists have historically focused more on explaining employee retention or turnover. The latter has clearly changed, however, as is evident in Meyer and Herscovitch's (2001) model where predictions are made concerning the effects of commitment on any behavior (focal or discretionary) of relevance to the target of that commitment. For reasons to be explained below, we believe that Locke's model can also be applied to explain any form of intentional behavior (e.g., attendance, turnover, in-role performance, organizational citizenship). Therefore, in light of the obvious overlap in purpose and implication, we argue that integration of commitment and motivation theory is both plausible and warranted.

In sum, as we turn to the development of our integrative model, we propose that commitment is part of a more general motivational process and is distinguishable from other components within this process. Our objective in the next section is to explain more fully where commitment fits within the motivation process and why its inclusion helps to understand and influence workplace behavior.

Toward the Development of an Integrative Model: Setting the Stage

If we are to incorporate commitment within the more general motivation process, we first need a framework to describe that process. As we noted earlier, Locke's (1997) model serves as an excellent starting point. However, some aspects of the model require modification for our purposes. In this section we provide the background for two of the most substantial changes: (a) the treatment of motivation as a multidimensional concept, and (b) a distinction between nondiscretionary and discretionary behavior. Other changes are introduced as they become relevant in our description of the model.

Motivation Mindsets

The theories of work motivation included in Locke's (1997) model treat motivation as a unitary concept. That is, although they recognize variation in the degree of motivation, they do not acknowledge differences in the psychological states, or mindsets, that can accompany this motivation. This becomes problematic for the integration of a model of commitment where the nature of the accompanying mindset is very important. This problem is not insurmountable, however. Indeed, motivation theories developed in other areas of psychology, most notably self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Ryan & Deci, 2000) and regulatory focus theory (Higgins, 1997, 1998), provide a convincing case that, like commitment, motivation is multidimensional. That is, it can take different forms on the basis of the nature of the accompanying mindset. As we explain below, the mindsets identified in these theories have a remarkable similarity to those identified in Meyer and Allen's (1991) three-component model of commitment. Therefore, to illustrate how Locke's model can be modified to better accommodate a multidimensional conceptualization of commitment, we provide a brief summary of relevant aspects of self-determination and regulatory focus theory.

Self-determination theory. According to self-determination theory, motivation reflects an intention to act. This intention can be self-initiated or result from external inducements. *Intrinsically motivated* behavior is undertaken purely for its own sake (i.e., the activity itself is enjoyable) and reflects "the inherent tendency to seek out novelty and challenges, to extend and exercise one's capacities, to explore, and to learn" (Ryan & Deci, 2000, p. 70). *Extrinsically motivated* behavior refers to "the performance of an activity in order to attain some separable outcome" (Ryan & Deci, 2000, p. 71). However, according to self-determination theory, extrinsically motivated behavior itself can take different forms depending on the perceived source of regulation (i.e., the impetus for the behavioral intent). As we explain below, the various forms of extrinsic motivation differ primarily in terms of perceptions of autonomy or self-determination.

Deci and Ryan (1985) argued that autonomy is a primary human need (cf. Heider, 1958; de Charms, 1968). External influences

exerted on us as a natural part of the socialization process have the potential to limit our sense of autonomy. Some efforts at influence clearly go against our natural inclinations and are accepted only because of a desire to attain contingent rewards or avoid contingent punishments. Others are more consistent with our personal values and are therefore less likely to be experienced as controlling. Deci and Ryan specifically identified four different forms of extrinsically motivated behavior: external, introjected, identified, and integrated.

Externally regulated behavior occurs in order to satisfy an external demand or reward contingency and is associated with feelings of being controlled (e.g., cleaning out the garage at the request of a parent or spouse). The perceived locus of causality is outside the person. *Introjected regulation* involves a different form of contingency, one involving self-worth. People often engage in a behavior that is socially acceptable in order to avoid feelings of guilt or anxiety (e.g., paying back a favor), or to gain others' respect (e.g., meeting parents' expectations by getting into medical school). Because the behavior is evaluated against external standards, it also tends to be experienced as somewhat controlled. *Identified regulation* comes from a conscious valuing of the action and its intended consequences. Although the tasks themselves might not be enjoyable (i.e., intrinsically motivating), they are seen as serving an important purpose and, thus, are typically experienced as somewhat internal (e.g., studying for an upcoming exam rather than going out with friends). Finally, with *integrated regulation*, the values guiding the behavior are fully accepted and integrated with other needs and values defining one's self-concept. Consequently, the behavior is experienced as having been freely chosen and therefore fully autonomous. This can be the case even when external sources of influence are quite evident. For example, the soldier who signs up for a tour of duty out of love of country and follows orders willingly should feel as fully autonomous in carrying out these activities as the scientist who chooses to spend long hours in the lab in the pursuit of knowledge. Again, because it is the objective that is valued, the behavior itself is not necessarily enjoyable.

It is important to note that all forms of extrinsic regulation can be highly motivating. Indeed, the use of reward and punishment can have a powerful impact on behavior and can even lead people to choose to pursue an externally regulated course of action over an internally regulated one. For instance, a strong enough monetary incentive might entice the reluctant teen to abandon a video game long enough to mow the lawn. Similarly, the threat of being a victim of the next downsizing might encourage an employee to take work home at night even though it will cut into valued family time. However, according to self-determination theory, external regulation can have negative consequences, including lower task satisfaction, lower effort, and less persistence. In the long run, personal well-being can also suffer. Studies in education have demonstrated that, in contrast to external regulation, "more autonomous extrinsic regulation was associated with more engagement (Connell & Wellborn, 1991), better performance (Miserandino, 1996), lower dropout (Vallerand & Bissonnette, 1992), higher quality learning (Grolnick & Ryan, 1987), and better teacher ratings (Hayamizu, 1997), among other outcomes" (Ryan & Deci, 2000, p. 73).

There are striking parallels between the nature and consequences of the different forms of perceived regulation identified in self-determination theory and the nature and consequences of the

three components of commitment described by Meyer and Herscovitch (2001). More specifically, the five forms of perceived regulation in Deci and Ryan's (1985) self-determination theory and the three components of commitment in Meyer and Allen's (1991) theory can both be seen as falling along a continuum from external control (external regulation, continuance commitment) to internal control (intrinsic motivation and integrated and identified regulation, affective commitment), with milder forms of external control in between (introjected regulation, normative commitment). Consistent with this notion of a continuum, Ryan and Connell (1989) observed a simplex-like pattern of correlations (Guttman, 1954) among measures reflecting students' reasons for various academic and prosocial behaviors. That is, the highest correlations were found for reasons adjacent to one another on the continuum. A similar pattern of correlations is seen among the three components of commitment, with normative commitment correlating more strongly with affective and continuance commitment than the latter do with one another (Meyer et al., 2002).

