Direct and indirect effects of supervisor communication on organizational commitment

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3 authors:

Mark van Vuuren
University of Twente

Menno De Jong
University of Twente

Erwin R Seydel
University of Twente

WHY WORK?

THE CONTRIBUTION OF VALUE PERCEPTIONS AND EFFICACY EXPECTATIONS TO ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT

Mark van Vuuren

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PROEFSCHRIFT

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en de assistent-promotor: **dr. M.D.T. de Jong**

All science is a sublime detective story.
Only it is not set to detect why a man is dead,
but the darker secret of why he is alive.

GK Chesterton

Contents

Chapter 1

General introduction

Mark van Vuuren

Introduction

This research project is about reasons why people work. One of the exciting aspects of this project is the possibility of visiting different kinds of organizations to meet people in their working environment. Sometimes, I recognized what Cheney (2000) described as regular feedback on interpretive work: “So you mean I can just hang out in an organization and call it research? Cool!” (p. 25). Once when I was visiting a call-center, I met a man who had been working there for quite some time. Honestly, I thought his job was extremely boring. He had many talents and could have chosen almost any line of work. He was free to go. But he didn’t. Given the chaotic dynamics of the market environment his company was in, competing organizations would have paid him twice as much as his current employer. But he stayed. He even seemed to like this (in my view) mind-numbing work in this dull organization. I wondered what kept him there. On asking, he replied, “Well, you know, it’s just… it’s just the organization. I dunno, I just like it, you know.” First, I thought “well, people certainly differ.” But then I realized that this man was just one of the literally millions of people who enjoy working for organizations where I could not imagine staying longer than a day. Similarly, when I tell others about my work (teaching students and doing research at the University of Twente) I sometimes realize this also works the other way around. Why do people stay where they are? What keeps them in this specific line of work in this particular organization? My curiosity about these questions guided the studies reported in this dissertation. Why people choose a particular line of work and a particular organization has been the topic of extensive research. Their attachment is framed in words like identification (Ashforth & Mael, 1989) and commitment (Meyer & Allen, 1997). The context is put into words like job embeddedness (Mitchell et al., 2001), job design (Hackman & Oldham, 1980), attractiveness (Turban, 2001), work-life balance (Baylin, Fletcher & Kolb, 1997), or satisfaction (Spector, 1997). People are found to bask in the reflected glory of an organization, while cutting off its reflected failure (Snyder, Lassegard & Ford, 1986). Employees, depicted as Type A-personalities (Schaubroeck & Williams, 1993), B-players (DeLong &Vijayaraghavan, 2003) or Charlatans (Parnell & Singer, 2001) try to manage their expressions, impressions, reputations, identities, images and prestige through charisma, contracts, fear appeals, feelings, emotions, and visions. Communication scholars are especially interested in the way an organization is presented to and perceived by its members. Studies are meta-analyzed to generalize the findings and answer the questions: Why do people do what they do in their organizations? What motivates employees to commit themselves to organizations? And how can communication support, enhance or diminish this process? One of the starting points for this project was the interest in the link between communication and commitment. More precisely: we wanted to study how perceptions of *competence* and *motivation* contribute to commitment. Both constructs are at the conceptual core of human behavior (Elliot, Faler, McGregor, Campbell, Sedikides & Harackiewicz, 2000), and are shaped and influenced by communication (e.g., feedback: Bandura, 2002; Sansone, 1986, 1989). To understand how communication can create conditions for commitment (Postmes, Tanis & De Wit, 2001), these constructs are studied from a socio-psychological view of communication (Craig, 1999). This socio-psychological view theorizes communication in terms of situations requiring manipulation of causes of behavior to achieve specified outcomes. From this perspective, communication is interesting because it both interacts with and influences social processes. Research in this tradition is aimed at learning more about the people in an organization and the way individuals and groups influence each other (cf. Miller, 2000 for analogies with the post-positivistic perspective).

Aim of this dissertation

The main aim of this project is to investigate whether competence and motivation contribute to staying in an organization – and liking it. Competence and motivation are fundamentally linked to each other (Ryan & Deci, 2000; Elliot & Dweck, 2005). One becomes competent through motivation, and one is motivated for things that are achievable, based on previous experiences (Bandura, 2002). For example, positive feedback has been found to enhance intrinsic motivation, mediated by perceived competence (Elliot et al., 2000). Based on attribution theory, competence in the workplace is seen as a subjective inference or a social construction of the potential for, or demonstration of, coordinated actions that accomplish organizationally valued tasks (Kanfer & Ackerman, 2005).

Before giving an overview of the chapters in this dissertation, I will first introduce the operationalization of 'staying and liking it' (i.e., commitment), motivation (i.e., values), and competence (i.e., efficacy). Special attention will be paid to current debates in academic literature to which these studies may contribute. These debates will be central in the general discussion.

Staying (and liking it): Commitment

As I am interested in why people attach themselves to organizations and work, commitment is the central topic of this project. Commitment has been at the center of studies into individual and organizational performance for decades and can be traced back to Fayol and Weber (Swailes, 2002). Meyer and colleagues, in particular, (Meyer & Allen, 1997; Meyer & Hercovitch, 2001; Meyer, Irving & Allen, 1993; Meyer, Becker & Vandenberghe, 2004) have elaborated extensively on commitment, and their conceptualization has dominated the discussions about commitment, largely because of the ease with which their commitment approach can be expanded to several dimensions and foci. Organizational commitment is defined as a psychological state that binds the individual to the organization. Meyer and colleagues operationalize commitment in three basic dimensions: affective (where *desire* to obtain a goal is the basis for motivation – employees continue employment because they want to and act on the benefit of the organization), normative (where a sense of *obligation* motivates people – they feel that they ought to remain with the organization), and continuance (where the *cost of withdrawal* extrinsically motivates people to do certain things, as not doing them is perceived as having higher costs than continuing to do them– they stay because they feel they need to do so).

Although there are indications of the construct validity of these dimensions (e.g., Allen & Meyer, 1996), the distinction has been criticized for two main reasons. First, it has been questioned whether "continuance commitment" should be regarded as a form of commitment since there is no psychological bind involved (Abbott, White & Charles, 2005). As it measures a perceived lack of alternatives, continuance commitment is attitude-neutral in nature (Brown, 1996) and may be something completely different than commitment. Its consistent negative relation to both affective and normative commitment casts further doubt on the proposition that commitment has a continuance dimension (Virtanen, 2000). Second, the high intercorrelation between affective and normative commitment, which has been consistently reported, has been raised as an issue. In their meta-analysis, Meyer et al. (2002) show that affective and normative commitment have similar patterns of antecedents, correlates and consequences. However, they also found differences between the dimensions in terms of magnitude of correlation and the influences of several moderators. As commitment serves as the most important variable in this project, the multidimensionality of commitment will be addressed in the general discussion.

Commitment is not limited to the level of the organization. Therefore, Meyer and Allen's model has not only been used to study the emergence of commitment dimensions, but also to distinguish between different foci of commitment. While the main focus has been on organizational commitment (e.g., Becker, 1960; Marsh & Mannari, 1977), it is acknowledged that people may also commit themselves to other entities, like their workgroup, their supervisor, their occupation, profession, or the union (Becker, 1992; Becker & Billings, 1996; Meyer, Allen, & Topolnytsky, 1998). While organizational commitment is the main focus of this project, one chapter compares occupational commitment with organizational commitment (cf. May, Korczynski & Frenkel, 2002; Lee, Carswell & Allen, 2000; Snape & Redman, 2003). Occupational commitment is an attachment to and a desire to stay in a current occupation or profession (Meyer, et al., 1993). Due to the instability of organizational life and the increasing uncertainty in the work environment, employees may not be as certain as they used to be of staying in an organization permanently. A turbulent career environment requires employees to adapt to changes and actively manage their employability (Fugate, Kinicki & Ashforth, 2004). As the stability of a professional life may shift from the individual's organization to their occupation (Meyer et al., 1998; Snape & Redman, 2003), the occupational focus of commitment is included in one of the studies in this project.

Although we focus on commitment as the dependent variable, this does not mean that commitment should only be regarded as the end-state. Organizations are dynamic systems and reveal both attitudinal and behavioral consequences of commitment. For example, commitment is regarded as a moderator in a model for goal achievement (Meyer et al., 2004). Both Begley and Czajka (1993) and Hochwarter et al. (1999) use commitment as a moderator for studying the effects of downsizing and turnover. Further, Harrison, Newman and Roth (2006) used a combination of meta-analysis, structural equation models, and time sequences to assess the contribution of job attitudes to performance. Organizational commitment -- introduced as “a fundamental evaluation of one’s job experiences” (p. 306) -- was one of the work attitudes that was found to have a strong effect on actual performance.

Finally, Meyer et al. (2002) reported that commitment influences turnover and withdrawal cognitions (affective commitment, $\rho = -.17$; normative commitment, $\rho = -.16$; continuance commitment, $\rho = -.10$). Affective commitment was found to correlate negatively with involuntary absenteeism ($\rho = -.22$), stress ($\rho = -.21$), and work-family conflict ($\rho = -.22$), and positively with job performance ($\rho = .16$), and organizational citizenship behavior ($\rho = .32$).

Motivation: Values

The first “route” that is followed in order to understand the emergence of commitment, is that of values. A value can be defined as “an enduring belief that a specific mode of conduct or end-state mode of existence is personally or socially preferable to an opposite or converse mode of conduct or end-state of existence” (Rokeach, 1973, p. 4). Values are a fundamental aspect of both people and organizations (Schein, 1992), as they are the implicit and broad goals that guide the behavior of an organization’s members (Chatman, 1989). Therefore, they are used to study the important but otherwise hard-to-grasp concept of organizational culture (Vandenberghe & Peiró, 1999) and are fundamentally linked to the motivation of members of the organization. In his landmark study, Sheridan

(1992) elaborated on the link between the perceived values of organizational culture and the motivation of employees to stay with an organization. Showing that job performance and turnover varied significantly according to organizational culture, he showed that values and motivation are related.

As values are grounded in one's identity, a certain value coherence can be expected for both organizations and people (Dose, 1997; Rokeach, 1973). This means that an organization's culture consists of a pattern of values as a coherent set of preferences (Cameron & Quinn, 2000). The Competing Values Framework (CVF) (Quinn & Rohrbaugh, 1983; Quinn & Spreitzer, 1991) specifies a structure among work values in a comprehensive way, and for this reason we chose to operationalize values in this project using the CVF.

Competing Values Framework

The CVF consists of two dimensions with contrasting poles (see Figure 1). Cataloguing values this way allows different preferences that are relevant for organizational research to be stressed (Quinn & Spreitzer, 1991). The first dimension of the CVF represents the primary focus of the organization, whether it is directed internally (with the main focus on the organization itself, its processes, or its people) or externally (with the main focus on the relation of the organization with the environment). The second dimension contrasts stability and control with flexibility and change. These two dimensions together form a framework of four quadrants representing four different models: (1) an internal process culture, represented by a control–internal focus; (2) a rational goal culture, represented by a control–external focus; (3) a human relations culture represented by a flexibility–internal focus; and (4) an open system culture represented by a flexibility–external focus (Quinn & Rohrbaugh, 1983; O'Neill & Quinn 1993; Van Muijen et al., 1999). The framework is called the *Competing* Values Framework, because the opposite patterns are contradictory. For example, the values in the Human Relations Model (e.g., participation and attention to employee concerns) are opposite to the values in the Rational Goal Model (goal achievement and a task focus). The framework does not maintain that these oppositions cannot exist at the same in a real system (i.e., they are not necessarily empirical opposites), but it does suggest that these values are viewed as opposites in our minds (O'Neill & Quinn, 1993). The CVF has been applied to a wide array of settings in organizational studies, most notably organizational culture (Quinn & Cameron, 1999) and leadership roles (Quinn, 1988), but also to the analysis of written and spoken messages (Rogers & Hildebrandt, 1993) and the way organizational change unfolds (Giek & Lees, 1993).

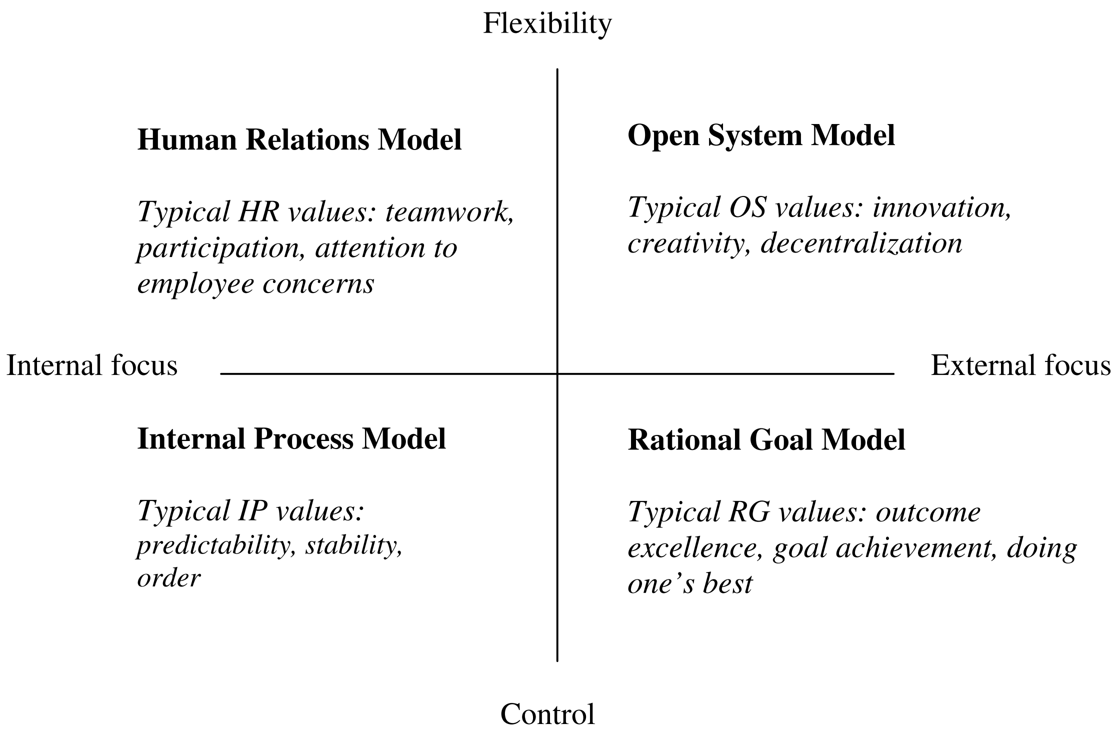

Figure 1. The Competing Values Framework (based on Quinn et al., 1983; Kalliath et al., 1999).

Person-organization fit

Values motivate individuals to behave in a certain way (Rokeach, 1973), but this motivational basis of values may become stronger when such values are shared with others. Overlap between an organization's values and personal ones may be additionally motivating. This is best known as "person-organization fit," defined as the congruence between patterns of organizational values and patterns of personal values (Chatman, 1989). There is, however, dispute about the concept of (person-organization) fit, as indirect and direct value congruence can be considered two conceptually different phenomena (Cable & Judge, 1996, 1997; Kristof, 1996; Ostroff et al., 2005);

Indirect (or actual) fit is assessed by a statistical comparison of self-reported perceptions. For example, actual fit assessment analyzes the overlap between reported scores on organizational values and individual values (e.g., Kalliath et al., 1999a; Ostroff et al., 2005; Van Vianen, 2000; Vandenberghe & Peiró, 1999). The pattern of personal values is often operationalized as individual preferences for organizational characteristics (Van Vianen, 2000), and the CVF has been applied to the indirect measurement of actual person-organization fit (e.g., Kalliath et al., 1999; Ostroff, Shin & Kinicki, 2005; Van Muijen et al., 1999; Van Vianen, 2000; Vandenberghe & Peiró, 1999).

Direct (or perceived) fit, on the other hand, is conceptualized as an individual's overall judgment about the extent to which he or she perceives a fit with the organization. Perceived fit is assessed using a direct measure, where respondents are asked to what extent they perceive themselves fitting in their organization. For example, Cable and DeRue (2002) studied respondents' subjective perceptions of the fit between their values and those of their organization. A positive relationship between actual value congruence and perceived fit has been found, but the correlations are weak (Cable & Judge, 1997; Kristof-Brown & Stevens, 2001). The difference between indirect and direct value congruence as two conceptually different phenomena will be addressed in the general discussion.

Values, person-organization fit and commitment

There is empirical evidence that person-organization fit contributes to organizational commitment (Kristof et al., 2005; Meglino et al., 1989; Van Vianen, 2000). Considering the multidimensional nature of the commitment construct (Meyer & Allen, 1997; Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001), person-organization fit is assumed to relate differently to distinct dimensions of commitment. Attention has been centered on affective commitment, because this is assumed to reflect shared values (Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001). This is plausible for several reasons (Kalliath et al., 1999). First, person-organization fit occurs when an individual perceives that an organization reflects his or her values. When an employee identifies preferred values in the organization, he or she may consider that personal fulfillment can be gained from being a member of the organization. For instance, if someone prefers ‘stability’ and a bureaucratic organization with clear role descriptions and order as its main characteristics can offer this, a positive evaluation of the fit between the individual and the organization may result in (affective) commitment. Furthermore, common interpretations reduce uncertainty and stimulus overload and improve interpersonal relationships (presumably, in part, by reducing conflict and misunderstandings), which improves commitment (Meglino et al., 1989; Schein, 1992). Finally, Kalliath et al. (1999) suggest that congruence among members’ values generates clearer role expectations as individuals are more able to predict each other’s behavior, which leads to less role ambiguity and conflict, and hence higher commitment (Kraimer, 1997; Meglino et al., 1989).

A fit between the values held by employees and their supervisors has also been found to be significantly related to employee satisfaction and commitment (Meglino et al., 1989). Others have shown that perceived value congruence is directly related to positive work attitudes, including commitment, (e.g., Posner, 1992; Van Vianen, 2000) and that person-organization fit can affect both contextual and task performance of employees (Bretz & Judge, 1994).These results are, however, ambiguous because of the weaknesses of the statistical methods normally used in studies on person-organization fit, which Edwards (1993, 1994) identified. Edwards proposed using polynomial regression analysis techniques to overcome these shortcomings, but this method has its own confusing aspects. Several studies using polynomial regression analysis controls for main effects of the organizational and personal values before measuring the congruence of the values have subsequently reported the absence of congruence effects in favor of main effects of the values. For example, Kalliath et al. (1999) and Vandenberghe & Peiró (1999) reported powerful main effects and no congruence effects. In a similar vein, Abbott et al. (2005) had to conclude that “overall, perceived organizational values do appear to be the most consistent predictor of organizational commitment, more so than personal values or the fit between personal and organizational values” (p. 544). The findings of our studies will be presented in the following chapters, followed by a discussion in the final chapter of the empirical results of main and congruence effects of values on commitment. The first route to commitment (via value considerations) is depicted in Figure 2.

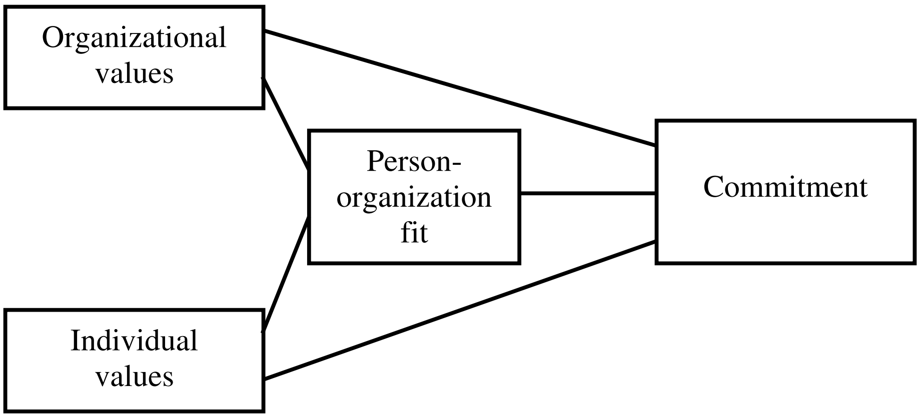

Figure 2. Proposed relationships between values and commitment.

Competence: Efficacy

Competence is proposed as the next route to commitment. In contrast to motivation, this aspect is nearly absent in commitment research. Mathieu and Zajac's (1990) meta-analysis reported only one study that incorporated efficacy. Efficacy expectations can be subdivided into two distinct concepts: self-efficacy and collective efficacy (Bandura, 1997). Bandura defines self-efficacy as "beliefs in one's capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given attainments" (p. 3), and collective efficacy as a group's shared belief in its conjoint capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce certain levels of attainments (p. 477). As Bandura states, the concept of collective efficacy in organizational settings has not yet been extensively studied. He proposes that a "belief of collective efficacy affects the sense of mission and purpose of a system, the strength of common commitment to what it seeks to achieve" (p. 469). As commitment is a psychological state that binds the individual to the organization, efficacy expectations may encourage an individual to want to be part of a team that is able to achieve more or less specified goals. Empirical evidence supports the theoretical proposition (Pajares, 2003) that small groups with a strong sense of collective efficacy have empowering and vitalizing effects on group members, reinforcing their commitment to the organization (Jex & Bliese, 1999; Walumbwa, Wang, Lawler & Shi, 2004). However, the proposed contribution to commitment to other collectivities, like "communities, organizations, social institutions and even nations" (Bandura, 2002, p. 477) remains disputed. In organizational research, collective efficacy is mostly referred to on the team-level (e.g., Gully et al., 2002), and since measures of other levels are lacking, this question is still unanswered. The present project investigates whether collective efficacy on the organizational level is a potentially valuable topic for research, in addition to the team-level approach to collective efficacy. The term "organizational efficacy" is used, to avoid confusion with other possible collectives or units, like groups, departments, or teams. As organizational efficacy surpasses task-specific efficacy considerations in favor of more generally perceived collective efficacy (Gibson, Randel, and Earley, 2000), this touches upon the fierce 'state-trait' discussion in efficacy literature (Bandura, 2002; Bosscher & Smit, 1998; Chen et al. 2001; Judge & Bono, 2001; Judge, Erez & Bono, 1998; Pajares, 1996; Spielberger, 1975).

This discussion concerns how generalizable efficacy perceptions are. While states are temporal and situation-specific, fluctuating over time and across situations, traits are defined as predispositions that are relatively stable across situations. The "inventor" of self-efficacy, Albert Bandura, dissociates himself (Bandura, 2002) from trait-like efficacy, as this would decontextualize the specific and context-bound nature of capabilities. On the other hand, research has undeniably shown that general self-efficacy (GSE) is actually an interesting, valuable and measurable construct (e.g., Bosscher & Smit, 1998; Chen et al. 2001; Eden, 1996; Gardner & Pierce, 1998; Judge & Bono, 2001; Judge, Erez & Bono, 1998). GSE has been found to predict both job satisfaction and job performance (Judge et al. 2001), self esteem, emotional stability, and positive self image (Judge, Erez, Bono & Thoresen, 2002; Judge, Locke, Durham & Kluger, 1998). One of the aims of this project is to investigate whether organizational efficacy is a relevant and measurable trait in organizational research, and the final chapter will discuss both the state-trait discussion and the relevance of organizational efficacy as a construct. The evaluation of self-efficacy and collective efficacy may lead to a kind of general perceived efficacy that could influence commitment. In light of the proposed congruence between individual and organizational values, the link between self and organizational efficacy will be examined. The final chapter will again discuss this expected link between self and organizational attitudes (both values and efficacy). The second route to commitment (via efficacy perceptions) can be seen in Figure 3.

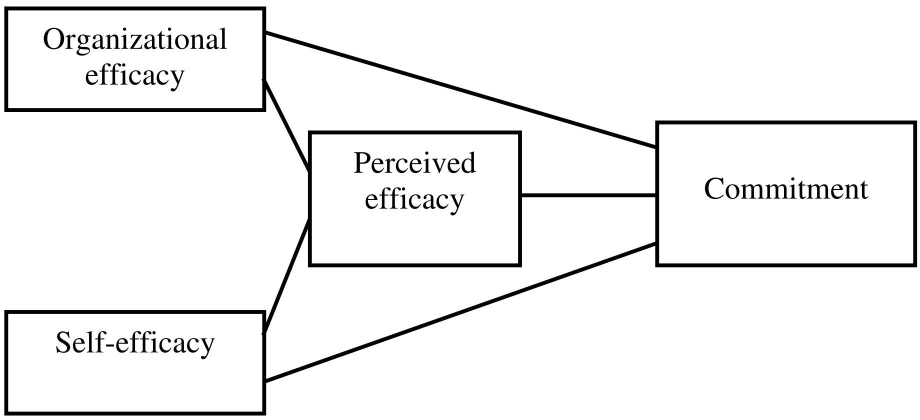

Figure 3. Proposed relationships between efficacy and commitment.

Motivation and competence are connected (cf. Elliot & Dweck, 2005) and interaction between motivation and competence is therefore expected. For example, experiments have shown that valuation of competence enhances motivation (e.g., Elliot et al., 2000; Harackiewicz & Elliot, 1993) and the motivation literature assumes that values influence efficacy (Locke, 1997; cf. Meyer et al., 2004). Imagine the following example: The Board of the *Federazione Sanmarinese Giuoco Calcio* (the national soccer association of San Marino) make winning the FIFA World Cup in 2010 their goal. Unfortunately, San Marino is not a leading soccer nation. Hence, things have to change for San Marino. Assuming that winning is an important value for professional sports players, they have to consider their commitment to this project. But one of the other considerations for the players is the perceived chance that their efforts will pay off. Even though the ultimate goal may be valued, the perceived lack of competence and the unlikelihood of achieving the outcome may restrain players from investing the necessary effort. At the same time, when individuals are confronted with a goal they value, it may be perceived as “worth fighting for”, leading to self-regulated attitudes and goal regulation in general (Porath & Bateman, 2006). Thus, motivation and competence may be involved in individuals’ evaluation before they commit themselves to a goal. Hersey, Blanchard and Johnson (1997) provide a model for situational leadership that thrives on the interaction between employees’ motivation and their competence. This project will also investigate whether this interaction also applies to organizational commitment.

Outline

In sum, this project aims to understand whether congruence between organizational and individual values contributes to commitment, and whether efficacy expectations contribute to commitment. The main discussions in the literature that will be considered: the multidimensionality of commitment; the relation between actual and perceived person-organization fit; the contribution of main values and value congruence to commitment; and the question whether organizational efficacy can be traced, including the aforementioned state-trait debate.

Overview of the chapters

In this dissertation, each chapter presents aspects of the contribution of communication, efficacy expectations, and person-organization fit to commitment.

Chapter 2 introduces the foci and dimensions of commitment and specific work values (derived from the Competing Values Framework; Quinn, 1988). Relating these values to the types of commitment allows us to explore how values may influence employees’ commitments. To do this, the dimensions of commitment are aligned along the flexibility-control axis of the CVF, and foci of commitment are aligned along the internal-external axis of the CVF.

Chapter 3 compares two different methods of assessing person-organization fit: actual fit (an indirect measurement based on the comparison of organizational and personal values or characteristics), and perceived fit (a direct measurement involving employees’ own estimations of their person-organization fit).

Chapter 4 presents a study of three dimensions of organizational commitment (affective, normative and continuance) of volunteers and paid workers in a non-profit organization. The study assesses whether the predictive power of the congruence between organizational and individual values for commitment differs between paid and unpaid workers. This is important as managers frequently assume that volunteers are hard to manage, because there is no "stick" to keep them in line.

Chapter 5 studies the contribution of self and organizational efficacy perceptions to affective, normative and continuance commitment. A fourfold typology based on the interaction between self and organizational efficacy is presented and tested in order to study how the efficacies interact.

Chapter 6 examines the contribution of organizational efficacy and person-organization fit to affective organizational commitment in two different organizations. The development and validation of an organizational efficacy scale (OES) is also described.

Chapter 7 analyzes the extent to which individual perceptions of person-organization fit and organizational efficacy can be regarded as mediators between supervisor communication and commitment of organization members. The chapter also considers which aspects of supervisor communication are considered the most important by employees.

Finally, the general discussion (Chapter 8) reflects on the findings and conclusions of the individual studies, and elaborates on future research.

Data

We collected data from four different organizations: a chemical plant, a service organization for blind and visually-impaired people, a telecommunication provider, and a hospital. In each case, the aim of the study differed, as did the interest of the organizations. Originally, each chapter was to be based on a different dataset: data of the chemical plant was aimed at testing the efficacy typology; the focus in the telecom survey was on the contribution of communication; and the hospital data was primarily used to test for effects of values on foci and dimensions of commitment.

