Support, commitment and employee outcomes in a team environment

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Support, Commitment, and Employee Outcomes in a Team Environment

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This field study investigated whether perceived team support and team commitment relate to employee outcomes differently than perceived organizational support and organizational commitment. A LISREL analysis was conducted on data from 380 manufacturing plant employees and 9 supervisors. Job performance was related to team commitment; intention to quit was related to organizational commitment; and organizational citizenship behavior was related to both team and organizational commitment. Commitment mediated the relationships between support and the outcome variables. © 2000 Elsevier Science Inc. All rights reserved.

The use of work teams has become a popular strategy for increasing productivity and worker flexibility in the United States. Seventy-eight percentage of U.S. organizations report that at least some of their employees are organized into work teams. In those organizations that utilize teams, an average of 61% of all employees are members of teams (Training, 1995). All 25 finalists for the 1996 America’s Best Plants sponsored by Industry Week have implemented work teams, and the majority of these companies’ production work force are engaging in self-directed or self-managed teams (Sheridan, 1997). Organizations have reported a number of benefits derived from the use of work teams. These include increased individual performance, better quality, less absenteeism, reduced employee turnover, leaner plant structures, and substantial improvements in production cycle time (Harris, 1992). In general, teams are considered an important ingredient of organizational success in the modern economy that is characterized by a need for rapid information exchange and response to customer demands (Cohen & Bailey, 1997).
Research has shown that many of the benefits associated with teams are related to the level of an individual's commitment to both the organization and to his or her work team (Becker, 1992; Bishop & Scott, 1997; Bishop, Scott, & Casino, 1997). Organizational commitment is the relative strength of an individual's identification with, and involvement in, a particular organization. Conceptually, this construct can be characterized by at least 3 factors: (a) a strong belief in and acceptance of the organization's goals and values; (b) a willingness to exert considerable effort on behalf of the organization; and (c) a strong desire to maintain membership in the organization (Mowday, Porter, & Steers, 1982). Team commitment can be defined similarly because teams develop goals and values that members may accept; members may choose to exert varying degrees of effort on the teams' behalf; and members may have varying levels of desire to maintain their team membership. Furthermore, individuals may experience a high level of commitment to one of these foci and not the other, both, or neither (Becker & Billings, 1993; Bishop & Scott, 1996).

Prior research also supports the notion that commitment to the organization and commitment to a work team are related to a number of desired employee outcomes. For example, organizational commitment has been linked to extrarole behavior (Gregersen, 1993; Shore & Wayne, 1993), job performance (Mathieu & Zajac, 1990), and lower turnover (Bishop, Scott, & Casino, 1997; Mathieu & Zajac, 1990), whereas team commitment has been linked to extrarole behavior (Becker & Billings, 1993) and team performance (Bishop & Scott, 1997; Bishop, Scott, & Casino, 1997; Scott & Townsend, 1994). However, these studies did not consider the simultaneous relationships among the outcomes and organizational and team commitment.

Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchison, and Sowa (1986) point out that the concept of commitment also encompasses the notion that employees may perceive the degree to which their employing organization is committed to them. They use the term perceived organizational support (POS) to describe the extent to which employees believe that the organization values their contribution and cares about their well-being (Eisenberger et al., 1986). Subsequent research has identified other entities with which employees could perceive reciprocal attachment (cf. Kottke & Sharafinski, 1988). One such entity is the employees' work team (Bishop, 1998). Members of work teams should be able to form perceptions as to whether and to what degree their teammates value their input and care about them. Therefore, the construct of perceived team support (PTS) can be defined as the degree to which employees believe that the team values their contribution and cares for their well-being.

In contrast to traditional work settings, self-directed work team environments require that members assume many of the functions otherwise ascribed to management, such as assigning tasks to members, scheduling work, determining work methods, and scheduling breaks (Cummings, 1978). Self-direction is designed to increase team members' sense of responsibility and to require them to make decisions with respect to operational problems and uncertainties (Campion, Medsker, & Higgs, 1993). To function effectively in such an environment, it is of particular importance that the interactions, exchanges, and affect among team
members be positive and supportive (Hackman, 1986). Consequently, the level of support members feel that they receive from their teams and the amount of commitment they hold for their teams is of significant importance.

The purpose of this paper is to propose and test a model that examines the relationships among both POS and PTS, commitment to the organization and to the work team, and desired employee outcomes (see Figure 1).