The pattern of relations between the different forms of regulation and behavior is also similar to that observed for the three components of commitment. That is, just as affective commitment has been found to have stronger links to behavior, particularly discretionary behavior, than normative and continuance commitment (Meyer et al., 2002; Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001), more autonomous forms of regulation (i.e., intrinsic, integrated, and identified regulation) have been found to be associated with greater task persistence (e.g., Ryan & Connell, 1989), depth of information processing (Grolnick & Ryan, 1987), and creativity (Koestner, Ryan, Bernieri, & Holt, 1984) than the more externally controlled forms (i.e., external and introjected regulation).

It is interesting to note that this pattern has been found even for personal goals (i.e., self-set goals such as New Year's resolutions) where autonomous regulation might naturally be assumed (e.g., Berg, Janoff-Bulman, & Cotter, 2001; Sheldon & Elliot, 1998). Sheldon and Elliot pointed out that personal goals can have a strong element of perceived external control when they are set to achieve outcomes that are more important to others than to oneself (e.g., losing weight to please a spouse) or to avoid feelings of guilt (e.g., sending holiday greeting cards to all of one's relatives). Sheldon and Elliot conducted three studies demonstrating that perceived autonomy in personal goals predicts goal attainment and that this effect is mediated by sustained effort investment.

Again, this discussion is not intended to imply that externally regulated forms of motivation cannot exert a powerful influence on behavior. However, as Sheldon and Elliot (1998) pointed out, "controlled goals are less likely to be well protected from competing desires and temptations" (p. 547). Because autonomous goals originate from personal values, they arguably have an advantage over those that are externally controlled (Deci & Ryan, 1991) and are likely to garner the highest levels of effort and persistence.

Regulatory focus theory. At the heart of regulatory focus theory (Higgins, 1997, 1998) is the notion that people are motivated to minimize discrepancies between actual and desired end states (i.e., seek pleasure) and to maximize the discrepancy between actual and undesired end states (i.e., avoid pain). However, the theory goes beyond this basic principle of hedonism by noting that end states can be defined in terms of (a) ideals (i.e., what one wants to be) and (b) "oughts" (i.e., what others think one should be). Individuals who seek to minimize discrepancies with their "ideal

self" are said to have a *promotion focus*, whereas those who seek to minimize discrepancies with their "ought self" have a *prevention focus*. Although there may certainly be some people for whom ideals and oughts are highly related, Higgins's work suggests that this is unlikely to be true of all, or even most, individuals.

Regulatory focus can be dispositional and reflect a generalized tendency to satisfy nurturance (promotion focus) or security (prevention focus) needs. However, it can also be situationally induced by increasing the relative salience of these needs through priming (e.g., activation through recall or threat) or problem framing (e.g., emphasizing the attainment of positive outcomes or the avoidance of negative outcomes). In either case, regulatory focus has implications for the nature of the goals people set, the strategies they use to attain them, and the emotional reactions they have following success or failure. Of particular relevance for our purposes is the notion that regulatory focus influences the way individuals think about their goals and the implications this has for goal-oriented behavior. According to Higgins (1998):

A promotion focus is concerned with advancements, growth, and accomplishment. Goals are hopes and aspirations. The strategic inclination is to make progress by approaching matches to the desired end state. In contrast, a prevention focus is concerned with security, safety, [and] responsibility. Goals are duties and obligations or even necessities. Given these differences, one would expect that people's self-regulatory states would be different when their focus is promotion versus prevention. With a promotion focus, the state should be *eagerness* to attain advancements and gains. With a prevention focus, the state should be *vigilance* to assure safety and nonlosses. (p. 27)

Regulatory focus theory complements self-determination theory and also has some similarities to commitment theory. Promotion focus and prevention focus reflect different motivational states. Individuals with a promotion focus see themselves as working toward the attainment of their ideals, whereas those with a prevention focus are attempting to fulfill their obligations. There are parallels between these motivational states and those characterizing the different forms of perceived regulation in self-determination theory, on the one hand, and the psychological states characterizing the forms of commitment in the three-component model, on the other (cf. Van-Dijk & Kluger, 2004). Individuals who are affectively committed, experience more autonomous forms of regulation (i.e., intrinsic, integrated, identified), or both might be expected to have a stronger promotion focus. In contrast, those who have a strong normative or continuance commitment, experience more controlled regulation (introjected or external), or both might have a stronger prevention focus.

The behavioral implications of the differences in regulatory focus also have some similarity to those described in the three-component model of commitment and self-determination theory. The motivational states associated with both a promotion and a prevention focus can serve as strong forces to behave. However, the obligations associated with a prevention focus are likely to be perceived as having more clearly defined boundaries than the ideals associated with a promotion focus. When one must do something, specification of requirements becomes important (as in labor contracts). Ideals tend to be less concrete and can expand when necessary to provide a continuous challenge. Therefore, behaviors associated with a prevention focus will arguably be more limited in scope than behaviors associated with ideals. In-

deed, Higgins (1998) argued that individuals with a strong prevention focus seek to satisfy minimum requirements for fulfillment, whereas those with a promotion focus seek to achieve the maximum level of accomplishment. In addition, research has shown that a promotion focus is associated with higher levels of creativity (e.g., [Friedman & Foerster, 2001](#); [Lam & Chiu, 2002](#)).

In sum, both [Deci and Ryan \(1985; Ryan & Deci, 2000\)](#) and [Higgins \(1997, 1998\)](#) argued that individuals can experience their motivational state in different ways. The difference is that, whereas Higgins addresses the *purpose* of one's behavior ("What am I trying to do?"), Deci and Ryan focus on *perceived causes* of the behaviors ("Why am I doing this?"). Moreover, the psychological states believed to accompany the different forms of regulation in these two motivation theories parallel those believed to characterize the different forms of commitment in Meyer and Allen's (1991) three-component model. In our integrative model, we use self-determination theory and regulatory focus theory as the bases for the development of a new concept, namely, goal regulation, to serve as the link between commitment and motivation theory. The implications of making distinctions among forms of motivation, as has been the case for commitment, are more apparent for some types of behavior than for others. Therefore, we turn now to the second important change we made to Locke's (1997) model.

The Nature of Motivated Behavior

The foregoing discussion implies that the importance of distinguishing among different forms of motivation (or regulation) and commitment is not so much for the behaviors included within a specified contingency, or the terms of a commitment, as it is for behaviors that fall outside these boundaries. The latter was referred to above as discretionary behavior ([Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001](#)). It has also been described as extra-role behavior ([Katz, 1964](#)) and organizational citizenship behavior ([Organ, 1988](#)). In the job performance literature, it has been referred to as contextual performance and distinguished from the more regulated task performance ([Borman & Motowidlo, 1997](#)). Hereinafter, we use the term *discretionary* to refer to behavior that, although beneficial to the goal setter or the target of a commitment, is not specified in the goal statement or terms of the commitment. Behaviors that are specified a priori are described as *nondiscretionary*.