However, as the project evolved, and results were reported in articles, data from the different organizations were used in different contexts and to compare organizations (see Table 1). Most notably, this applies to the attempt to validate the newly developed Organizational Efficacy Scale, in which the use of multiple data sets is inevitable, as testing of each step in scale construction is a complex process using different rounds of administration (Spector, 1992). Thus, data from the service organization (explicitly gathered for this purpose) did not suffice. Luckily, we were sometimes allowed to add items to a survey to strengthen our case for the scale. For example, while the telecom survey was primarily designed to evaluate communication, the telecom provider allowed us to include a single-item measure of person-organization fit (Cable & Judge, 1996). This was a negotiated compromise, as in other studies we used a multiple-item scale to assess fit (Cable & DeRue, 2002). While this makes comparison with other data sets more difficult, the use of single items is not a threat of reliability and validity per se (cf. Wanous et al., 1997, for a rationale). Similarly, in the hospital study, we were allowed to test different efficacy scales, enabling us to validate our newly developed scale and compare it with an upscaled existing scale. The cooperation of the organizations ultimately made all four data sets relevant when preparing Chapter 6, even though the primary focus of the surveys differed.

As analysis of the indirect measures of value congruence yielded puzzling results, we reanalyzed the data in a simple methodological paper (Chapter 3) to see how fit perceptions could be assessed. In order to compare different types of organizations, we also included the data of the chemical plant. Finally, the service organization proposed including their volunteers in the survey in order to compare their attitudes and perceptions with those of paid workers. Seizing this unexpected opportunity, we hypothesized on the differences between paid and unpaid workers regarding commitment. Separate analyses of these data ultimately led to chapter 4, even though this was not part of the original project. But it is a nice paper, isn't it?

Table 1

Use of the data sets in chapters of this dissertation

Chapter	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**
Chemical		XX		XX	XX	
Hospital	XX	XX			XX	
Service			XX		XX	
Telecom					XX	XX

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Chapter 2

Why Work? Aligning foci and dimensions of commitment along the axes of the Competing Values Framework

Mark van Vuuren, Bernard P. Veldkamp, Menno D. T. de Jong & Erwin R. Seydel

(Resubmitted)

Abstract

Purpose –To gain insight into the psychological dynamics of work motivation, specific work values are related to foci and dimensions of commitment to understand how different values influence people's commitments.

Design - A survey from a hospital (n=222) was analyzed on the relationships between organizational values, individual values, affective and normative commitment on both organizational and occupational level.

Findings - Results supported the proposition that dimensions of commitment can be aligned along the flexibility-control axis of the Competing Values Framework (CVF) and that the foci of commitment can be aligned along the internal-external axis of the CVF, but in line with recent findings, value congruence effects were absent.

Research limitations/implications - Although only small effect sizes were found, and results based on self-report have to be handled cautiously, the hypothesized pattern was found for affective and normative organizational and occupational commitment. This gives insights into the values associated with these types of commitments.

Practical implications - Specific values which are found to be related to specific kinds of commitment can direct strategies for influencing commitments in organizational contexts.

Value of the paper - As specific values are linked to specific commitments, a) practitioners gain insight into which values may lead to a specific kind of commitment, enabling them to develop strategies for enhancing commitment, and b) academics see how the CVF corresponds to newly developed insights into commitment research.

Introduction

Why do people get up early in the morning? Why do they drive to a building where they spend the better part of the day? Why do they continue to do that for most of their lives? Why work? Questions regarding the reasons people act the way they do are not only important for the individual, but also for the organization. The best use of human capital occurs when leadership is aligned as close as possible to the motivations of the workforce. It is beneficial for all parties involved when the things that keep people involved in their work are recognized. In this study, the importance of a human motivator (values) is assessed for an important asset (commitment), which serves as a binding force between the individual and an organization or occupation.

Commitment has served as a major construct of research for investigating the ties that bind someone to a particular occupation in a particular organization. Although several distinct dimensions of commitment have been found, all of them represent a binding force that inspires individuals to actions that are relevant to both the organization and the individual (cf. Meyer & Herscovitch 2001, p. 301). This binding force is the perceived reason for taking part in a course of action, and can, arguably, be helpful for answering questions about the working life of individuals. Therefore, research on commitment can help us understand organizational considerations on strategy and goals. It is of strategic importance to understand why members of an organization join a team and do their work, in order to understand and even predict reactions to managerial actions. So, commitment can provide a useful frame of reference for understanding human behaviour for both individuals and organizations.

Scholars who have investigated commitment in organizational contexts have unpacked the concept of commitment and laid bare a multidimensional structure of binding forces (e.g., Angle & Perry 1981; Mayer & Schoorman 1992; Meyer & Allen 1997; Mowday, Steers & Porter 1979; O'Reilly & Chatman 1986) and showed the existence of multiple foci of commitment (Becker & Billings 1993; Meyer, Allen & Smith 1993; Redman & Snape 2005; Vandenberghe, Bentein & Stinglhamber 2004). In studies on the antecedents of commitment, the importance of values has been repeated underlined. This prominent attention holds for work values in general (Dose 1997; Elizur & Koslowski 2001, Kidron 1978; McDonald & Gandz 1991; Sagie, Elizur & Koslowski 1996), for cultural values (Hofstede et al. 1990; Wasti 2003), and for value congruence (Chatman 1991; Dose 1997; Kalliath, Bluedorn & Strube 1999a; Meyer, Irving & Allen 1998; Mayer & Schoorman 1992; Van Vianen 2000; Vandenberghe & Peiró 1999).

Various sets of values have been used to explain or predict organizational commitment, most of them consisting of general lists of values without a coherent underlying framework of interrelationships (e.g., O'Reilly, Chatman & Caldwell 1989; McDonald & Gandz 1991). A drawback of this approach is that it leads to *ad hoc* patterns of values, which are hard to generalize between people and organizations. In contrast, some researchers have provided a more systematic approach for investigating values. Hofstede et al. (1990), for instance, validated a framework of dimensions to distinguish between cultures, which has proven its relevance for the comparison of national cultures. Quinn and colleagues (Quinn 1988; Quinn & Spreitzer 1983; Quinn & Rohrbaugh 1991) developed the so-called Competing Values Framework (CVF), which has become a dominant value set for assessing organizational cultures (e.g., Cameron & Quinn 1999; Harris & Mossholder 1996; Kalliath et al. 1999a; O'Neill & Quinn 1993; Van Vianen 2000; Vandenberghe & Peiró 1999; Verplanken 2004).

In this study, we will investigate whether different foci and dimensions of commitment can be related to the CVF. Earlier research has established a relationship between organizational commitment and the values represented in the CVF (e.g., Kalliath et al. 1999a; Van Vianen 2000; Vandenberghe & Peiró 1999). We will move beyond this by testing theory-based hypotheses about the relationship between the specific value quadrants of the CVF and both foci (organizational/occupational) and dimensions (affective/normative) of commitment. We hope to contribute to the understanding of the way individual perceptions of values contribute to commitment. Before turning to the relationship between values and commitment, we will first review the multidimensional structure of commitment and different foci, and relate the CVF to work values.

Multidimensionality of commitment

The 'binding force' that is the essence of commitment can occur in many different dimensions or forms. Such dimensions recognize the complex motivations people have, making sense of their lives and evaluating different reasons for taking or continuing a certain course of action. These different reasons may refer to different basic human needs and can accordingly lead to different forms of commitment (see Meyer & Herscovitch 2001). The most widespread model was developed by Meyer and Allen (1991, 1997; cf. Meyer, Becker & Vandenberghe 2004; Meyer et al. 2002). Their model (Meyer & Allen 1997) distinguishes between three mindsets that cover three forms of commitment dimensions: attachment based on emotional attitudes (*affective* commitment), the sense of obligation towards the organization (*normative* commitment), and the perceived cost of leaving the organization (*continuance* commitment). Since this emphasizes the diverse ways in which commitment can emerge, it is reasonable to assume that antecedents and implications will also vary across the dimensions. For affective commitment, these antecedents are found in a positive working climate (Mathieu & Zajac 1990), perceived organizational support (Rhoades, Eisenberger & Armeli 2001) and person-organization fit (Kristof 1996). Normative commitment tends to be related to processes in the early stages of socialization and the perceived psychological contract between the organization and the individual (Clugston, Howell & Dorfman 2000). Continuance commitment, in contrast, is not related to these antecedents, or negatively so. The main antecedents for continuance commitment are found to be stability, financial security, and side bets (Meyer & Herscovitch 2001).

Although there are indications of the construct validity of these dimensions (e.g., Allen & Meyer 1996), there is some doubt whether the model is right. First, there is the question whether the mindset labelled "continuance commitment" really is a form of commitment since there is no psychological bond involved. It is questionable whether a lack of alternatives should be labelled as commitment (Abbott, White & Charles 2005). After reviewing the critical discussions of continuance commitment's attitude-neutral origins (Brown 1996) and its negative correlations with both affective and normative commitment (Virtanen 2000), we decided to focus only on the attitudinal commitments: namely, affective and normative commitment. These two dimensions of commitment are the topic of a second debate in the literature, where the correlation between affective and normative commitment has been questioned. In their meta-analysis, Meyer et al. (2002) show that affective and normative commitment have similar patterns of antecedents, correlates and consequences. However, they also found differences between the dimensions in terms of magnitude of correlation and the influences of several moderators. For this reason, various researchers have suggested exploring the possible differences between these two commitment dimensions further (e.g., Brown 1996; Meyer et al. 2002; Powell & Meyer 2004). So we will incorporate affective and normative commitment in our study and investigate whether differences in their respective relations can be traced to the values used in the CVF.

Foci of commitment

Together with studies exploring different dimensions of the binding force, Meyer and Allen's commitment model has also been adapted to account for different foci of commitment. When commitment was introduced as a topic of research, the main focus was on organizational commitment (Becker 1960; Marsh & Mannari 1977). This is still the most widely used variable in commitment research, especially affective organizational commitment (Meyer & Allen 1997). But people can also be committed to other entities than the organization, such as their workgroup, their supervisor, or their occupation (Becker 1992; Becker & Billings 1996; Meyer, Allen & Topolnytsky 1998). The occupational commitment scale (Meyer, Allen & Smith 1993), which incorporates the aforementioned dimensions of commitment, allows researchers to address the effects of other values than organizational commitment (cf. May, Korczynski & Frenkel 2002; Lee, Carswell & Allen 2000; Snape & Redman 2003). Occupational commitment is defined as an attachment to and a desire to stay in a current occupation or profession (Meyer et al. 1993). Due to the instability of organizational life and the uncertainty often associated with the working environment, employees may not be ascertain of staying in an organization as they might once have been. A turbulent career environment requires employees to adapt to change and actively manage their employability (Fugate, Kinicki, & Ashforth 2004). The stability of an individual's professional life may shift from organization to occupation (Meyer et al. 1998; Snape & Redman 2003). This underlines the importance of attention to both organizations and occupations as foci of commitment.

The recognition of the distinct dimensions and foci of commitment are important advances in the study and understanding of commitment. The relationships between these dimensions and foci and values need to be studied, as work values (based on individual values) are often regarded as predictors of commitment. We will now turn to a comprehensive description of work values, in order to develop the hypotheses of this study.

Work values

Values are a fundamental aspect for both organizations and individuals (Katz & Kahn 1978). Values are the basis for an organizational culture and are defined as enduring preferences for certain modes of conduct and end states (Enz 1986). They play an important role in the functioning of the organization, guiding and directing decision making (Kraimer 1997). Moreover, an organizational culture is said to have its core substance in values (Schein 1992), and values have metaphorically been called the DNA of organizational culture (Isaac, Wilson & Pitt 2004). An investigation of the intangible but highly important concept of 'organizational culture' is best done through an assessment of the relative importance of work values as perceived by individual members of the organization (Ostroff, Shin & Kinicki 2005). Knowing the impact of organizational culture on motivation, it is not surprising that work values are related to commitment attitudes, both theoretically (e.g., Dose 1997; McDonald & Gandz 1991) and empirically (e.g., Kidron 1978; Elizur & Koslowsky 2001). From the various operationalizations in use for the measurement of values, we chose the Competing Values Framework (CVF) (Quinn & Rohrbaugh 1983; Quinn & Spreitzer 1991). Compared to other options (McDonald & Gandz 1993; Rokeach 1973; Finegan 2000; Sagie, Elizur & Koslowsky 1996), one of the main advantages of the CVF is that it provides a comprehensive structure among values, consisting of two axes with contrasting poles (see Figure 1). Several other studies on the relationship between value congruence and commitment have used the CVF (e.g., Kalliath et al. 1999a; Ostroff et al. 2005; Van Vianen 2000; Vandenberghe & Peiró 1999). The contrast as point of departure for cataloguing values gives the opportunity to stress different preferences (Quinn & Spreitzer 1991).

The first axis of the CVF represents the primary focus of the organization, whether internal (addressing the organization itself, its processes, or its people) or external (addressing the relation of the organization with the working environment). The second axis represents the primary approach of the organization, whether flexibility or control. These two axes form a framework of four quadrants, each representing a value model (Quinn & Rohrbaugh 1983): (1) the Internal Process Model, where stability and control are primary, and order and predictability are important values; (2) the Rational Goal Model, where rationality and planning are expected to result in profit and efficiency; (3) the Human Relations Model, where cohesion and morale are important, and human resources and training are emphasized; (4) the Open System Model, where inspiration, adaptability and growth are more important than control.

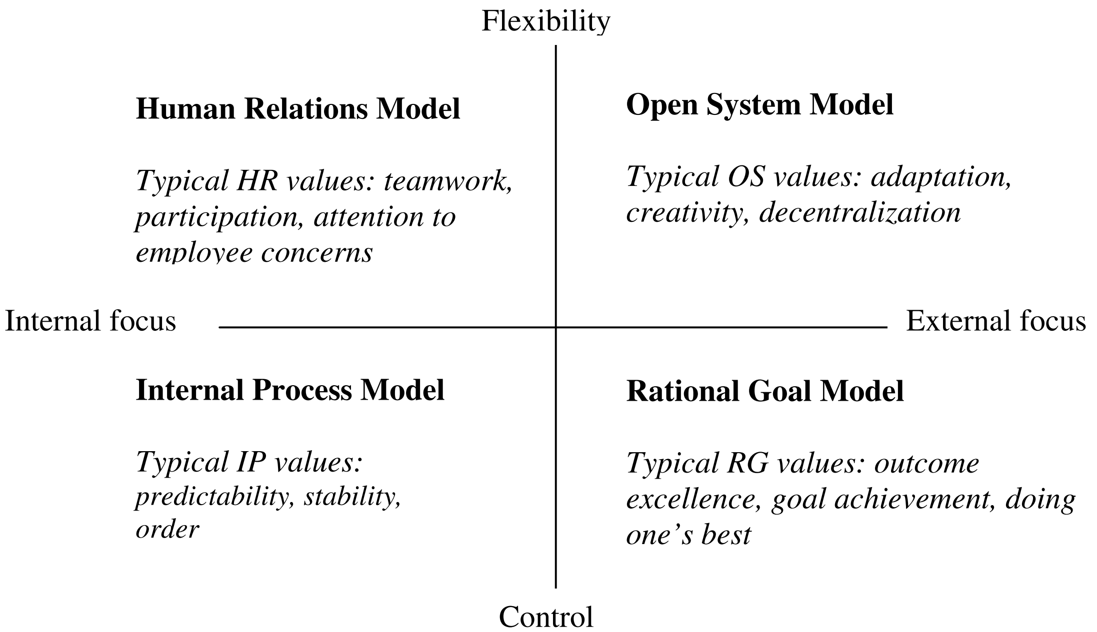

Figure 1. Typical values of the four quadrants of the Competing Values Framework (based on Quinn et al., 1983; Kalliath et al., 1999a).

Hypotheses

Our main aim is to study whether the axes that define the values in the CVF can be aligned with dimensions and foci of commitment. More specifically, we will investigate whether the different kinds of commitment are related to the different value quadrants of the CVF for main and congruence effects (e.g., Abbott et al. 2005). We propose that the CVF's internal-external dimension can be related to the two foci of commitment, the organizational (internal) and the occupational (external) focus, and that the CVF's flexibility-stability dimension can be related to the distinction between relational contract (affective commitment) and transactional contract (normative commitment). We will test this main idea by using stepwise testing from general to specific hypotheses.

First, on the most general level, we propose that values are an evaluation tool for individuals that help them decide whether or not to commit themselves to something or someone (Meglino & Ravlin 1998). People get attached to the things they value, and evidence has been found for this effect. In the context of recent value congruence research, the main effects of organizational values turn out to be important contributors to commitment compared to the congruence between organizational and individual values. For example, Vandenberghe and Peiró (1999) reported on a study where employees' reactions were mainly explained by organizational values *per se* and by value preferences instead of congruence. They expected these results based on previous findings that an organization's cultural emphasis on interpersonal relationships correlated with lower turnover (Sheridan, 1992) and that values ("the content of culture," Vandenberghe & Peiró 1999, p. 570) proved to be linked to perceived quality of life (Quinn & Spreitzer 1991). Contrary to their expectations, Kalliath et al (1999a) reported powerful main effects and no congruence effects. Similarly, Abbott et al. (2005) conclude that "overall, perceived organizational values do appear to be the most consistent predictor of organizational commitment, more so than personal values or the fit between personal and organizational values" (p. 544). Note that "organizational values" are regarded here as individual perceptions, like commitment. We expect that the organizational values as perceived by the individual members of the organization are relevant for the four types of commitment. If these values are non-significant for the four types of commitment, any further specification is irrelevant. Therefore we start by hypothesizing that

H1 Organizational values will predict all four types of commitment.

Second, we propose that the foci of commitment can be placed on the horizontal axis of the CVF, which identifies the organization's focus, whether internal or external (Quinn 1988). We propose that this dimension can be related to distinctive foci of commitment, with the organizational focus more internal, and the occupational focus more external. Individuals in an organization with an internal focus will consider specific values stressing the maintenance of the socio-technical system important (Quinn 1988), like membership, motivation and order. Such values reflect the importance of the organization to employees and their participation "in the family," hence organizational commitment. On the other hand, we propose that individuals in an organization with an external focus, which emphasizes contributions to external stakeholders, may stress the importance of their profession rather than the organization. A focus on adaptation, meeting of expectations and the personal contribution to the satisfaction of external stakeholders' needs underlines the importance of an occupation. Employees' pride in their profession and occupational commitment are becoming increasingly important for many people (Lee, Carswell & Allen 2000; Meyer, Allen & Topolnytsky 1998; Snape & Redman, 2003), given the changes and dynamics of modern working environments which stress employability (Fugate, Kinicki & Ashforth, 2004). So employees who are predominantly committed to the organization may serve the needs of the organization best, whereas employees more committed to their occupation will serve external stakeholders better and take more pride in their professional performance. From a competing values perspective, these kinds of behaviours can be identified as a consequence of an internal as opposed to an external focus. As values associated with internal integration may differ from those associated with external adaptation (Meglino & Ravlin 1998), the commitment consequences may also differ. So we hypothesize that

H2a Organizational commitment will be better predicted by the values associated with the Human Relations & Internal Process Models than those associated with the Open System & Rational Goal Models.

H2b Occupational commitment will be better predicted by the values associated with the Open System & Rational Goal Models than those associated with the Human Relations & Internal Process Models.

Third, we presume that the dimensions of commitment (Meyer & Allen 1997) can be related to the vertical axis of the CVF based on the nature of motivation. Meyer, Becker and Vandenberghe (2004) point to this idea by combining commitment mindsets with Deci and Ryan's (1985) self-determination theory. In this theory, the intention to act can be intrinsically motivated, reflecting "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) or it can be extrinsically motivated, where an activity is performed "to attain some separable outcome" (Ryan & Deci 2000, p. 71). Meyer et al. (2004) propose that affective commitment can be placed alongside intrinsic motivation, while normative commitment is extrinsic motivation ("introjected regulation," see Gagné & Deci 2005, p. 336) though less so than continuance commitment. As mentioned before, the external regulation associated with continuance commitment, with the perceived locus of causality outside the individual (Meyer et al. 2004), raises doubts whether continuance commitment really is a form of commitment.

This distinction in self determination theory may help in the debate on the differences between affective and normative commitment, which are highly correlated, but conceptually distinct (e.g., Meyer et al. 2002). We propose that both affective and normative commitment are value-based, but that the values differ in their nature. In their discussion on psychological contracts, Meyer et al. (1998) already pointed to this distinction, labelling affective commitment as a "relational" contract and normative (and continuance) commitment as "transactional contracts" (cf. Rousseau 1995). As affective commitment is relational (Meyer et al. 1998; Meyer & Herscovitch 2001), this intrinsic motivation may lead to a flexible attitude towards the organization, as was also shown in the relation of affective commitment to Organizational Citizenship Behaviour (LePine, Erez & Johnson 2002). On the other hand, normative commitment is predominantly transactional, and can be less flexible and more calculating. If this is true, the dimensions of commitment may be structured along the vertical axis of the CVF, leading to the hypothesis that

H3a *Affective commitment will be better predicted by the values associated with the Human Relations & Open System Models than by those associated with the Internal Process & Rational Goal Models.*

H3b *Normative commitment will be better predicted by the values associated with the Internal Process & Rational Goal Models than by those associated with the Human Relations & Open System Models.*

The *fourth* hypothesis combines the previous hypotheses. A model gains from the synergy that comes from integrating different factors. With the CVF, combining the flexibility vs. control dimension with the internal vs. external dimension into quadrants produces new insights. So, the proposed relation of values and commitment foci (H2) and commitment dimensions (H3) along the axes of the CVF lead to the hypotheses that

H4a *Affective organizational commitment will be best predicted by organizational values in the Human Relations quadrant.*

H4b *Normative organizational commitment will be best predicted by organizational values in the Internal Process quadrant.*

H4c *Affective occupational commitment will be best predicted by organizational values in the Open Systems quadrant.*

H4d *Normative occupational commitment will be best predicted by organizational values in the Rational Goal quadrant.*

We will go one step further in our hypotheses, as one important topic on the relation between values and commitment has not yet been addressed. This topic is *value congruence*, which occurs when employees perceive that their values match the organization's values. Correspondence between the values of the organization and an organization member will be identified, leading to higher value congruence (Chatman 1991). The feeling that one is the "right person in the right place" nourishes a feeling of comfort and an intention to stay (Schneider, Goldstein & Smith 1995). Meyer and Herscovitch (2001) propose that shared values form the basis of affective commitment. Theoretically this seems reasonable, because recognizing such an important feature as shared values can lead an individual to support the course of action proposed by the organization which promotes these values. Common interpretations also reduce uncertainty and stimulus overload, improving interpersonal relationships (presumably, in part, by reducing conflict and misunderstandings); this in turn improves commitment (Meglino, Ravlin & Adkins 1989; Schein 1992). Congruence among members' values generates clearer role expectations, as it is easier to predict each other's behaviour, which leads to less role ambiguity and conflict, and hence higher commitment (Dose 1997; Finegan 2000; Kraimer 1997; Meglino et al. 1989). Locke (1976) discusses the effects of similarity: "Individuals are generally attracted to and feel most comfortable with people who are 'like them' or 'see things' the way they do, especially 'important' things" (1976, p. 1327). An affective bond can more easily be established when individuals recognize their own values in their colleagues or organization. Therefore, in order to study the attribution of values to commitment not only are the values themselves interesting, but also the perceived congruence between individual and organizational values. Besides the theoretical considerations behind Meyer and Herscovitch's (2001) proposition that shared values form the basis of affective commitment, empirical evidence has also been found (Cable & DeRue 2002; Meyer et al. 2002). But the research results are not unequivocal. In other studies that used the CVF to operationalize values, the results were "marginal" (Vandenberghe & Peiró 1999, p. 597) or even "minuscule" (Kalliath et al. 1999a, p. 1192) when statistical significance was attributed to large sample sizes rather than practical significance. The usability of the CVF for congruence effects was therefore tested again in this study.

Value congruence has been empirically shown to influence both affective and normative dimensions of commitment (e.g., Meyer et al. 1998; Vandenberghe & Peiró 1999), although it influences affective commitment the most (Meyer & Herscovitch 2001, p. 317; Meyer et al. 1998). But given the different nature of the CVF values, specific values could influence normative commitment. The main issue here is the reciprocity of normative commitment that has been named as a psychological contract, fostered by mutuality in important issues. Value congruence could play a role in this reciprocity. Value congruence may lead to occupational commitment, as well as organizational commitment, because the values individuals have will be in line with their occupational choices and recognizing the organization's values may confirm the choice to work in a specific organization. Moreover, because of the importance of the dimensions and foci of commitment in the changing work environment (Meyer et al. 1998), it is important to assess the effects of value congruence on several forms of commitment. We will therefore investigate the relation between value congruence and the proposed division of the dimensions and foci of commitment along the axes of the CVF, beyond the contribution of the individual work values. Therefore we hypothesize that

H5a *Affective organizational commitment will be best predicted by the congruence of individual and organizational Human Relations values.*

H5b *Normative organizational commitment will be best predicted by the congruence of individual and organizational Internal Process values.*

H5c *Affective occupational commitment will be best predicted by the congruence of individual and organizational Open Systems values.*

H5d *Normative occupational commitment will be best predicted by the congruence of individual and organizational Rational Goal values.*

Method

Participants and procedure

We collected data from a hospital in the Netherlands, which was created from the merger of four distinct speciality-based locations in 2000. Because the organization had experienced low response rates in earlier studies, 580 questionnaires were distributed via the managers of departments, who encouraged members to take part in this study. This led to a response of 222 (38%). 85% of the respondents were women, mean tenure was 8 years, and mean age was 39 years. The responding group reflected the actual organization for gender, age and tenure. The active involvement of managers in the distribution of the questionnaire caused a slight overrepresentation of this group in returning the questionnaires.

Measures

Values. We measured individual and organizational values of organization members with an operationalization of the Competing Values Framework (Quinn 1988) as validated by Kalliath, Bluedorn and Gillespie (1999b). The scale consists of four items to measure each of the values quadrants. A 7-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (*not valued at all*) to 7 (*highly valued*) was used for all sixteen scale items. The respondents were asked to judge each value item with reference to themselves and with reference to the organization. Individual values were operationalized as individual preferences for organizational characteristics (cf. Van Vianen 2000).

Commitment. We used Meyer and Allen's (1997) organizational commitment scales to measure affective organizational commitment (e.g., "I feel a strong sense of belonging to my organization."), and normative organizational commitment (e.g., "Even if it were to my advantage, I do not feel it would be right to leave my organization now.").The research on occupational commitment is not as widespread as that on organizational commitment, but Meyer et al.'s (1993) operationalization of occupational commitment has been used in most of these studies (e.g. Irving, Coleman & Cooper 1996; Lee, Carswell & Allen 2000; Snape & Redman 2003). An advantage of this choice is that this measure of occupational commitment is designed along the same dimensions of commitment as Meyer and Allen's original organizational commitment scale (Meyer & Allen 1991). These scales consist of six affective occupational commitment items (e.g., "I am proud to work in this profession.") and six normative occupational commitment items (e.g., "I would feel guilty if I left my profession."). For all measures, a 7-point Likert scale was used ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*).

All measures were in Dutch. We used the standardized Dutch translation of Meyer et al.'s affective organizational commitment scale (De Gilder, Van den Heuvel & Ellemers 1997). The other commitment scales (Meyer & Allen 1997; Meyer et al. 1993) and the value-scale (Kalliath et al. 1999b) were independently translated into Dutch by two of the researchers. A comparison of the translation led to a renewed version. A back-translation of these scales by an external academic peer (who was not familiar with the original scales) was compared to assure that essential concepts were retained in the translation.

Analysis

All analyses incorporated regression analysis tailored to the hypotheses. For the first three hypotheses, we will use regression analyses. The fourth hypothesis will be investigated by a stepwise regression analysis. Finally, in order to test the fifth hypothesis about the congruence measures for each quadrant of the competing value model, we performed a polynomial regression analysis, as proposed by Edwards (1993; cf. Kalliath et al. 1999a; Van Vianen 2000) This is a multi-stage analysis, starting with a linear equation of Individual (I) and Organizational (O), and proceeding to a quadratic equation including higher order terms (I, O, I*O, I^2, O^2).

Results

Table 1 displays the means, standard deviations, and correlations for the variables in the study. Scale reliabilities are comparable to the original scale (Kalliath et al. 1999b).

The first hypothesis tests whether organizational values predict the four types of commitment at all. The results show that organizational values were significantly related to affective organizational commitment (R^2=.18), affective occupational commitment (R^2=.09), normative organizational commitment (R^2=.05), and normative occupational commitment (R^2=.05), thereby confirming H1. In line with previous research (e.g. Kalliath et al. 1999a, p. 1092), the effects are small but significant. So although these effects are small, this still indicates that the hypothesized pattern exists and the foci and dimensions of commitment can be aligned along the axes of the CVF.

