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## AN INTEGRATIVE REVIEW OF ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT - EXPLORING THE RELATION BETWEEN ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT AND EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE

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**Abstract:** The dynamic nature of contemporary work settings make it challenging for organizations to retain talent. Organization commitment is believed to be a strong indicator of intentions to leave and turnover behavior. Committed employees are believed to stay with the organization for longer durations of time and in affective respects; show greater loyalty and passion towards work. A review of literature has shown the multiple perspectives in which commitment has been studied. The objectives of the current study are two fold in nature. Firstly, this paper attempts to study the historic evolution and diverse conceptual views on accepted committed behavior; so as to establish clear relevance of these constructs into three components which are affective, normative and continuance commitment. This is done by establishing construct congruence with popularly accepted models. The second part of the paper tries to analyze the relationship aspects of each of these components with employee performance; so as to understand the differing importance of each, as a predictor of employee performance.

**Keywords:** Organizational commitment; Affective Commitment; Continuance Commitment; Normative Commitment; Employee Performance.

### INTRODUCTION:

Contemporary Organizations are facing dynamic situations of competition, uncertainty due to continuous and rapidly changing technology as a product of globalization (Sohi, 1996; Prager, 2003; Jones et al., 2000, 2005, 2007). Organizational commitment is understood in terms of a sense of belonging, acceptance, identity, loyalty, support, passion and pride feelings ones employers and organization. (Sverke and Sjöberg, 1994; Lee et al., 1999; Kim et al., 2005; Le Rouge et al., 2006; Aghdasi et al., 2011; Cho et al., 2012). Research shows that, committed employees are less likely to leave the organization and it has been noted that they often dedicate themselves to offer their best knowledge, skills, experience, abilities and effort for their organizations well-being (Porter et al., 1979; Mowday et al., 1979; Mowday et al., 1998; Mathieu and Zajac, 1990; Meyer and Allen, 1991). The importance of this aspect paves way for researchers to proactively respond to employee demands and changes. Various researchers have attempted to understand commitment in many ways. Porter et al. (1974) defined organizational commitment as, "the relative strength of an individual's identification with and involvement in a particular organization". Mowday et al. (1979) defined organizational commitment as, "an active relationship with the organization, such that individuals are willing to give something of themselves in orders to contribute to the

organization's well-being". Meyer et al. (2002) identified several outcomes of affective and normative commitment, which are withdrawal cognition, turnover intention, turnover, on-the-job behavior and employee health and well-being.

Thus, commitment has been studied from various perspectives by researchers. This difference in understanding of the concept stems from the historical evolution and multiple views of the construct. It is therefore important for researchers, to identify each component of commitment separately and to its contribution to performance.

### EVOLUTION OF COMMITMENT

Organizational commitment can be understood in many respects. Researchers have reviewed the concept with various parameters in mind. This understanding has developed by keeping various considerations that can be related to job satisfaction and performance. Amongst the known researchers; Becker (1960), Porter (1974) O'Reilly and Chatman (1986) and Meyer and Allen (1984, 1990); have given constructs that make case for understanding commitment behaviors. We first start by reviewing the historical background of the construct of organizational commitment.

### Commitment as Side Bets

Howard Becker's (1960) explained organization commitment as, "The relationship between employee and organization that are based on the "contract" of economic exchange behavior'. He explained that committed employees are committed because they have totally hidden or somewhat hidden investments called "side-bets". Thus if any one were to leave, the bets would not be claimed. He also suggested economic costs accrue over a period of time that make it more difficult for the person to leave work. In this study, organizational commitment was also identified as a major predictor in explaining voluntary turnover. Thus it was suggested that commitment should be measured by evaluating the reasons, if any that would cause a person to leave his organization. (Alutto, Hrebiniak and Alonso, 1973; Ritzer and Trice, 1969).

### Commitment as Affective Dependence

Porter et al. (1974) propagated that organisational commitment is related to the employee's identification and involvement with their organisation. Mowday et al. (1979) explained this further by referring to behavioural and attitudinal aspects of a committed employee. Behavioural commitment was explained in terms of commitment-related behaviours. Such behaviours represent individuals forgoing alternative courses of action and individuals choosing to link themselves to the organization Attitudinal commitment is also thought of as a mind set in which individuals consider the extent to which their individual values and goals are the same as those of their organisation. Thus commitment was explained in terms of, "a strong belief and acceptance of the organization's goals and values, a willingness to exert considerable effort on behalf of the organization and a strong desire to maintain membership in the organization" (Porter 1974). The underlining conclusion of this theory found its roots in Beckers Side Bet theory which proposed that commitment and turnover were related to each other.