It might be argued that if the benefits of autonomous regulation, promotion focus, and affective commitment are reflected more in discretionary than in nondiscretionary behavior, the advantage disappears if one simply expands the goal or the terms of the commitment. However, this is often more easily said than done. For example, despite the effort and attention to detail that goes into negotiating a labor contract, consider what happens when employees "work to rule" by doing only those things explicitly required in the contract. Many important activities fail to get done, and the effect can be very damaging to the organization. If anything, the requirements for continuous change in the modern workplace are making it more difficult for management to specify, monitor, and regulate desired employee behavior ([Bridges, 1994](#); [Fried, Hollenbeck, Slowik, Tieg, & Ben-David, 1999](#)). As employees' discretion over their behavior increases, the nature of their commitment and motivation becomes even more important. Therefore, we maintain that the distinction between nondiscretionary and discre-

tionary behavior is also important, and can easily be incorporated into Locke's (1997) model.

The Integrative Model

Having provided a brief overview of relevant theory and research pertaining to work motivation and commitment, our objective here is to bring the theories together in a unified model. This model is depicted in Figure 2. Concepts taken directly, or with minor modifications, from Locke's (1997) model (see Figure 1) are presented in boxes without shading. Relations among these concepts are indicated with solid arrows. As noted earlier, these relations have generally been well established empirically. The key concepts we have added to the model are shaded. Relations among these concepts, and links to other concepts in the original model, are indicated with dotted arrows. In most cases these relations are based on theory and related research findings but have not been tested directly. Consequently, they serve as the basis for the propositions we offer to guide future research.

The model introduces four new or modified concepts to Locke's (1997) model of the motivation process: goal regulation, commitment to social foci, goal commitment, and the bases for commitment. It also makes the important distinction between nondiscretionary and discretionary goal-directed behavior we described earlier. We address each of these changes in turn, beginning with the distinction between nondiscretionary and discretionary behavior.

Nondiscretionary and Discretionary Behavior

In a goal-setting context, nondiscretionary behavior is that which is specified or implied by the goal itself (e.g., make 10 more phone calls per hour, increase sales by 25%). Discretionary behavior is, by definition, unspecified and can take various forms. For example, it could include exerting extraordinary effort to achieve a goal under conditions that would normally absolve the employee of negative consequences for failure. It could also include voluntarily sharing information that would help others achieve their goals.

In our model, we consider nondiscretionary and discretionary behavior to be direct outcomes of the four goal mechanisms identified by Locke (1997): direction, effort, persistence, and task strategies. Moreover, in both cases, the strength of the effects of the mechanisms on behavior will be moderated by three of the four conditions specified in Locke's original model: feedback, ability, and task complexity. We address the fourth moderating condition, goal commitment, later. We argue that all four mechanisms apply to both forms of behavior. To illustrate, consider the following example.

A logging crew has been given a monthly goal of increasing its cut rate by 10% over the previous 6-month average. In light of existing evidence for the effectiveness of goal setting (see [Locke & Latham, 1990, 2002](#)), and assuming the crew members accept the goal, they should respond by becoming more focused on goal-relevant activity, exerting effort, and developing strategies to increase the likelihood of goal attainment. In other words, we should see an increase in nondiscretionary (i.e., goal-compliant) behavior. Under the right conditions (i.e., ability, feedback, task clarity), this behavior should lead to an improvement in actual performance.

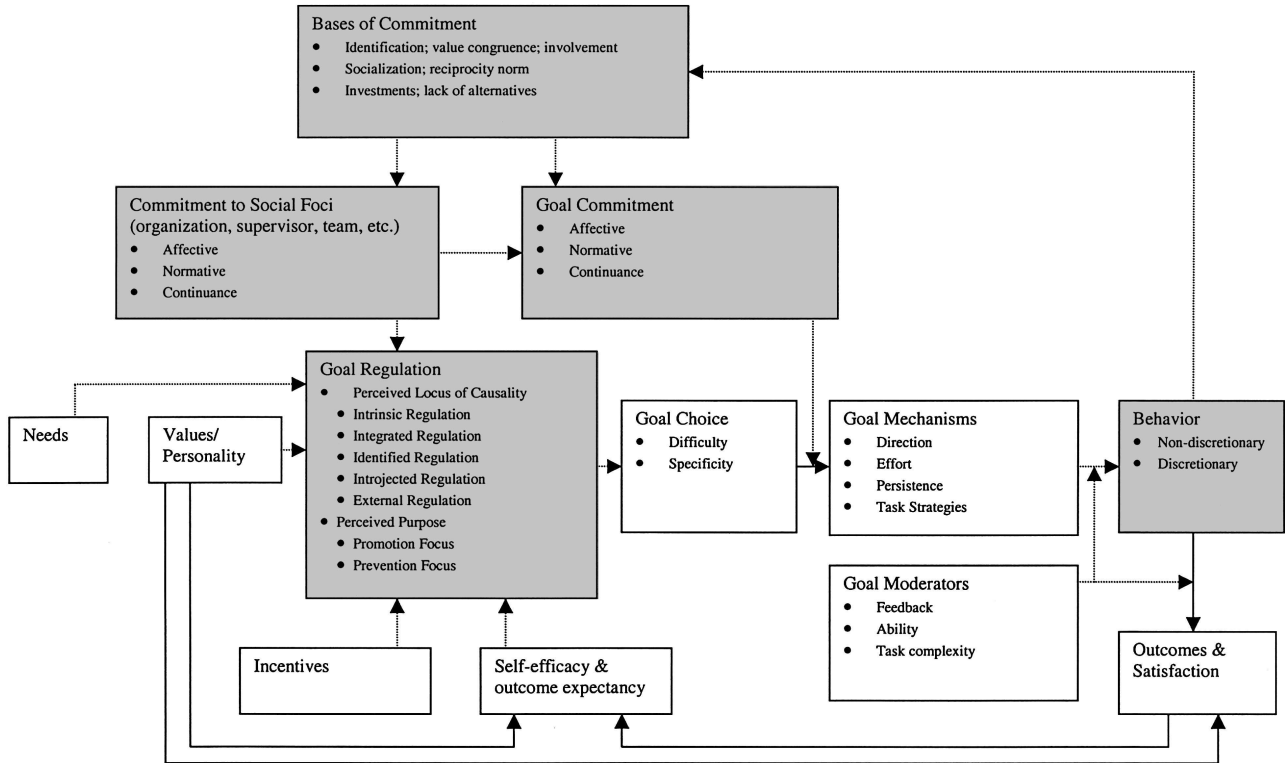


Figure 2. An integrated model of employee commitment and motivation.