H2 tests whether the foci of commitment can be aligned to the internal (Human Relations & Internal Process) and external (Open System & Rational Goal) sides of the CVF. The results support Hypothesis 2, as the majority of the variance in organizational commitment is explained by the values in the internal quadrants (Human Relations & Internal Process values: R^2=.18 for affective organizational commitment, and R^2=.04 for normative organizational commitment) compared to the external quadrants (Open System& Rational Goal values: R^2=.10 for affective organizational commitment, and a non-significant R^2 for normative organizational commitment). As further hypothesized, occupational commitment is more affected by the values in the external quadrants (Open System & Rational Goal values: R^2=.05 for affective occupational commitment, and R^2=.04 for normative occupational commitment) than by the values in the internal quadrants (Human Relations & Internal Process values: R^2=.04 for affective occupational commitment, and R^2=.03 for normative occupational commitment). Even though the effects are small, this is a first indication that the organizational and occupational foci of commitment can be aligned along the internal-external axis of the CVF.

Table 1

Means, standard deviations and correlations for the values and commitments

	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Organizational values														
1. Human Relations	3.65	1.00	*.76*											
2. Open System	4.23	.90	.47	*.65*										
3. Internal Process	3.81	1.09	.70	.41	*.71*									
4. Rational Goal	4.36	.93	.56	.49	.66	*.67*								
Individual values														
5. Human Relations	6.24	.83	-.09	.00	-.09	.03	*.85*							
6. Open System	5.70	.82	.01	.00	-.02	.06	.78	*.77*						
7. Internal Process	5.77	.81	-.10	-.02	-.09	.00	.75	.67	*.73*					
8. Rational Goal	6.02	.78	-.02	-.03	-.03	.07	.78	.67	.75	*.80*				
Commitment														
9. Affective organizational	3.83	1.11	.42	.24	.36	.30	.04	.14	.00	.10	*.82*			
10. Affective occupational	5.55	.79	.20	.22	.13	.15	.04	.05	-.04	-.00	.27	*.73*		
11. Normative organizational	3.31	1.05	.12	.07	.21	.12	-.14	-.06	.02	.06	.52	.09	*.71*	
12. Normative occupational	3.21	1.09	.11	.01	.18	.19	-.03	-.02	-.02	.05	.26	.42	.48	*.78*

Note. Correlations larger than .13 p<.01. Alpha's on the diagonal.

H3 states that the affective commitment dimension is related to the flexible values of the CVF (Human Relations & Open System) and the normative commitment dimension is related to the control values (Internal Process & Rational Goal). Again, these hypotheses are confirmed for the affective and normative commitments on both foci. The majority of the variances of the affective commitments are explained by values in the flexibility quadrants (Human Relations & Open System values: R^2=.18 for affective organizational commitment, and R^2=.06 for affective occupational commitment) compared to the control quadrants (Internal Process & Rational Goal values: R^2=.13 for affective organizational commitment, and a non-significant R^2 for affective occupational commitment). For H3b, the impact of the values on the control quadrants (Internal Process & Rational Goal values: R^2=.04 for normative organizational commitment, and R^2=.04 for normative occupational commitment) is greater than on the flexibility quadrants (Human Relations & Open System), where the values did not contribute significantly to normative commitment. Despite the small effect sizes, this is a first indication that the affective and normative dimensions of commitment can be aligned along the flexibility – control axis of the CVF.

H4 tests whether the combination of the foci and dimensions of commitment can be related to the values in the specific quadrants of the CVF. We conducted a stepwise regression analysis for each of the commitments to test which values contribute significantly to the respective commitments. As predicted (H4a-d), the quadrants of the CVF predict the respective affective and normative commitments for both foci: (a) Human Relations values contribute most to affective organizational commitment (B=.42; R^2=.18; $F(1,219) = 46.91$, $p<.01$); (b) Internal Process values contribute most to normative organizational commitment (B=.22; R^2=.05; $F(1,219) = 10.91$, $p<.01$); (c) Open System values contribute most to affective occupational commitment (B=.21; R^2=.05; $F(1,219) = 9.94$, $p<.01$); and (d) Rational Goal values contribute most to normative occupational commitment (B=.19; R^2=.04; $F(1,219) = 7.93$, $p<.01$).

The results further support the indication from Hypotheses 2 and 3 that the axes of the CVF are relevant for both affective and normative dimensions together with the organizational and occupational foci of commitment.

Table 2

Significant regression weights and R^2 for effects of Individual (I) and Organizational (O) values in the CVF for four commitments

	Affective organizational commitment			**Normative organizational commitment**			**Affective occupational commitment**			**Normative occupational commitment**		
	I	O	R^2	I	O	R^2	I	O	R^2	I	O	R^2
Human Relations		.47	.18			-		.16	.05			-
Open System	.20	.30	.08			-		.19	.05			-
Internal Process		.37	.13		.21	.04			-		.18	.03
Rational Goal		.35	.10			-		.13	.02		.22	.04

H5 tests whether the foci and dimensions of commitment can be related to value congruence in the specific quadrants of the CVF. To test whether interaction effects of individual and organizational values would predict the four types of commitment over and above the main effects of individual and organizational values, we conducted polynomial regression analyses with affective and normative organizational and occupational commitments as the dependent variables. The results indicate that the interaction terms did not contribute significantly to any of the variables in any of the value quadrants. As can be seen in Table 2 (where only statistically significant effects are reported), there were only main effects, and the contribution of individual values was almost absent. Therefore, the addition of quadratic terms proposed by Edwards (1993) had no effect in our study.

Discussion

The aim of this study was to examine the effects of organizational and individual values on affective and normative commitment on both the organizational and the occupational level. Although the explained variance for most of the hypotheses was low and the results thus have to be treated cautiously, the proposed pattern is definitely discernible for affective and normative organizational and occupational commitment. These results show that the CVF has merit in the contexts of both dimensions and foci of commitment. Understanding the values that underlie commitment is extremely important, and the CVF is a useful framework in this regard.

In the context of the ongoing debate on the multidimensionality of commitment, this is an important finding. The results of this study indicate that flexibility and control values lead to affective and normative commitment respectively. This argues strongly that these dimensions are indeed distinguishable constructs. Jaros (1997) elaborated on the overlap between the conceptualizations of the dimensions, by stating that affective commitment refers to a general emotional attachment to the organization, and normative commitment reflects a specific type of attachment-related emotion (i.e., a feeling of obligation). Previous research has shown that while there is a clear overlap between these constructs, different values lead to different dimensions of commitment (e.g. Finegan 2000). Our study shows that the difference between these values relates to the CVF flexibility-stability dimension. This supports the proposition that affective commitment is relational and its motivation is primarily intrinsic, as opposed to the transactional and extrinsic nature of normative commitment (Meyer et al. 2004).

The CVF is not only relevant to the dimensions of commitment, but also to the distinction between organizational and occupational commitment. The link between internal values and organizational commitment confirms earlier findings (Vandenberghe & Peiró 1999). Given the increasing attention employees pay to occupational commitment (Snape &

Redman 2003), the link we found between external values and occupational commitment may have practical implications for managers.

The fourth hypothesis, which presumed a relationship between each of the CVF-quadrants to a specific combination of focus and dimension of commitment, was also confirmed. This is particularly important for managers. Though the effect sizes were relatively small, and caution needs to be observed, we propose the following: For affective organizational commitment, the values of the Human Relations Model appear to be especially important. If managers want to enhance the affective bond employees have with their organization, they should pay attention to participation and teamwork. In a similar vein, we propose a link between the Internal Process values (e.g., stability and order) and normative organizational commitment, between the Open System values (e.g., creativity and decentralization) and affective occupational commitment, and between the Rational Goal values (e.g., excellence and goal achievement) and normative occupational commitment.

The potential of these managerial strategies is further supported by our finding that organizational values are important per se, irrespective of congruence effects. Apparently, managers can influence employees' commitment by explicating the values of their organization. In all, our study confirms the relation between organizational values and commitment, and adds to the body of research that shows the importance of main effects of values and casts doubt on the existence of congruence effects (Abbott et al. 2005; Kalliath et al. 1999a; Vandenberghe & Peiró 1999). Future research is needed to further explore why congruence effects are less influential than commitment theory would lead us to expect.

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Chapter 3

The congruence of actual and perceived person-organization fit

Mark van Vuuren, Bernard P. Veldkamp, Menno D. T. de Jong and Erwin R. Seydel

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Abstract

Person-organization fit (P-O fit) is an important and often-researched variable, which sheds light on the way employees perceive their relationship with the organization they work for. In this study, two different assessments of P-O fit are compared, i.e. actual fit (an indirect measurement based on the comparison of organizational and personal values or characteristics) and perceived fit (a direct measurement involving employees' own estimations of their P-O fit). The four quadrants of the Competing Values Framework (CVF) are used to investigate which values have the strongest influence on employees' fit perceptions. In a polynomial regression analysis, the predictive power of the indirect fit measure on the direct fit measure is tested in a sample of two organizations (hospital n1=222; chemical plant n2=550). The results show that of the four CVF quadrants Human Relations values have the strongest predictive power for employees' fit perceptions, and Rational Goal values contribute least. In the discussion section, special attention will be paid to the measurement of individual values as the results raise important methodological questions.

Introduction

Fitting in matters. People's perceptions of connectedness, similarity and unity are important as they move through different environments in their lives. Some of these environments 'fit like a glove' while other places do not. From a Lewinian point of view (Lewin, 1935), behaviour is even a function of person and environment, which places fit at the core of human life (cf. Schneider, 2001, p. 145). Logically, questions regarding this fit have also attracted the interest of organizational researchers in a wide range of areas, like marketing (Richins, 1994), personnel selection (Adkins *et al.*, 1994, Ng and Burke, 2005), subsidiary decisions of multinationals (Tarique *et al.*, 2006), job satisfaction (Taris *et al.*, 2005), and group effectiveness (Kirkman *et al.*, 2004). In all these areas, a certain amount of fit seems necessary for people to flourish.

Theoretically, the study of fit in organizations has shed light on the way employees develop perceptions of fit as they manoeuvre through organizational life (Cable and DeRue, 2002; Schneider, 2001). Under the umbrella of person-environment fit, research has shown that employees may evaluate their fit with their organizations, supervisors, groups and jobs (cf. Ostroff *et al.*, 2005; Van Vianen, 2000; see Kristof-Brown *et al.*, 2005, for a review). In this paper, we will focus on person-organization (P-O fit) because in the wide array of contexts and situations that may (mis)fit with organization members, the organization appears to be particularly central (Judge and Kristof-Brown, 2004).

Kristof (1996) defined P-O fit as "the compatibility between people and organizations that occurs when at least (a) one entity provides what the other needs, (b) they share similar fundamental characteristics, or (c) both" (pp. 4–5). This definition implies the possible existence of both complementary (providing what is needed) and supplementary (similarity of characteristics) fit. Regarding complementary fit, again several dimensions can be distinguished. For example, the distinction in needs-supplies and demand-abilities fit has shown to be relevant (Cable and DeRue, 2002) as it underlines the reciprocity of the relationship between person and organization, discerning the organization fulfilling the needs of the individual (needs-supplies fit) and the individual fulfilling the needs of the organization (demands-abilities fit). In a similar way, research on supplementary fit has shown to have distinct dimensions, too. This concerns the difference between actual (or indirect) value congruence and perceived (or direct) value congruence (Cable and Judge, 1996, 1997; Kristof, 1996; Ostroff *et al.*, 2005). Actual fit is assessed by comparing independent measures of workers' values and their perception of the organizations' values, whereas perceived fit is conceptualized as an individual's overall judgment about the extent to which he or she perceives a fit with the organization.

P-O fit is assumed to have important implications for employees' well-being and various organizational outcomes, as it affects central attitudes and behaviour of people in the workplace. Earlier research has shown that P-O fit is associated with organizational identification (Saks and Ashforth, 1997), perceived organizational support (Eisenberger *et al.*, 1986), organizational commitment (O'Reilly *et al.*, 1991; Meyer and Herscovitsch, 2001), job satisfaction (Meglino *et al.*, 1987), and job performance (Lauver and Kristof-Braun, 2001). Moreover, attrition and turnover as a result of not fitting in an organization are major managerial problems, with enormous (financial) consequences for an organization (Schneider et al., 1987, 1995). A consequence of the extensive research on P-O fit is that several labels have emerged that cover (parts of) the construct, like value congruence (Kraimer, 1996), shared values (Chatman, 1989, 1991), agreement (Edwards, 1991), and similarity (Kalliath *et al.*, 1999a). Although the research efforts are scattered across many fields and confusion may arise due to the different levels and labels of fit, the importance of the topic for organizational theory and practice is generally acknowledged.

Besides the theoretical developments, there are also methodological aspects at stake. A topic of discussion concerns the direct and indirect assessment of fit (Kristof, 1996; Cable and Judge, 1996, 1997). When using indirect measurement techniques, fit is assessed by a statistical comparison of self-reported perceptions of the issues at stake. For example, the most widespread indirect fit assessment analyzes the overlap between reported scores on organizational values and individual values to see how they fit into an organization (e.g., Kalliath *et al.*, 1999a; Ostroff *et al.*, 2005; Van Vianen, 2000; Vandenberghe and Peiró, 1999). Direct measures, on the other hand, ask respondents to what extent they perceive themselves fitting in their organization. For example, Cable and DeRue (2002) asked for respondents' subjective perceptions of the fit between their values and an organization's values. A recently introduced alternative for a direct congruence measure is a single-item graphic scale with several circles overlapping differently, from totally separate to totally overlapping (Bergami and Bagozzi, 2000; Shamir and Kark, 2004). Respondents are then asked to indicate which picture best visualizes the overlap between their own values and the values of their organization.

The question about how indirect and direct fit measures are related also has a statistical aspect, not to say that the statistical analysis that comes with the respective measures is hotly debated. It has been depicted as "the statistical conundrums that have plagued recent fit research" (Judge and Kristof-Brown, 2004, p. 99). For example, Edwards (1994) made clear that problems with collinearity can emerge with the original analyses on indirect measures of fit that he described as operationalizing congruence as "collapsing two or more measures into a single index" (Edwards, 1994, p. 51). The introduction of polynomial regression analysis as an alternative to a series of analytical problems (Edwards, 1993, 1994, 2001; Edwards and Harrison, 1991; Edwards and Parry, 1993) has been named "one of the most dramatic changes to studies of P-E fit in recent years" (Kristof *et al.*, 2005, p. 295). He proposes the multi-staged polynomial regression analysis as an alternative, which involves first linear (P, O) and then quadratic ($P*O$, P^2, O^2) equations to compare the reported perceptions of personal and organizational values. Note that the quadratic terms and the interaction term are derived from the initial variables P and O, and some multicollinearity is therefore unavoidable (cf. Kristof, 1996). Still this leaves polynomial regression to be an effective cure for most of the problems with other congruence indices, although the analyses are complex in contrast to direct measure of fit, which of course avoids the problem of complex fit analyses by asking directly for fit perceptions. On the other hand, after investigating direct measures of met expectations, Irving and Meyer (1995) recommended to avoid the use of direct measures as the effects were spurious.

Note that in discussing the direct and indirect measures of fit, there are also conceptual questions involved. As said before, Cable and Judge (1996, 1997) distinguish the direct and indirect fit measures as two conceptually different phenomena. Direct measures refer to *perceived* fit while indirect measures assess *actual* fit. A positive relationship between actual value congruence and perceived fit has been found, but the correlations are only weak (Cable and Judge, 1997; Irving and Meyer, 1995; Kristof-Brown and Stevens, 2001).

Kristof-Brown *et al.* (2005) proposed that the reason why a relationship has been found at all may be due to "individuals' propensity to interpret environmental cues in ways that allow them to maintain a positive self-concept" (p. 291). We think, however, that the weak overlap between the indirect and direct fit measures may be attributed to the fact that the respondent's expected mental comparison of values will differ from the values that are operationalized in the measurement of actual fit. So while both actual and perceived fit are perceptions (Kristof, 1996), the essential difference between the two measures is between open (perceived general fit) and closed (actual congruence between two sets of operationalized concrete values) measures. The question therefore arises if there is congruence between the open perceptions of the direct measure and the closed assessment of specific values. In other words: Which values are actually the values that are taken into consideration implicitly when employees evaluate their perceived fit with an organization? This takes previous research (e.g. Cable and Judge, 1996, 1997) an important step further, as the content of the actual values and how they relate to perceived fit will be examined instead of a plain observation of the correlation between the related but distinct constructs.

So we will compare the perceived value congruence as it is measured directly with a four-cluster operationalization of values to gain insight in the values that are considered important to employees in evaluating their fit with the organization. The four clusters that will be taken into account are based on the Competing Values Framework (CVF; Quinn and Spreitzer, 1991; Quinn, 1996), which has been used as a model for congruence assessment in many studies (e.g. VandenBerghe and Pieró, 1999; Van Vianen, 2000; Ostroff *et al.*, 2005; Zammuto *et al.*, 2000). This model consists of two dimensions: an internal-external dimension and a flexibility-control dimension. Together, they form four quadrants, each representing a distinct set of organizational culture indicators. These four quadrants represent the following models (adapted from O'Neill and Quinn, 1993):

- The *human relations model* (emphasizing flexibility and internal matters) stresses the importance of cohesion and morale with emphasis on training and human resources. Here teamwork and participative decision making are valued, and the acknowledgement that organizations are made of people, the concerns of employees are reckoned with.
- In the *open system model* (emphasizing flexibility and external matters), the criteria for effectiveness are adaptability and growth. Here creativity, innovation and a decentralized way of working are valued.
- The *internal process model* (emphasizing control and internal matters) emphasizes measurement and information management to bring stability and control in the internal organization. Its adherence to procedures provides predictability and security.
- The *rational goal model* (emphasizing control and external matters) focuses on rational action, profit, clear targets, and efficiency. Typical values for the Rational goal model are the importance of outcome excellence, goal achievement and that organization members do their best.

These indicators represent what people value about an organization's performance. They define the core values and therefore can be used to see what is perceived as 'good' and 'appropriate' in an organization, for example dealing with strategic human resource management (Panayotopoulou *et al.*, 2003). Figure 1 presents a graphic illustration of the competing values framework.

In this study we will test whether the values of the four quadrants of a CVF-operationalization (being the indirect measure of P-O fit) can predict the direct measure of fit, using the direct measure as the dependent variable in a polynomial regression analysis as Edwards (1993) proposed. In order to do this, we will expand a hypothesis by a study from Cable and Judge that was stated as "Actual values congruence positively affects perceived values congruence" (1997, p. 547). Given the four quadrants of the CVF, this hypothesis can be specified in order to investigate the importance of each quadrant to perceived fit.

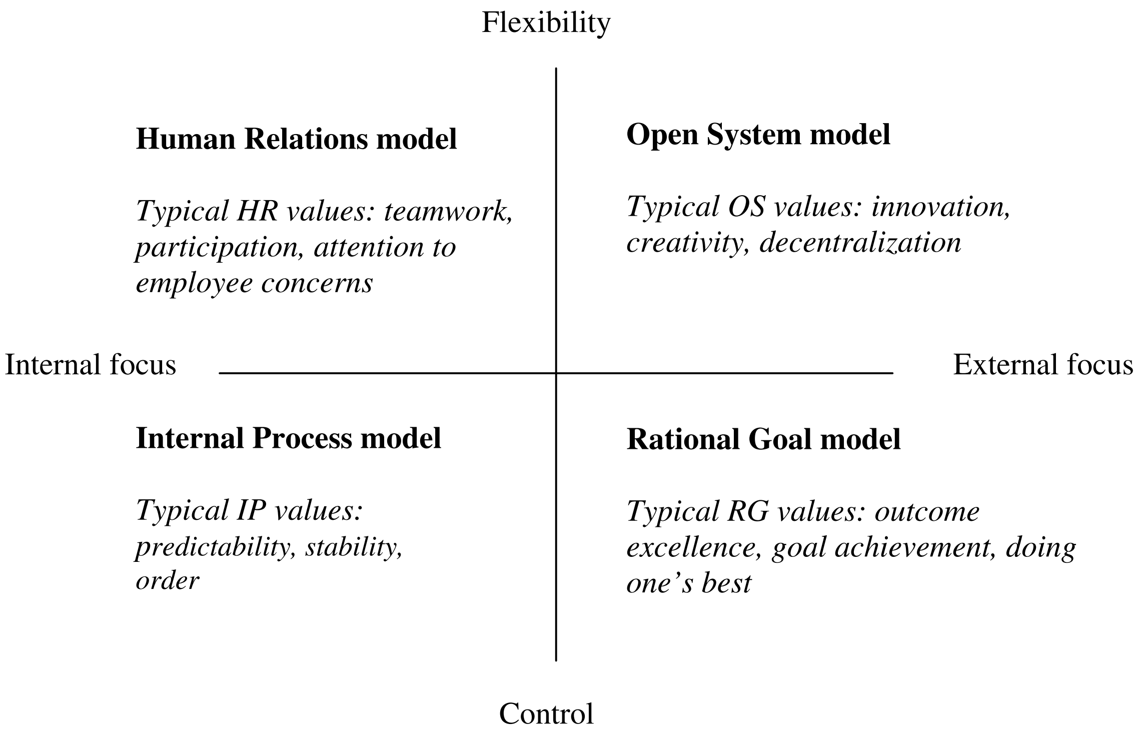

Figure 1. The four quadrants of the Competing Values Framework (based on Quinn et al., 1983; Kalliath et al., 1999).

We expect that the values of each of the four quadrants may be incorporated in people's perceptions of fit with the organization. For example, people may evaluate to which extent their personal need for participative decision making (valued in the *human relations* model) are met in the organization, as well as their longing for predictability (valued in the *internal process* model) is addressed in the daily routine of work. Therefore, we expect that all values of the four quadrants will be evaluated as people think about their fit with the organization. This leads to the following hypothesis:

> *Hypothesis: The greater the congruence between individual's (I) human relations, (II) open system, (III) internal process, and (IV) rational goal values and their respective perceptions of the (I) human relations (II) open system, (III) internal process, and (IV) rational goal values of the organization, the higher their levels of perceived person-organization fit.*

Procedure

Participants

The hypothesis was tested using datasets that were obtained from a hospital and a chemical plant in the Netherlands. This was done to see whether these different organizations would show similar or different patterns of the nature of values that are taken into account by their members when considering their fit. When the pattern would be the same, the results could possibly be generalized. If the patterns would differ, this would be a first indication that different organizations would lead organization members to evaluate different values for evaluating fit. For the hospital, this involved the participation of 222 employees (response rate = 38%). Of the respondents, 84% were female, and the respondents were evenly spread across ages. 47% of the respondents had been working within the organization for over 10 years. Respondents were asked to fill in a questionnaire using pen and paper. The chemical plant is part of a multinational in chemical industry. Questionnaires and prepaid postage envelopes were distributed to the home addresses of all 1200 individual organization members, and 550 questionnaires were returned (response rate = 46%). The responding group reflected the actual organization on gender (14% female), age (69% was aged between 40 and 59), and tenure (mean tenure 12 years).

Measures

Direct measure of fit perceptions. We measured P-O fit directly by asking the respondents to indicate how well they fitted in their organization. We did this with the three-item scale, used by Cable and DeRue (2002; e.g. “My organization’s values and culture provide a good fit with the things I value in life”), using a 7-point Likert scale.

Actual fit for both organizational and individual values. We measured several values that are relevant for organization members. We used the operationalization of the Competing Values Framework (Quinn, 1988) as validated by Kalliath *et al.* (1999b). The scale consisted of four items to measure each of the competing values quadrants. A 7-

point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (*not valued at all*) to 7 (*highly valued*) was used for all sixteen scale items. The respondents were first asked to judge each value item with reference to their organization. Then they had to judge their preference of an organizational culture, which counts as a measure of individual values (Van Vianen, 2000).

All measures were in Dutch. The scales were translated independently by one of the researchers and an expert who was not involved in the study. Differences in the two translations were examined and discussed. A back-translation of these scales (by an academic peer was not familiar with the original scale) was examined to assure that essential concepts were retained in the translation.

Results

The means, standard deviations, reliabilities and correlations of the variables are shown in Table 1. As can be seen in this table, the organizational values and the individual values show different patterns. The scores on the scales of individual values are asymmetrical due to a tendency to score in the upper ranges of the measures. This is indicated by higher means and lower standard deviations than for the organizational values, leading to a negative skewness. This pattern also appears in previous studies using individual perceptions of actual value congruence (e.g. Kalliath *et al.*, 1999a). We expect that this result is both to be expected and problematic, given the operationalization of these items (i.e. asking for a preference for an organizational culture). We will return to this result in the discussion section. The problem with this pattern becomes clear when the hypothesis is tested.

Table 1

Means, standard deviations, correlations and reliability coefficients of the factors over both organizations

	Mean	SD	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.
1. Organizational values HR	4.35	1.26	**.80**								
2. Individual preference HR	5.84	.98	.00	**.87**							
3. Organizational values OS	4.31	1.13	.66	.10	**.75**						
4. Individual preference OS	5.31	.92	.05	.72	.14	**.75**					
5. Organizational values IP	4.36	1.17	.68	-.03	.52	.07	**.59**				
6. Individual preference IP	5.28	.92	-.01	.49	.12	.50	.03	**.64**			
7. Organizational values RG	4.84	1.03	.60	-.02	.50	.05	.69	.06	**.67**		
8. Individual preference RG	5.84	.79	.09	.67	.15	.57	.07	.55	.14	**.78**	
9. Person-organization fit	4.40	1.21	.54	.04	.40	.10	.45	.05	.38	.12	**.88**

Note. Correlates >.09 = p<.01. HR = Human Relations; OS = Open Systems; IP = Internal Process; RG = Rational Goal.

Table 2

Regression coefficients of the unconstrained models for both organizations

	Unconstrained Stage 1			Unconstrained Stage 2						
	P	O	R^2	P	O	P^2	P*O	O^2	ΔR^2	R^2
	Hospital									
Human Relations	.10	.60**	.36**	.18	1.90*	.39	-1.00	-.36	.02	.38**
Open Systems	.18**	.40**	.20**	-.55	.07	.55*	.34	.05	.02	.20**
Internal Process	.07	.50**	.24**	-.20	1.01	.36	-.14	-.39	.01	.26**
Rational Goal	.06	.34**	.12**	-.92*	-.38	.43	1.25	-.34	.03	.15**
	Chemical plant									
Human Relations	.04	.46**	.22**	-.17	-.03	-.09	.70*	-.09	.01	.23**
Open Systems	.09*	.38**	.17**	-.48	.54	.41	.37	-.44	.01	.18**
Internal Process	.11*	.35**	.15**	.05	.50	.00	.13	-.26	.00	.15**
Rational Goal	.13**	.30**	.13**	.17	.13	-.22	.37	-.12	.00	.13**

Note. * - significant at 0.05-level; ** - significant at 0.01-level.

To test the hypothesis that the four quadrants are related to perceived (directly measured) P-O fit, we conducted a polynomial regression analysis (Edwards, 1994) on the data of the two organizations (see table 2). For the hospital, the linear equation (Stage 1) showed a significant contribution of all the four O(rganizational values) parameters and only one of the P(ersonal preference) parameters (viz., reported preference for Open system values) to the directly measured perception of fit. The chemical plant showed significant main effects for the four O-parameters and three of the P-parameters. Here the contribution of the P-parameters was smaller than the contribution of the O-parameters. Surprisingly, for both organizations did the second model (where the quadratic and interaction terms are added to the linear model) not contribute significantly to the explained variance for any of the four quadrants (ΔR^2 varied from .00 to .03, n.s.). Apart from the criterion of a significant proportion of variance explained by the overall equation, none of the models meets the criteria that indicate congruence effects (cf. Edwards, 1994, p. 73): The higher-order terms are mostly non-significant and do not show the expected pattern of positive or negative contributions. Therefore, further examination of higher-order terms beyond the ones in the model is irrelevant. We will elaborate in the discussion section on the finding that predominantly main effects for the actual organizational values were found to cover the variance of fit perceptions.

Regarding the relative importance of the four quadrants of the CVF, the *human relations* model had the greatest impact on perceived fit in both organizations and the *rational goal* values had minimum influence. For the hospital, the second most important was the *internal process* model, suggesting that the internal values are most important to the employees of the hospital. For the chemical plant, the second best predictor was the *open system* model, hinting to the importance of flexibility (as opposed to control) for perceived fit of the employees in the chemical plant. In all, as the congruence effects were absent, the hypothesized relations between the indirect and direct measures of actual and perceived fit, respectively, are not confirmed in this study.

Discussion

The aim of the study was to compare a direct and an indirect measure of P-O fit perceptions. The results show that the higher-order terms are not significant, and that only main effects of the original determinants have emerged. This is an indication that the values as operationalized in the four quadrants of the CVF do not fully cover the values that are evaluated when asked directly for the fit. We realize that polynomial regression is dependent on large sample sizes and power, and that datasets of $n_1 = 222$ and $n_2 = 550$, respectively, may be relatively small. This may have contributed to the absence of congruence effects in our findings. But the results are so unambiguous that it is reasonable to reflect on the theoretical and methodological implications.