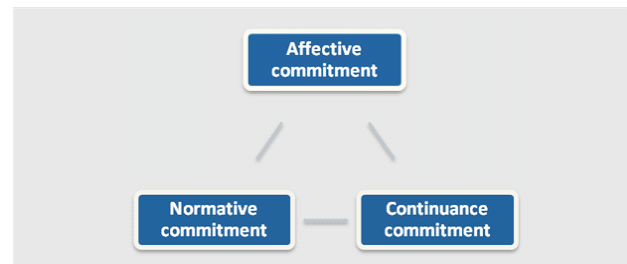
### Commitment as a Multi-Dimensional Construct

O'Reilly and Chatman focused on psychological attachment that depended on two important aspects, namely identification and internalization with the organization. These researchers defined commitment as, "the psychological attachment", felt by the person for the organization, along with his compliance to the extrinsic rewards which are a result of this attachment. O'Reilly and Chatman argued that the psychological attachment could result in Organizational Citizenship Behaviours also. (O'Reilly and Chatman 1985)

Research Methodology: Being a literature review based paper, an understanding of the concept has been developed from secondary sources of data such as research papers, books, articles and existing models. The paper is divided into two parts. The first part explores the various views on commitment and provides an integrative framework of commitment by analyzing the congruence of these diverse views with the Meyer and Allen (1991) Three Dimensional Model of Organizational Commitment. Having analyzed the three established constructs of commitment, the second part of the paper analyses the role of each construct as

a predictor of employee performance.

The Three-Component Model of organizational Commitment - Meyer and Allen (1991)



**Fig.1: The Three Component Model of organizational Commitment: Meyer & Allen (1991)**

The Three Component model explains the three types of commitment as affective, continuance, and normative commitment (Meyer & Allen ,1991). The model attempts to analyze and explain the various forms of commitment that had evolved through various historic constructs. After having reviewed various aspects of commitment, the researchers suggested that there should also be another aspect added to the research the research of commitment, which should be termed as normative commitment (Meyer & Allen, 1991).

Affective Commitment was explained as, "Ones emotion attachment with the organizations whereby there is identification and Involvement with the values of the organization". (Meyer & Allen, 1991).

Continuance Commitment is defined as the willingness to remain in an organization because of the investment that the employee has with "nontransferable" investments. (Meyer & Allen, 1991).

Nontransferable investments include things such as retirement, relationships with other employees, or things that are special to the organization

a. Continuance commitment also includes factors such as years of employment or benefits that the employee may receive that are unique to the organization

Normative commitment is defined as: "generalized value of loyalty and duty, being "a feeling of obligation to continue employment". The reason for this was attributed natural to the way we are raised in the society. can be explained by other commitments such as marriage, family, religion, etc (Meyer & Allen, 1991).

These researchers define affective commitment as, "Ones emotion attachment with the organizations whereby there is identification and involvement with the values of the organization". This could be attested in lieu of the affective dependence approach that emphasized the involvement and personal relationships, attachment that the employee formed with the organization. Continuance Commitment was explained as the willingness to remain in an organization because of the investment that the employee has with "non-transferable" investments. This was like the historic hidden bets that people had and the cost of leaving that they would have to bear. Non-transferable investments include things

such as retirement and relationships with other employees. Continuance commitment also included factors such as years of employment or benefits that the employee may receive that are unique to the organization. Normative commitment was defined as, “the generalized value of loyalty and duty, being a feeling of obligation to continue employment”. This was attributed to one's sense of obligation to remain in a certain job, just like a sense of obligation to remain in institutions of marriage, family, religion, etc

Allen & Mayer suggested that all the three forms of commitment relate negatively to turnover. They related in different capacity other work-relevant behaviours such as attendance, in-role performance and organizational citizenship behaviour. They also suggested that affective commitment is expected to have the strongest positive relation; followed by normative commitment and continuance commitment is expected to be unrelated, or related negatively, to the desirable work behaviours. (Meyer, Allen, & Smith 1993).