Now consider what might happen if there is an unexpected change in the weather that makes goal attainment much more difficult. In addition to behaviors required to attain the goals under normal conditions, crew members may have to exert additional effort and persist in the face of unexpected obstacles, perhaps at additional costs to themselves (e.g., discomfort, longer hours). Because the new conditions were unforeseen and could be used as a legitimate excuse for failure to attain the goal, any behavior taken to overcome obstacles and increase performance could be considered discretionary. As we explain below, discretionary behavior should be more sensitive to differences in forms of regulation and commitment than nondiscretionary behavior. For additional evidence, see Smith’s (1977) study of the effects of job satisfaction on attendance during a snowstorm.

As a final point, it should be noted that including a separate box in our model to highlight the distinction between nondiscretionary and discretionary behavior raises an issue that was not apparent in Locke’s (1997) original model. That is, what is the nature of the goal mechanisms? In the original model they could be interpreted as intentions (e.g., willingness to exert effort), behavior (e.g., actual effort and persistence), or cognitive processes (e.g., direction of attention, strategy development). Because we now include behavior as a separate component in the motivation process, we hereinafter consider the goal mechanisms to be internal processes (e.g., intentions) that immediately precede motivated behavior.

Goal Regulation

One of the most significant modifications we propose to Locke’s (1997) model is the inclusion of goal regulation, a concept

based on self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Ryan & Deci, 2000) and regulatory focus theory (Higgins, 1997, 1998). We define *goal regulation* as a motivational mindset reflecting the reasons for, and purpose of, a course of action being contemplated or in progress.

Consistent with self-determination theory, this definition suggests that goal regulation includes an assessment of the reasons for (Buss, 1978), or locus of causality of (de Charms, 1968), a course of action. In Figure 2 we use the term *perceived locus of causality* to refer to a person’s beliefs about why he or she is pursuing a particular goal. Locus of causality can vary along a continuum from external (external and introjected regulation) to internal (intrinsic, integrated, and identified regulation). As we noted earlier, this assessment of causality reflects the relative strength (salience) rather than the absolute strength of internal and external inducements.

Following regulatory focus theory, the definition also suggests that goal regulation can reflect different purposes for a course of action. In Figure 2 we use the term *perceived purpose* to refer to the actor’s general purpose in trying to attain a given outcome. In particular, we acknowledge the two specific purposes identified in regulatory focus theory: to achieve ideals or make gains (promotion focus) and to fulfill obligations or avoid losses (prevention focus).

Several related issues warrant discussion. First, although our definition of goal regulation focuses on reasons and purpose, it does not preclude inclusion of qualities of goal regulation suggested by other current or future theories. For example, another aspect of goal regulation might be goal orientation, a concept

introduced into the motivation literature by Dweck and her colleagues (e.g., [Dweck & Elliott, 1983](#); [Dweck & Leggett, 1988](#); [Grant & Dweck, 2003](#)). The concept was introduced initially to distinguish *performance goals*, where the purpose is to demonstrate ability or avoid demonstrating lack of ability, from *learning goals*, where the objective is to acquire new knowledge or skills. In many respects, the distinction between performance and learning orientation parallels that between prevention and promotion focus (cf. [Van-Dijk & Kluger, 2004](#)) and therefore its inclusion would require little or no refinement to our definition of goal regulation. However, researchers have recently begun to make finer distinctions among goal orientations (e.g., [Grant & Dweck, 2003](#); [Vandewalle, Cron, & Slocum, 2001](#)), and these might warrant consideration as components of goal regulation in the future. We have not done so here because the dimensionality of goal orientation is still uncertain.

Second, in the following discussion we focus primarily on goal regulation at the contemplation stage (i.e., on the role it plays in influencing goal choice). However, we expect that it continues to influence ongoing action and can itself change in response to variations in internal or external conditions. For example, an employee who initiates a course of action for extrinsic reasons (e.g., to comply with a supervisor's request), and has a prevention focus (to avoid the stigma of failure) might come to appreciate the value of the intended outcome (identified regulation) and see it as an ideal to be achieved (promotion focus). Alternatively, an employee who initially has high ideals (identified regulation and promotion focus) might recognize the futility of his or her efforts and continue only out of concern for the consequences of failure to do otherwise (extrinsic regulation and prevention focus).

Finally, although our model acknowledges two important components of goal regulation, locus of causality and perceived purpose, we have not yet addressed the link between the two. We are unaware of any research to date that has examined relations between perceptions of autonomous versus external regulation and regulatory focus. Earlier, we suggested that the values inherent in the more autonomous forms of regulation might serve as the ideals that give purpose to behavior. For example, employees who share the value the company places on quality customer service should see this as an ideal to be achieved and therefore have a promotion focus. Similarly, the obligations and costs inherent in more external forms of regulation should be experienced as the oughts that characterize a prevention focus. Therefore, following the example above, employees who do not share the company's value for customer service but recognize that failure to comply with the relevant policy could result in reprimand or termination should have a stronger prevention focus. We offer this as our first proposition.

Proposition 1: Employees who view their behavior as more internally driven (intrinsic, identified, and integrated regulation) perceive themselves as working toward the accomplishment of ideals (promotion focus). Those who view their behavior as more externally driven (external or introjected regulation) perceive themselves as working toward the fulfillment of obligations (prevention focus).

As can be seen from Figure 2, we propose that goal regulation mediates the effects of the antecedents of goal choice in Locke's model: needs, values/personality, incentives and self-efficacy.

(Note that, consistent with Bandura's, 1997, theory and empirical evidence [[Locke & Latham, 2002](#)], we expanded the self-efficacy box from Figure 1 to include outcome expectancy as an antecedent of goal regulation.) We propose that the influence of these antecedents is filtered through goal regulation. That is, all factors influencing intentional goal-directed behavior will be experienced as having a reason and a purpose, and these reasons and purposes influence the nature of the goals that people set or accept.

Proposition 2: The effects of personal needs, values, personality, incentives, self-efficacy beliefs, and outcome expectancies on goal choice are mediated by their effects on goal regulation.

This proposition implies that all of the previously specified antecedents of goal choice will, alone or in combination, affect goal regulation. Discussion of these effects is complicated by the fact that needs, values, personality, and incentives are categorical variables with many different elements. Therefore, for present purposes, we offer a general proposition concerning the effects of these antecedents on goal regulation. This proposition is presented graphically in Figure 3.