From a theoretical point of view, it is interesting to note that the relative importance of the four quadrants of the CVF differed for the organizations. While the *human relations* quadrant had the greatest impact on perceived fit in both organizations and the *rational goal* values had minimum influence, the second most important quadrant for the hospital was the *internal process* model while for the chemical plant, the second best predictor was the *open system* model . We suggest that this result provides an answer to our question which values matter most for the perception of fit as different organizations showed different results on the relationship between actual and perceptual fit. Presumably, this has to do with the specific cultures of the organizations that we studied. It suggests that the internal values are most important to the employees of the hospital, while hinting to the importance of flexibility (as opposed to control) for perceived fit of the employees in the chemical plant. Indeed, a hospital can afford to be more internally focused, while an organization with competitors, like the chemical plant we studied, has to pay attention to other aspects, here the flexibility quadrants.

In general, the importance of *human relations* predicted perceived fit best for both organizations, and this is consistent with other studies in which actual fit precedes work attitudes like commitment (e.g. Kalliath *et al.*, 1999a; Vandenberghe and Peiró, 1999). In the *human relations* model, there is a strong emphasis on human resource and training, focusing on the importance of cohesion and morale. It underlines the importance of information sharing and participative decision making. It is likely that respondents confronted with a direct measure of value congruence think of typically human values, ethics or morale, and neglect values like stability and innovation, for which 'values' is a less obvious connotation. The question of culture or organizational values may trigger primarily the more ethical side of work, and the way the people are treated in psychological terms. This stresses the importance of human resource management's attention to the organization's culture (Fernandez *et al.*, 2003) and employees' perception of trust (Tzafrir, 2005, Zeffane and Connell, 2003) as employees turn out to evaluate specific HR-values when perceived fit is at stake. Future research could involve ethics-related behaviour, in order to discover more precisely which values are evaluated when asked for the value congruence perceptions in a direct manner.

Methodologically, two topics need attention. As the explained variance of the actual fit measure for the perceived fit is rather small, it must be concluded that the two ways to measure P-O fit are not equal. When organization members are asked to what extent their values are similar to those of the organization, they presumably have another set of values in their minds than the operationalization of the distinct quadrants of the Competing Values Framework. Consequently, it is premature to conclude, on the basis of a positive perceived fit (as it is measured directly), that the organization members perceive a fit between themselves and their organization with regard to *human relations* values, *open system* values, *rational goal* values, and i*nternal process* values (cf. O'Neill and Quinn, 1993). Again, as the *human relations* model is most important, this is an indication that these values are actually important in the cultures of the organizations we studied.

More importantly, however, the question arises if actual values are to be measured as it is done in regular research. The congruence effects were absent in this study due to the skewed answers on the individual values scale. There are more studies in which the explained variance is almost solely attributable to main effects of the organizational and individual values (see, for example, Kalliath *et al.*, 1999a; Vandenberghe and Peiró, 1999). We propose that the high means and low standard deviations in the assessment of individual values lead to the comparison of a measure (i.e. organizational values) with a constant variable (i.e. individual values) which in turn impedes possible main and interaction effects of the variable. Of course, a certain level of variance is essential to find effects of variables, and if this variance is absent the construct may become irrelevant.

While the results may suggest that individual values are not important, we suggest that the operationalization of individual values is the main cause of the lack of effects. Individual values are seen as vital for individual attitudes and behaviour (Judge and Kristof-Brown, 2004), so it seems contradictory that no effects were found. We propose that the absence of effects may be due to the operationalization of individual values as 'preference for an organizational culture' in the present and other (e.g. O'Reilly *et al.*, 1991; Van Vianen, 2000) studies, which threatens the nature of values. Rokeach defined a value as 'an enduring belief that a specific mode of conduct or end-state mode of existence is personally or socially preferable to an opposite or converse mode of conduct or end-state of existence' (1973: 4). While this definition of values is most famous for its distinction of 'instrumental' and 'terminal' values, it underlines the importance of the preference of a value to an *opposite* value. As values are valuable by definition, asking whether or not values are preferred seems to be the wrong question – values *are* values because they are preferable. By just asking if values are preferred without a forced choice, ceiling effects can be expected. For example, most people are keen on security. But if they have to choose between security and adventure – the choice becomes more difficult. Treated as unipolar constructs, the values will always be valued, that is their nature. But treated as bipolar constructs (in reference to Rokeach's definition: preferable to an opposite), or in ranking the values, ceiling effects may diminish. Meglino and Ravlin (1998) discuss this topic when they review and compare normative assessment of values (i.e. measuring values independently from each other) and ipsative measures (assessing preferences between different values). While warning for social desirability tendencies, they propose that normative measurement is most appropriate when the aim of a study is to understand a respondent's P-O fit. However, the tendency to score higher on individual than on organizational values is not a unique finding in our study. What is more, a close examination of a set of articles addressing actual fit shows a clear trend (see table 3) in this regard. Without exception, the individual values show higher ranges of means and lower ranges in standard deviations than organizational values. We propose that this has to do with an underestimated disadvantage of normative measures that frustrates congruence research by ignoring the nature of values as preferences *opposed to* other options (Rokeach, 1973).

We suggest that the lack of evidence for the interaction is due to the nature of 'individual values' that tend to score in the upper ranges of the scales. The weak relationship between actual and perceived fit that is found regularly (cf. Cable and Judge, 1997; Kristof-Brown and Stevens, 2001) may therefore be due to the fact that the common way of measuring individual values is spurious. We believe that this is an important topic for future research. As a start, we suggest two ways to reduce these effects, which both imply ranking of values. First, Rokeach (1973) proposed to rank the values from most important to least important. Second, Cameron and Quinn (2000) designed the OCAI, a measurement instrument based on the CVF in which credit points are to be apportioned to the distinct quadrants, one hundred points in total. By these two methods the values are scored in their relative position towards each other. This recognizes the complex and ipsative nature of values. In all, this study stresses the importance of future research on the congruence between actual and perceived fit between people and the places they work in.

Table 3

Range of means and standard deviations of organizational values and individual values in some published articles

	Organizational values		Individual values / preference	
	Mean range	SD range	Mean range	SD range
Boxx et al. 1991	3.69- 5.32	N/A	5.37 – 6.55	N/A
Kalliath et al. 1999a	4.40-5.28	1.13-1.47	5.55 – 6.11	0.71 - .82
Vandenberghe and Peiró 1999	3.68 - 4.09	0.96-1.00	3.99 – 4.93	0.58 - 0.89
Goodman 1999	2.50 – 3.81	0.58 – 0.94	3.01 – 4.59	0.49 - 0.78
Van Vianen 2000:				
Newcomers	N/A	N/A	4.47 – 5.91	0.56 – 0.83
Peers	4.22 – 4.41	0.86 – 0.90	4.42 – 5.86	0.55 – 0.85
Supervisors	4.50 – 4.97	0.72 – 0.80	4.84 – 5.88	0.50 – 0.61
Cable and Edwards 2004	2.81-3.55	0.86 – 1.09	3.62 – 4.39	0.62 - 0.81
Ostroff et al. 2005:				
Employees	0.12- 0.89	0.68 - 0.98	0.91 – 1.49	0.50 - 0.63
Managers	0.24-1.22	0.54 - 0.85	1.21 – 1.63	0.35 - 0.47
Present study	4.31 – 4.84	1.03 – 1.26	5.28 – 5.84	0.79 – 0.98

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Chapter 4

Commitment with or without a stick of paid work: comparison of paid and unpaid workers in a non-profit organization

Mark van Vuuren, Menno D. T. de Jong & Erwin R. Seydel

(Resubmitted)

Abstract

The aim of this study is to investigate whether non-paid volunteers have other reasons to be a member of an organization than paid workers. Volunteers are assumed to be hard to manage, because there is no "stick of a paid contract" to keep them in line. Therefore, we studied different dimensions (viz. affective, normative and continuance) of organizational commitment of volunteers and paid workers in a non-profit organization. Further, we assessed whether the predictive power of the congruence between organizational and individual values for commitment differs between paid and unpaid workers. As expected, volunteers showed a significantly higher level of affective commitment to the organization, and person-organization fit was a stronger antecedent of affective commitment for volunteers than for paid workers. Surprisingly, volunteers also showed a higher level of normative commitment than paid workers. Other results were partly confounded by age. Theoretical and practical implications of the findings are discussed.

Introduction

There are reasons abound for people to work in a certain organization beside financial considerations, as volunteers prove every single day. For example, Clary, et al. (1998) proposed six (non-financial) psychological and social functions that are served by involvement of volunteer work (viz. values, understanding, career, social, protective, and enhancement). Many non-profit organizations at least partially depend on the contribution of volunteers in achieving their goals. The majority of the organizational research on voluntarism has been dedicated to the study of volunteer organizations. Since volunteer organizations completely depend on the commitment of volunteers, these organizations and the well-being of these volunteers receive most research attention. In practice, however, voluntarism also plays an important role in hybrid organizations, where both paid and unpaid members work together towards achieving the organization's goals. Research attention for unpaid volunteers who work in organizations where most employees are paid workers with a contract is therefore justified. Moreover, such hybrid organizations offer the unique possibility to compare the job-related attitudes of paid and unpaid workers, which will contribute to our understanding of the nature of voluntarism in organizations. In this paper, we will report on a study in which we compared job-related attitudes of paid and unpaid members working in the same organization.

Previous research in hybrid organizations has shown that a mixed employee force is a complex context to work in, for volunteers, paid workers, and management alike. The paid workers may see volunteers as a threat to their own position in the organization. Although Brudney and Gazley (2002) empirically refute the 'conventional wisdom' that volunteer assistance results in conflicts with the paid staff, the perception of paid workers on this can be stubborn. Particularly when volunteers bring in valuable experience and credentials, paid staff members may feel threatened (McCurley & Lynch, 1996). In a reaction, they can stress the boundaries between professionalism and voluntarism. A competitive atmosphere between paid and unpaid workers may, in turn, demoralize volunteers. When they realize that their contribution to the organization is not as welcome as they may have hoped for and their lofty dedication to the organization is not respected, they may feel less motivated to exert themselves for the organization.

For management, there is another problem that may lead to reservations towards volunteers. MBA-educated managers may be quite unaccustomed when confronted with volunteers in their organizations. Cookman, Heynes, and Streatfeld (2000) found in their research on voluntarism in libraries that there is some reservation among managers to employ them. Volunteers are said to be hard to manage, because there is no “stick of a paid contract” (p. 20) to keep them in line. Moreover, it is assumed that volunteers will easily withdraw from the organization, due to the lack of financial consequences of such a decision. Managers may think that only altruistic dispositions of volunteers bind them to the organization. So, despite the unquestionable benefits of voluntary workers in an organization, managers may be aloof to place tasks in the hands of volunteers. More precisely, it may be the perceived lack of *interdependence* that comes with non-paid work that restrains organizations from embracing the opportunities offered by volunteers. Gazley and Brudney (2005), however, propose that “these problems may be more closely associated with poor training, supervision and management of volunteers than with voluntarism per se.”

From a managerial perspective, the problems of volunteers in organizations can be reframed in terms of organizational commitment (cf. Hustinx & Lammertyn, 2004). From a psychological stance, commitment refers to a force that binds an individual to activities that are relevant to one or more goals (Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001). Over the last decades, organizational commitment has been studied extensively in various contexts, and has been shown to reduce absenteeism and turnover and to enhance work effort and performance (Mathieu & Zajac, 1990; Meyer, Stanley, Herscovitch & Topolnytsky, 2002; Riketta, 2002). Commitment can flow from several sources and emerge in several forms. Both solidarity and obligation may lead to commitment, but they are different in nature. For organizational commitment, the appearances of the binding force of an individual to an organization are described in several ways. The most widespread way to address the multidimensionality of organizational commitment is offered by Meyer and Allen (1991, 1997).

When commitment is treated as a three-dimensional construct, each managerial reservation regarding voluntarism is related to one of the dimensions of organizational commitment. Any questions regarding the volunteers' desire to contribute to the goals of an organization are covered by the *affective commitment* dimension, which refers to the intrinsic motivation of volunteers and their feelings about the organization (Meyer, Becker & Vandenberghe, 2004; Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001). The concerns managers may have about the loyalty of volunteers and their manageability correspond to the *normative commitment* dimension, as it deals with the moral foundations of loyalty (Meyer & Allen, 1991). Finally, the *continuance commitment* dimension, which refers to the perceived costs of leaving the organization, is related to the assumption that volunteers will more easily quit, as such a decision has no financial consequences (Meyer & Allen, 1991).

The different considerations that accompany the perceived benefits and difficulties of the presence of volunteers in organizations, and the questions regarding the attitudes of both paid and unpaid workers ask for more empirical research. In this study, we will compare the three dimensions of organizational commitment of paid and unpaid workers in the same organization, because knowledge of these attitudes may lead to a better understanding and a decrease of tension between the two groups in an organization.

Hypotheses

We will first combine theoretical insights in the three dimensions of organizational commitment with considerations about the nature of voluntarism, leading to the formulation of hypotheses for this study.

Affective commitment reflects a person's emotional attachment with the organization. In other words, people contribute because of their positive attitude and feelings towards the organization. Such a positive attitude may lead to behavior that supports the organization, which is especially important when individual initiative and cooperation are required (Lepine, Erez & Johnson, 2002). Research has shown that, on the whole, someone who is affectively committed to an organization will have higher job satisfaction, will be more likely to show organizational citizenship behaviors (Feather & Rauter, 2004), be less absent and have fewer turnover intentions (e.g. Eby, Freeman, Rush & Lance, 1999; Farrell & Stamm, 1988; Mathieu & Zajac, 1990; Michaels & Spector, 1982; Tett & Meyer, 1993). As Meyer and Herscovitch (2002) put forward, the mindset that can be characterized as 'affective commitment' finds its origin in recognition of the values of the organization. Particularly during the first period in an organization and the accompanying socialization phase, members make sense of the congruence between their beliefs and the culture of the organization (Schneider, Goldstein, & Smith, 1995). It seems reasonable that volunteers who enter and stay in an organization will have firm affective commitment to an organization – as their desire for contributing stems from a careful process of "sorting out priorities, and matching of personal capabilities and interests" (Benson et al. 1980, p.89).

This 'matching' in reference to affective organizational commitment is similar to the concept of person-organization fit (Kristof, 1996; Cable & DeRue, 2002) being a well-known antecedent of affective commitment. The importance of fit as a major reason for involvement in volunteer work seems logical, because "people come with needs and motives important to them and volunteer service tasks do or do not afford opportunities to fulfill those needs and motives" (Clary et al., 1998, p. 1529). The same principle is expressed even more explicitly by Catano, Pond and Kelloway (2001) as they state that "[i]ndividuals join voluntary organizations because of the compatibility of their beliefs with the values of the organization" (p. 257). People who also need other rewards of work (like financial compensation) will presumably not base their activities and commitment solely on these value-based considerations and affections. In contrast to paid workers, we propose that volunteers will have both higher affective commitment and person-organization fit. Moreover, affective commitment will be more strongly related to perceived person-organization fit with volunteers than with paid staff. As such we hypothesize that

H1 *Volunteers will show higher affective commitment to the organization than paid workers.*

H2a *Volunteers will show higher person-organization fit than paid workers.*

H2b *Affective commitment of volunteers will be better predicted by person-organization fit than the affective commitment of paid workers.*

Despite the strong intuitive argument in favor of a relatively high affective commitment of volunteers, the strength of the relation between these attitudes and volunteer behavior is disputed. Pearce (1993) states that volunteering is often seen as a peripheral activity in people's lives, which implies that the behavioral consequences of the feelings volunteers have for their organization may be subordinate to outside events. This observation explains the aforementioned managerial reluctance to call in volunteer services. In this respect, normative and continuance commitment may be expected to play a more important role in explaining volunteer behavior, as they stress the dependence of volunteers on the organization, in terms of obligation and necessity (Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001).

The *normative commitment* dimension of the Allen and Meyer model indicates a sense of obligation and loyalty. As a bottom line, people stay because they feel they ought to. More generally, a 'psychological contract' (Rousseau, 1995) emerges that flows from a belief in mutual obligations, typically in terms of reciprocity in an organizational context (Rousseau & Tijoriwala, 1998). The perception that promises are made about the rewards one gains when staying with the organization (e.g. career opportunities) will lead to some set of reciprocal obligations. The reciprocal nature of a working relationship may be more central to paid workers, as their relationship with the organization is more contractual than for volunteers. Moreover, because this loyalty and the transactional nature of the contract is particularly stressed during the socialization phase in which paid workers are often more involved than volunteers, we propose that normative commitment will be higher for paid workers than for volunteers. Normative commitment can be based on the obligation to reciprocate for benefits received making it rather transactional than relational (Meyer, Allen & Topolnytsky, 1998; Chapter 2, this dissertation), and this may be especially applicable to paid workers. The proposition that volunteers may have a less transactional relationship with the organization than paid workers leads to the hypothesis that

> *H3 Volunteers will show lower normative commitment to the organization than paid workers.*

Utilizing Becker's (1960) idea of side bets, Allen and Meyer (1990) define *continuance commitment* as "the magnitude and/or number of investments individuals make and a perceived lack of alternatives" (p.4). Quitting an organization can lead to the loss of several important benefits and incentives (like income, status, or side-bets). Thereby the perceived costs of leaving can function as a binding force as it hinders to turn an intention to leave in actual leaving the organization. For volunteers, these 'golden handcuffs' will presumably be absent, as was also indicated by the aforementioned remark about the absence of 'the stick of paid work'. The perceived lack of alternatives is presumably also smaller for volunteers than for paid members of the organization (cf. Laczo & Hanisch, 2000). Therefore, we hypothesize that

> *H4 Volunteers will show lower levels of continuance commitment to the organization than paid workers.*

The present study

We investigated a group of paid and unpaid workers in a study on organizational commitment in a non-profit organization. The organization's mission is to provide services for blind and weak-sighted people in areas like education, physical aid, and ergonomic adaptation. For everyone, from children to elderly people, the organization exerts itself so that their clients can live, study and work as independently as possible. Within a centre of expertise, the organization strives for the diffusion of knowledge and understanding in society about the life of visually impaired. Most of the organization's members (N_1=1351) are paid workers (e.g., teachers, caregivers), but there is also a group of non-paid volunteers (N_2=257) who provide specific help like personal care, driving buses, and taking clients out for a walk.

Questionnaires and prepaid postage envelopes were sent to the home addresses of all 1608 individual organization members, i.e. including the volunteers. 655 questionnaires were returned. (n_1 =597, a response rate of 44%; n_2 =57 a response rate of 22%). The response rate of the volunteers was lower than that of the paid workers. We propose two reasons for this difference. First, the amount of time spent by volunteers in the organization varied, and some volunteers may have perceived their contribution to the organization too small to participate in the survey. For example, one volunteer wrote that because her activities were limited to an hour per week, in which she took one of the clients for a walk, the questions were hard to answer for her. Second, the respondents were addressed as 'members' in the questionnaire and some volunteers believed that this did not apply to them. Management thought that the label 'member' included both paid and unpaid employees, but some volunteers perceived the questionnaire as not applicable to their specific situation. Within a day after the questionnaires were distributed, some volunteers replied that the questionnaire did not apply to them, because these volunteers did not consider themselves as members of the organization. In response, the organization sent a second mailing to all voluntary members two days later to invite them to fill in the questionnaire, stressing that unpaid workers are seen as members of the organization. But this may have discouraged people to participate in the study.

Seventy percent of the respondents were women, mean tenure was 8 years. The mean age was 46, and elder people were significantly overrepresented compared to the entire organization. Comparison of the personal characteristics of paid and unpaid respondents showed that the group of volunteers included more females, and that the volunteer group was relatively older than the group of paid workers. This difference is in accordance with the actual state in the organization, where voluntary work is relatively often done by older women. Although this is an indication that the results will reflect the real mindsets of both volunteers and paid workers as they are present in organizations, in a secondary analysis we will test for confounding effects of both age and gender.

Measures

We used Meyer & Allen's (1997) scales to measure *affective organizational commitment* (6 items, e.g. "I feel a strong sense of belonging to my organization", Cronbach's alpha .82), *normative organizational commitment* (5 items, e.g. "Even if it were to my advantage, I do not feel it would be right to leave my organization now", Cronbach's alpha .70), and *continuance organizational commitment* (5 items, e.g. "I believe that I have too few options to consider leaving this organization", Cronbach's alpha .75).

We measured *person-organization fit* by asking the respondents to indicate how well they fitted into their organization. We did this with the three-item scale used by Cable and DeRue (2002; e.g. "My organization's values and culture provide a good fit with the things I value in life", Cronbach's alpha .85).

For all measures we used a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 'strongly disagree' to 'strongly agree'. All measures were in Dutch. We used the standardized Dutch translation of Meyer et al.'s affective organizational commitment scale (De Gilder, Van den Heuvel & Ellemers, 1997). The other commitment scales (Meyer & Allen, 1997) and the person-organization fit scale (Cable & DeRue, 2002) were translated into Dutch. The scales were translated independently by two of the researchers. A comparison of the translation led to a renewed version. A back-translation of these scales by someone who was not familiar with the original scales assured that essential concepts were retained in the translation.

Results

In order to test our hypotheses, we compared the scores of volunteers and paid workers (see table 1 and 2). It is interesting to see that the volunteers in this organization have higher scores at all variables. Also note the higher correlation between affective commitment and person-organization fit for volunteers. To test the hypotheses about the dimensions of commitment, we conducted a t-test (see table 2), and calculated Cohen's d for an indication of the effect size (Cohen, 1988). Note that Cohen's d can only be used when the variances of the two groups are homogeneous. As Levene's test of homogeneity showed non-significant results for all measures, Cohen's d turns out to be an appropriate measure for this study.

The results show that volunteers have higher affective commitment, thereby confirming H1 (Cohen's d = .59, an indication of a medium effect). Furthermore, hypothesis H2a was confirmed: the volunteers showed higher levels of person-organization fit (Cohen's d = .48, an indication of a medium effect). We also assumed that person-organization fit would better predict affective commitment for volunteers than for paid workers (H2b). Therefore we conducted a linear regression analysis with person-organization fit as the independent variable and affective organization commitment as the dependent variable for the two groups of respondents. As hypothesized, the person-organization fit perception of the volunteers was a better predictor for their affective commitment (F (df. 55) = 67.0, $p < .001$; adjusted $R^2 = .54$) than for the paid workers (F (df. 595) = 188.0, $p < .001$; adjusted $R^2 = .24$). The correlations already hinted to differences between the volunteers and the paid workers regarding the impact of fit perceptions on affective commitment (see table 1), and that difference was confirmed by the regression analysis.

Table 1

Means, standard deviations, and correlations for affective, normative, and continuance commitment and person-organization fit for both paid and non-paid workers

	Mean	SD	1.	2.	3.	4.
Volunteers (1)						
1. Affective commitment	5.10	1.00	-			
2. Normative commitment	4.22	1.07	.51	-		
3. Continuance commitment	3.30	1.10	.37	.43	-	
4. Person-organization fit	5.47	0.94	.78	.44	.17	-
Paid workers (2)						
1. Affective commitment	4.52	1.03	-			
2. Normative commitment	3.33	1.01	.49	-		
3. Continuance commitment	3.40	1.29	.24	.28	-	
4. Person-organization fit	5.01	1.05	.50	23	.01	-

Note. (1) = All correlations significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). n=57. (2) = All correlations significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). n=597.

Table 2

T-test for the means of affective, normative, and continuance commitment, and person-organization fit

	t-test	df	p	Cohen's d
Affective commitment	3.66	628	.000	.59
Normative commitment	5.57	626	.000	.89
Continuance commitment	.53	623	ns	-.08
Person-organization fit	2.83	625	.005	.48

For normative commitment, however, the results were contrary to our expectations (H3). Volunteers reported having a much higher level of normative commitment to the organization than paid workers (Cohen's d = .89, an indication of a large effect). Furthermore, the hypothesis regarding continuance commitment (H4), i.e. that volunteers would have lower continuance commitment than paid workers, was not confirmed in this study. No significant difference was found between volunteers and paid workers in their attitudes towards the perceived lack of alternatives and the loss of investments when leaving the organization.

Up till this point, we implicitly assumed that the two groups were homogeneous except that one group gets paid for their efforts and the other group works *pro deo*. However, we already mentioned that the groups actually differ on age and gender as volunteering in this organization was primarily done by relatively older women compared to the paid population. As the results were representative for both groups, this difference also worked out in the two groups. If these results are due to age and gender, we may erroneously attribute the differences to the fact that they get paid or not and the results may suffer from a lack of repeatability. In order to establish the rigour of the conclusions, we controlled for age and gender as possible confounders in a mixed model design. In their meta-analysis, Meyer et al. (2002) reported positive, albeit weak (range of ρ .12-.15), relationships between age and the three dimensions of commitment and no effects of gender. This is in line with our study, where it turned out that gender was not a confouder, but age had a positive effect on affective (B=.11; SE = .04; $p<.05$), normative (B=.18; SE = .04; $p<.001$) and continuance commitment (B=.26; SE = .05; $p<.001$) and person-organization fit (B=.10; SE = .05; $p<.05$).

More important, controlling for age and gender as confounders indeed changed the results for some hypotheses. For both affective and normative organizational commitment the results stayed the same: volunteers report stronger affective (B=.38; SE = .16; $p<.001$) and normative (B=.70; SE = .16; $p<.001$) commitment than paid workers. For continuance commitment and person-organization fit, however, the initial results were indeed confounded by age: after controlling for confounders, volunteers showed lower continuance commitment than paid workers, as we hypothesized (B=-.46; SE =

.20; $p<.05$). For person-organization fit, the differences between paid and unpaid workers turned out to be non-significant after controlling for confounders ($B=.23$; $SE = .18$; $p=.19$).

In all, age turned out to be a confounder for the commitment dimensions and person-organization fit thereby changing the results (see table 3 for an overview). We will reflect on these results in the discussion section.

Table 3

Comparison of support for hypotheses without and with confounder control (age and gender)

	Hypothesis	Without confounder control?	With confounder control?
Affective commitment	Paid < unpaid	Supported	Supported
Normative commitment	Paid > unpaid	Opposite	Opposite
Continuance commitment	Paid > unpaid	Not supported	Supported
Person-organization fit	Paid < unpaid	Supported	Not supported

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to gain insight in the commitment pattern of volunteers compared to their paid co-workers. Regardless of their age, volunteers report higher levels of affective commitment (as previous scholars had already proposed, see for example Catano et al., 2001; Clary et al., 1998; Wilson & Pimm, 1996). Furthermore, this study showed that the importance of perceived person-organization fit for affective commitment is even greater for volunteers than for paid workers, for whom this also is an important feature (cf. Kristof, 2000). The results of the proposed hypotheses about both normative and continuance commitment were surprising. Volunteers did show higher levels of normative commitment than paid workers, and there was no difference in continuance commitment between the two groups.

Contrary to our expectations, the volunteers had higher levels of normative commitment than the paid workers, even when controlling for differences in age and gender between the two groups. The question arises how to explain the surprisingly strong normative commitment of the volunteers. We propose that an explanation lies in the characteristics of the volunteers in this organization. Research on volunteering related to the human life span (Erickson, 1994) shows that older people are motivated to volunteer because of their wish to fulfil an obligation or commitment to society; this in contrast to younger volunteers, who are primarily in search of satisfying interpersonal relationships (Omoto, Snyder & Martino, 2000). The fact that volunteers in this organization are relatively old implies that the tasks that are open for volunteers appeal to the generativity of the elder segment of societies' volunteer population. Our initial hypothesis was that paid workers would be stronger normatively committed based on the principle of reciprocity (Dabos & Rousseau, 2004). But incorporating Omoto et al.'s (2000) life span argumentation, normative commitment may also enhance through the generativity drives of older members of society. To our knowledge, this is a new aspect of normative commitment in desperate need of future research.

As the age of the respondents confounded the relationship between the two groups and their continuance commitment, one has to be careful interpreting the results. Our initial analysis showed that volunteers had the same level of continuance commitment as paid workers, but subsequent analysis revealed that this must be attributed to age differences. Based on these results, it must concluded that, in general, volunteers indeed will show lower levels of continuance commitment than paid workers. Paid workers who consider leaving their organization will – in contrast to volunteers – have to cope with (financial) insecurity that comes with such a decision. As continuance commitment comes with age, organizations attracting older volunteers, however, may experience their volunteers to have a continuance commitment as strong as their paid workforce.