This study extends the research on work teams and employee commitment in a number of ways. First, the model emphasizes the support that employees believe they receive from others as well as the commitment that they give. Second, the model considers the simultaneous relationships among organizational and team commitment and desired employee outcomes. Of particular interest, is our attempt to clarify the relationship between organizational commitment and job performance. Research findings with respect to this relationship are ambiguous and the empirical linkages are weak (Mathieu & Zajac, 1990). However, by examining the commitment and performance relationship from the perspective of team members, some much needed clarification may be obtained. Third, by reconsidering social exchange relationships in a team environment, this study addresses whether employees can distinguish between support perceived to emanate from the organization and the work team and whether this discernment translates into changes in the levels of commitment to the respective commitment foci. Fourth, our use of structural equation modeling (SEM) allows us to examine the degree to which team and organizational commitment mediate the relationships among sources of

\* To simplify the presentation of the model, correlations among the exogenous variables are not shown.

Numbers in parentheses are values for constrained paths.

**Figure 1.** Hypothesized Structural Model*
employee support and the outcome variables. Fifth, the model is germane to team management systems that have become pervasive throughout industry. Finally, the resulting model will establish links among the commitment, support, and work team literatures.

A Model of Support and Commitment

Sources of Employee Support

Figure 1 illustrates our hypothesized model of support and commitment. POS and PTS are essential components of the exchange relationships associated with organizational and team commitment (Bishop, 1998; Wayne, Shore, & Liden, 1997). As such, it would seem that support from these entities would be of particular importance to team-based organizations. Social exchange theory proposes that when one person, or entity, does a favor for another, the recipient of the favor is obliged to reciprocate (Blau, 1964), though the details of when and in what form are unspecified (Gouldner, 1960). Based on social exchange theory and the norm of reciprocity (Gouldner, 1960), POS has been shown to have a positive relationship with organizational commitment (Eisenberger et al., 1986; Settoon, Bennett, & Liden, 1996; Wayne, Shore, & Liden, 1997). The theory behind this relationship is that the employees experience affective commitment for the company when they perceive the company provides support to them.

Although the POS-organizational commitment relationship has received support in prior studies (e.g., Eisenberger et al., 1986; Settoon, Bennett, & Liden, 1996; Wayne, Shore, & Liden, 1997), we believe that it is important to retest it in a team environment. By doing so, we can test the extent to which employees distinguish among sources of support and determine the degree to which such discernment is related to different foci of commitment. Therefore, based on social exchange theory and the norm of reciprocity, we hypothesize that, in a work team environment:

**H1:** Perceived organizational support (POS) will be positively related to organizational commitment.

The norm of reciprocity has a "division of labor" component which states that reciprocation will be made in terms of goods and services that are of value to the object of the reciprocation and is within the capability of the donor (Gouldner, 1960). More specifically, when an individual team member knows that other members of the team value his or her contribution to the team and cares about his or her well-being, then that member is inclined to reciprocate by putting forth greater effort on behalf of the team. Furthermore, a team member who perceives such supporting consideration is likely to make the interpretation that such behavior represents underlying team values and internalize these values. This component of commitment should be enhanced by the team member's reaction to high levels of PTS. Therefore, we hypothesize an exchange relationship will take place between the member and the team such that:
**H2:** Perceived team support (PTS) will be positively related to team commitment.

An important component of this study is to examine the source of the support associated with an employee's job performance. Research on social exchange theory has shown that employees who feel they receive high levels of support from their organizations are more likely to perform better than those who do not (Eisenberger, Fasolo, & Davis-LaMastro, 1990). On the other hand, Settoon, Bennett, and Liden (1996) and Wayne, Shore, and Liden (1997) tested the relationship between POS and job performance using structural equation modeling. In both of these studies the path coefficient from POS and job performance was not significant. However, neither of these studies addressed the issue of work teams and team commitment.

We reason that the existence of work teams and the focus on teamwork may have a significant influence on the dynamic that links support in the workplace with performance. In an environment where team performance, rather than individual performance, is emphasized, employee effort is applied within the context of the team and output is measured in terms of the team's performance. therefore, the relevant and most salient entity with respect to the exchange relationship involving support and performance is the employee's work team. Therefore, we hypothesize that:

**H3:** Perceived team support (PTS) will be positively related to job performance.

**Employee Outcomes**

Prior research supports the idea that the levels of commitment an individual feels toward distinct entities have direct relationships with various employee outcomes such as intention to quit (Becker, 1992; Bishop & Scott, 1997; Mathieu & Zajac, 1990), organizational citizenship behavior (Becker, 1992; Bishop & Scott, 1997; Gregersen, 1993; Shore & Wayne, 1993; Williams & Anderson, 1991), and job performance (Bishop & Scott, 1997; Bishop, Scott, & Casino, 1997).