Proposition 3: Employees experience more autonomous regulation and a stronger promotion focus as the relative salience of internal forces for behavior (i.e., needs, values, personal disposition) increases and experience more external regulation and a stronger prevention focus as the relative salience of external inducements (i.e., rewards and punishments) increases.

By focusing on the relative salience of the internal and external forces to behave, we acknowledge that these forces are relatively independent and can operate simultaneously. However, we believe that one or the other will be perceived as more salient. It is the relative salience that determines perceptions of external versus autonomous regulation and promotion versus prevention focus. To illustrate, recall the examples of the soldier described earlier. The soldier (Soldier A) who enlists in the armed forces with a strong set of values and with full awareness of its implications is likely to see his or her behavior under combat conditions as highly autonomous even when carrying out direct orders. This is because the values that guided the initial decision to enlist remain highly salient as causes of subsequent behavior. The situation would be quite different for a soldier (Soldier B) who was unable to avoid a draft or enlisted merely to follow a family tradition. As implied by Proposition 2, this difference in goal regulation is likely to have implications for goal choice. We elaborate in Proposition 4.

Proposition 4: Employees' choice of goals is influenced by goal regulation. In particular, employees set or accept more difficult goals under conditions of autonomous regulation and promotion focus than under conditions of external regulation and prevention focus.

Note that of the two characteristics of goal choice identified by [Locke \(1997\)](#), specificity and difficulty, we believe that goal difficulty is most likely to be influenced by goal regulation. This is because goal difficulty has the most obvious consequences for employees in terms of effort exertion and the allocation of time and other resources. Specificity has been shown to be an important

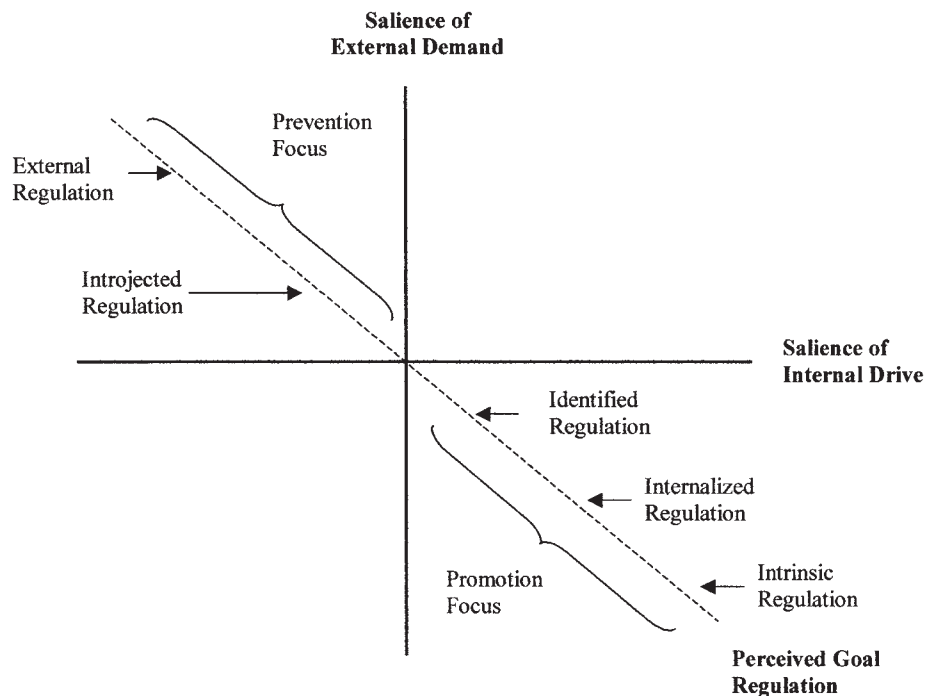


Figure 3. Salience of external and internal influences as determinants of perceptions of goal regulation.

factor for task performance (Locke & Latham, 1990), presumably because it aids in the direction of effort. However, it is likely to be under the control of an external goal setter (when such exists) and may be less of an issue for negotiation by the recipient. Therefore, following our example above, we would expect Soldier A's and Soldier B's decision to accept the goal to be affected more by its difficulty than by its specificity.

Admittedly, when goals are self set, specificity in goal choice might become an issue. Even here, however, it is difficult to predict how specificity will be influenced by goal regulation. On the one hand, because the values underlying autonomous regulation and the ideals underlying promotion focus tend to be abstract, we might expect self-set goals in the service of these values and ideals to be quite general. On the other hand, if values and ideals contribute to the perceived importance of goal attainment and the individual understands the benefits of having clear objectives, autonomous regulation and promotion focus might contribute to the setting of more specific goals. Therefore, we do not offer a specific hypothesis concerning the effect of goal regulation on goal specificity but suggest that this is an issue worth considering in future research.

Returning to our example concerning the two soldiers' responses to the assignment of a difficult goal, it is important to recognize that whether either is in a position to reject the goal will depend on the situation. Certainly we would expect Soldier A to be more likely than Soldier B to volunteer to undertake a very challenging assignment. The distinction we made earlier between nondiscretionary and discretionary behavior is obvious here. But what happens in this example if the goal is presented in the form of a command? We believe that the distinction between nondiscretionary and discretionary behavior continues to apply. Just as in the earlier case of the logging crew, an assigned goal, if accepted,

should influence the direction of behavior, level of effort, persistence, and development of task strategy. Thus, as long as things go according to plan, the behavior of Soldier A and Soldier B might be indistinguishable. If conditions change, however, so might the behavior. For example, if the negative consequences of pursuing a course of action become greater than those of failing to comply with orders, Soldier B may be inclined to reduce effort or give up. Soldier A, however, pushes on as long as the behavior remains consistent with the values that guided the initial decision to act.

Although our examples are strictly illustrative, nearly all employees are likely to have some discretion in the goals they set for themselves and in how they carry out those that are assigned. As we noted earlier, if anything, the level of discretion afforded to employees is increasing (cf. Fried et al., 1999). Therefore, we need a better understanding of how goal regulation affects employee behavior. We offer the following propositions to guide research in this direction.

Proposition 5: Goal regulation influences employee behavior through goal choice and the goal mechanisms of direction, effort, persistence, and task strategy.

Proposition 6: Because they choose more difficult goals, employees who experience autonomous regulation and a promotion focus are willing to exert more effort and persist longer in goal-directed behavior than employees who experience external regulation and a prevention focus.

Proposition 7: The indirect effect of goal regulation on discretionary behavior is greater than its effect on nondiscretionary behavior.

In sum, making the distinction between nondiscretionary and discretionary behavior helps to illustrate the benefits of treating motivation as a multidimensional concept. Including goal regulation as part of the motivation process helps to explain the nature of the underlying mindsets and facilitates integration of commitment into a model of the more general motivation process.