Analyzing the Congruence between the Three Dimensional Model and Historic Approaches of Organizational Commitment The Relevance of the Allen & Mayer Three component Model of Commitment can be seen in the following table which highlights the congruence between various historic approaches along with Allen & Mayer's model of organizational commitment .This model refers to the three forms of commitment as affective, continuance, and normative commitment (Meyer, Allen, & Smith 1993).

Affective Commitment: Ones emotion attachment with the organizations whereby there is identification and Involvement with the values of the organization”.

Table 1. shows Congruence between the Three Dimensional Model and Historic Approaches of Organizational Commitment

Variables in Allen & Mayer's model	Historic Approach
<div> <div>Affective Commitment denotes components of :</div> <div> <div>? Emotional attachment</div> <div>? Identification with the organization</div> <div>? Involvement in the organization</div> </div> <div>Organizational Citizenship Behavior</div> </div>	<div> <div> <div>→</div> <div>Theory of Affective Dependence</div> </div> <div> <div>(Porter 1974, Mowday 1979)</div> <div>(O'Reilly and Chatman, 1986)</div> </div> </div>

Continuance commitment is the willingness to remain in an organization because of the investment that the employee has with “nontransferable” investments.

Variables in Allen & Mayer's model	Historic Approach
<div> <div>? Non-transferable investments include things such as retirement, relationships with other employees, or things that are special to the organization</div> <div>? Continuance commitment also includes factors such as years of employment or benefits that the employee may receive that are unique to the organization</div> </div>	<div> <div> <div>→</div> <div>The Side Bets Theory</div> </div> <div>Howard Becker's (1960)</div> </div>

In 1982, Weiner defined commitment as being a “generalized value of loyalty and duty”. Meyer and Allen (1991) supported this type of commitment with their definition of normative commitment being “a feeling of obligation”.

Normative commitment is defined as a generalized value of loyalty and duty, being “a feeling of obligation to continue employment

Variables in Allen & Mayer's model: Identified as a new form of commitment

Allen & Mayer
<div> <div>? Feeling of obligation to continue employment.</div> <div>? Natural due to the way we are raised in society.</div> </div> <div>can be explained by other commitments such as marriage, family, religion, etc.</div>

Review of Literature: Definitions of Organizational Commitment

Researcher's analysis of Organizational Commitment: Emotional Alliance with the organization, Identification with organizational values and loyalty towards the organization

The following definitions define aspects of commitment in terms of emotion attachment and involvement with the values of the organization. They also emphasis the importance of inter personal relationships and overall attachment that the employee feels with the organization.

Kanter (1968) described organizational commitment as the attachment of an individual's affectivity and emotion to the Group. He emphasized on the nature of attachment and relationships that evolve within a span of time. Thus, commitment was viewed as a psychological construct involving emotional attachment and relationship building.

Buchanan (1974) described commitment as the, “affective attachment” to the goals and values of the organization in relation to goals and values , apart from its purely instrumental worth. This research focused on explaining commitment in terms of pure attachment between the organization and the employee.

O'Reilly et al. (1986) described commitment by focusing on the “psychological bond that ties the employee to the organization”. These ties could be viewed in terms of the inherent loyalty that the employee feels towards the organization along with his inclination to go beyond the call of his duty for his organization

Porter et al. (1974) defined three major components of organizational commitment as being “a strong belief in and acceptance of the organization's goals, a willingness to exert considerable effort on behalf of the organization, and a definite desire to maintain organizational membership”.

Maume (2006) described commitment as the “willingness to work hard to improve their companies, the fit between the firm's and the worker's values, reluctance to leave, and loyalty toward or pride taken in working for their employers”. He viewed commitment in terms of the employees desire to perform better. Commitment was thus seen as an energizing force that would help in bringing about



efficiency in performance.

Cohen & Kirchmeyer, (1995) explained Organizational commitment in terms of an individual's dedication and loyalty to an organization. The emphasis on the relationship building holds strong when it comes to their perspectives on the eagerness of an employee to exert and channelize all efforts for the benefit of his organization.

(Meyer & Allen, 1993; O'Reilly & Chatman 1986), defined affective commitment as the emotional attachment, identification, and involvement that an employee has with its organization.

Porter et al (1996) defined Organizational commitment in terms of nature of relationship that an employee develops with his organizations, that stems from his natural belief and identification with the values of the organization. This was also instrumental in developing loyalty with the organization.