From a managerial point of view, the results of this study offer several insights in the functioning of volunteers in organizations. First, person-organization fit, which has been shown to be an important antecedent of affective commitment in general, appears to be even more influential for volunteers than for paid workers. If organizations are able to communicate how their goals, values and culture are congruent to the individual's beliefs, volunteers can indeed be very helpful and committed organizational members. Especially when volunteer-based organizations could emphasize their contribution to society's benefit, as this is most important for volunteers in later life (Omoto et al., 2000). This will be rewarding for both parties involved. Explicit communication of values thus compensates for the absence of an organization's pay and reward system for volunteers, as it reveals what kinds of behavior are valued. Second, given that the volunteers' sense of commitment appears to be similar to or (in the case of affective and normative commitment) even stronger than the commitment of paid workers, it is crucial to fully acknowledge their membership of the organization. Management has to make sure that volunteers are not belittled and do not "perceive themselves as the 'poor bloody infantry' with the officers and other full-time staff creaming off the attractive, rewarding or exciting activities" (Wilson & Pimm, 1996, p. 28). What is more, the apparent attachment of volunteers towards the organization makes the organization responsible for the highly needed support to the voluntary members of the organization.

As mentioned before (cf. Pearce, 1993), the fact that the volunteers' attitudes appear to be favorable in many respects does not necessarily imply the corresponding behavioral consequences. A study by Laczo and Hanisch (2000) suggests that commitment may have less impact on the intentions of volunteers to stay with their organization compared to paid workers. In general, however, a clear relationship is found between the three commitment dimensions and behavior (Bentein, Vandenberg, Vandenberghe & Stinglhamber, 2005; Meyer et al., 2002). The results of this study show that not only affective commitment can be found with volunteers, but that especially normative commitment can emerge. As commitment of volunteers springs from several wells, the robustness of their commitment seems promising.

This study showed that the absence of 'a stick of paid work' does not lead to the situation that volunteers leave their tasks very easily. As indicated by their commitment, there seems to be an interdependence, even though volunteers are not paid for their contribution. They may need the organization as much as the organization needs them.

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Chapter 5

Part of a winning team? The contribution of efficacy expectations to commitment

Mark van Vuuren, Menno D. T. de Jong and Erwin R. Seydel

(Submitted)

Abstract

Purpose – To investigate the main and combined effects of self and organizational efficacy to three dimensions of organizational commitment.

Design/methodology/approach – A questionnaire was sent to the employees of chemical plant (response 550; = 46%). Data were analyzed using both dichotomization and moderated multiple regression.

Findings – Both organizational efficacy and self-efficacy were found to contribute to affective, normative and continuance commitment. The results concerning the fourfold typology are promising, but a test of interaction between self and organizational efficacy did not fulfill this promise.

Research limitations/implications – Two new determinants (i.e. organizational and self efficacy) are added to the range of antecedents of commitment. Since this is the first study that shows these effects, there is not yet evidence available about the stability of these effects.

Practical implications – The contribution of organizational efficacy perceptions to commitment provides new opportunities for managing commitment. The role of feedback about organizational successes and failures appears to be crucial.

Originality/value – This paper underlines the importance of efficacy perceptions for commitment, and introduces a fourfold typology of employees based on efficacy expectations.

Introduction

The interaction between an individual and the environment is a central topic in research on human behavior. Generally speaking, two major views exist on how they relate. On the one hand, a socio-cultural approach states that an individual is a product of society, while, on the other hand, a social psychological stance focuses on the psychological processes of individuals that underlie all social order (Craig, 1999). In the context of organizations, several lines of research deal with this interaction to understand the behavior of organizational members. The concept of person-environment fit (Edwards, 1991; Kristof, 1996), for example, focuses on the evaluation of the environment by an individual, leading to attitudes such as commitment (Cable and DeRue, 2002) and job satisfaction (Kalliath *et al.,* 1999). Another line of research addresses the way culture, for instance Hofstede's (1980) individualism-collectivism dimension, influences organizational members' attitudes and behavior. In all, it becomes clear that to understand organizational behavior, one has to incorporate aspects of both individuals and their environment.

Taking perceptions as the main currency of human research, Wheelan (2005) points out an interesting aspect of the link between individuals and their environment as she elaborates on Field Theory by stating that "behavior is a function of the person, the real environment, and the individual's perception of that real environment" (p.118). This elaboration highlights the importance of individuals' perceptions in addition to the actual existence of person and environment. Thus, work-related perceptions and individual resource characteristics together lead to affective reactions, like commitment (Kohler and Mathieu, 1993).

Research emphasizing the compatibility between individual and organizational characteristics (Kristof-Brown *et al.,* 2005) most often incorporates values (Chatman, 1991), and to a lesser extent demands and needs (Cable and DeRue, 2002). We will add the contribution of capability perceptions (efficacy) to these characteristics, suggesting the importance of efficacy for commitment. Therefore we will elaborate on the (compatibility of) self and collective efficacy in organizational settings.

Commitment and efficacy

Commitment can be depicted in the setting of an individual who is heading for certain goals. Depending on the specific nature of such goals, people attach themselves to do what they believe to be necessary to attain them. As goals and the reasons to attain them may vary, commitment has logically been found to be a multidimensional construct. Meyer and colleagues (Meyer and Allen, 1991, 1997; Meyer and Herscovitch, 2001) discern these commitments as being affective (where *desire* to obtain a goal is the basis for motivation), normative (where a sense of *obligation* motivates people), or continuance in nature (where the *costs of withdrawal* motivates people extrinsically to do certain things as not-doing them is perceived as having less favorable consequences than continuation of a course of action).

One of the factors influencing people's goal-oriented behaviors is the expectation that the activities will ultimately lead to the achievement of the goals. In his description of self-efficacy, Bandura (2002) states that "[u]nless people believe that their actions can produce the outcomes they desire, they have little incentive to act or to persevere in the face of difficulties" (p.128). Perceived self-efficacy is defined as "people's judgments of their capabilities to organize and execute courses of action required to attain designated types of performances" (Bandura, 1986, p.391). Empirical evidence supports Bandura's contention that self-efficacy beliefs affect virtually every aspect of people's lives (Bandura, 1997), including organizational commitment (Riggs and Patrick, 1994; Saks, 1995). Collective efficacy, on the other hand, is usually defined as "a group's shared belief in its conjoint capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce certain levels of attainments" (Bandura, 1997, p. 477). Within organizations, this leads to the idea that "belief of collective efficacy affects the sense of mission and purpose of a system, and the strength of common commitment to what it seeks to achieve" (Bandura, 2002, p. 469). Collective efficacy has also been found to influence organizational commitment (Jex and Bliese, 1999; Walumbwa *et al.,* 2004)

It therefore seems logical to assume that both self and collective efficacy are related to dimensions of organizational commitment. In this study, we investigate the relations between the two levels of efficacy (self – collective) and the three-dimensional model of commitment (affective – normative – continuance). This implies that efficacy is considered as a trait, because organizational commitment is a general evaluation with relatively long-lasting implications (Meyer *et al.,* 2004). In this study, trait-like collective efficacy is measured on the level of the organization, labeled as organizational efficacy. As organization members evaluate the "macro" aspects of organizational functioning rather than a "micro" task-specific evaluation of expectancies, it is in the line of thought to use a general level of analysis. Organizational efficacy is defined as an individual's perception of the general capabilities of an organization (cf. Chapter 6, this dissertation). We propose that for organizations, efficacy perceptions can be seen as a trait, because the activities of "the organization" will be super-ordinate (Keyton, 2005) and are therefore general in nature.

Since this interpretation of efficacy perceptions has been the subject of a lively academic debate, we will first discuss this before addressing the design and the results of our study.

Can efficacy be seen as a trait?

There are scholars in the field of social science (e.g. Lee, 1989, 1990) who pose that unobservable variables (like mental processes) should not be tolerated in scientific research as they merely serve as metaphors and are useless in relation to behavior: "The fact that Indo-European languages allow us to talk about thoughts, schemata, and so forth does not mean that they exist" (Lee, 1990, p. 144). But for most social-scientific researchers, studies using mental processes have led to such interesting results, that they accept some vagueness in their variables and study them all the same. For efficacy research, the question is to what level vagueness of the construct is permitted. This debate can be labeled as the state-trait discussion (Spielberger, 1975). Traits are perceived as relatively enduring predispostions of individuals, and can therefore be seen as stable across situations. States, on the other hand, are temporal and situation-specific, fluctuating over time and across situations. This distinction applies to both self and collective efficacy: Task-specific collective efficacy refers to the expectancies members have about the collective power to perform well-defined specific tasks, whilst general collective efficacy refers to a perceived collective capacity defined in mere broad terms (Gibson *et al.,* 2000).

While state-like efficacy has been introduced and advocated by Bandura, he dissociates himself from trait-like efficacy, as this would overlook the specific and context-bound nature of capabilities (Bandura, 2002; cf. Pajares, 1996). The decontextualization of efficacy expectations would thus deny the potential diversity of human competence (Bandura, 2002, p. 40-41). Generalized self-efficacy instruments would then assess general beliefs about capabilities without specifying which capabilities actually are considered (Pajares, 1996). As a basis of the processes underlying Bandura's social-cognitive theory, however, self-efficacy beliefs vary on three dimensions: *magnitude* (task difficulty), *strength* (certainty) and *generality* (the extent to which magnitude and strength beliefs generalize across tasks and situations). So while he acknowledges that efficacy beliefs can be generalized to some extent through "transformational restructuring of efficacy beliefs" (Bandura, 2002, p. 53; cf. Riggs and Knight, 1994), Bandura stays cautious about the assessment of such perceptions and narrows the focus of self-efficacy to a specific context (Chen *et al.,* 2001). Bandura (1995) proposes an intermediate position between microscopically operationalized activities and broad evaluations in trait-terms. Being faithful to "micro-analytic approaches that are sensitive to the diversity of human capabilities," which would be "better suited to clarify how self beliefs affect human thought, motivation, affect and action" (Bandura, 2002, p. 48) would lead to a very specific and hard-to-use measurement tool for organizational research.

On the other hand, research has undeniably shown that general self-efficacy (GSE) is actually an interesting, valuable and measurable construct (e.g. Bosscher and Smit, 1998; Chen *et al.* 2001; Eden, 1996; Gardner and Pierce, 1998; Judge and Bono, 2001; Judge *et al.,* 1998a). While these scholars disagree with the narrow focus of Bandura, they pay tribute to the fullness of his social cognitive theory by incorporating the generality that is a part of it. In this line of research, GSE is defined as an "individual's perception of their ability to perform across a variety of different settings" (Judge *et al.* 1998a, p. 170). GSE has been found to predict both job satisfaction and job performance (Judge *et al.* 2001). Furthermore, trait-like GSE has been found to be related to other core self-evaluations traits, like self esteem and emotional stability and may be parts of a higher-order core construct (Judge *et al.,* 2002), the positive self-concept (cf. Judge *et al.,* 1998b).

The present study

In general, we propose that efficacy and commitment are related: a positive evaluation of capabilities is expected to increase the likelihood of commitment, both internally (affective) and externally (normative and continuance). As it is human to prefer success over failure, people will try to avert failure and look for success. In environments where 'a winning mood' is felt, it is more likely that people are willing to stay then in disappointing or powerless contexts. In a similar vein, perceptions that someone's own contribution is important and valued in an organization will enhance the desire to proceed and stay in this course of action. We therefore assume a generally positive relationship between efficacy expectations and commitment (cf. Jex and Bliese, 1999; Riggs and Patrick, 1994; Saks, 1995; Walumbwa *et al.* 2004).

More specifically, we propose that different perceptions of both self and organizational efficacy contribute to different dimensions of commitment. As *affective commitment* comes close to intrinsic motivation (cf. Meyer *et al.,* 1998), we expect that efficacy expectations, like values and other beliefs, can commit people affectively. When goals are perceived as attainable, an attachment to a mission can emerge (Bandura, 2002). Especially when the goals are just within the reach of a unified team, they have great motivational impact (Collins and Porras, 1996). *Normative commitment* may be related to organizational efficacy as efficacious organizations will be more rewarding than organizations that are not perceived as efficacious – and thereby stimulating the emergence of a psychological contract and "invite" to behavior based on mutuality. This may also apply to self-efficacy: the perception that an employee has something important to offer and is capable to contribute may strengthen the perceived psychological contract

(Rousseau, 1995). For *continuance commitment*, the consequences of efficacy expectations may be more complex. When people perceive *themselves* as ineffective, they may cling to the organization because a loss of membership is problematic for them as they will be on their own again, hence higher continuance commitment. High self-efficacy, in turn, will lead to the perception that alternatives will be available and employability without the organization is an option. So we expect that the higher self-efficacy, the lower continuance commitment will be. For organizational efficacy, we expect a positive relation with continuance commitment, as leaving an efficacious environment may be harder than attrition from a less capable environment. When an environment is valued, leaving it will feel like a loss. So we hypothesize that:

> *H1 Higher levels of employees' self-efficacy will lead to a) stronger affective commitment, b) stronger normative commitment and c) weaker continuance commitment.*
>
> *H2 Higher levels of employees' organizational efficacy will lead to a) stronger affective commitment, b) stronger normative commitment and c) stronger continuance commitment.*

The question arises whether such related attitudes as self and organizational efficacy will also interact in their influence on the three forms of organizational commitment. Interactions are an important topic when similar questions on different but related perceptions are investigated. A well-known example of such an interaction is value congruence where a fit between values of individuals and their environment (like an organization or a group) leads to positive attitudes that are beneficial to the organization (Kristof, 1996; Kristof –Brown *et al.,* 2005). In a similar manner, we propose that people perceive the efficacies of both themselves and the organization they are part of and that *a combination of these two evaluations* affects their commitment – given the importance of the interaction of person and environment (Wheelan, 2005). The question arises how these efficacy expectations interact. Assuming the significance of both the person and the environment for human behavior, we propose that self and organizational efficacy perceptions are an important pair in evaluating the individual's position within the organization.

It is still unclear whether a homologous pattern of efficacy levels can be expected. Some scholars have provided frameworks in which self and collective efficacies have comparable consequences (e.g. Chen and Bliese, 2002; Gibson, 2001; Lindsley *et al.,* 1995; Prussia and Kinicki, 1996), but others have questioned this (e.g. Kozlowski and Klein, 2000). Chen *et al.* (2002) explored this question empirically, and found both similarities and dissimilarities between self and collective efficacy regarding their consequences. They explicitly focused on task-specific efficacy for action teams and not on generalized efficacy beliefs. In a laboratory study, Katz-Navon and Erez (2005) found team-interdependence as the key factor for explaining which level of efficacy was of importance. Collective efficacy was useful under conditions of high team-interdependence, while self-efficacy emerged as a meaningful construct that explained individual performance under low task interdependence conditions. In the context of commitment, Meyer *et al.* (2002) found that work experience variables correlated much stronger with affective commitment than those involving personal characteristics. This may suggest that self-efficacy (being a personal characteristic) will contribute less to commitment then work-related variables like organizational efficacy. In all, evidence for and against the interplay between the efficacies is still confusing and a clear answer is to be found.

Chen *et al.* (2005) provide a framework for theory building with homologous models. They discern metaphoric, proportional and identical multilevel theories for comparison of perceptions on different levels, differing from exploratory (low precision of prediction) to confirmatory (high precision of prediction). Given the lack of consensus about the interaction effects of self and organizational efficacy, our model is typical metaphoric.

Typology

We propose that a combination of the two efficacies leads to a fourfold typology of people dealing with organizations. Straightforward application of this combination of efficacy perceptions leads to a typology where both self and organizational efficacies are presented as being either high or low. This results in a 2x2 diagram for organizational and self-efficacy as a frame of reference in which four kinds of employees can be identified, viz. the captive, the independent, the supporter and the team player (see table 1).

Table 1

A fourfold typology based on self and organizational efficacy expectations

		Self-efficacy	
		Low	*High*
Organizational	*Low*	Captive	Independent
efficacy	*High*	Supporter	Team player

Exploring the consequences of both efficacies, we propose that these four types can be described as follows.

Captives (low self-efficacy – low organizational efficacy)

These employees are captives of bounded capabilities. Feeling that they are not able to do their job very good, they are also frustrated or apathetic given the captives' belief that their organization is not capable either. Being out of control, feelings of disappointment will arise. The only reason why captives stay are external motivation considerations.

Supporters (low self-efficacy – high organizational efficacy)

Supporters are enthusiastic about their organization and feel at home, but perceive a lack of essential competences in themselves. They will follow the vision, but will take little responsibility for it assuming they may bungle important tasks. They will be glad to do just simple work that supports others to achieve the goals of the organization. Supporters will probably 'bask in reflected glory' (Snyder *et al.,* 1986), a response which may even have physiological effects (e.g. Bernhardt *et al.,* 1998).

Independents (high self-efficacy – low organizational efficacy)

Because of the own perceived competence, while observing a lack of competence in the rest of the organization, independents will not work in the corporate line of duty. Independents will work from their own policy – mainly focused on the (external) customer and the goals they set for themselves. The independents will probably 'cut off reflected failure' (Snyder *et al.,* 1986), and perceive an imbalance in the value of their inputs to the organization relative to their peers (cf. Riggs and Knight, 1994).

Team players (high self-efficacy – high organizational efficacy)

Team players feel like being the right person in the right place. As these employees are capable organization member, they work hard in the inspiring context. They have great expectations of the organization and the role that they play in it themselves.

To investigate the possible interaction of the two components, we hypothesize that:

> *H3 The interaction of employees' perceptions of self and organizational efficacies will add positively to the prediction of organizational commitment.*

Using this typology, the hypothesis (H3) about the interaction between self and organizational efficacy can be specified as the types in the typology differ in their nature. Therefore we propose that:

- Team players will have the highest scores on affective commitment, followed by, respectively, supporters, independents, and captives.
- Team players will have the highest scores on normative commitment, followed by, respectively, supporters, captives, and independents.
- Supporters will have the highest scores on continuance commitment, followed by, respectively, captives, team players, and independents.

Research design

For this study, we collected data from an industrial organization, part of a multinational in chemical industry (n=550). Questionnaires and prepaid postage envelopes were distributed to the home addresses of 1200 individual organization members, and 550 questionnaires were returned (46%). The responding group reflected the actual organization on gender (14% female), age (69% was aged between 40 and 59), and tenure (mean tenure 12 years).

Organizational commitment. We used Meyer and Allen's (1997) organizational commitment scales to measure affective, (five items, e.g. "I feel a strong sense of belonging to my organization.") normative (five items, e.g. "Even if it were to my advantage, I do not feel it would be right to leave my organization now") and continuance (five items, e.g. "Too much of my life would be disrupted if I decided to leave my organization right now") organizational commitment. We used the standardized Dutch translation of Meyer et al.'s affective organizational commitment scale (De Gilder *et al.,* 1997) and the other scales were translated and back-translated as a quality check. The reliability of the scale was good (Cronbach's α = .82).

Efficacy perceptions. We measured Organizational efficacy by using the Organizational Efficacy Scale (see Chapter 6, this dissertation), consisting of seven items like "I think [name organization] is able to offer excellent services to his clients". The reliability of the scale was good (Cronbach's α = .83). For self-efficacy, we adapted the OES to an individual level by a referent shift consensus composition (Chan, 1998). The reliability of the scale was sufficient (Cronbach's α = .77).

Results

The means, standard deviations, and correlations of the five variables of interest are displayed in table 2. Two remarkable descriptives are the high mean score for self-efficacy and its low standard deviation. This negatively skewed pattern leads to low correlations with the other variables.

Table 2

Means, standard deviations, and correlations for self-efficacy, organizational efficacy, and affective commitment (N=550)

	M	SD	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.
1. Self-efficacy	5.91	.62	--				
2. Organizational efficacy	4.62	.99	.25	--			
3. Affective commitment	4.70	1.20	.27	.48	--		
4. Normative commitment	3.86	1.14	.16	.31	.57	--	
5. Continuance commitment	4.49	1.58	.02	.10	.32	.40	--

Note. Variables were measured on seven-point Likert scales where 1 represents low scores and 7 high scores.

To test for interactions and to evaluate the potential value of the efficacy-based typology of organizational members, we conducted two different analyses: first we used a variable split in which we enforced the typology using a median split, and checked for differences. The use of variable splits is a common way to make such a fourfold typology. In such a case participants are categorized into groups based on their scores which are split around the median (here: median self-efficacy = 6.00; median organizational efficacy = 4.71). After this categorization, the commitment scores of the four groups of organizational members were compared by an analysis of variance. But there are some concerns about the validity and robustness of a variable split (Hayes, 2004; Maxwell and Delaney, 1993). Therefore, we conducted other analyses that give additive information on the existence of the four types of employees. It is proposed to use moderated multiple regression analysis (Hayes, 2004), which treats the independent variables on a continuous scale as it was measured instead of dichotomizing them. In the first stage, the main effects of self and organizational efficacy are examined, thereby testing hypotheses H1 and H2. In the second stage, the interaction term (Organizational efficacy x Self-efficacy) is added, testing whether this interaction contribute significantly to the prediction of the dimensions of commitment (H3).

Typology tested by a median split

The results of the four types of employees discerned can be seen in table 3 and figure 1. Regarding affective commitment, the results were conform our expectations, with team players have the highest scores, followed by, respectively, supporters, independents, and captives. A post hoc analysis (LSD) showed that these differences were all significant. For normative commitment, the types partly followed the expected pattern. As expected, the team players have the highest scores, followed by the supporters. Contrary to our expectations, the difference between independents and captives on normative commitment was not significant. We expected the independents to be less dependent on the organization, based on their higher self-efficacy, than the captives, and therefore less loyal to a psychological contract. For continuous commitment, the results differed from our expectations. We expected the team players to have a relatively low continuance commitment, because of their high self-efficacy in comparison with the captives and supporters. However, they appeared to have the highest score, which implies that the team players value the synergy between their own and the organization's capabilities. Leaving the organization is then perceived as a loss of considerable investments. The independents scored significantly lower than team players and supporters.

The scores of the three dimensions of commitment showed largely the same pattern among the four types of employees—i.e., affective commitment is the strongest and normative commitment turns out to be the weakest. But it is interesting to note that the captives' continuance commitment is higher than their affective commitment. This is in line with the proposed profile of the captives.

Table 3 Means of organizational commitment of the four-fold typology

	Affective commitment		Normative commitment		Continuance commitment	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Captive (n=174)	4.15	1.22	3.50	1.04	4.42	1.48
Supporter (n=162)	4.98	.91	4.02	1.04	4.59	1.42
Independent (n=87)	4.44	1.28	3.66	1.10	4.08	1.68
Team player (n=116)	5.38	.94	4.33	1.26	4.78	1.75
Overall (n=539)	4.71	1.19	3.86	1.14	4.49	1.57
F	35.2		15.6		3.5	
P	<.001		<.001		.015	
Eta^2	.17		.08		.02	

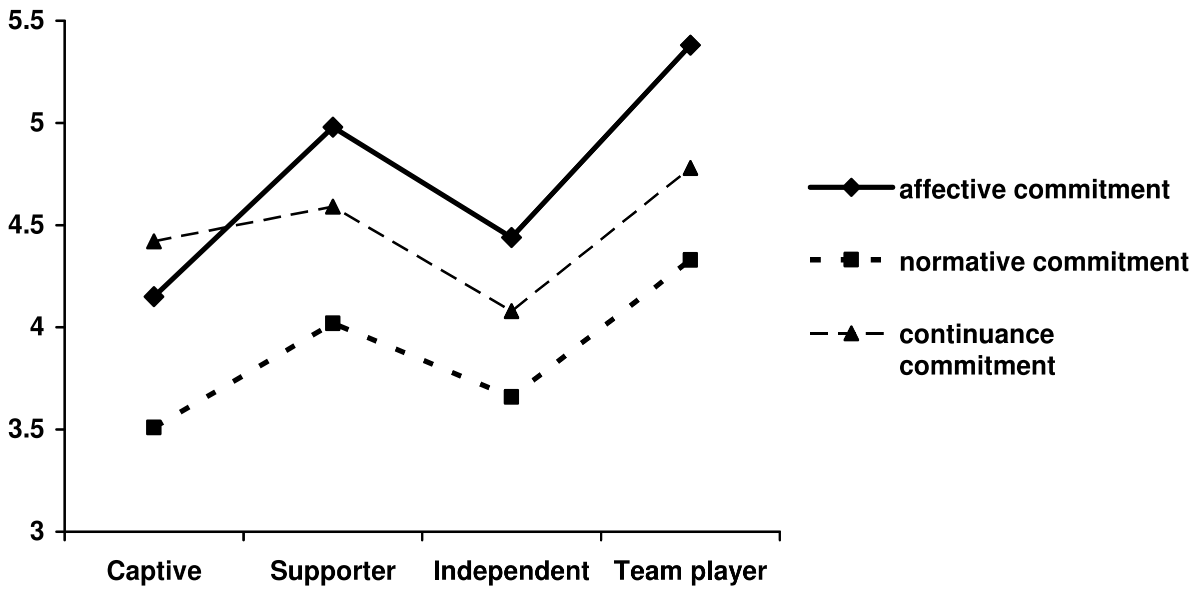

Figure 1. Scores on affective, normative and continuance commitment for the four types.

Interaction tested by a moderated multiple regression

Although the median split partly confirmed our expectations on the impact of organizational and self-efficacy, these results have to be read with care. Therefore we also conducted moderated multiple regression analysis (table 4). For affective commitment, the results of the first stage indicate that both organizational efficacy and self-efficacy predict affective commitment. In a second stage, the interaction term did not add significantly to the explained variance, suggesting that only main effects of the two efficacy expectations predict affective commitment. For normative commitment, the effects were similar but smaller. Again, no interaction effect was found. For continuance commitment, only a main effect for organizational efficacy was found.

Table 4

Beta's of main and combined effects on commitments

	Affective commitment	Normative commitment	Continuance commitment
Step 1			
Organizational efficacy (O)	.44**	.29**	.16**
Self-efficacy (S)	.17**	.09*	-.03
R^2	.25	.10	.02
Step 2			
Organizational efficacy (O)	.45**	.29**	.16**
Self-efficacy (S)	.14**	.09*	-.02
O x S	-.05	.02	.03
R^2	.25	.10	.02
ΔR^2	-	-	-

Note. *p<.05 **p<.01

The two analyses (median split and moderated multiple regression analysis) do not lead to the same conclusions. Where the initial analysis using a variable split showed differences between the four groups, thereby confirming the apparent face validity of the distinction, further analyses using moderated multiple regression showed that the four groups could not be discerned in this organization. We will turn to this in the discussion section.

Discussion

The aim of this study was to investigate the importance of efficacy perceptions for organizational commitment. Organizational efficacy appears to be a significant predictor of affective, normative and continuance commitment. Employees' self-efficacy added significantly to the explained variance of affective and normative commitment. For all dimensions of commitment, organizational efficacy proved to have stronger effects than self-efficacy. The effect sizes, however, are reasonably low, suggesting that the efficacy measures should first and foremost be used in combination with other predictors. Of the three commitment dimensions, the relation between efficacy perceptions and affective commitment is the strongest. The predictive power for both normative and continuance commitment, although statistically significant, is only marginal.

Our attempt to find four types of employees based on their efficacy perceptions led to interesting but mixed results. On the one hand, we were able to confirm most of the hypotheses regarding the effects on affective, normative and continuance commitment, which is in line with the face validity of the typology. On the other hand, however, when testing for the interaction using moderated multiple regression, we could not trace an interaction between the two types of efficacy.

There are several reasons that could explain the absence of the expected interaction effects in the regression analysis. An explanation would be that self and organizational efficacy do not necessarily need to interact. Katz-Navon and Erez (2005), for instance, found team interdependence to be a moderator for which efficacy predicted commitment. So, context-specific characteristics could infer with the relationship between self and organizational efficacy.

Another explanation for the absence of interaction is the idea that self-efficacy is hard to measure using self-reported questionnaires. In our study, the self-efficacy scale led to a ceiling effect (a high mean score and a low standard deviation). The negative skewness of self-efficacy scores is a consistent finding in efficacy-research (Forsyth and Carey, 1998), suggesting that people may respond in socially desirable ways when evaluating their own capabilities. Especially in contexts as political and strategic as organizations, the vulnerability to admit a lack of skills will often be avoided.

While critics may use this outcome to reiterate their critique on the vagueness of general efficacy scores (Bandura, 2002; Lee, 1989), we propose that the variables are in fact relevant, but hard to investigate using quantitative self report questionnaires. Bandura's guide to the construction of self-efficacy scales (1995) is, in our view, not a useful alternative in organizational research. Therefore we think that some qualitative measurement techniques are better suited to explore the contribution of employees' self-efficacy, and, hence, its interplay with organizational efficacy. It has been shown that psychological variables may be distilled with the use of life story narratives. For example, Bauer and Bonanno (2001) used semi-structured interviews to find cues of self-efficacy and how this helped people overcoming traumas and grief. Coding of narrative interviews on explicit reference to the inteviewee's own strengths (e.g. "I was able to help her when she needed me") or weaknesses ("I just couldn't give her what she needed") led to the measurement of self-efficacy in a natural context that could subsequently be analyzed quantitatively. A similar approach could be used to trace a delicate subject such as self-efficacy in organizational contexts.