Field theory (Lewin, 1943) asserts that individuals' reactions to an environment are determined, to a great extent, by the proximity and the salience of the elements that are perceived (Mathieu & Hamel, 1989). In general, more proximal elements have a greater influence on individuals than distal ones. However, the degree of influence also depends upon the level of the psychological salience of the elements. For example, a distal stimuli may have a greater influence on a reaction if its salience is particularly high, while a proximal element may have little influence on a reaction if its salience is low (Mathieu, 1991).

With respect to intention to quit, we view its relationship with team commitment differently than its relationship with organizational commitment. If an individual wants to leave an organization, he or she must dissolve the relationship or redefine it in such a way that he or she is no longer a member. Indeed, prior research supports a negative relationship between organizational commitment and
intention to quit. On the other hand, if an employee has an unsatisfactory relationship and low level of attachment to his or her work team, the employee may seek to change teams while still remaining with the organization (cf. Wayne, Shore, & Liden, 1997). Therefore, the employee may regard the association with the team as temporary. In other words, the employee would not have to leave the company to obviate an unsatisfactory relationship with a given team. In this way, an organization’s goals, values, and other characteristics upon which an individual’s organizational commitment is based could be independent of the individual’s team membership (Bishop & Scott, forthcoming). In the case of a temporary team or task force, the unhappy individual has only to wait until the team’s purpose has been accomplished and the team dissolved. If the team is permanent, the employee may seek a transfer to a different team within the same organization. However, even though the team may be the more physically proximal element, the organization is more psychologically salient with respect to its influence on the continuation or termination of the employment relationship. Therefore, consistent with the results of prior research, yet considering the effects of both team and organizational commitment, we hypothesize that:

**H4:** Organizational commitment will be negatively related to intention to quit.

Organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) can be defined as behavior that goes beyond what is expected on the basis of the formal employment contract (Bateman & Organ, 1983; Organ, 1990) and, as such, is a highly valued employee outcome (Organ, 1988). In general, research suggests a positive relationship between organizational commitment and OCB, yet the results are mixed. For example, Williams and Anderson (1991) found that organizational commitment was not a significant predictor of OCB. On the other hand, Gregersen (1993) and Shore and Wayne (1993) found that affective commitment was positively related to OCB. Becker (1992), applying a multiple foci perspective, found that commitment to foci other than the organization (e.g., co-workers) explained significant variance in OCB not accounted for by organizational commitment. It should be noted that Becker did not test the simultaneous effects of team and organizational commitment on extrarole behavior, nor was his study conducted in an environment characterized by work teams. On the other hand, Bishop and Scott (1997) found that both team and organizational commitment were related to a willingness to engage in OCB. Combining the results of these studies in light of the assertion by Fishbein and Ajzen (1975) that intentions (willingness) precede behavior, we hypothesize that:

**H5:** Both organizational and team commitment will be positively related to OCB.

Mowday et al. (1982) stated that the weak relationship between organizational commitment and job performance is the least encouraging finding in the organizational commitment literature. A meta-analysis by Mathieu and Zajac
(1990) support this observation by showing that the confidence interval around the mean correlation between organizational commitment and performance included zero. They concluded that “commitment has relatively little direct influence on performance in most instances” (p. 184). In an attempt to clarify the relationship between organizational commitment and job performance, researchers have examined the nature of the commitment, the type of job performance being considered, and the objects, or foci, of employee attachment.

With respect to the nature of commitment, affective commitment (emotional attachment to, identification with, and involvement in the organization) was found to predict performance, as measured by supervisor ratings (Mayer & Schoorman, 1992; Meyer, Paunonen, Gellatly, Goffin, & Jackson, 1989). When the type of job performance was considered, affective commitment was found to predict dependability and initiative but did not predict accomplishment or judgment (Angle & Lawson, 1994). Continuance commitment (desire to stay with the organization due to “side bets” such as retirement vesting, seniority, or other sunk costs) did not predict job performance (Mayer & Schoorman, 1992; Meyer et al., 1989). Furthermore, Brett, Cron, and Slocum (1995) found that organizational commitment predicted job performance more strongly when externally imposed pressures to stay on the job (i.e., financial requirements) were low.

With respect to teams, Bishop and et al. (1997) found empirical support for a positive relationship between team commitment and job performance. However, their hypotheses were not tested in the context of a model that considered the simultaneous effects of both team and organizational commitment. Additionally, their study did not consider the influence of support variables on the commitment-outcome relationships.

In a work team environment, physical proximity and regular interaction with the team suggests that it is easier for employees to receive feedback regarding how well their behavior reflects team goals, values, and norms than it is to receive similar feedback with respect to the global organization. Therefore, the work team, when compared to the organization, is more psychologically salient in terms of performance-related behavior (cf. Becker, Billings, Eveleth, & Gilbert, 1996). The actual work performed by individuals takes place within the auspices of a team that is both physically proximal and psychologically salient. Hence:

H6: Team commitment will be positively related to job performance.