Porter et al (1974) characterized affective commitment by three factors, namely; "a belief in and acceptance of the organization's goals and values, a willingness to focus effort on helping the organization achieve its goals, and a desire to maintain organizational membership".

Kanter, (1968) explained commitment in terms of, "Loyalty to employer". Sheldon, (1971) explained commitment as the "identification with or attachment to the organization". Both the researchers emphasized on the relational aspect of organizational commitment.

Hall, Schneider, & Nygren, (1970) explained commitment as an Integration of individual and organizational goals. This analysis laid emphasis on the integrated relation derived out of common interests.

Mowday, Porter, and Steer (1982) see commitment as attachment and loyalty. These authors describe three components of commitment: an identification with the goals and values of the organization; a desire to belong to the organization; and a willingness to display effort on behalf of the organization. They further explained commitment as the relative strength of an individual's identification with and involvement in a particular organization.

Becker, Randal, and Riegel (1995) defined the term in three dimensions: namely, a strong desire to remain a member of a particular organization; a willingness to exert high levels of efforts on behalf of the organization and a definite belief in and acceptability of the values and goals of the organization.

Researcher's analysis of Organizational Commitment: Feeling of obligation to continue employment and Duty towards the role.

The following definitions define aspects of commitment in terms of a "generalized value of loyalty and duty". Meyer and Allen (1991) supported this type of commitment with their definition of normative commitment being "a feeling of obligation".

Wiener (1982) described commitment in aspects of a totality of internalized normative pressures that force an individual to act in a way which meets organizational goals and interests. He explained how such pressures were experienced in many aspects of a person's social behavior. Just as many institutions were obligatory for an individual to

be a part of, so he viewed the organization to be as well.

Sheldon, 1971 explained commitment as an attitude or an orientation toward the organization which links or attaches the identity of the person to the organization. The level of linkage puts the individual in an obligatory relationship and he cannot leave the workplace.

Bolon (1997) explained commitment as an individual's feeling of obligation to their workplace. The explanation of the term obligation emphasized the fact that commitment was a sense of compulsion that the individual felt. Meyer and Allen (1991) supported this type of commitment prior to Bolon's definition, with their definition of normative commitment being "a feeling of obligation".

Marsh & Mannari, (1977) explained that a committed employee considers it morally right to stay in the company without evaluating the amount of satisfaction the firm gives him or her over the years. The emphasis was on the aspect of it being morally, "right" to continue working in the organization.

Meyer & Allen (1997) explained normative commitment in terms of the psychological and beliefs that a person has about what will be exchanged between them, the employee and the organization, therefore influencing their obligation to the organization.

Researcher's analyses of Organizational Commitment: Non-transferable investments and side bets and associated with the costs of leaving.

The following definitions explain commitment as the willingness to remain in an organization because of the investment that the employee has with "nontransferable" investments and perceive loss of opportunities; that keep an employee from leaving the organization.

Hrebiniak & Alutto (1972) explained commitment as a structural phenomenon that can be linked to the individual-organizational transactions and alterations in side-bets or investments over time. The emphasis of the explanation was heavily relied on economic exchange in terms of a win-win situation for both the parties involved.

Kanter (1968) established that commitment was related to the profit associated with continued participation and a 'cost' associated with leaving. Thus commitment was perceived as a loss of opportunities that kept an individual working in a certain job.

Reichers (1985) added that the nontransferable investments include benefits such as retirement, relationships with other employees, or things that are special to the organization. He said that continuance commitment studies two antecedents: investments and alternatives. These studies often look at investments such as time, money, or effort.

Congruence of the definition variables with three dimensional model of commitment

The review of various definitions highlights variables that have been used by the researchers to explain the concept of commitment. These diverse explanations can be clubbed together and studied in congruence to Allen & Meyer's model of commitment.