Practically, the evidence for organizational efficacy's contribution to commitment opens up new ways of managing organizational commitment. Bandura (2002) describes several processes that may influence collective efficacy. A promising strategy for enhancing organizational efficacy is extensive use of feedback. By providing sufficient and reliable information about performances of individuals and the organization, managers can present the building blocks of realistic and motivating efficacy expectations. Openness about possible failures and their causes as well as explicit attention to the organization's successes may help to shape people's feeling that they are part of a winning team.

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Chapter 6

'What keeps you here?' Organizational efficacy and person-organization fit as antecedents of affective organizational commitment

Mark van Vuuren, Wim J. L. Elving, Menno D. T. de Jong & Erwin R. Seydel

(Submitted)

Abstract

In this paper, organizational efficacy is introduced as a new branch on the tree of efficacy research. It refers to the perception individual employees have of the general capabilities of their organization to achieve its goals. In the first phase, an organizational efficacy scale (OES) was developed and tested. In the second phase, the contribution of both organizational efficacy and person-organization fit to affective organizational commitment was examined in two different organizations. The OES proved to be a reliable and distinctive measure of organizational efficacy. Both organizational efficacy and person-organization fit appeared to be relevant predictors of affective organizational commitment, and no practically meaningful interaction between the predictors was found. The theoretical and managerial implications of these findings are discussed.

Introduction

The success of an organization largely depends on the willingness of its members to exert themselves to the organization's profit. Some kind of binding force is needed between an organization and its members. From a strictly transactional perspective, this willingness is gained by financial incentives and other rewards. But decades of research have shown that employees' motivation may also flow from another well. Particularly people's emotional attachment to an organization appears to be an important factor, as can be concluded from the research on organizational commitment.

Organizational commitment as a binding force has been the topic of extensive research (cf. Meyer *et al.*, 2002 for a review). Commitment is a complex construct and has been defined and operationalized in many different ways (Meyer, Allen, and Smith, 1993; Mottaz, 1988). People may commit themselves to several levels, like organizations, work groups, and occupations (Baruch and Winkelmann-Gleed, 2002, cf. Iles, Mabey and Robertson, 1990). In this study, we limit ourselves to organizational commitment. Meyer and Herscovitch (2001) state that organizational commitment binds an individual to an organization, but different mindsets may be used to characterize the nature of this binding force. They follow Meyer and Allen (1991) in the distinction between emotional attachment to the organization (affective commitment), perceived cost of leaving (continuance commitment), and a perceived or moral obligation to stay (normative commitment).

Of these three dimensions of commitment, affective commitment appears to have the strongest relationship with employees' willingness to contribute to their organization's success and desirable organizational outcomes, like higher job satisfaction, organizational citizenship and positive extra-role behaviours, lower absenteeism and fewer turnover intentions (e.g., Boshoff and Mels, 2000; Eby *et al.,* 1999; Mathieu and Zajac, 1990; Michaels and Spector, 1982; Tett and Meyer, 1993; Watson and Papamarcos, 2002). Affective organizational commitment is defined as the magnitude of the employees' emotional attachment to, identification with and involvement in the organization (Meyer and Allen, 1997).

In the quest for antecedents of affective commitment, the importance of person-organization fit (or: value congruence) has emerged as a central topic of interest, both conceptually (Chatman, 1991; Finegan, 2000; Meyer and Herscovitch, 2001) and empirically (e.g., Cable and DeRue, 2002; Cable and Judge, 1996; Meyer, Irving and Allen, 1998; O'Reilly, Chatman and Caldwell, 1991; Van Vianen, 2000; Wasti, 2003; Wiener, 1982). Person-organization fit is defined as the extent to which an employee perceives that his or her values match the organization's values (Cable and DeRue, 2002; Chatman, 1991; Kristof-Brown, 2000; Meglino, Ravlin and Adkins, 1989). The relationship between values and affective commitment is underlined by the fact that other frameworks that address the multidimensionality of commitment attitudes prefer the term value commitment over affective commitment (Angle and Perry, 1981; Mayer and Schoorman, 1992; cf. Meyer and Herscovitch, 2001).

Person-organization fit perceptions reflect a final evaluation of the compatibility of employees in their working environment, based on their everyday working experiences. This explains why Meyer and Herscovitch (2001) name shared values in describing the basis of affective commitment, whereas their recent meta-analysis focuses on more specific evaluations of concrete working experiences, such as role ambiguity, procedural justice, and organizational support (Meyer *et al.*, 2002). Such a focus overlooks the possibility that employees may also evaluate the power of the organization as a whole, in addition to their own involvement in the organization. As a matter of fact, research into organizational identification has shown that the external prestige of an organization influences employees' feelings towards their organization (e.g., Smidts, Pruyn and Van Riel, 2001). Inspired by these findings, we propose a two-component approach of explaining affective organizational commitment, comprising the employees' evaluation of their personal compatibility with the organization, and their estimation of the organization's ability to achieve its goals. After all, an organization exists because its goals are superordinate (Keyton, 2005), meaning that they are too difficult, time-consuming and complex to be achieved by one person. A certain degree of confidence in the collective capabilities of the organization members together is essential beyond the level of agreement on the goals and values that the organization aims to achieve.

The estimation of this confidence in the capabilities of others has been the topic of extensive research, since it influences motivation (Bandura, 2002). One of the central constructs that emerges from this line of research is collective efficacy (Bandura, 2000), which refers to the belief that an entity can successfully achieve varying levels of results (cf. Lindsley, Brass and Thomas, 1995). In this paper, we will introduce a specific level of collective efficacy, i.e., *organizational efficacy*, and study its relationship with person-organization fit and affective organizational commitment.

Organizational efficacy

Since Bandura (1977) introduced the concept of self-efficacy, the studies using this concept have mushroomed. More recently, collective efficacy has gained attention (e.g. Earley, 1994; Jung and Sosik, 2003; Lent, Schmidt and Schmidt, 2006). After reviewing the literature on collective efficacy, three topics emerged about which choices have to be made when doing research on collective efficacy topics: (1) the level of collectivity, (2) the level of specificity, and (3) the ways of assessment.

Level of collectivity. Bandura suggests that various levels of collectivity may be subject to efficacy considerations, like “communities, organizations, social institutions and even nations” (2002, p. 477). In organizations, collective efficacy is mostly referred to on the team-level (e.g., Gully *et al.,* 2002). Empirical research confirms the theoretical proposition (Pajares, 2003) that groups with a strong sense of collective efficacy have empowering and vitalizing effects on group members, and reinforce their commitment to the organization (Jex and Bliese, 1999; Walumbwa *et al.,* 2004). While the team-level approach to collective efficacy is dominant, we concentrate in this paper on collective efficacy on the organizational level as a potential valuable topic for efficacy research and organizational research. To emphasize our focus on the organizational level of efficacy, we will use the term “organizational efficacy”, thereby distinguishing it from other possible collectivities or units, like groups, departments, or teams. Research on organizational attitudes (e.g. attractiveness, reputation, commitment, identification) has shown that an organization is a useful unit of analysis. Besides, by studying organizational efficacy as it relates to similar-level constructs as organizational commitment and person-organization fit, problems of comparing different levels of analysis (e.g., *group* efficacy and *organizational* commitment) are avoided.

Level of specificity. A second topic is the distinction between task-specific collective efficacy and a more general collective efficacy. Task-specific collective efficacy refers to the expectancies members have about the collective power to produce desired results in a very specific setting, whilst general collective efficacy is the perceived collective capacity defined in mere broad terms (Gibson, Randel and Earley, 2000). Organization members are used to these broadly defined goals as most strategic goals normally imply a range of tasks (e.g. increase employees’ motivation). Therefore, a focus on the organizational level of collectivity implies the evaluation of ‘macro’ aspects of organizational functioning, rather than a ‘micro’ task-specific evaluation of expectancies. We propose that organizational efficacy is best analyzed as a general evaluation of an organization’s collective power and capabilities to achieve its goals.

Ways of assessment. There are three current approaches to the assessment of collective efficacy (Bandura, 2000, cf. Jung and Sosik, 2003): (a) averaging self-efficacy perceptions of individual members’ appraisals, (b) letting the group discuss the topic and give a conjoint judgment on the group’s efficacy, and (c) aggregating all members’ perceptions of the group’s efficacy. Whiteoak, Chalip and Hort (2004) provide support for the reliability of all three approaches. For measuring organizational efficacy, however, none of the three ways can be used. The aggregation of self-efficacy perceptions is not applicable, as it confuses individual and collective units of analysis; the sum of all members’ efficacy perceptions cannot be treated as an equivalent of the overall efficacy of an organization. The second approach is practically impossible for assessing organizational efficacy, since the people that would have to be involved in this method will outnumber the practical limit of that kind of sessions for most organizations. Moreover, the forced consensus on which this approach is based suffers from problems of social pressure (Fernández-Ballesteros *et al.,* 2001). Finally, the third way assesses organizational efficacy through the aggregation of members' appraisals of the organization's capabilities. However, in studying the effects of an employee's perceptions on his or her organizational commitment, differences between employees are of greater importance than the aggregated overall picture for the organization. Therefore, we will assess the individual estimations of organizational efficacy without aggregating the scores.

In short, in this study we conceptualize organizational efficacy as an *individual's* (way of assessment) perception of the *general* (level of specificity) capabilities of an *organization* (level of collectivity).

Note that Bandura utilizes the similar term "collective organizational efficacy" (Bandura, 2002, p. 468), but that his use of the term "organizational" only refers to organizational settings in which various levels of collective efficacy may emerge. His use of the term "organizational" is just to distinguish it from other settings, such as politics, sports, or health contexts. Within the organizational setting, Bandura focuses strongly on groups and teams as the level of analysis for collective efficacy, not on the organization as a whole. He also gives a task-specific stance to collective efficacy because organization members have to depend upon others "in performing tasks and in carrying out their complementary roles". Thus, the organizational efficacy that we use, with its non task-specific nature and organizational level of analysis, is a part of the organizational setting that is indicated by Bandura's collective organizational efficacy. Bandura refers to this organizational level as he discusses the relevance of perceived collective efficacy to issues of organizational culture.

Leaning on the work of Martin and Siehl (Martin, 1993; Martin and Siehl, 1983; Siehl and Martin, 1990), Bandura describes studies of organizational culture as a line of inquiry that "is concerned with the shared values and belief systems in an organization that shape its formal and informal practices" (p. 474). Bandura first stresses the importance of person-organization fit as he describes how “cultures perpetuate themselves by their socialization practices but also through selective recruitment of people who readily fit into the prevailing system” (474-475). Moreover, by stating that “[b]eliefs of collective efficacy affect the sense of mission and purpose of a system and the strength of common commitment to what it seeks to achieve” (2002, pp. 469), Bandura hints to the importance of both collective efficacy and person-organization fit on commitment. So, by our introduction of organizational efficacy together with person-organization fit and affective organizational commitment, it is possible to empirically test the relationships conceptually proposed by Bandura.

The present studies

The research reported in this paper on the concept of organizational efficacy is divided into two phases. In the first phase, we developed and validated an organizational efficacy scale. In the second phase, we used the newly developed scale to test three hypotheses on the relationships between organizational efficacy, person-organisation fit, and affective organizational commitment.

First, we hypothesize that both person-organization fit and organizational efficacy will be related to organizational commitment. The relationship between person-organization fit and organizational commitment has been established in many previous studies (e.g., Cable and DeRue, 2002; Meyer *et al*., 1998; O’Reilly *et al.,* 1991; Van Vianen, 2000; Wasti, 2003; Wiener, 1983). Since organizational efficacy is a new construct, there is no prior research available on its impact on commitment. But we can refer to the few studies that report a positive relationship on the group efficacy level (Jex and Bliese, 1999; Walumbwa *et al.,* 2004). Further, Fletcher and Williams (1996) showed that being aware of how well the organization is performing may contribute to organizational commitment. Based on the aforementioned discussion, we hypothesize that:

> *H1 Employees’ degree of person-organization fit will predict their affective organizational commitment.*

H2 Employees' perceptions of organizational efficacy will predict their affective organizational commitment.

Apart from the main effects of person-organization fit and organizational efficacy on organizational commitment, interactions of both variables might occur. As literature on visionary leadership explains, employees need both feelings of agreement (person-organization fit) and feasibility (efficacy) to be committed (Bass, 1985; Collins and Porras, 1996). Therefore transformational leadership has been stressed in the context of commitment, since it combines agreement and feasibility (Walumbwa *et al.,* 2004). It seems reasonable to assume that person-organization fit and organizational efficacy perceptions may enforce or diminish each other's effect on commitment. For instance, an organization that is perceived as highly efficacious, but having a complete mismatch of norms and values, will be displeasing rather than inviting. And similarly, an ambitious vision may be attractive to employees, but not without considering the actual capability of the organization to realize that vision. To explore the possible interaction of the two components, we hypothesize that:

H3 Employees' perceptions of organizational efficacy and their degree of person-organization fit will interact in their prediction of affective organizational commitment.

We will first describe the development of the organizational efficacy scale (OES), and after that report on the research testing the three hypotheses.

First phase: Organizational Efficacy Scale development

We defined organizational efficacy as an individual's perception of the general capabilities of an organization to achieve its goals. In order to measure this perception, we constructed a scale and conducted two validation studies (cf. Spector, 1992).

Item pool development

To formulate items for the Organizational Efficacy Scale (OES), we chose the Competing Values Framework (CVF; Quinn, 1988) as a frame of reference. The CVF is a spatial model that was developed in order to explore organizational effectiveness (Quinn and Rohrbaugh, 1983) and can therefore serve as a guide for item generation on organizational efficacy. The CVF and existing group efficacy scales (Gibson *et al.,* 2000; Goddard, 2002) were studied by four scholars who participated in an expert meeting to develop a pool of items for the scale. Using the four quadrants of the CVF—i.e. empowerment, goal achievement, innovation, and order (O'Neill and Quinn, 1991)—an initial pool of twelve items was generated. The items were formulated as "[name organization] is able to…" followed by statements referring to capabilities (for example," develop new ideas," or "deliver excellent products") in a seven-point Likert format.

This set of items was evaluated by fifteen members of various organizations, who agreed to take part in a pilot test. The participants received a questionnaire, and were asked to indicate their confidence in their organization's efficacy by indicating the extent to which they agreed with the twelve statements. They were also asked to reflect on the comprehensiveness, logic, clarity, and completeness of the items. Their comments resulted in the removal of five items: four of these items were judged to refer more to organizational values than to perceived capabilities; one item was removed because of overlap with another item. In addition, their comments resulted in small adjustments on the exact formulation of the final seven items.

First validation study

The first full administration of the OES was conducted with two aims. The first aim was to gain preliminary insight in the reliability of the scale. The second aim was to compare the OES with an alternative solution to the absence of an appropriate scale: as suggested by Chan (1998), we 'scaled up' an existing instrument that is in use for a different level of analysis of collective efficacy. The two scales were compared on their reliabilities and on their predictive power on affective organizational commitment.

The alternative scale used in this study was designed to measure collective efficacy perceptions on the group level (Gibson *et al.,* 2000). We transposed this Group Efficacy Scale by adjusting the level of analysis from the group to the organization. For example, the item "No task is too tough for my group" was rephrased to "No task is too tough for my organization." Affective organizational commitment was measured by a Dutch translation (De Gilder, Van den Heuvel and Ellemers, 1997) of Meyer and Allen's (1997) five-item Affective Organizational Commitment scale. All variables were measured using a seven-point Likert scale, ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree".

The questionnaire was administered in a Dutch hospital, which consists of four speciality-based locations. As the hospital had experienced low response rates in earlier studies, the questionnaires were distributed via the managers of departments, who encouraged the members (N= 585) to take part in this study. This led to a response of 222, which is a response rate of 38%. The responding group reflected the actual organization on gender, age and tenure. The only (small but significant) distortion was that managers were slightly overrepresented, presumably due to their involvement in the distribution of the questionnaire.

The results showed that all seven items of the OES loaded on one factor (confirmatory factor analysis) with loadings all between .79 and .65. The scale's reliability was satisfactory (α=.81; M=3.81; SD=1.01) and comparable to the alternative eight-item scale based on Gibson et al. (α=.86; M=4.64; SD=1.02). The correlation between the two scales was .51. Regarding the predictive power on affective organizational commitment, the two scales differed. The OES had a significant relationship with affective organizational commitment (β=.35, $F(1,220)$=31.29, p<.001; R^2=.12), in contrast to the alternative scale (β=.12, $F(1,220)$= 3.11, n.s.; R^2 =.00). Based on these findings, it may be concluded that, within the context of affective commitment research, the OES is a better measure of organizational efficacy than a transposed alternative.

Second validation study

In a second administration, we investigated whether the OES can be statistically distinguished from affective organization commitment and person-organization fit, and explored the relationships between the three constructs. We expected the items of the three constructs to load on three different factors in an exploratory factor analysis. Furthermore, we expected the three constructs to be related.

Organizational efficacy and affective organizational commitment were measured in the same way as in the first validation study. Perceptions of person-organization fit were measured by a Dutch translation of the three-item scale developed by Cable and DeRue (2002). An example of an item is: “My organization’s values and culture provide a good fit with the things I value in life”. The quality of the translation was checked with a back-translation procedure (Breslin, 1970). Again, all variables were measured using a seven-point Likert scale (strongly disagree – strongly agree).

This study was part of a larger study conducted within a chemical plant. This organization is part of a multinational in chemical industry. Questionnaires and prepaid postage envelopes were distributed to the home addresses of 1200 individual organization members, and 550 questionnaires were returned (46%). The responding group reflected the actual organization on gender (14% female), age (69% was aged between 40 and 59), and tenure (mean tenure 12 years).

Table 1

Factor Loadings (with Varimax Rotation) of Affective Organizational Commitment, Person-Organization Fit and Organizational Efficacy Expectations

Factor and item	Loading 1	2	3
Organizational efficacy			
[Name Organization (NO)] is able to achieve the goals she sets for herself	**.77**		
[NO] is able to develop new ideas	**.74**		
[NO] is able to give clear information about work	**.72**		
[NO] is able to be flexible to the environment	**.67**		
[NO] is able to be reliable to her stakeholders	**.65**		
[NO] is able to motivate her members	**.61**	.34	
[NO] is able to deliver excellent products	**.58**		
Person-organization fit			
My organization's values and culture provide a good fit with the things that I value in life		**.85**	.32
The things I value in life are very similar to the things that my organization values		**.83**	
My personal values match my organization's values and culture		**.69**	.43
Affective organizational commitment			
This organization has a great deal of personal meaning for me			**.82**
I feel personally attached to this organization			**.79**
I feel a strong sense of belonging to my organization			**.73**
I feel like "part of the family" at my organization			**.73**
I really feel that the problems my organization faces are my problems too			**.61**

Note: all items have been translated into English, for the purpose of this manuscript. All factor loadings less than .30 have been omitted (Spector, 1992). Total variance explained by the three factors $R^2 = .61$.

The results of the exploratory factor analysis showed that the three constructs can be distinguished (see Table 1, previous page). All items of the OES load on one factor, thereby indicating that it is possible to assess employees' general evaluation of their organization's efficacy.

For insight in the relationship between the constructs, Table 2 presents the means, standard deviations, and correlations of organizational efficacy, person-organization fit, and affective organizational commitment. The mean scores show that the organization is perceived to be moderately efficacious, that employees perceive a moderate fit between themselves and the organization, and that they feel moderately committed to the organization. The correlations are reasonably high, indicating that the three constructs are related.

In sum, the results of the second validation study confirm the findings of the first study in that the OES is a reliable measure. Furthermore, the results show that organizational efficacy is a distinct but related construct to person-organization fit and affective organizational commitment.

Table 2

Means, Standard Deviations, Reliabilities and Correlations of Organizational Efficacy, Person-organization fit, and Affective Organizational Commitment

Variable	*M*	*SD*	1	2	3
1. Organizational efficacy	4.62	.97	(.84)		
2. Person-organization fit	4.58	1.14	.49	(.87)	
3. Affective commitment	4.71	1.18	.49	.61	(.87)

Note. N = 550. Scale reliabilities are on the diagonal. All correlations $p < .001$.

Second phase: Relationship between organizational efficacy, person-organization fit and affective commitment

After the construction and testing of the OES as a measure of organizational efficacy in the first phase, the second phase is aimed at investigating the contribution of both organizational efficacy and person-organization fit to affective organizational commitment. Therefore we analyzed data from two different organizations to test the aforementioned hypotheses.

Method

Respondents

We collected data from two different organizations. The first organization is an organization that provides services for physical disabilities (n=593, response 38%). The second organization is a provider of telecommunication services (n=456, response 46%).

Measures

We used the OES for the measure of organizational efficacy, and affective organizational commitment was measured with the scale from De Gilder *et al.* (1996). For the assessment of *person-organization fit* in these two organizations, we used the single item scale used by Cable and Judge (1996). This single-item scale has proven to show identical results in predicting work outcomes as the three-item scale that has been used in the validation studies in the first phase (Cable and Judge, 1996).

Results

Table 3 displays the means, standard deviations and correlations of the three organizations. In order to test our hypotheses we conducted hierarchical multiple regression (see table 4). The independent variables were centered before analysis, in order to address multicollinearity (Aiken and West, 1991). We first controlled for age and tenure as the possibly relevant demographic variables from the respondents (cf. Meyer *et al.,* 2002, p. 28). For these data sets most control variables were non-significant (see step 1 in table 4), only age contributed significantly to the variance in the service organization ($t=4.1$, $p < .01$). Then, to test the hypotheses about main effects of organizational efficacy and person-organization fit regarding organizational commitment, we entered these variables in the second step. As can be seen in table 4, our hypotheses H1 and H2 were confirmed in both organizations, with (significant) Beta's of .23 and .35. Step 3 addressed the exploratory question whether an interaction between the two independent variables occurred. The data only partly supported the hypothesis H3 of the interaction effect of organizational efficacy and person-organization fit in predicting organizational commitment. For the service organization, only main effects contribute to organizational commitment. For the telecom organization, a statistically significant interaction effect did emerge, but the effect size of the interaction (ΔR^2) did not refer to a practically meaningful contribution (cf. Cohen, 1990).

Table 3. *Means, Standard Deviations, Reliabilities and Correlations of Organizational Efficacy, and Affective Organizational Commitment for the Two Organizations*

Variable	M	SD	1	2	3
Organization 1 – service					
1. Organizational efficacy	4.48	.99	(.83)		
2. Person-organization fit	5.02	1.05	.51	-	
3. Affective commitment	4.52	1.03	.38	.49	(.81)
Organization 2 – telecom					
1. Organizational efficacy	4.98	1.03	(.81)		
2. Person-organization fit	4.94	.71	.50	-	
3. Affective commitment	5.28	.87	. 45	.40	(.88)

Note. Scale reliabilities are on the diagonal. Person-organization fit was a single item measure. All correlations $p <.001$.

Table 4

Hierarchical Regression with Organizational Efficacy, Person Organization Fit and the Interaction as Predictors of Affective Organizational Commitment in Two Organizations

Predictor	***Affective Organizational Commitment***		
	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3
	Organization 1: service (n = 593)		
Age	$.24^3$	$.15^3$	$.15^3$
Tenure	.01	.07	.07
Person-organization fit		$.28^3$	$.30^3$
Organizational efficacy		$.27^3$	$.27^3$
Person-organization fit x Organizational efficacy			.03
F	19.71^3	55.99^3	44.83^3
R^2	.06	$.27^3$	$.27^3$
ΔR^2		$.21^3$	.00
	Organization 2: telecom (n=456)		
Age	.06	.03	.02
Tenure	.10	$.14^1$	$.15^3$
Person-organization fit		$.35^3$	$.38^3$
Organizational efficacy		$.23^3$	$.23^3$
Person-organization fit x Organizational efficacy			$.11^1$
F	4.40^1	41.66^3	34.80^3
R^2	.02	$.26^3$	$.27^3$
ΔR^2		$.25^3$	$.01^1$

Note: ^{1}p<.05; ^{2}p<.01; ^{3}p<.001

Discussion

The aim of our study was to gain insight in the extent to which organization members are led by organizational efficacy and fit perceptions to be committed to their organization. In this paper, we first introduced the concept of organizational efficacy and constructed a scale for its measurement. Organizational efficacy appeared to be a relevant and measurable construct in organizational contexts. The psychometric properties of the OES are adequate. The scale proved to be reliable, and the analyses provided initial support for its validity. Organizational efficacy, as measured by the OES, appeared to be a factorial distinctive construct, which behaves as theoretically assumed in predicting affective organizational commitment. The scale's properties were confirmed in two different types of organizations. Finally, in predicting affective organizational commitment, the OES outperforms an up-scaled collective efficacy scale.

Second, we examined the contribution of organizational efficacy and person-organization fit perceptions as antecedents of affective organizational commitment, both separate and in interaction. Bandura (2002) suggested that collective efficacy could be an antecedent of commitment. Previous studies already have shown that this applies to efficacy perceptions on the group level (Gibson *et al.,* 2000; Jex and Bliese, 1999; Walumbwa *et al.,* 2004). The results of this study indicate that this suggestion also holds true for efficacy on the organizational level. Both organizational efficacy and person-organization fit are relevant predictors of affective organizational commitment. The contribution of organizational efficacy is remarkably similar, at least in the organizations included in our research. In one of these organizations, person-organization fit and organizational efficacy interacted, but this effect has no practical significance. In all, referring to organizational commitment, employees will separately consider their own values fit and the abilities of their organization.

This is the first time that efficacy expectations were found to be of importance on this abstract level of the organization as a whole. All available collective efficacy research in organizational contexts focuses on the group level (e.g. Gibson *et al.,* 2000; Gully *et al.,* 2002; Walumbwa *et al.,* 2004). This group level is characterized by a limited number of actors, direct interaction possibilities between all group members involved, and relatively short feedback loops about the collective performance. Given these characteristics, it seems reasonable that group members develop group efficacy expectations and that these expectations are related to organization-relevant outcome variables, like commitment. The results of this study show that organization members also have perceptions about the efficacy of their organization, that they can reflect on it in a coherent fashion, and that these perceptions are relevant in the context of organizational commitment. Apparently, organization members do form an image of the organizational efficacy, despite its more abstract and wide-ranging nature. The evolvement of organizational efficacy and its relation to other levels of (collective) efficacy would be a promising topic for future research.

Given the contribution of employees' perceptions of person-organization fit and organizational efficacy, it is important for organizations to explore how these perceptions emerge, and how they can be influenced. With respect to person-organization fit, research has shown that both formal training and informal social interaction (in particular with a mentor) may play an important role (Chatman, 1989, 1991). Regarding the enhancement of organizational efficacy, it may be fruitful to build on insights gained in previous (self and collective) efficacy research. There are several information sources to enhance efficacy expectations (Bandura, 1997; Lent *et al.,* 1996), which can be distinguished in direct and indirect learning experiences (Anderson and Betz, 2001). Direct learning experiences are based on information provided on past successful performances (mastery experiences, cf. Goddard, 2001), encouraging communication (social persuasion) and emotional arousal. Indirect learning experiences are vicarious experiences, where skills are modelled by someone else. Both types of learning experiences are information-based, but information alone will not suffice, since "the impact of performance attainments on efficacy beliefs depends on what is made of those performances" (Bandura, 2002, p.81).

Organizations that seek to improve the organizational efficacy perceptions must inform employees about the collective performances, and help them to weigh and interpret these performances. Communication is essential, as overall performance indicators are not readily available to all employees, and it will be hard for employees to evaluate such indicators and understand their implications by themselves. This help can be given in several ways, two of which we would like to bring up here. First, we already mentioned transformational leadership as a possible way of improving organizational efficacy (cf. Densten, 2005; Sivasubramaniam *et al.* 2002; Walumbwa *et al.,* 2004), since a typical charismatic leader communicates positive evaluations and expresses confidence in the collective capacities (Shamir, House and Arthur, 1993). Second, a more individual approach that may further organizational efficacy is the use of mentoring in organizations. Note that the mentor also was mentioned in the recommendations for enhancing person-organization fit. Recently, Payne and Huffman (2005) investigated the impact of mentoring in organizations. They provided evidence for the idea that protégés of a mentor have higher levels of affective commitment than non-mentored employees. Their explanations for this effect fit well in the context of this paper, as they state that mentoring promotes the adoption of organization's values (cf. person-organization fit), that protégés have better stress management (cf. direct learning experiences through emotional arousal), and that mentors serve as role models (cf. indirect learning experiences). Aryee and Chay (1994) also reported evidence that commitment may be stronger for mentored employees compared to non-mentored employees.

Based on this study it can be proposed that a positive evaluation of organizational efficacy may be one of the building blocks of a healthy work environment. This conclusion may be linked to the Positive Organizational Behaviour School (Frederickson, 2001; Luthans, 2002; Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi, 2000; Wright, 2003). A central assumption of this school is a focus on positive attitudes that may improve morale, motivation, well-being and performance. The OES may help other researchers to investigate the processes that are related to organizational efficacy expectations, especially related to Positive Organizational Behaviour.