Method

Participants and Setting

The sample for this study consisted of 380 production employees from an automotive outsource manufacturing plant in the southeastern United States. The average age of the employees was 36.9 years. The respondents were mostly white (83%), there were slightly more females (53%), and most had finished high school (88%).

Employees were organized into 65 teams of 6 workers each. Team members worked within a few steps of each other and each member could easily see his or
her teammates. The teams were self-directed in that they controlled the pace of their work, distributed tasks, and scheduled work breaks. The company provided cross-training on various operations so that team members would be skilled in more than one task and they were able to switch stations from time to time to refine their skills. Training programs in quality control and group process skills such as communication, conflict resolution, and problem solving were also provided.

First-level supervision was provided to the teams by 1 of 9 “facilitators.” The role of the facilitators was different when contrasted with first level supervision in a traditional work setting (Cummings, 1978; Hackman, 1986; Manz & Sims, 1984, 1987; Wall, Kemp, Jackson, & Clegg, 1986). Structurally, the facilitators were not members of the team, but were external to them. Each facilitator was responsible for between seven and nine teams. The facilitators evaluated team members, scheduled training, acting as communication links between teams and upper management, explained and interpreted company policy, gave feedback performance and customer needs, and consulted with teams on an as-needed basis.

Procedure

Production employees completed surveys that contained measures of POS, PTS, organizational commitment, team commitment, and intention to quit. The survey was administered in the company training room and cafeteria on company time. The 380 participants represented all employees who were present on the day the survey was conducted. Participation was voluntary but no one refused to take part. Members of the research team were present to answer questions and to ensure that the participants responded to the survey independently. Seven incomplete surveys were dropped from subsequent analyses. Surveys that measured the criterion variables of job performance and OCB for each employee were completed by the teams’ corresponding facilitator several days after the production employees completed their surveys.

Measures

Production employees responded to five seven-point Likert scales with responses ranging from “strongly disagree” (1) to “strongly agree” (7). Team facilitators responded to two seven-point Likert scales to measure job performance and OCB.

Perceived organizational support (POS) and perceived team support (PTS). POS was measured by a shortened version of the Survey of Perceived Organizational Support (SPOS; Eisenberger et al., 1986, 1990). Seven items were selected from the SPOS that loaded among the highest in Eisenberger et al.’s (1986) factor analysis. Short forms of the survey have been used with success in previous research (Eisenberger et al., 1986; Wayne, Shore, & Liden, 1997). The coefficient alpha was 0.85. To measure PTS, this same short form was modified to refer to the team rather than to the organization (α = 0.90). Similar modifications have been used successfully in prior research and have been shown to measure support constructs (e.g., perceived supervisory support) distinct from organizational support (cf. Kottke & Sharafinski, 1988).

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Organizational commitment and team commitment. The short form of the Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ; Mowday, Steers, & Porter, 1979) was used to measure organizational commitment ($\alpha = 0.89$). Team commitment was measured by modifying the short form of the OCQ to refer to the team rather than to the organization ($\alpha = 0.89$). This technique was suggested by Reichers (1985) and has been referenced in the literature (e.g., Scott & Townsend, 1994). Based on the recommendations of Podsakoff and Organ (1986) one item was deleted due to the results of our factor analysis and a reevaluation of item content.

Intention to quit. A three-item scale was used to measure intention to quit ($\alpha = 0.86$). Two items, “It is likely that I will actively look for a new job in the next year” and “I often think about quitting” were taken from the Michigan Organizational Assessment Questionnaire (Cammann, Fichman, & Klesh, 1979). The third item, “If I could, I would get another job with another company” was adapted from a scale developed by Landau and Hammer (1986).

Job performance. The facilitators rated their employees on job performance using a six-item scale ($\alpha = 0.83$). The items were taken from a measure used by Wayne, Shore, and Liden (1997). The following items were rated on a seven-point scale with anchors ranging from “never” (1) to “always” (7): “Overall, to what extent has this employee been effectively fulfilling his or her roles and responsibilities?”, “Overall, to what extent has this employee been performing his or her job the way you would like it to be performed?”, and “In my estimation, this employee gets his or her work done very effectively.” The following item was rated on a seven-point scale with anchors ranging from “poor” (1) to “outstanding” (7): “Rate this employee’s overall level of performance.” The following item was rated on a 7-point scale with anchors ranging from “not at all” (1) to “a great extent” (7): “If you entirely had your way, to what extent would you change the manner in which this employee is performing his or her job?” The following item was rated on a seven-point scale with anchors ranging from “strongly disagree” (1) to “strongly agree” (7): “All in all this employee is very competent.”