Commitments to Social Foci

Although Locke (1997) included goal commitment and organizational commitment in his model, only the former was considered to play a role in influencing task performance (see Figure 1). Organizational commitment was included as one of several factors that influence other forms of work behavior (e.g., job and work avoidance, deviance, adjustment). Recall, however, that we expanded the focus of the motivation process to include all forms of goal-oriented behavior. With this broadened perspective, we argue that organizational commitment plays a more important role in the motivation process. Moreover, we believe that the same is true of commitments to targets other than the organization (e.g., supervisors, team, unions). Indeed, there is now considerable evidence that multiple workplace commitments can influence employee behavior (e.g., T. E. Becker & Billings, 1993; Siders, George, & Sharwadkar, 2001; Vandenberghe et al., 2001). We refer to these as commitments to social foci to distinguish them from goal commitment because we believe that they exert their influence at a different point in the motivation process.

Commitment to social foci. We propose that commitments to social foci combine with other antecedents in Locke's (1997) model to affect goal-directed behavior. The effect of these commitments is indirect through goal regulation, goal choice, and goal commitment. Commitment should exert a direct effect on goal regulation, and the different forms of commitment should have a significant impact on the corresponding forms of regulation. That is, employees who have a strong affective commitment to a relevant social target are likely to share the target's values and experience self-set and assigned goals as autonomously regulated (integrated or identified regulation) and as ideals to be achieved (promotion focus). Those who have a strong normative commitment are likely to perceive goal acceptance and related behaviors as an obligation and should thus evince the introjected form of goal regulation. Finally, those who are committed to a target primarily out of necessity (continuance commitment) likely see the goal as externally regulated (i.e., pursued in order to avoid the loss of desired outcomes beyond their control). Because they are trying to fulfill obligations and avoid losses, those experiencing introjected and external regulation should have a prevention focus.

Proposition 8: Compared with employees with lesser affective commitment, those with stronger affective commitment to a target experience greater intrinsic motivation and more autonomous forms of external regulation (i.e., integrated and identified regulation) and a stronger promotion focus in the pursuit of goals of relevance to the target.

Proposition 9: Compared with employees with lesser normative commitment, employees with stronger normative commitment to a target experience greater introjected regulation and a stronger prevention focus in the pursuit of goals of relevance to the target.

Proposition 10: Compared with employees with lesser continuance commitment, employees with stronger continuance commitment to a target experience greater external regulation and a stronger prevention focus in the pursuit of goals of relevance to the target.

Given that commitment influences perceptions of goal regulation, the impact on goal choice, goal commitment, goal mechanisms, and work behavior should be the same as described in Propositions 4 and 5. When considered together, the foregoing propositions help to explain why research consistently has shown that affective commitment to the organization and other targets has the strongest positive correlations with desirable work behaviors such as job performance and organizational citizenship behavior, followed by normative commitment and continuance commitment (Meyer et al., 2002).

Goal commitment. Our treatment of goal commitment differs from Locke's (1997) in two ways. First, we argue that it is a multidimensional concept. Second, we have separated goal commitment from the other moderating conditions identified in Locke's model and have changed the point at which it exerts its moderating effect. The first change is based on Meyer and Herscovitch's (2001) argument that all workplace commitments, including goal commitment, can be accompanied by different mindsets (desire, obligation, cost), and that these mindsets have important implications for commitment-relevant behavior. In sum, employees can pursue a goal because they want to, because they think they should, because they must, or some combination of these. This change necessitates a different approach to the measurement of goal commitment than has been used in the past (e.g., Donovan & Radosevich, 1998; Klein, Wesson, Hollenbeck, Wright, & DeShon, 2001). Meyer and Herscovitch provided directions and a set of sample items to serve as a guide to the development of such measures.

The rationale for the second change is that, unlike the other conditions (i.e., feedback, ability, task complexity) that moderate the effects of the motivational mechanisms on behavior and of behavior on performance, we believe that goal commitment interacts with goal choice to influence the goal mechanisms themselves. That is, we propose that goal commitment influences the extent to which a goal actually promotes greater attention to goal-relevant activities, intention to exert effort in the short and long term, and willingness to develop strategies to facilitate goal attainment. Moreover, we propose that the moderating effect will be greatest for affective commitment, followed by normative and, finally, continuance commitment. This is consistent with Herscovitch and Meyer's (2002) argument that, because it tends to be based on personal values, affective commitment is a stronger binding force than normative and continuance commitment. The latter are more likely to conflict with the perceived shorter term self-interests of some employees and, therefore, are subject to countervailing forces that can weaken the bond. For example, an individual who agrees to work toward a difficult goal out of obligation, or to receive a bonus, might re-evaluate the situation if it becomes apparent that the costs of meeting the goal are greater than anticipated.

Proposition 11: The effect of goal choice, particularly the difficulty of the goal, on the goal mechanisms will be moderated by goal commitment. Difficult goals promote

greater willingness to exert effort, persist, and develop facilitating strategies as goal commitment increases. The strength of the moderating effects will be greatest for affective commitment, followed by normative and continuance commitment, respectively.

Although we distinguish between commitments to social foci and commitment to goals, and propose that these exert their primary influence at different points in the motivation process, we do not believe they are completely independent. Employees can set or accept goals without any obvious influence of commitment to a social target (e.g., organization, supervisor, team), but in many cases the choice of goal, and the nature of the commitment to these goals, is likely to be influenced by such commitments. Therefore, we have included a path between commitment to social foci and goal commitment in Figure 2.

Proposition 12. The nature and strength of employees' commitments to social foci will affect the nature and strength of their commitment to goals of relevance to these foci.

We expect that the most obvious effect of commitments to social foci on goal commitment will be "in kind," that is, affective to affective, normative to normative, and continuance to continuance. However, other combinations are possible. For example, employees who have a strong affective attachment to a supervisor might experience a strong affective, normative, or continuance commitment to an assigned goal depending on whether they believe in the value of the goal, feel an obligation to do what the supervisor wants, or are concerned about damaging their relationship by not accepting the goal.

Bases of Commitment

The final component in our integrative model, the bases of commitment, was included to acknowledge those factors believed to contribute to the development of employee commitment. According to Meyer and Herscovitch (2001), the bases for the different forms of commitment are similar regardless of the target of that commitment. Thus, the same bases apply to the development of commitment to social foci and to goals. This does not mean, however, that the specific antecedent conditions will be the same, or that the nature of the commitment to a goal will necessarily be the same as the nature of the commitment to relevant social foci. For example, employees might have a strong affective commitment to the organization because the company culture is compatible with their personal values. Nevertheless, their affective commitment to a goal set by the organization (e.g., reducing the length of service calls) might be weak if they believe that attainment is not in the company's best interest. Similarly, employees might have little invested in their employment in the company (i.e., low continuance commitment to the organization) but have a lot to lose (e.g., a bonus) by failing to achieve a performance goal (i.e., high continuance commitment to the goal).