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Chapter 7

Direct and indirect effects of supervisor communication on organizational commitment

Mark van Vuuren, Menno D. T. de Jong & Erwin R. Seydel

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Abstract

Purpose – To gain insight in the contribution of organizational communication to perceptions, we investigated both direct and indirect relationships between supervisor communication and employees' affective organizational commitment. Regarding the indirect relationships, individual perceptions of person-organization fit and organizational efficacy were included in the model as mediators.

Design - A survey from a Dutch provider of telecommunication services (n=456) is analyzed on the relationships between communication, commitment and the proposed mediators, using regression analysis and a confirmatory structural equation model.

Findings - Both person-organization fit and organizational efficacy were found to partly mediate the main effects of communication and affective commitment. Following the test of mediation of fit and efficacy one by one, a test of the two mediators simultaneously in a confirmatory structural equation model led to a fitting model without any modifications. The most important aspects of communication between manager and employee turn out to be the feedback from the manager, followed by the notion of the manager listening to the employee.

Research implications/limitations – Given that the analyses are based on self-report in one organization, these results have to be handled cautiously.

Practical implications – Supervisor communication strengthens commitment via a clear view of which values are important, which goals are to be achieved, and how efficacious the organization has been in the past.

Value of the paper – The results show how communication - through the managers who are seen to represent the organization- can influence employees' perception of an organization.

Introduction

Whether one is committed to the view that communication is an important aspect of organizations (e.g. Daft, 2002; Rodwell *et al.*, 1998), or that organizations cannot exist without communication (e.g. Keyton, 2005) or even that communication *is* the organization (e.g. Taylor and Van Every, 2000), it is clear that communication has strong ties to the very core of organizational existence. Through communication, information is shared to provide a fundamental understanding of the tasks that are to be performed as well as the goals to which the organization is striving. Corporate communication provides opportunities to enact complex environments of an organization and shapes images of stakeholders, politics, opportunities and threats. Given the superordinate nature of organizational goals, members have to interact to be able to achieve the goals that are the reason for existence to the organization, and they define the organization accordingly. Therefore, Keyton (2005) defines organizational communication as 'a complex and continuous process through which organizational members create, maintain, and change the organization.' Managers have a central role in this process as they have a position to provide a bigger picture of the organization, the environment, competing values and preferences of stakeholders to other organization members (cf. Robson and Tourish, 2005). Subordinates and peers of managers then create meaning from those messages. The centrality of managers in the process suggests that there is a link between managerial communication and attitudes about the organization. When a manager fails to provide this bigger picture, for instance due to continuous physical absence or lack of skills, subordinates may loose sight on the organization and the goals may not be motivating.

While it is easy to show the harmful effects of poor managerial communication, it may be hard to pinpoint the positive consequences of managers with great communication skills. We suggest that one of the consequences of such behavior is the commitment of employees to the organization. Organizational commitment (Meyer and Allen, 1997) has been shown to be an attitude of great importance for organizations, as it refers to the attachment of individuals to an organization. Commitment leads to several attitudes and behaviors that are beneficial to the organization, like organizational citizenship behavior, and reduced absenteeism or turnover (Eby *et al.,* 1999; Tett and Meyer, 1993; Watson and Papamarcos, 2002). In this paper, the central aim is to study how employees' satisfaction with managerial communication relates to their organizational commitment. We will look for new bridges between communication and commitment. We will propose both direct and indirect relationships between communication and employees' affective organizational commitment (see figure 1). Regarding the indirect relationships, we will investigate to what extent individual perceptions of person-organization fit and organizational efficacy can be regarded as mediators between supervisor communication and organizational commitment.

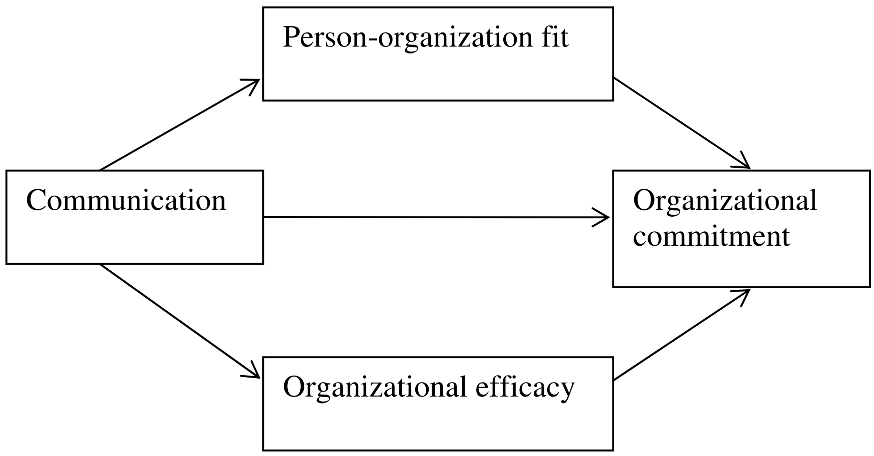

Figure 1. The proposed model of direct and indirect links between communication and commitment.

Communication and commitment

Perceptions and attitudes are important for individuals as they maneuver through organizational life (Cable and DeRue, 2002). A central attitude in organizational research is commitment, being a force that binds people to organizations (Meyer and Allen, 1997; Meyer and Herscovitch, 2001). Focus of research has been particularly on affective commitment, which refers to the intrinsic motivation of volunteers and their feelings about the organization (Meyer *et al.*, 1998). Communication has been linked to organizational commitment in several ways. Allen (1992), for example, found that, especially in organizations involved in total quality management, communication variables explained up to 59 percent of the variance in organizational commitment. De Ridder (2004) found task-related information to be an important antecedent of organizational commitment, while McDonald and Gandz (1991) suggested that commitment was especially important for the 'soft side' of the organization. Guzley (1992) proposed that especially attentiveness and perceptiveness were communicative predictors of organizational commitment. In their meta-analysis, Mathieu and Zajac (1990) showed the importance of leader communication for commitment, suggesting that "a supervisor who provides more accurate and timely types of communication enhances the work environment and thereby is likely to increase employees' commitment to the organization" (pp. 180). This is in line with the finding (Putti *et al.*, 1990) that communication relationship satisfaction enhances the individual's sense of membership of the organization. Studying the contribution of communication climate, Trombetta and Rogers (1988) found that openness and information adequacy predicted commitment, but participation in decision-making did not. Finally, Treadwell and Harrison (1994) suggested that images to which people commit themselves arise from communication, depending on specific context variables. As a starting-point, we therefore hypothesize a direct relationship between communication and commitment. To avoid that the results are only vague notions of general evaluations of organizational communication, we focus on the specific role of the supervisor as communicator. As one of the tasks of supervisors is to provide employees with a clear view of the work environment, we hypothesize:

> *H1 Satisfaction with supervisor communication contributes to employees' affective organizational commitment.*

In addition to the proposed direct relationship, communication is also considered to provide the foundation of employee attitudes (Rodwell *et al.*, 1998) and create the conditions for commitment (Postmes *et al.*, 2001). Several factors have been shown to mediate the relationship between communication and commitment, like procedural justice (Gopinath and Becker, 2000) and a psychological contract (Guest and Conway, 2002). Communication is then a means through which these perceptions and attitudes emerge (Robichaud *et al.*, 2005). In this paper, we investigate whether two other factors mediate the relationship between communication and commitment, i.e. person-organization fit (Kristof, 1996) and organizational efficacy (Chapter 6, this dissertation).

Person-organization fit as a mediator

Organizational values are important for organizations (Dose, 1997; Finegan, 2000). Parts of the images that individuals shape of organizations deal with the preferred behavior within the organization. This involves a wide array of topics, ranging from what cloths to wear on Friday, how careful the organizations possessions are to be handled, the sincerity and status of the CEO, the relative importance of customer satisfaction compared to the opportunities to gain money, to the strictness of lunch break times. People make sense of these topics by interacting and interpreting emerging events. This is one of the reasons why changing an organization's culture is so hard, as most of the values are taken for granted. In all, an image of 'the organization' emerges and some values are unveiled as preferred behaviors compared to opposite values (Rokeach, 1973). For this study, especially the perceived congruence between organizational values and individual values (person-organization fit; Chatman, 1989) seems relevant. The more an organization's identity matches the identity of the individual, the more this recognition may motivate members to cooperate in the daily routine and be flexible towards changes that are communicated as necessary by managers.

Several studies suggest that communication is able to influence the fit perceptions of employees. Kraimer (1997), for example, provided a framework of information-seeking by newcomers in order to get a grip of the place they have entered by joining this specific organization, for example through informally revealed impressions. At the same time, she proposes, organizations try to socialize those newcomers by shaping images of the organizations through formally orchestrated communication. Managerial communication that is evaluated as 'good' communication may help to sharpen the view of the things the organization values, thereby facilitating the perception of fit. For example, Chatman (1991) proposed that experiencing more social interaction would be associated with person-organization fit. This proposition was based on research findings that occupational socialization affects individual values (Mortimer and Lorence, 1979), and rigorous attempts by the organization to influence their members inspire individuals to think and act in accordance with organizational interests (Reichers, 1987). Kim, Cable and Kim (2005) showed that employees perceive greater value congruence with an organizational culture when 'a common message' is communicated about the values of the organization.

Person-organization fit, in turn, has been found to strengthen people's commitment. Meyer and Herscovitch (2001) conclude that shared values are a fundamental basis for affective commitment. Empirical studies confirm the link between person-organization fit and organizational commitment (e.g. Cable and DeRue, 2002; Van Vianen, 2000; Wasti, 2003). In all, making a convincing case and providing the organization's values coherently may in turn strengthen people's commitment towards the organization. Therefore we hypothesize:

> *H2 The relationship between supervisor communication and affective organizational commitment is mediated by perceived person-organization fit.*

Organizational efficacy as a mediator

One of the central roles of management is to motivate people towards reaching targets, goals and the organization's mission. This is often done through visions of 'excellence', 'pride' and 'satisfaction' looming at the horizon of the organization's efforts. To incorporate the perceptions of capabilities in our model, we borrow the concept of 'efficacy' from social learning theory (Bandura, 2002). Apart from self efficacy, Bandura suggests that various levels of collectivity may be subject to efficacy considerations, like "communities, organizations, social institutions and even nations" (2002, pp. 477). As organizations are the topic of our study, we propose that organizational efficacy (defined as an individual's perception of the general capabilities of an organization; see Chapter 6, this dissertation) will be important in this respect.

Efficacy declines when something is preached but not practiced. When high goals are set and they are reached after a period of hard work, this can be motivating (Collins and Porras, 1996). Perceived support given by the organization (Eisenberger *et al.*, 1986) and the supervisor (Eisenberger *et al.*, 2002) adds to the understanding of the relevance of work. As we perceive communication to be central in shaping the perceptions of the way an organization is effective and/or efficient in reaching its goals, we investigate organizational efficacy as a possible mediator. It helps to evaluate the relative importance of messages claiming 'being number 1' or aiming 'results beyond expectations'. Is this symbolic blabber that needs to be said for window-dressing purposes or is this really the focus and are profits gained when the goals are reached? Important aspects of an organization are evaluated by employees (for example the organization's ability to achieve goals, to develop new ideas and products, to be flexible, reliable and motivating). Communication is at the heart of these influences and may thereby influencing organizational efficacy.

In turn, "perceived collective efficacy is concerned with the performance capability of a social system. Beliefs of collective efficacy affect the sense of mission and purpose of a system, and the strength of common commitment to what it seeks to achieve" (Bandura, 2002, pp. 469). Efficacy expectations are thus supposed to influence commitment. Therefore we will study the contribution of communication to perceptions of organizational efficacy and the way communication finally helps to shape commitment.

H3 The relationship between supervisor communication and affective organizational commitment is mediated by perceived organizational efficacy

Design of the study

Respondents

We collected data from a Dutch provider of telecommunication services (n=456, response 46%). Due to considerations of statistical power, the response of at least 376 organization members was needed. Therefore, 1000 members were randomly selected and they received an email with a link to an online questionnaire. A total number of 456 respondents returned the survey (45.6%).

Measures

Supervisor communication. The scale that was constructed to measure satisfaction with communication of the manager stems from different sources that incorporate aspects of communication between manager and employee. First, the construct of perceived supervisor support (Eisenberger *et al.*, 2002) operationalizes the importance of a supportive relationship. Putti et al. (1990) also distinguish two-way communication as a relevant facet of supervisor communication, where a manager not only provides feedback, but also listens to employees. Third, the importance of information supply is stressed by the use of parts of another instrument (Postmes *et al.*, 2001), which reiterates feedback as a central construct in organizational communication. Further, research on charismatic leadership shows that communicating the vision of an organization is an important task of leaders (Kirkpatrick and Locke, 1996). Finally, De Ridder (2004) shows the importance of trust for supportive employees. Together, these items (see Appendix A for an overview) cover a range of topics that may be important for efficacy, values and commitment.

Person-organization fit. We used the single-item scale used by Cable and Judge (1996). This single-item scale has proven to show identical results in predicting work outcomes as the three-item scale that has been used in the validation studies in the first phase (Cable and Judge, 1996).

Organizational commitment. We measured affective organizational commitment with use of a Dutch translation (De Gilder *et al.*, 1997) of Meyer and Allen's (1997) five-item Affective Organizational Commitment scale.

Organizational Efficacy perceptions. We measured Organizational efficacy by using the Organizational Efficacy Scale (see Chapter 6, this dissertation), consisting of seven items like "I think [name organization] is able to offer excellent services to his clients".

All variables were measured in Dutch, using a seven-point Likert scale (ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree").

Analysis

To provide specific recommendations for enhancing commitment through communication, we also wanted to know which aspects of communication were most important for the overall evaluation of communication. Therefore we used the "Overall, I am satisfied with the communication with my manager"- item as the dependent variable in a stepwise linear regression with the other items as possible predictors. There is a problem with this way of dealing with the scale, as multicollinearity is to be expected as the independent variables are components of the same scale. From this point of view, the absence of multicollinearity among the items is considered to be a problem as the items are supposed to correlate! Of course, this is normally not called 'multicollinearity' but reliability, and is intentional and desirable. Given the alpha for this scale (.94), collinearity is to be expected and as we used a stepwise regression, this homogeneity of the independent variables could be problematic. To find a cutoff point we checked two collinearity statistics, i.e. the tolerance/VIF (Fox, 1991) and the condition index (Belsley *et al.*, 1980). The tolerance (a variance inflation factor) will approach zero when the intercorrelation of the independent variables becomes higher, and .20 is an indication of multicollinearity problems. The VIF, the reciprocal of tolerance, also has a rule of thumb criterion (VIF > 4) for deciding when multicollinearity of a particular independent becomes problematic. The condition index captures the square roots of the ratios of the largest eigenvalue to each successive eigenvalue. Belsley (1991) states that the choice of the threshold is 'somewhat of an art-form' (38) and should not be seen as a classical significance level. A condition index greater than 15 indicates a possible problem and an index greater than 30 suggests a serious problem with collinearity has emerged as a rule of thumb. We will therefore take 15 as the threshold, knowing that collinearity will emerge as these items are supposed to be part of the same scale. To test the mediation hypotheses (H2 and H3), we used the procedure proposed by Baron and Kenny (1986) for tests of mediation, including Sobel's test. Therefore, the mediators will be evaluated separately. Finally, we will test the complete model using a confirmatory structural equation model.

Results

As can be seen from the descriptive statistics (see table 1), the reliabilities of the scales are good (>.80). Because person-organization fit was measured with a single item scale, there is no reliability to report.

Table 1

Descriptives and correlations of the constructs

	M	**Sd**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
Communication	3.76	.70	(.95)			
Person-organization fit	3.56	.82	.37	(-)		
Organizational efficacy	3.53	.51	.48	.52	(.81)	
Organizational commitment	3.78	.62	.39	.45	.40	(.84)

Note. Reliabilities (Cronbach's alpha) of the scales appear on the diagonal.

To see which aspects of managerial communication contributed most to the overall satisfaction of the respondents, we conducted a hierarchical multiple regression analysis on the communication scale. The results are reported in table 2. While the tolerance and VIF are not problematic, the condition index indicates that the results after the second variable may be spurious. While other items also predicted overall managerial communication satisfaction significantly (e.g. trust in manager, communicating the vision of the organization) and the tolerance/VIF did not unveil collinearity problems, the Condition Index exceeded the threshold suggesting collinearity problems. Although conservative, we will only consider the first two steps in the stepwise regression as reliable outcomes. This leads to the conclusion that the most important factor turns out to be the feedback from the manager, followed by the notion of the manager listening to the employee.

Table 2

Items predicting: Overall, I am satisfied with the communication with my manager

	R^2 (Adj.)	ΔR^2	ΔF	Tol (min)	VIF (max)	Ci (max)
I am content with the feedback I receive from my manager	.62	.62	736.9	1.00	1.00	8.4
My manager takes time to listen to me	.70	.08	130.7	.45	2.2	14.4
I trust my manager	.74	.04	60.3	.37	2.7	17.1
My manager communicates the vision of [name organization]	.76	.02	39.4	.34	2.9	19.2
I experience a distance between me and my manager	.77	.01	16.4	.34	3.0	21.1
My manager keeps me informed about important issues in the organization	.77	.00	10.6	.29	3.5	24.3
My manager values my contribution	.77	.00	7.8	.28	3.6	26.0

The results of the test for direct and indirect effects of communication on commitment are shown in table 3. In the first step, a significant direct effect of communication satisfaction on commitment is found (Beta .39, R^2=.15, $p<.01$), thereby confirming

Hypothesis 1. In a second step, person-organization fit and organizational efficacy are entered separately to the model to see whether these perceptions mediated between managers' communication satisfaction and commitment. As can be seen in table 3 both person-organization fit and organizational efficacy are found to partly mediate the relationship between communication and commitment. Testing the two mediators simultaneously in a confirmatory structural equation model led to a fitting model without any modifications (df=132, Chi^2=400; GFI=.91; TLI=.92; RMSEA=.06).

Table 3

Person-organization fit mediating communication satisfaction and affective commitment

	B	**SE**	**Beta**	**Adj. R^2**
Step1				
Communication satisfaction	.35	.04	.39	.15
Step 2				
Communication satisfaction	.23	.04	.26	
Person-organization fit	.27	.03	.36	.26 (ΔR^2 =.1)
Sobel test:	5.20			

Organizational efficacy mediating communication satisfaction and affective commitment

	B	**SE**	**Beta**	**R^2**
Step1				
Communication satisfaction	.35	.04	.39	.15*
Step 2				
Communication satisfaction	.23	.04	.25	
Organizational efficacy	.35	.06	.29	.21(ΔR^2 =.06)
Sobel test:	6.24			

Note. All results p<.001

Discussion

Organizational communication is regarded as a means to create conditions for commitment (Postmes *et al.*, 2001). Other studies have shown the importance of communication for perceptions of jobs, work units, and supervisors. Macro attitudes are sedimented in organizations through all kinds of micro interactions in everyday organizational life (cf. Boden, 1994). Managers are believed to speak for the organization and represent it (Robichaud *et al.*, 2004; Wiley, 1988). It is already known that supervisor behavior may lead to commitment to the supervisor (Stinglhamber and Vandenberghe, 2003). In this study, we linked supervisor communication to a central attitude in organizational research, i.e. affective organizational commitment. We showed that communication can influence employees' perception of an organization, through the managers who are seen to represent the organization. Especially, the interaction is important in the relationship, as can be derived from the finding that satisfaction with feedback and the manager as the listener in a communicative relationship were found to make a relationship be satisfactory. The quality of the dyad thus is important for the individual's perceptions (cf. Rodwell *et al.*, 1998). Communication strengthens commitment via a clear view of which values are important, which goals are to be achieved, and how efficacious the organization has been in the past.

This study adds to our knowledge on organizational functioning in several ways. First, it reiterates the importance of organizational communication (via managers) for organizational attitudes. Given the importance of accountability in organizations, the results of communication efforts are to be clarified in order to show how something as intangible as interaction is a key factor in organizational success. Thus linking a satisfying communicative relationship between the manager and an employee to well-known attitudes and perceptions like person-organization fit and commitment can underline the contribution of communication to organizations. Further, the satisfaction with this relationship influences the second mediator investigated in this study, i.e. organizational efficacy. This is reasonable, as feedback on past performance has been found to strengthen efficacy perceptions (Bandura, 2002). A positive evaluation of managerial communication –including both giving feedback and listening- may help employees to get an accurate picture of the strengths and weaknesses of the organization. Such a clear view can be helpful in evaluating the core competences of the organization in terms of organizational efficacy.

Practical implications

The direct and indirect contribution of communication to commitment underlines the importance of supervisor communication to organizational functioning. The effect of communication to fit and efficacy perceptions reiterates the role of interactions between managers and employees, because sense of direction, motivation and competence are important to them.

For managers, it is well-known that the attitudes of their members are important for well-being and performance. But to get a grip on the processes that lead to perceptions is a tough journey. In this study, we have shown that communication leads to a central attitude, commitment. Hence, we have bridged the gap between daily interactions and the intangible attitudes by showing that listening and giving feedback are key activities in enhancing commitment. This process is explained through the partial mediation of a clear view on what is perceived as what the organization stands for (value fit) and what it is able to achieve (efficacy).

For feedback, this implies that behavior of employees is explicitly related to the values of the organization. Top management could support these conversations by discussing the values of the organization in order to establish them. This provides clear backing for middle managers to discuss behavior of employees. Regarding the importance of listening, one has to reckon with the option that this feedback also works the other way around. Managers are responsible to show how the organizational values are to be practices. If they do not act in line with the values, they have to be open to corrections. Further, listening and feedback about efficacy also involves openness. While quick wins and positive stories are easier to communicate, to help members craft accurate efficacy perceptions also bad news has to be told and listened to. In all, shaping an image of the organization through communication helps people to stay involved. But -as always- daily practice, political agendas and personal gains will distort these ideological propositions.

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Appendix A

The scale for satisfaction with supervisor communication consists of the following items.

1. Overall, I am satisfied with the communication with my manager
2. My manager communicates the vision of [name organization]
3. My manager takes time to listen to me
4. My manager values my contribution
5. My manager is honest to me in his/her communication
6. My manager shares personal (work)experiences with me
7. I trust my manager
8. My manager keeps me informed about important issues in the organization
9. I experience a distance between me and my manager
10. I receive clear information from my manager about the task I am assigned to
11. My manager provides information about the targets of our team
12. I am content with the feedback I receive from my manager

Chapter 8

General discussion

Mark van Vuuren

So, why work? The previous chapters reported the findings of the different parts of the project, and discussed the insights that emerged. This general discussion will first discuss the overall findings in relation to the main questions, returning to the themes that were presented in the introduction as emerging and ongoing debates in the literature. Second, it will discuss the socio-psychological approach to communication in this project in the context of the meta-theoretical framework of communication traditions (Craig, 1999). Finally, it elaborates on future research in this field, and suggests how the insights gained during the project could be used to study why people work in organizations.

Discussion of general findings

The main aim of this project was to investigate whether competence and motivation contribute to commitment. In short, the results of our studies indicate that both competence (Chapters 5 & 6) and motivation (Chapters 2, 4 & 6) contribute to commitment. Furthermore, (supervisor) communication is important for commitment (Chapter 7), and both person-organization fit and organizational efficacy partly mediate this relationship.

Given these results, some reflections are in order as competence, motivation, and commitment did not turn out to be as straightforwardly related as was expected at the start of the project. Given the insights that have emerged during this project, let us return to the issues raised in Chapter 1 regarding the main discussions in the literature on organizational research.

Main and congruence effects of values on commitment

In Chapter 1, several studies were mentioned which have reported the absence of congruence effects in favor of main effects of values. At several stages of this project, we found evidence that both values and value congruence contribute to commitment – but the link between values and value congruence was more delicate than expected.

Individual perceptions of organizational values showed an effect on affective and normative commitment at both the organizational and the occupational level (Chapter 2). Several studies using this multi-staged method have reported the importance of main effects instead of congruence effects (e.g., Abbott et al., 2005; Kalliath et al., 1999; Vandenberghe & Peiró, 1999; see e.g. Van Vianen, 2000 for the confirmation of congruence hypotheses). Our study replicated these findings, considering the absence of congruence effects assessed as actual (or indirect) fit. It seems that Edwards' (1994) plea for polynomial regression analysis has had an unexpected side effect, unveiling the importance of main effects of organizational and individual values instead of congruence. In their model, Meyer and Herscovitch (2001) stated that shared values are the basis for (affective) commitment, but when assessing actual value congruence this effect could not be established.

It has been suggested that indirect and direct value congruence are two conceptually different phenomena (Cable & Judge, 1996, 1997; Kristof, 1996; Kristof et al., 2005; Ostroff et al., 2005). Chapter 3 considers this possibility, as it is important to know what specific perceptions of 'fit' are related to commitment. When fit was measured as perception (i.e., direct assessment), person-organization fit turned out to be relevant to commitment. Data from volunteers and paid workers (Chapter 4) on the contribution of perceived person-organization fit to affective commitment, for example, showed a strong link between values and the commitment of volunteers. It was already known that volunteers often show higher levels of affective commitment than paid workers (e.g., Catano et al., 2001; Clary et al. 1998; Wilson & Pimm, 1996), but this strong link with (perceived) person-organization fit had not been established before.

So, on the one hand, our research confirms the relation between organizational values and commitment. This adds to the body of research that shows the importance of main effects of values, thereby casting doubt on the existence of congruence effects (Abbott et al., 2005; Kalliath et al., 1999; Vandenberghe & Peiró, 1999). The increasing interest in organizational values per se is a positive development, and in line with findings that emphasize their importance. The fact that managers can (sometimes) influence employees' commitment by explicating the values of their organization, underlines the importance potential of different strategies to communicate those values.

On the other hand, the results on the expected effects of congruence on commitment are confusing, though this is countered by the results of direct assessment of fit. Interestingly, this distinction appeared in the introduction as the difference between indirect and direct congruence measures. It seems that the discussion of fit measures and that about main and combined effects of fit are intertwined: the lack of empirical support for the theory that commitment is based on shared values may be due to a spurious assessment of congruence as actual fit. Assessing congruence using perceived fit is less problematic, partly because both fit and commitment are considered perceptions in that case.

Indirect and direct measures of congruence

Chapter 3 showed some interesting aspects of comparing the distinction between indirect (actual) and direct (perceived) fit. Most importantly, we found that the difficulty comparing the two fit measures may be imputed to the measurement of actual fit. The operationalization of values may explain the absence of congruence in actual fit research.

In Chapters 2 and 3 it was suggested that the operationalization of values may be flawed, thereby obscuring the real effects of individual values and congruence to commitment. In order to test this, we compared actual and perceived fit by linking indirect and direct measures of fit, using polynomial regression techniques (Chapter 3). The results reiterate the importance of value patterns (like the Competing Values Framework) instead of an ad hoc ranking of related values. The importance of specific human relations values predicted perceived fit best for both organizations (cf. Kalliath et al., 1999; Vandenberghe & Peiró, 1999). In the CVF's human relations model, there is a strong emphasis on human resources and training, focusing on cohesion and morale. The model underlines the importance of information sharing and participative decision making. It is likely that when respondents are asked to give a direct measure of value congruence, they think of typically human values, ethical or moral, and neglect values like stability and innovation, which are less obviously "values."

The common way of operationalizing individual values related to work is to ask individuals to imagine the "ideal organization." Reframing individual values to organization’s culture is an option, but only when individual choices are included in the operationalization to avoid skewed answers. Chapter 3 also discussed how individual values have tended to score higher (and have smaller standard deviations) than organizational values in previous studies. Given the high means and low standard deviations in the assessment of individual values in several studies (see Chapter 3, Table 3 for an overview), finding congruence effects is unlikely, as the congruence should stem from comparison of a measure (i.e., organizational values) with a constant variable (i.e., individual values). Since individual values are considered vital for attitudes and behavior (Judge & Kristof-Brown, 2004), the construct of congruence seems highly unlikely. Consequently, it was suggested in Chapter 3 that the lack of effects is primarily due to the operationalization of individual values, and this operationalization should therefore be reconsidered. Congruence studies should not operationalize individual values as “preference for an organizational culture” (e.g., O’Reilly et al., 1991; Van Vianen, 2000; and as was done in Chapters 2 and 3), as this fails to consider the possibility that a value may be chosen because it is preferable to an *opposite* value. Values are by definition important, so asking whether or not values are preferred seems to be the wrong question – values *are* values because they are preferred. If one asks whether values are preferred without giving a forced choice one can expect ceiling effects.

Meglino and Ravlin (1998) compared normative assessment of values (measuring values independently from each other) and ipsative measures (assessing preferences between different values). They propose that normative assessment is most appropriate when the aim of a study is to understand a respondent’s P-O fit, but there are serious questions about this conclusion. Though Meglino and Ravlin (1998) warn of social desirability tendencies, they seem to underestimate the problem of normativity in value studies. The alternative – using ipsative measures- avoids this problem, as values are considered important by definition, and participants are forced to choose between options that are per se valuable. Of course, ipsative measurement of values has also been criticized methodologically (e.g., Edwards & Parry, 1993). But the decisive advantage of using ipsative meaures is that it forces choices to be made, yielding an ordering of values based on importance. As Meglino and Ravlin (1998) state, "[ipsative measures] … are believed to duplicate the way values are cognitively held by individuals" (p. 360).