Organizational citizenship behavior. Following the suggestion of Organ, we conducted interviews with facilitators and other plant managers to determine the items that would best reflect OCB in terms of the “site specific needs, problems, culture, norms, and tradition” (Organ, 1988: 106). As a result, OCB was measured with a six item scale ($\alpha = 0.76$). Four items were from Smith, Organ, and Near (1983) as modified by Wayne, Shore, and Liden (1997) and two items were from Williams and Anderson (1991). The facilitators responded to the items on a seven-point scale with anchors ranging from “not at all” (1) to “a great extent” (7).

Results

Before testing our hypotheses, principal factor analyses were performed on the items to which the team members and the facilitators responded. Team members responded to a total of 34 items measuring POS, PTS, organizational commitment, team commitment, and intention to quit. Five factors emerged with eigenvalues greater than 1.0, explaining 60.91% of the variance. Facilitators
responded to a total 12 items measuring OCB and job performance. Two factors had eigenvalues greater than 1.0 and explained 55.22% of the variance. In each analyses, there were no cross loadings (the largest loading of an item on an unintended factor was 0.32) and, with the exception of one intention to quit item, all of the items had loadings of greater than 0.40 on their intended factors. Table 1 reports means, standard deviations, correlations, and coefficient alphas among the scale scores.

To test the hypothesized model (See Figure 1), a covariance matrix was used as input to LISREL 8.12a (Jöreskog & Sörbom, 1993). Following the procedures outlined by Settoon, Bennett, and Liden (1996), we created manifest indicators for each latent construct by averaging the items for each scale. An item measurement model would have 46 paths estimated with 968 degrees of freedom. The addition of the structural portion would result in the estimation of only 7 more paths, with 977 degrees of freedom. Hence, with the item approach, our ability to determine how well the structural portion of the model holds up with our sample was reduced. Creating single indicators from the scales allows a more rigorous test of the structural portion of our model. Because, a covariance matrix was used as input, we set the error variance for each manifest indicator to the product of the variance of the items by scale, and the quantity one minus the reliability of the scale. The values to which the error variances were set appear in Figure 1. The exogenous variables were assumed to correlate. Figure 2 displays the completely standardized path coefficients for the relationships in the model. Completely standardized path coefficients are reported because of their suitability in comparing relative contributions explained variance (Bagoszi, 1980).

The Hypothesized Model

The fit indices for the hypothesized structural model were $\chi^2(9) = 15.04$, $p < .09$, Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) = 0.043, Comparative Fit Index (CFI) = 0.99, and the Tucker–Lewis Fit Index (TLI) = 0.98. These results indicate that the data fit the hypothesized model well (Medsker, Williams, & Holahan, 1994).

Direct Relationships

POS was positively related to organizational commitment, providing support for Hypothesis 1. PTS was positively related to team commitment, but not to job performance, providing support for Hypothesis 2 but not Hypothesis 3, respectively. Hypothesis 4 was supported because organizational commitment was negatively related to intention to quit. Both organizational commitment and team commitment were positively related to OCB, supporting Hypothesis 5, and team commitment was positively related to job performance, supporting Hypothesis 6.

Mediating Role of Organizational and Team Commitment

Implicit in our model is that organizational commitment mediates the relationships between POS and the outcome variables, intention to quit and OCB, whereas team commitment mediates the relationships between PTS and job performance and OCB. To test the mediating roles of the commitment variables
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Perceived organizational support (POS)</td>
<td>3.59</td>
<td>1.26</td>
<td>(.85)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Perceived team support (PTS)</td>
<td>4.83</td>
<td>1.30</td>
<td>0.12**</td>
<td>(90)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Organizational commitment</td>
<td>4.51</td>
<td>1.24</td>
<td>0.63**</td>
<td>0.11**</td>
<td>(.89)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Team commitment</td>
<td>4.60</td>
<td>1.37</td>
<td>0.12*</td>
<td>0.59**</td>
<td>0.27**</td>
<td>(.89)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Intention to quit</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>1.80</td>
<td>-0.54**</td>
<td>-0.15**</td>
<td>-0.70**</td>
<td>-0.25**</td>
<td>(.86)</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Organizational citizenship behavior (OCB)</td>
<td>4.72</td>
<td>0.81</td>
<td>0.27**</td>
<td>0.26**</td>
<td>0.36**</td>
<td>0.36**</td>
<td>-0.33**</td>
<td>(.76)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Job performance</td>
<td>5.54</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>0.18**</td>
<td>0.19**</td>
<td>0.36**</td>
<td>-0.12**</td>
<td>0.19**</td>
<td>(.74)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p < .05.