Table.2 shows the congruence of the definition variables with three dimensional model of commitment

Commitment		
Researcher Keywords	Identified Variables	Allen & Meyer Model
? Attachment to the goals, psychological ? Bond, emotional attachment, , desire to be a member, desire to maintain organizational membership ? Willingness to exert considerable effort	? Emotional attachment	Affective Commitment
? The fit between the firm's and the worker's values ? Reluctance to leave, and loyalty toward or pride taken in working for their employers, ? Individual's dedication and loyalty to an organization ? Belief in and acceptability of the values and goals	? Identification with the organization	
? Willingness to work hard to improve their companies ? Identification, and involvement, relationship, ? Loyalty, desire to belong, willingness to display effort ,acceptability of values, desire to be a member	? Involvement in the organization	
? Morally right to stay in the company ? Influencing their obligation to the organization ? Obligation to their workplace ? Links or attaches the identity	? Feeling of obligation to continue employment. ? Natural due to the way we are raised in society.	Normative Commitment
? what will be exchanged between them, ? generalized value of loyalty and duty, ? a feeling of obligation ? orientation toward the organization	? Loyalty and duty towards an institution	
Allen & Mayer		
? individual-organizational transactions ? side-bets or investments over time ? Profit associated with continued participation ? 'cost' associated with leaving	? perceived costs associated with leaving the organization ? Side Bets	Continuance Commitment
? willingness to remain ? "Non-transferable" investments. ? Investments such as time, money, or effort. ? investments and alternatives		

Thus Meyer and Allen (e.g., Allen & Meyer, 1990; Meyer & Allen, 1997) widely accepted commitment framework encompasses various perspectives of organizational commitment. Their explanation of affective, continuance, and normative commitments covers the various dimensions and perspectives of an employee's attachment with an organization. Research on this model grows each year, and a substantial body of scholarship supports the construct validity of their measures (Allen & Meyer, 1990, 1997; Cohen, 1993).

For the purpose of the study we will refer to the Meyer and Allen framework, to assess the contribution of each of these components towards work performance.

Organization commitment and Employee Performance

Researchers have carried out various studies to examine relationship between organizational commitment and performance. A few studies have found positive relationship between organizational commitment and performance (Benkhoff, 1997; Suliman and Lles 2000; Meyer et al., 2002) while others have examined very weak, negative or insignificant relationship between the two (e.g. Leong et al., 1994; Wright, 1997; Mathieu & Zajac, 1990).

Affective Commitment and employee performance

Campbell et all (1993) defined the job performance as behaviors that are consistent with the objectives of the organization. Borman & Motowidlo (1993) explained these behaviors as task and contextual or citizenship performance behaviors. Task performance behaviors include those behaviors which encourage an employee to achieve the specific task given to the employee or behaviors associated that contribute to the technical activities of the organization (Borman & Motowidlo, 1993). Whereas, contextual or citizenship performance behaviors are the ones which help in setting up a social and psychologically supportive environment that can help employees to perform their core technical or task activities (Borman & Motowidlo, 1993). Job performance evaluation results are useful to take decisions on employee remuneration package, promotion, training for performance improvement, retention and termination (Piercy et al.,1998).Employees who are committed to their work can influentially carry out both these behaviors successfully.

Campbell et al. (1993) defined performance as “Performance is what the organization hires one to do, and do well”. There is no doubt the employees who perform well are an asset for any organization. (Brown and Peterson, 1993; Babin and Boles, 1996; Arnold et al., 2009)

Performance is seen as a function of abilities, opportunities and motivation. Organization commitment acts as a motivating force which can help an employee to explore his potential to the fullest. Performance is also important for employees as it can also be seen as a source of satisfaction in a job. Furthermore, rewarded performance has been instrumental in creating lasting careers for a lot of employees. On the other hand, low job performance might lead to job dissatisfaction or even as a personal failure (Brown and Peterson, 1993; Babin and Boles, 1996; Mackenzie et al).

Literature review shows that out of all the three commitment components; affective commitment has been mostly studied in the past (Brunetto and Farr-Wharton, 2003). Many previous researchers have found positive relationship between affective commitment and employee performance (e.g. Meyer and Allen, 1996; Luchak & Gellatly, 2007; Meyer et al.1989)

Robert et all.,(2005) studied affective and continuance commitment. Affective commitment was studied in terms of the attachments that employees form with their organizations .The researchers emphasized that employees with strong affective commitment believe that their values match those of their employers and feel emotion emotionally attached to and identify with their company.

They concluded that the social exchange framework, formed by the exchange of good treatment by the firm (e.g., trust, safe conditions, fair compensation strengthens attachments that result in more favorable job performance (e.g., Riketta, 2002; Shore & Wayne, 1993).