The bases of commitment identified by Meyer and Herscovitch (2001) and included in our model represent basic mechanisms presumed to be involved in the development of commitment. They therefore represent some of the most proximal causes of commitment. There are many other factors (e.g., human resources management practices and policies) that serve as more distal causes.

Included among these might be some of the antecedents of goal choice included in Locke's (1997) model (Figure 1) and our modification of this model (Figure 2). For example, personal values are expected to play a role in shaping employee commitment (Finegan, 2000; Vandenberghe & Peiro, 1999). For simplicity, we have not included paths between the antecedent variables and the bases of commitment. Nevertheless, we acknowledge that various connections may exist. Similarly, we recognize that both the antecedent variables and the bases of commitment will be influenced by various environmental factors, including leadership, the social milieu, and the work itself. These are not included in our model, and space does not allow us to do justice to discussion of the roles that these factors play in the motivation and commitment processes.

Finally, we have included a feedback connection between behavior and performance and the bases of commitment. This path acknowledges theory and research pertaining to behavioral commitment (e.g., Kiesler, 1971; Salancik, 1977) and the escalation of commitment (e.g., Staw, 1976; Staw & Ross, 1987). Under certain conditions (e.g., volition, irrevocability, visibility), pursuing a course of action can strengthen commitment to that course of action (e.g., goal commitment) and to the beneficiaries of that course of action (e.g., commitment to social foci). These effects will arguably be stronger in the case of discretionary behavior because it is volitional by definition. The nature of the psychological commitment that develops as a function of this escalation process will depend on one's level of conscious awareness (Meyer, Bobocel, & Allen, 1991). For example, consider a bank employee who makes a bad loan. Because the original decision was freely chosen, irrevocable, and public, there will be pressure to escalate the commitment (e.g., provide the client with additional funds to address the "problem"). If the employee is aware that this escalation is a face-saving maneuver, it is likely to be experienced as continuance commitment. However, if the employee is successful in rationalizing the original decision, the escalation might be experienced as affective commitment to the course of action and possibly the client. In either case, we believe that the effect of the behavior on subsequent commitment will be indirect through its effects on one or more of the bases of commitment (e.g., value congruence, investment).

Implications of the Model for Theory and Practice

The most immediate contributions of the integrative model of motivation and commitment are the propositions that provide direction for future research. Should these propositions be supported, there are additional implications for motivation and commitment theory in general, as well as for related literatures that make reference to the motivation and/or commitment processes. There are also implications for management policy and practice.

Motivation Theory

Motivation theory benefits in at least two important ways from integration with commitment theory. First, commitment is an important energizing force in the motivation process that has yet to be fully acknowledged. Therefore, recognizing it as such helps broaden our understanding of the bases for motivated work behavior in general. It also helps to address the criticism that current motivation theories, focusing as they do on personal needs, values,

and incentives as the primary motivational forces, are too culture-specific (e.g., [Boyacigiller & Adler, 1991](#); [Shamir, 1991](#)). By including multiple foci of commitment as antecedents of goal-oriented behavior, we acknowledge the existence of social influences that might be particularly relevant in non-Western cultures. In some of these cultures, the well-being of the collective (e.g., peers, work groups) appears to be more important to employees than it is in North America ([Cheng & Stockdale, 2003](#)). Even in Western cultures, individuals often behave cooperatively, in many cases because it benefits others to whom they have a strong bond ([Organ & Ryan, 1995](#)). Commitment, particularly affective and normative commitment to social foci, helps account for this behavior.

Second, including commitment as a component in the motivation process served as the impetus for making a distinction between nondiscretionary and discretionary behavior and for the introduction of goal regulation as a way of acknowledging differences in the mindsets that can accompany motivated behavior. Distinctions similar to that between nondiscretionary and discretionary behavior have been made in other theories of organizational behavior (e.g., [Borman & Motowidlo, 1997](#); [Katz, 1964](#); [Organ, 1988](#)) but not in mainstream theories of work motivation where the emphasis has been on nondiscretionary behavior (e.g., task performance). The notion of differing mindsets has proved valuable in theories of motivation developed in other areas of psychology (e.g., [Deci & Ryan, 1985](#); [Higgins, 1997](#)) but has not yet been considered in work motivation theory. Therefore, both ideas serve to advance our understanding of work motivation and behavior.

Commitment Theory

One of the primary benefits of embedding commitment within a model of motivation is that it helps identify the mediating mechanisms explaining how employees' relationships with social foci influence behavior relevant to those foci. There are at least two important implications of this. First, some authors (e.g., [Randall, 1990](#)) have pointed out that observed relations between measures of organizational commitment and job performance are modest. This can be explained by recognizing that (a) the organization is only one of several foci of commitment, (b) commitment is only one of many forces involved in goal choice, and its effects are indirect, and (c) the effects of goal choice on performance are mediated and moderated by various internal mechanisms and contextual factors. Further, most measures of organizational commitment were developed with the objective of predicting employee retention. With retention as the goal, staying with the organization represents the focal behavior ([Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001](#)). In this case, job performance would be considered discretionary behavior in the sense that performance above the minimum required for retention is not specified in the goal (nor included in the measures). Thus, the absolute level of the impact of organizational commitment on performance will generally be lower than on retention. The strength of the observed relations between organizational commitment and job performance should be stronger if the measures of commitment are constructed to include working toward the attainment of organizational objectives as the focal behavior (see [Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001](#)).

Second, including multiple foci of commitment in a model of work motivation helps explain how these multiple commitments

interact to influence behavior. Commitment to each target should influence goal-oriented behavior of relevance to that target. To the extent that the goals are compatible, the effects of multiple commitments should be complementary or additive. In contrast, if the goals are in opposition, having dual commitments will create a conflict for the individual, and single-foci commitments will lead to behavior that is of benefit to one target but detrimental to the other. We discuss some of the practical implications of this below.

Related Theory

Motivation and commitment are often included as antecedent, consequence, or mediating variables in theories pertaining to related concepts. Therefore, the propositions derived from our model have implications for these theories as well. To illustrate, we focus here on some of the implications for theories of leadership, employee identification, and job design.