**p < .01.

Coefficient Alphas appear in parentheses on the diagonal.
we first estimated a model in which the direct paths from the support variables to the outcome variables were freed. This was done so that variance in the outcome variables attributed to the support variables would not be forced to be reflected in the indirect paths through the commitment variables. None of these paths were significant.

We then used the technique recommended by Sobel (1987) to determine the significance of the indirect paths. By using the maximum likelihood path coefficients and their standard errors as input, we computed the indirect effects, their standard errors, and 95% confidence intervals (CI) for each path. The indirect effects of POS on intention to quit ($\gamma_{11}\beta_{31}$) was $-0.51 \pm 0.16$ ($SE = 0.081$) and on OCB ($\gamma_{11}\beta_{41}$) was $0.91 \pm 0.15$ ($SE = 0.078$). The indirect effects of PTS on OCB ($\gamma_{22}\beta_{42}$) was $0.18 \pm 0.13$ ($SE = 0.064$) and on job performance ($\gamma_{22}\beta_{52}$) was $0.36 \pm 0.14$ ($SE = 0.070$). In none of these cases did the 95% CI contain zero. This supports the mediating roles of the commitment variables suggested by our model.
Model Comparisons

Anderson and Gerbing (1988) proposed a technique for testing an hypothesized model by comparing it to a series of nested models through sequential χ² difference tests. The results are shown in Table 2. These nested models represent the "next most likely constrained and unconstrained alternatives" (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988: 418).

Less constrained models. In a less constrained model, one or more paths are added to the hypothesized model. That is, one or more of the paths that were constrained (i.e., set to zero) in the hypothesized model are estimated. If the Δχ² between these models is not significant, then the hypothesized model is supported because it is more parsimonious (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988).

The extant literature reports tests of direct relationships between POS and the outcome variables, intention to quit, OCB, and job performance. Significant relationships between POS and intention to quit and OCB are generally supported (Settoon, Bennett, & Liden, 1996; Wayne, Shore, & Liden, 1997) while the relationship between POS and job performance is mixed (cf. Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchison, & Sowa, 1986; Settoon, Bennett, & Liden, 1996; Wayne, Shore, & Liden, 1997). One of our purposes was to build on these findings by testing the proposal that the relationships between POS and the outcomes, intention to quit and OCB, were primarily through organizational commitment. Furthermore, considering a model that included the effects of team commitment and was tested by data drawn from a sample of employees working in a team environment, we chose to make no hypothesis suggesting a significant relationship between POS and job performance. To challenge these contentions we allowed the direct paths from POS to intention to quit, OCB, and job performance to be estimated (Model 1). The difference in the chi-squares between the hypothesized model and Model 1, χ²(3) = 3.24, was not significant. This means that adding the paths did not result in a better fit. Therefore, the hypothesized model is preferred over Model 1 because the former is more parsimonious.

Prior research also reports mixed results with respect to the relationship between organizational commitment and job performance (Mathieu & Zajac, 1990). We did not hypothesize this path to be significant. However, in light of the ambivalent findings of previous research, we challenged our contention with Model 2, a model in which the path from organizational commitment to job

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>χ²</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>RMSEA</th>
<th>Comparative Fit index</th>
<th>Tucker-Lewis Fit Index</th>
<th>Δχ² (df) from Hypothesized</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hypothesized</td>
<td>15.04</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>.043</td>
<td>.99</td>
<td>.98</td>
<td>n/a</td>
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<tr>
<td>Model 1⁵</td>
<td>11.80</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>.051</td>
<td>.99</td>
<td>.97</td>
<td>3.24 (3)***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Model 2⁶</td>
<td>13.37</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>.053</td>
<td>.99</td>
<td>.98</td>
<td>1.67 (1)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Model 1 allows the paths from POS to intention to quit, OCB, and job performance to be estimated.

*Model 2 allows the path from organizational commitment to job performance to be estimated.

***p < .001.
performance was freed. The nonsignificant $\chi^2$ difference, $\chi^2(1) = 1.67$, supports the more parsimonious hypothesized model.