Meyer et al., (2002) had conducted a meta analysis to assess the relations among affective, continuance, and normative commitment to the organization and relations between the three forms of commitment and variables identified as their antecedents, correlates, and consequences in Meyer and Allen's (1991) Three-Component Model. As per the study; all the three forms of commitment "related negatively to withdrawal cognition and turnover, and affective commitment had the strongest and most favorable correlations with organization-relevant performance and employee-relevant outcomes. Thus they emphasized that affective commitment was the strongest source of compliance that an individual develops with an organization. Normative commitment was also associated with desirable outcomes, but in a weak relationship capacity. Continuance commitment was unrelated or related negatively, to all the mentioned outcomes.

Jaros, (1997) said that, affective commitment seemed to be more positively related to job performance, and this was confirmed by different empirical studies;

Mayer & Allen had stated that the foundation for the development of the three-component model was the assumed belief that though all forms of commitment relate negatively to turnover, they relate differently to measures of other work relevant behaviors (e.g. attendance, in-role performance, organizational citizenship behaviors (OCB) (Meyer et al., 2002)said that affective commitment was expected to have the strongest positive relation, followed by normative commitment; continuance commitment is expected to be unrelated, or related negatively, desired behaviors at work.

#### **Continuance Commitment and employee performance**

As researched, continuance commitment engenders a strong bond with the organization based on the costs associated with leaving the organization (McGee and Ford, 1987), for example pension plans, seniority benefits, family concerns.

In consistence with H. S. Beckers (1960) side bet theory, the researchers conclude that Employers offer a variety of such inducements to retain employees, including job status, seniority, and benefits. Further, employees often desire to avoid the social and economic costs of leaving (e.g., relocation costs, disrupted social networks). Thus higher CC often is was seen to be negatively related or unrelated to job performance and citizenship behavior (Meyer, Stanley, Herscovitch, & Topolnytsky, 2002; Organ & Ryan, (1995) meta analyses have established that the correlation between AC and CC is near zero (e.g., Meyer et al., 2002), consideration of the psychological mechanisms influencing Affective Commitment and Continuance Commitment suggests the possibility of mutual or synergistic effects of Affective Commitment and Continuance Commitment

A few researchers have attempted to understand the

relationship between continuance commitment and job performance and have concluded that continuance commitment in past, has a positive impact on employee's job performance. Suliman and Lles (2000) conducted a study on the full time employees working in three companies of industrial sector in Jordan and explored that continuance organizational commitment has positive association with employee job performance.

Furthermore, Khan et al. (2010) also conducted a research on employees working in oil and gas sector of Pakistan and examined positive and significant relationship ( $r=0.218$ ,  $p<0.001$ ) between continuance commitment and employee's job performance.

#### **Normative Commitment and employee performance**

There is very little significance that has been attached to normative commitment in relation to performance in relation the existing literature. Research shows very little evidence of a study to assess the role of normative commitment in performance.

Research has found positive impact of three components of organizational commitment on performance of personnel in different work (e.g. Suliman and Lles 2000; Khan et al., 2010;). However, results also contradict with findings of few researchers who found that continuance commitment among employees correlate negatively with their performance (e.g. Meyer et al.'s 1989); This implies that organizations can acquire better performance results by attaching employees for affective commitment and increasing their obligation level for building normative commitment.

Rehman et al, (2012) Studied the commitment levels of police officers in Pakistan and found that Normative commitment has significant and positive relationship with performance of police officers

#### **CONCLUSION**

Thus, building on the literature review, we can see that all the three forms of commitment are related to employee performance. Affective commitment has been associated with higher performance as the higher relational value and bonding with the organization is instrumental in bringing out higher employee performance. Continuance commitment has been studied to have a positive relationship with performance, yet in some cases it is also seen to have a negative correlation with employee performance. Normative commitment has been associated in a positive correlation with organizational commitment. The research study invites attention of the researchers and practitioners to increase performance levels by increasing the affective commitment among employees.

#### **LIMITATIONS AND SCOPE FOR FURTHER STUDY**

The study is solely based on a review of literature and understanding of the researcher. The knowledge from the same shall eventually be applied to an empirical assessment of the construct.

Despite examining role of organizational commitment in relation to employee performance, this study can be carried further with the help of empirical evidence.



Yet this provides a base for identifying the relevance of the Allen & Meyer model of commitment as well as identifying individual roles of each commitment component as a predictor of employee performance.

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