First, including commitment to various foci as factors involved in the motivation process might help explain the relative effectiveness of different leadership styles (e.g., transactional vs. transformational; [Bass, 1985](#)). Transactional leaders exert their influence by making salient the positive (contingent reward leadership) or negative (management-by-exception) consequences of employees' actions. Transformational leaders are equally adept at using contingent reward but also encourage employees to transcend narrow, short-term self-interests to work toward objectives that are in the best interests of the team or organization. In doing so, they are likely to build commitment, primarily affective commitment, to relevant social foci and their goals. Therefore, according to our model, transformational leaders exert their influence through two channels: satisfaction of personal needs and commitment to social foci. Transactional leaders utilize only the former. This might help explain the "augmentation effect" of transformational leadership so often reported in leadership research (see [Bass, 1997](#)).

Our model also holds promise for enriching the growing literature on identification in organizations. According to identity theorists, a social identity refers to the nature and content of a person's relationship with another specific individual or group ([Ellemers, Spears, & Doosje, 2002](#)). Such an identity is said to stem from the categorization of individuals, the distinctiveness and prestige of the group, the salience of out-groups, and other variables involved in group formation ([Tajfel, 1981](#)). Among probable consequences are behaviors that are congruent with the identity ([Ashforth & Mael, 1989](#)). These are important issues, but how does identification lead to congruent behaviors? Our model suggests that identification with, say, a work team leads to affective commitment to that team. This, in turn, leads to goal regulation that is perceived as more autonomous and self-controlled ("I want to accept/set goals that are consistent with my identification with the team") and the choice of goals that are seen as beneficial to the team. Note, however, that identification is a relatively distal cause of behavior. Therefore, as we explained earlier with regard to the effects of commitment to social foci on behavior, how the effects of identification will play out will depend on a host of other personal and situational factors and on their joint influence on the mediating mechanisms outlined in the model.

Finally, our model has implications for job design theories. A popular approach in this area over the past 15 years has been employee empowerment ([Conger & Kanungo, 1988](#); [Sagie & Koslowsky, 2000](#); [Thomas & Velthouse, 1990](#)). In her seminal

work, Spreitzer (1995, 1996) developed a measure of psychological empowerment capturing four sets of essential cognitions: meaning (fit between work-role requirements and personal beliefs and values), competence (work-specific self-efficacy), self-determination (sense of choice in initiating and regulating actions), and impact (perceived influence on strategic, administrative, and operating outcomes at work). Authors have identified several practices (e.g., participative decision making, delegating leadership, job enrichment) that lead to greater empowerment among employees (for a review, see Sagie & Koslowsky, 2000). However, as noted by Sagie and Koslowsky, it is likely that these practices operate at least partly through mediating mechanisms, including commitment to joint decisions and identification with management. According to our model, empowerment practices generate more autonomous forms of regulated behavior if they elicit identification and value congruence as bases of commitment, hence, strengthening affective commitment to relevant foci such as management. However, if empowerment practices engender a sense of reciprocity (e.g., because employees feel valued by receiving rewarding jobs), they might produce a strong normative commitment. Finally, if empowerment practices are ineffective, they could be replaced by directive leadership practices that, by emphasizing the instrumental nature of the relationship, would promote continuance commitment. Thus, the effects of empowerment practices on behavior may depend on the nature of the commitment they produce.

Management Policy and Practice

Our model has several implications for human resource management. Some of these follow directly from the motivation and commitment theories on which the model is based, including the use of goal setting (Locke & Latham, 1990), emphasis on building strong affective commitment (Meyer & Allen, 1997), and the use of autonomy-supportive practices to foster perceptions of internal regulation (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Others only become apparent when the commitment and motivation process are considered in conjunction. In the interests of space, we focus here on two examples.

First, past work has recognized goal commitment as a necessary, albeit not sufficient, condition for effective goal setting. Various strategies have been suggested for how this commitment might be achieved: Employees could make public statements, leaders could communicate inspiring visions, and employees could participate in the creation of their goals (Locke & Latham, 2002). According to our model, however, the nature of the commitment invoked by these various strategies might be quite different. We know that "selling" the value of an assigned goal or allowing employees to participate in the goal-setting process leads to higher levels of task performance (Latham, Erez, & Locke, 1988), and we suspect that this is because these strategies promote affective commitment to the goal. Using a "tell" strategy to assign a goal, combined with a public statement of acceptance, is likely to, at best, instill continuance commitment. As a result, employees might do what is required to achieve the goal but nothing more. Whether this is good enough will depend on the nature of the goal and the situation. The benefits of affective commitment over continuance commitment are most likely to be realized when it is difficult to

specify all of the required behaviors or to anticipate all of the potential obstacles in advance. Under these conditions employee discretion becomes important.

Second, as we noted earlier, to date, little attention has been paid to understanding how employee commitment affects behavior. Our model identifies the motivational mechanisms that may be involved, and this has some important implications. For example, concerns over declining levels of organizational commitment due to instability and uncertainty in the economic environment might be allayed by recognizing that the benefits of employee commitment to the organization accrue from their impact on employees' willingness to set or accept goals that are in the organizations' best interests. One potential solution to declining organizational commitment might be to identify other targets of commitment that share similar goals. For example, employees who are committed to their supervisors or teams may often set or accept many of the same goals as those who are committed to the organization (T. E. Becker & Billings, 1993). Similarly, commitment to one's profession or customers might also lead to the setting or acceptance of goals that are compatible with organizational objectives. To illustrate, consider the professor who is a highly productive researcher and dedicated teacher in spite of having little affective attachment to the university itself. Commitment to the profession and students is a likely explanation. Therefore, in situations where fostering commitment to the organization is difficult (e.g., because of a history of mistrust) or undesirable (e.g., because of a desire to retain flexibility in staffing), organizations might still benefit from the motivating influences of commitment by fostering commitment to other targets (e.g., profession, clients) with compatible goals.

Note that we are not suggesting that commitment substitution is a perfect solution or that organizational commitment is not important. There is rarely complete overlap between target-relevant goals. Despite being a strong researcher and teacher, the professor in our example above might be unwilling to take on administrative activities if the only benefit would be to the university. Organizations need to consider very carefully what they want from employees, both in terms of nondiscretionary and discretionary behavior, and then determine what forms and foci of commitment are likely to facilitate fulfillment of those requirements.

Conclusion

Our aim has been to strengthen both the commitment and motivation literatures by integrating the best and most current elements of both into a single theory. This integrated theory suggests a number of directions through which the understanding of human behavior in the workplace can be advanced. First, the inclusion of variables such as goal choice, self-efficacy, and goal mechanisms in the model should help commitment scholars explain and investigate the processes through which forms, foci, and bases of commitment affect work behavior. Second, by building the concept of goal regulation and the multidimensional view of commitment into the model, motivation scholars can now more thoroughly study how environmental factors like leadership, social influences, and the nature of work affect behavior. Finally, by recognizing distinctions among forms, foci, and bases of commitment, a deeper understanding of goal regulation, choice, and volitional action should be possible.

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