More constrained models. Our model includes two separate hypotheses we believe are appropriate to emphasize and challenge with competing alternatives. However, each of these alternatives involves the removal of only one path. Because a test for the $\Delta \chi^2$ when deleting a single path would be redundant with a $t$ test for the individual parameter estimate, only an inspection of the $t$-value is required test these alternatives. First, we felt that it was appropriate to emphasize the relationship between organizational commitment and OCB because prior research has focused on the relationship with mixed results (Gregersen, 1993; Shore & Wayne, 1993; Williams & Anderson, 1991). Hypothesis 5 posited that the relationship would be significant and this was supported ($t = 5.19$, $p < .001$). Second, Hypothesis 3 posited that PTS would have a direct relationship with job performance because of the proximity and salience of the work team. Indeed, the bivariate correlation coefficient suggests that this is so ($r = 0.18$, $p < .01$). However, when the simultaneous effects of the other variables in the model are accounted for, the path from PTS to job performance is not significant ($t = -1.69$, ns) and Hypothesis 3 is not supported. Based on this finding, a revised model is proposed and discussed below. See Figure 3.

Grouping Effects

Because the respondents were nested within teams and facilitators, we checked the self-report variables for grouping effects at the team level and the facilitator-reported variables for grouping effects at the facilitator level. Our model proposes relationships among individual level constructs. To the extent that the variable scores are influenced by team membership or rating tendencies unique to individual facilitators, our ability to draw conclusions from our statistical results would be weakened. We checked for group level influences by computing intraclass correlations, ICC(1), for each variable. The results suggested that grouping effects are not of sufficient magnitude as to compromise the results of our individual analysis. We also checked for systematic differences across facilitators in job performance and OCB scores, suggesting possible harshness or leniency. The results of Duncan and Tukey post hoc comparisons offer little evidence of either bias.

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to propose and test a model that examined the simultaneous relationships among POS, PTS, organizational commitment, team commitment, and employee outcome variables. Factor analysis supported the existence of four separate factors representing the POS, PTS, organizational commitment, and team commitment constructs. Structural equation modeling results provided evidence of the differential relationships among these constructs and suggested that all were important with respect to the outcome variables investigated. Furthermore, several plausible alternatives models were examined providing a rigorous test of our hypothesized model (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988; Platt, 1964).
Structural path estimates are the standardized parameter estimates. To simplify the presentation of the model, the manifest variables have been omitted.

** p < .01, one-tailed test.

*** p < .001, one-tailed test.

**Figure 3.** Structural Path Estimates of the Revised Model

A distinct pattern of correlates for organizational and team commitment was found. This pattern implies that employees distinguish between support offered by the organization and that offered by the work team and respond by directing attitudes and behavior toward the corresponding entity. That is, employees react differently based on the source of support and the object of their commitment.

This study contributes to the literature on support, commitment, and work teams in several ways. It extends recent research on support in the workplace by considering multiple sources of support. We found that POS and PTS are related to different forms of commitment through which employees fulfill exchange-related obligations by exhibiting attitudes and behaviors that benefit the organization. In light of the few studies that have been published on POS, along with the novelty of the PTS construct, this finding provides a valuable contribution to the literature. Of particular importance was the demonstration that the relationship between PTS and team commitment has a strong conceptual basis and that it is distinct from the relationship between POS and Organizational Commitment.
As mentioned above, prior research reports mixed findings with regards to the relationship between POS and job performance. This study offers additional insight into the support-performance relationship by finding that support emanating from the work team (PTS) is related to job performance and this relationship is mediated by team commitment. Mowday, Porter, and Steers (1982) concluded that the weak relationship between organizational commitment and job performance is the least encouraging finding in the literature. Mathieu and Zajac confirmed this by concluding that “[organizational] commitment has relatively little direct influence on performance in most instances” (Mathieu & Zajac, 1990: 184). The significant path between team commitment and job performance suggests that commitment may be related to performance when the focus of commitment is more immediate and proximal and that the individual’s performance has a more immediate and significant effect on the success of the object of commitment.

The lack of support for Hypothesis 3 and the significance tests of the indirect effects suggest that, despite the proximity and salience of the team, the relationship between PTS and job performance is mediated by team commitment. In light of these results, a revised model was proposed in which all of the relationships among the support variables and the outcome variables are mediated by commitment. This model has the appeal over our hypothesized model in that it is more parsimonious and the mediating role of commitment is consistent across both support variables. However, acceptance of this model should be deferred until it can be tested on additional data to prevent capitalization on chance.

Applications of Findings

Our findings are important to practicing managers in that they suggest that commitment to different entities within the organization are associated with different employee behavior. The magnitudes of the outcome variables were related to the degree to which employees felt that they received commitment, or support, from different sources. With knowledge of the relationships reported here, managers may have an additional diagnostic tool to help them determine the focus of interventions. At the same time, we urge caution in assuming an invariant causal order among the constructs. On one hand, it seems reasonable that increasing team commitment could have a positive influence on job performance. On the other hand, it is also reasonable that members of teams who perform well together may develop stronger commitment to their teams.

Practicing managers might consider both the salience and the source of employee support as they address the variety of issues present in the modern workplace. For example, if a manager is concerned with turnover, he or she may want to make sure that support from the organization is demonstrated in tangible ways that are easily seen and interpreted by employees. However, if job performance is the issue, a manager may want to examine the degree to which member interaction within teams engenders a supporting, caring environment in which all members’ contributions are recognized, valued, and acknowledged.

The revised model also has implications for practicing managers with respect to job performance. The revised model suggests that team commitment mediates
the relationship between PTS and job performance. Stated with caution, it could be that successful efforts to enhance PTS could positively influence performance. However, other external influences could subvert commitment to the teams and performance could suffer despite such efforts. For example, a poorly planned incentive plan that rewards individuals rather than teams may encourage individuals to put forth effort on their own behalf rather than on behalf of the team, and to put personal goals and values ahead of team goals and values. This could undermine team commitment and thereby adversely affect performance.

Limitations

This study, like all field research, has limitations. A main concern is that readers unfamiliar with structural equation modeling may erroneously conclude that causal relationships can be inferred from our results. Making such conclusions have been exacerbated, in part, because structural equation modeling has also been referred to as causal modeling. One should remember that proof of causality cannot be made from statistical results alone. Only sound theory, appropriate experimental designs, and corroborating statistical results can allow one to make causal inferences. Even so, the independent variables in our model have been identified by theory and prior research as antecedents of the dependent variables. The results show only that causal relationships are possible and readers should make such inferences with caution.

As with all studies of this type, common method variance, or mono-method bias, is a concern. However, we feel that due to the nature of our dependent variables, it is unlikely that common method variance would be a serious problem in this study. For example, intention to quit can be assessed only by asking the individual his or her thoughts on the matter. Although common method variance is an issue with this type of research methodology, this design can be quite useful in providing a picture of how people feel about and view their jobs (Spector & Brannick, 1995). Furthermore, this design can provide information about the intercorrelations among various feelings and perceptions (Spector, 1994). Spector concludes that “properly developed instruments are resistant to the method variance problem” (Spector, 1984: 438). To enhance this resistance, we made efforts to follow the recommendation of Podsakoff and Organ (1986) to eliminate obvious overlap in items across measures.

A strength of this study is that the dependent variables of job performance and OCB were assessed by data from a source (i.e., facilitators) other than the production employees. Multiple sources of data reduce the effects of common method variance.

Future Research

The results of this study suggest several additional paths for future research. First, testing this model in different work environments could address both its degree of generalizability and the possible boundary conditions for its applicability. In other contexts, individuals may be affected by dynamics involving teams that differ from this site. Cross-functional activities across teams may produce results different from those reported here. This may be especially true for team
members with boundary spanning tasks and responsibilities. Second, our study was conducted with permanent work teams. Research involving temporary teams such as task forces should also be done. Such studies may need to base their hypotheses on theoretical standpoints other than those presented here because employees may view team membership differently when the team is temporary in comparison to when the team is permanent.

Third, it may be that when an individual’s high job performance is recognized by his or her teammates, the team may respond by demonstrating that it has a greater value for the high performing member’s contribution (i.e., PTS). Such PTS may, in turn, be related to an increase in team commitment and then even greater performance. By employing a longitudinally designed study, the reciprocal nature of this process could be tested. Fourth, future research should explore other types of support-commitment relationships. One type of support-commitment exchange that may be of particular importance is a mentoring relationship (Whitely, Dougherty, & Dreher, 1991). Supervisory support in the form of mentoring may affect one’s professional commitment and should be examined in future research. It may also be useful for future investigations to consider the demographic make-up of work teams within the context of the support-commitment exchange in which organizational members participate. As organizations become less hierarchically structured and utilize more work teams, the issue of diversity among team members is likely to be critical in the study of support-commitment relationships.

Fifth, one of the purposes of our study was to assess the relationships among team commitment, organizational commitment, and OCB. In doing so, we showed that the general altruism dimension of OCB was related to both foci of commitment. Future work could distinguish and examine which dimensions of citizenship behavior are directed toward the team versus those directed toward the global organization. This approach would be consistent with Organ’s call for OCB measures that considered “site-specific” needs (Organ, 1988: 107) and Williams and Anderson’s (1991) dichotomization of citizenship behavior directed toward an individual (OCBI) versus the organization (OCBO). The study of OCB directed toward the work team may be of particular interest to organizations that make extensive use of teams.

Finally, relationships involving other commitment foci (e.g., professional commitment, union commitment) should be examined to determine if similar patterns emerge. If they do, it would demonstrate even more strongly that managers should be concerned with employees’ perceptions of support and commitment.

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