Ipsative measures should therefore better reflect actual organizational conditions, where employees are forced to make choices all the time.

In all, fit research may treat different values differently. We studied different foci and dimensions of commitment (Chapter 2), compared actual and perceived fit (Chapter 3), and checked for differences between different target groups (paid and unpaid workers, Chapter 4). It seems we should differentiate which specific values refer to specific commitments. Values in general can not be expected to contribute evenly to commitment, so combining them underestimates the power of specific values on distinct commitments.

Besides, the questions underlying this research project deal with the links between distinct perceptions of individual organization members. This kind of research approach has been criticized for implying causality. It seems logical that some perceptions *contribute* to other perceptions, which explains why effect sizes have been reported (e.g., Cohen's D, Eta^2, R^2) (Cohen, 1990). This explicit notion of c*ontribution* is important, allowing us to exclude alternative –yet more extreme- interpretations. *Causality* can not be claimed, as our findings are not necessarily the only causes in the process; this is due to the nature of the data (self report, cross-sectional) and the use of survey research designs. Despite this, *correlation* is does not adequately explain the relationship, as it reduces it to links without any necessary direction. Both theory and research support this explanation of the relationships between the investigated variables. As the aim of this project was to understand the contributions of a set of variables to others in a process, most of the studies used regression analysis to indicate the direction of the contributions. This process inference (Hayes, 2005) focuses on estimating the effect size than on "determining whether a prediction the theory makes about what should happen in a study actually does happen" (p. 41).

Main and combined effects of efficacy expectations on commitment

Bandura (2002) suggested that efficacy perceptions should be apparent for collectives (groups, units, organizations and nations) and that collective efficacy could be an antecedent of commitment. Empirical research on collective efficacy and commitment has been limited to groups and teams (e.g., Gibson et al., 2000; Jex and Bliese, 1999; Walumbwa et al., 2004). To explore organizational efficacy as a new unit of efficacy analysis, we constructed and validated a scale to assess organizational efficacy, which showed interesting results in its predictive (Chapter 6) and mediating (Chapter 7) power. An attempt to validate the scale (Chapter 5) yielded mixed results, as organizational efficacy proved to have stronger effects than self-efficacy on affective, normative and continuance commitment. Testing for interaction using moderated multiple regression did not reveal any interaction between the two types of efficacy. So, organizational efficacy appeared to be a relevant and measurable construct in organizational contexts. This is the first time that efficacy expectations were found to be important on the level of the organization as a whole. On a group level, efficacy is characterized by a limited number of actors, direct interaction possibilities between all group members, and relatively short feedback loops. These results show that organization members also have perceptions about the efficacy of their organization, that they can reflect on it in a coherent fashion, and that these perceptions are relevant to commitment. Apparently, organization members do form an image of organizational efficacy, despite its more abstract and wide-ranging nature.

As mentioned in the introduction, measures used to generalize efficacy (like the OES) are not undisputed, as there is a question what level of generalizability is possible. Bandura (2002) is part of the state-camp, stating that measures dissociated from contextual factors and clearly defined activities are meaningless, since they contradict the basic assumption of the multidimensionality of self-efficacy beliefs. His alternative is to use microanalytic approaches that are sensitive to the diversity of human abilities (see, for example, Bandura 1995), but this leads to self-efficacy scales that are hard to use, and to organizational efficacy scales that are unusable. As described in Chapter 6, measurement of organizational efficacy requires individual estimations of broadly defined organizational efficacy (without aggregating the scores). Traits can be defined as "dimensions of individual differences that show consistent patterns of thought, feelings, and actions" (McCrae & Costa, 1990, p. 23).It seems clear that efficacy traits can be applied to the study of organizations. Given the single-factor results of the general terms that were used to operationalize organizational efficacy, we found that employees consider the efficacy of the organization in general terms as has been found in previous trait research (e.g., Bosscher & Smit, 1998; Chen, et al., 2000; Eden, 1996; Gardner & Pierce, 1998; Judge & Bono, 2001; Judge, Erez et al., 1998; Judgeet al., 2002; Judge, Lockeet al., 1998). Of course, efficacy can be regarded as a state, given the mass of empirical findings for its context-bound expectations (see Bandura, 2002, for an overview). However, especially for higher-level efficacy expectations (for example with organizations and nations), it seems reasonable to evaluate previous success and failure in general terms (Riggs & Knight, 1994), leading to a general perception of the organization as a relatively stable trait. Other evaluations of an organization, like dimensions of reputation (Fombrun, 1996), are also generalized when people decide whether to trust an organization or not. It seems that the generality-dimension of social learning theory (Bandura, 2002) is important to understand individual's efficacy expectations about larger collectives, as it is harder to identify specific items than to evaluate overall performance.

As with individual values (Chapters 2 and 3), the measurement of self-efficacy was skewed (Chapter 5). The difficulty assessing these constructs makes it hard to confirm the proposed interactions in this project (i.e., organizational values x individual values; organizational efficacy x self-efficacy). This is not entirely surprising, as both individual values and self-efficacy refer to evaluations of the self instead of perceptions about others (or the self in relation to others). Self report bias may emerge here, and negative skewness of self-efficacy scores has been consistently found (Forsyth and Carey, 1998), suggesting that people may respond in socially desirable ways when evaluating their own capabilities. For example, Wang and Netemeyer (2002) reported a mean self-efficacy score of 6.35 among marketing managers (using seven-point Likert scales, SD=.66). A certain level of variance is essential to find the effects of variables, and if this variance is absent the construct may become irrelevant. In such a sensitive context as an organization, individuals may not dare to admit a lack of skills. As a consequence, other methods are needed to assess these measures: for individual values, a rank-ordering of values was proposed (Chapter 3), as this incorporates the ipsative nature of values. For self-efficacy, specific qualitative measurement techniques were proposed (Chapter 5), as these are better suited to explore the contribution of employees' self-efficacy, and, perhaps, its interplay with organizational efficacy. Bauer and Bonanno (2001) used semi-structured interviews to find cues of self-efficacy, using life story narratives. This may help to measure self-efficacy in a natural context, and could be a promising approach to evaluating such a delicate subject as self-efficacy in organizational contexts.

Multidimensionality of commitment

This project established the contributions of self-efficacy (Chapter 5), organizational efficacy (Chapters 5, 6 and 7), organizational values (Chapter 2), person-organization fit (Chapters 4, 6 and 7) and satisfaction of supervisor's communication (Chapter 7) to commitment. The project also provided insight into another topic that has caused major debate in the field: the multidimensionality of commitment, proposed by Meyer and Allen (1997).

Affective and normative commitment

The distinctness of affective and normative dimensions of commitment is disputed. The distinction has been questioned because of the similarity of the two dimensions' antecedents, correlates and consequences (Iverson & Buttigieg, 1999; Meyer et al., 2002), although it is agreed that the strength of the effects differs between the dimensions. Jaros (1997) conceptualizes normative commitment as a special category of attachment-related emotions (feelings of obligation), which contrast with the more general emotional attachment to the organization reflected by affective commitment. This suggests that normative commitment only includes one aspect of affective commitment, in line with the distinction made by Meyer et al. (1998) between "transactional" normative commitment, stemming from perceived reciprocity, and "relational" affective commitment. According to this interpretation, normative commitment is rather calculative, while the similarity between affective and normative stresses the attitudinal nature of the commitments, in contrast to the calculative continuance commitment (e.g., Brown, 1996). When regarded as attitudinal commitments, affective and normative commitment are depicted as fostering motivation in different ways. Using self-determination theory as a frame of reference (Meyer et al., 2004), affective commitment can be seen as intrinsic motivation while normative commitment is a form of extrinsic motivation, i.e. introjected regulation. Testing the proposition that both affective and normative commitment are value-based, but that the values differ (Chapter 2), we found affective commitment was related to the flexibility pole of the CVF, and normative commitment to the stability pole. This indicates not only that the CVF is relevant in both the contexts of dimensions and foci of commitment (see Chapter 2), but it also supports the suggestion that the two attitudinal commitments are conceptually different.

Normative commitment has attracted less attention than affective and continuance commitment. While studying the commitment profiles of volunteers and paid workers in some detail (Chapter 4), we found an interesting aspect of motivation that has not yet been linked to normative commitment: the motivational shifts during the life span (Erickson, 1994). Following existing literature on the principle of reciprocity (Dabos & Rousseau, 2004), our initial hypothesis was that paid workers would have more normative commitment than volunteers. Omoto, Snyder and Martino (2000) found that older non-paid workers were motivated to volunteer to fulfill an obligation or a commitment to society, whereas younger volunteers were primarily looking for satisfying interpersonal relationships. The volunteers in the service organization we studied are relatively old and reported significantly stronger normative commitment than paid workers, perhaps because the tasks that were available in this organization appealed to the social responsibility of older volunteers. Assuming that older volunteers are more influenced by normative considerations and loyalty than younger ones, it appears logical that they report higher levels of normative commitment than paid workers in the same organization. Omoto et al.'s (2000) theory may explain the correlation between age and normative commitment which we found (Chapter 4; cf. Meyer et al., 2002). To our knowledge, this is a new explanation for normative commitment that has not been reported before.

Continuance commitment

The question whether "continuance commitment" really is a form of commitment applies to both sub-dimensions of continuance commitment (Bentein et al., 2005): the perceived sacrifice associated with leaving (high-sacrifice commitment), and the costs resulting from a lack of employment alternatives (low-alternatives commitment). For high-sacrifice commitment, the main question is whether maintaining membership because of the perceived costs of not keeping the commitment (Brown, 1996) involves a psychological bond. To refer to low-alternatives as a kind of commitment is questionable, because the perceived lack of alternatives is an observation rather than an attitude (Abbott et al., 2005; Swailes, 2002; Virtanen, 2000). If commitment is restricted to attitudes, continuance commitment should not be regarded as a commitment, and this is why continuance commitment was not incorporated in Chapter 2. If behavioral aspects of commitment are considered, however, continuance commitment adds to our understanding of commitment (see Chapter 5).

Commitment and identification

A concept closely related to commitment is identification (Ashforth & Mael, 1989). The foci used in commitment research can even be found in identification research: e.g., organizational commitment and organizational identification, or occupational commitment and professional identification (cf. Van Dick et al., 2004). Empirically, there is substantial overlap between the constructs, as metareviews have shown: Fontenot and Scott (2000) found an estimated correlation of .70, and Riketta (2005) reported a correlation of .78 of attitudinal organizational commitment and organizational identification (shared overlap: 62%). The conceptual similarities and distinctions of the two constructs have been extensively discussed by several eminent scholars (e.g., Bartels, 2006; Cheney and Tompkins (1987); Gautam, Van Dick & Wagner, 2004; Harris & Cameron, 2005). Van Dick et al. (2004) proposed a broader conceptualization of identification with several dimensions, including cognitive, affective, evaluative and behavioral identification. By incorporating these dimensions, especially the behavioral dimension, the overlap between commitment and identification increases even more, although Van Dick et al. (2004) still propose treating the concepts differently. First, commitment is seen as more stable than identification, and second, the concepts are seen as stemming from different sources (pp. 185-186). In a review, Edwards (2005) views Van Dick et al.'s broader definition as problematic and separates the constructs, limiting identification to an individual's subjective state, while commitment includes "certain psychological states," (p.219) over and above the subjective state of identifying with the organization.

Given the overwhelming commonality of the two concepts, there may be an underlying construct, like a positive evaluation of attachment, from which both commitment and identification tap. In his plea for clarity in personality research, Block (1995) argued that such discussions waste scientific time and "prevent the recognition of correspondences that could help build cumulative knowledge" (p. 210). Similarly, I think we should lump the two concepts together (cf. Cronbach, 1956) and proceed to "build cumulative knowledge." The main reason for combining commitment and identification is given by Postmes et al. (2001) – although they acknowledge the differences between the disciplines from which they stem *for all practical purposes,* the terms identification and (affective) commitment can be used interchangeably. Since Van Dick et al. (2004) showed the usefulness of broader definition of identification, the two concepts are too similar to stay apart.

An evaluation of the sociopsychological approach to communication

This research project was aimed to make a theoretical contribution to commitment literature. Thorngate (1976) showed a major problem with theory building: although academics and practitioners are in need of theory that is generalizable, simple and accurate, it is impossible to satisfy these three needs at the same time (cf. Weick, 1979): A general and simple theory is inaccurate, while an accurate and general theory would be highly complex. If a theory is both simple and accurate, it would no longer be generalizable and "medical researchers would never move beyond white rats" (Wells, 2001, p. 495). Aiming to generalize process inferences (Hayes, 2005; Mook, 1983) and suggest the direction of the relationships based on theoretical considerations and previous research, this project took a quantitative approach in line with the socio-psychological tradition (see Chapter 1). One of the drawbacks of the socio-psychological tradition, however, is its limited predictive power (Craig, 1999). The results in Chapter 7 support our idea that organizational communication does influence commitment, and that commitment is mediated by motivation and competence, but the predictive power of these studies is limited. This may be due to the irrationality of human beings and the complexity of communication processes, giving the socio-psychological variables innumerable antecedents, correlates, and consequences. This probably explains why socio-psychological scholars reach for alternative explanations of communication and behavior that come from other academic traditions. As a result of this tendency, I expect that socio-psychological scholars in particular will be open for meta-theoretical conversations and "give war a chance" (Weick, 1999a, p. 797*)*. To understand what the findings from this project can teach us, let us reflect on the concept of communication used in this project, and compare it with other conceptualizations used in several contrasting "traditions" of communication research.

Reflections from other traditions

The diversity of traditions from which scholars have come to the field of communications and the multitude of topics ready for examination has inevitably led to a plurality of perspectives, disciplines and paradigms, which are more or less integrated in the field (Craig, 2003). But as an intellectual tradition, communication "remains radically heterogeneous and largely derivative" (Craig, 2003, p.4).

To facilitate meta-theoretical discussions about communication, Craig (1999) composed an outline of the field by studying different conceptual vocabularies, conceptual models, explanations and principles that are used in communication science. He identified seven traditions: rhetorical, semiotic, phenomenological, cybernetic, socio-psychological, socio-cultural, and critical. Of course these are instrumental constructs rather than essential categories. Craig (2001) used these labels to arrange "metadiscursive commonplaces" (p. 231), and identified differences as well as possible topics of conversation between the traditions. Multi-languaging (Putnam, 2001) may provide a vocabulary for this discussion, and we will use this set of paradigms to reflect on the strengths and weaknesses of our design.

Given the aim of this study and the instruments that were used, it becomes clear that it has to be assigned to the socio-psychological tradition. Craig (1999) states that the problems of communication in the socio-psychological tradition are theorized as "situations requiring manipulation of causes of behavior to achieve specified outcomes" (p. 133). In order to achieve these outcomes, the focus was aimed at perceptions and attitudes that are believed to influence the dependent variable, organizational commitment. The irrationality of human beings and the complexity of communication processes produce innumerable antecedents, correlates, and consequences of socio-psychological variables. Given these considerations and the linearity of our model, it would be interesting to view this project from the perspective of the other traditions. After describing the essence of the traditions as delineated by Craig (1999), I will therefore discuss one or more aspects of the project from the perspective of the each tradition[1].

Rhetorical tradition

a summary of the basic ideas.

Rhetorical theory is interested in the artful use of discourse to persuade an audience. Here words are instrumental, appealing to the common experience that communication affects people, changing an audience's opinions, raising desires, motivating groups, and binding people together. While listening to a speaker, we may be influenced by his or her words, convinced they sound reasonable, even correct. Rhetorical theory is aimed at understanding how words influence people, but more as a

[1] I have to admit that some traditions (especially the critical and semiotic) may be suspicious about the whole idea of mapping the field (Craig, 1999) and multi-languaging (Putnam, 2001). The critical tradition can address the political agenda at the basis of this reflexivity. Looking for common ground in organizational communication, the critical perspective warns against the "extorted reconciliation that can easily accompany efforts to find a common voice with which to speak" (Mumby, 2000, p. 69). Taken together with the aforementioned risk of a caricature of traditions and possible vilification (Miller, 2000) of other approaches, the outcome could easily become a new hegemony. Similarly, the semiotic tradition seems to be very sceptical about the possibilities of multi-languaging. A focus on the personal interpretation of signs and symbols makes it hard to believe that "a lot of translation" (Czarniawska, 1998, p. 273) really is a viable option, due to the risk of misunderstanding. Second, the traditions are not only perspectives, but are also ethically charged. Knowing this, a new problem arises. Corman (2000) cites Gergen (1991, p. 77) on the problem of beliefs and values that people from a certain tradition hold dear and take very seriously: "no one value in itself recognizes the importance of any alternative value…. Each voice of value stands to discredit all that does not meet its standard" (pp. 3-4).

practical matter than a theoretical one (the Latin Quintilian viewed rhetoric as more *praktike* than *theoretike (II.18)*).

reflection: rhetorical.

Regarding the organization's primary concern to motivate its members, rhetorical tradition would focus on the way communication motivates people. The persuasive power of words is evident in organizational communication, and organizations convey their image through communication. Where our studies focused on attitudes, rhetorical traditions would investigate the actual messages that shaped these attitudes. One of our scales evaluated the perceptions of leadership communication in terms of reliability, motivation and solidarity. For Quintilian, this kind of evaluation would be too abstract, and he would call for the situation to be analyzed, to explain why motivation and persuasion are needed. We did not pay specific attention to the composition of organizational communication in terms of invention, arrangement, style, or delivery. By addressing more general attitudes, we were unable to address the *praktike* of organizational communication, and would not be able to offer practical recommendations in this context.

It may also be interesting to look at the concept of manipulation as a bridge between the rhetorical and the socio-psychological tradition. Both traditions consider that the causes of behavior need to be manipulated. In rhetoric, manipulation refers to the message, whereas in socio-psychology refers to the attitudes of organization members.

Semiotic tradition

a summary of the basic ideas.

Communication is the intersubjective mediation by signs. The semiotic tradition studies the codes that are the medium in communication processes and the difficulty different actors in the communication process have interpreting these codes. This tradition addresses the problems that arise when people try to understand each other (or "more dangerous", when they: assume they actually do understand). Latour (1996) points out this vulnerability, stating that no translation is without transformation, thereby indicating how important the signs are that mediate between the *actants*. Taylor and Van Every (2000) describe this process: "Communication is not just messaging: it is instead a continuous process of adjustment in which each participant's speech provides the material for the interpretive skills of the hearer to fill in the gaps, to guess at the speaker's meaning and motives, to verify assumptions and to correct misapprehensions"(p. 9)

reflection: semiotic.

From a semiotic point of view, there is considerable danger of misinterpretation when researchers (being outsiders) try to read between the lines of the general outcomes and identify traits of a specific organization. This would be better left to the organization members. On the other hand, replacing researchers with organization members forces the latter into a theoretical framework and encourages them to interpret their situation in terms of this discourse. In an attempt to avoid misinterpretation by outsiders, the insiders are forced to adopt a mode of discourse that is unfamiliar to them, which will inevitably lead to distortion.

Overall, the semiotic tradition would question whether the motivation of organization members can be deduced from communication activities. Because interpretation of language is affected by the attitudes one has, the process is cyclical rather than linear (Weick, 1995). Committed members of an organization may interpret communication signs in a positive way because they are already motivated. From a semiotic point of view, the analysis of motivation in organizations can not assume linearity due to the cyclical nature of the process of communication and meaning.

Phenomenological tradition

a summary of the basic ideas.

The phenomenological tradition aims for unmediated contact with others, and theorizes communication as dialogue. On the one hand, communication is seen as the ultimate way of establishing real contact with each other. On the other hand, communication shows how problematic it is to get in real contact, in view of the boundaries between individuals.

It is hard to achieve "unmediated contact with the world outside" when one thinks in terms of subjects and objects, and one's perceptions are distorted by rational filters. These filters alienate the individual from the reality of being part of the world, without deconstruction, ratio and prescription. In an attempt to show the phenomenological view of communication, Verbeek (2005) uses the following example. He asked if someone had ever drunk H_2O. The answer should be *no*, because we drink water. The same holds for swimming in H_2O + NaCl: this is not the same as swimming in the Pacific or the Atlantic Ocean, because it omits the experience of swimming in water. Although water can be described as H_2O, and it *enables* water to be water, what we experience is just water. Phenomenologists focus on the actual, felt experience instead of the conditions that enable these experiences or the explanations and analyses of the experiences.

reflection: phenomenological.

From a phenomenological point of view, the attempt to describe the way people are committed to their organization in terms of constructs and attitudes is highly artificial. It abstracts, deconstructs and demystifies the ongoing process of working and living. Causality is "created" using all kinds of statistics, but this violates the genuineness of actual behavior and the complexity of practice. From the phenomenological point of view, this would mean "understanding" a process without actually focusing on the process itself. Our surveys objectified active subjects (Weick, 2003), thereby throttling practice for the sake of a theoretical context-free depiction of elements (Weick, 1999b). Phenomenological scholars interested in the motivation of organization members as a research topic would focus on *enactment* (Weick, 1995) as the process of attitude creation. To investigate these processes, they would need some sort of ethno-methodologies (Garfinkel, 1967), because these methods come as close as possible to real contact between the researcher and the observed.

Cybernetic tradition

a summary of the basic ideas.

The cybernetic tradition views communication exclusively practically, as a form of information processing. The "good old" transmission model epitomizes this tradition, but it has evolved, challenging simplistic notions that communication processes have a linear cause and effect. Although this process may be extremely complex and subtle, there are still underlying principles that structure the transmission of information. Seeing this, there are numerous analogies between human and nonhuman communication.

reflection: cybernetic.

I expect that the cybernetic tradition would be quite positive about this project. While emphasizing the complexity of the process, they would be interested in the results of the study. It would be especially interesting to study these concepts in a situation where the information process is largely visible, such as the socialization process. During an individual's first phase in an organization, a lot of information is provided by the organization, and the newcomer seeks information in order to make sure that he or she understands how things work in the organization (Kraimer, 1997; Schneider, Goldstein & Smith, 1995). It could help us understand both communication and socialization if we focused on the information process in this early phase.

Socio-cultural tradition

a summary of the basic ideas.

Communication does not take place in a vacuum, but occurs in a context of socio-cultural patterns, which are both based on communication processes and the result of them. Individuals adopt these patterns (learning them through communication) as their cultural heritage; the patterns provide boundaries for the game of interaction, reflecting the mutual relation of macro and micro levels of interaction. The lore and rituals of a culture are part of our identities, thereby placing the individual as *the* central point of a system.

reflection: socio-cultural.

As this project is interested in organizational culture, it can easily be harmonized with the socio-cultural tradition. But seen from that tradition, our approach is problematic, as analysis is focused on the individual and individual opinions on communication, and individual expectations and attitudes. This would be a problem from the socio-cultural tradition, as the influence of the community has not been taken into account while investigating the attitudes of individual respondents. To understand why workers are committed to their organizations, a socio-cultural point of departure would consider the reasons that people normally join a community. Next the aspects of the specific organization would be investigated, to find out how commitment is produced in that community.

Critical tradition

a summary of the basic ideas.

Communication cannot be taken at face value, but must always be judged in the light of the distorting effects of power and ideology in society (Craig, 1999, p. 149). There are always assumptions underlying communication, and these define the specific context. By selecting and excluding aspects of reality in our communication, we confirm power balances without questioning their validity. Critical theory attempts to reveal power structures by reflecting on communicative practice. Critical researchers have attempted to explain the social and communicative processes through which conditions of hegemony arise (Mumby, 2000).

reflection: critical.

Scholars in the critical tradition would point out the vulnerability of this project to the abuse of power. Contact was restricted to those at the top of the hierarchy. The project supported the dominant discourse by using questions proposed by managers ('singling out aspects as a key dimension, silencing other ways of describing the process' Alvesson & Deetz, 2000, p. 57) and giving the organizations the opportunity to use the information provided by the studies as they wished. Moreover, as has already been pointed out by the phenomenological tradition, the subject matter is "frozen" (Alvesson & Deetz, 2000) in a nineteenth-century positivistic, neo-empiricistic way. The approach establishes the suggestion of the authority of scientific research (for a critical stance on activating the reader, see Alvesson & Deetz, 2000, p. 134-136).

Though the research project might be problematic from a critical point of view, the whole idea of the discussion would probably be approved. Reflecting on the choices made in a research design is positive because it reveals hidden assumptions (Alvesson & Deetz, 2000, p. 45-46). On the other hand, reflecting on research using someone else's traditions can easily lead to a caricature of those traditions, making this more a rhetorical than a meta-theoretical exercise. On the whole, there is some danger in the "field mapping business", as Deetz (2001) illustrates in a review of the history of traditions: "The more functionalistic researchers found a safe and separate place in the distinction, and the researchers doing alternative work readily embraced the grid for it gave them a kind of asylum.…[W]e happily accepted the new-found capacity to present ourselves to mainstream critics as doing fundamentally different, but legitimate, kinds of research"(p. 9). In communication research, our approach may give each of us an asylum too in Craig's field description (1999). How we approach the subject could provide power to a small group, binding others with the prescriptions of a dominant discourse. In such a discourse the boundaries are clearly set by definitions of core concepts (Deetz: "definition [stems from] definitio, to kill or make final"), as Tompkins and Wanca-Thibault (2001) cite Burke (1966): "The nomenclature used to define a field not only serves to reflect and select reality, it also deflects reality; hence, the vocabulary of organizational communication draws attention to certain phenomena, and simultaneously draws it away from others" (p. xviii).

Conclusion

Looking at this project from the perspective of different traditions raises some interesting questions about the project, our methods, and the interpretation of results. The phenomenological tradition in particular would question the ethical basis of the project, pointing out the loss of context and the interference with the processes in which the organization member enact. The phenomenological tradition would disqualify research from a socio-psychological tradition rather than reflecting on it. Of course, the different traditions are *designed to disagree* with each other (McPhee, 2000), and ethical arguments will inevitably endanger the open conversation between the traditions. But the fact that another tradition disqualifies this project should not be discouraging. In fact, reflecting on how the different traditions would view this project has uncovered several interesting thoughts about the topic in general and this project in particular.

First, although I have tried to keep an open mind toward several traditions, it is hard to avoid myopia. My own approach sometimes tends towards the socio-psychological tradition in my emphasis on aspects of attitude and perception (Craig, 2005, personal communication).

Second, the general lack of attention for the organizational context and the process that leads to the attitudes being studied made me reflect on my own approach to understanding communication and organizational commitment. This plea for context is in line with Thorngate's (1976) comment that every attempt to formulate findings in methodology and in general terms will lead someone to nag that "it depends." When trying to combine generalizability and simplicity, achieving accuracy (or, in this case, context specificity) will always be problematic.

In short, the context-specific aspects of communication will be of major importance for future research.

Future research

At the end of each chapter, suggestions were made for future research. Most notably, these suggestions included further study of organizational efficacy (including the OES), the use of ipsative measures of fit in relation to commitment, investigation of normative commitment in relation to the life span of employees, and further attempts to find out whether captives, independents, supporters and team players are distinguishable types of employees, as proposed in the typology considering self and organizational efficacy expectations.

More generally, the context in which communication takes place should be explicitly incorporated in future projects. Specific attention to the organizational context stresses the necessity of qualitative, context-rich data (see Patton, 2002). This is in line with the review of different traditions in the field of communication, which showed the importance of context and accuracy.

Following Thorngate's (1976) idea of the tradeoff between generalizability, accuracy and simplicity, in-depth case studies have been proposed as a means of building theory (cf. Weick's (1979, pp. 35-38) *six o'clock inquiry*). In particular, emphasis is placed on studying actual communication activities rather than the residuals of communication (Corman, 2004). The critical incident technique (CIT) seems especially relevant as an instrument. This has been demonstrated by Zwijze-Koning & De Jong (2006), who used the CIT to explore how organization members evaluate organizational communication. They conclude that their CIT interviews answered questions left unanswered by other surveys. For example, CIT analysis provided a better understanding of *why* employees were (dis)satisfied with the organizational communication and *in what ways* employees wanted to be involved. The CIT may be helpful to understanding the context in which organizational communication is embedded and whether fit perceptions and efficacy expectations lead to organizational commitment. This design would incorporate the insights gained from reflecting on the different traditions (especially the rhetorical, phenomenological, and critical traditions), which drew attention to the actual context of organizational communication. Another way to study the central constructs addressed in this project in a more qualitative way would be to use storytelling techniques to study the concepts of motivation and person-organization fit (e.g., Billsberry et al., 2005) and competence and efficacy (e.g., Bauer & Bonanno, 2001; see Chapter 5). A promising perspective seems to be to focus on the wellbeing of individual employees, what Newell (2002) calls “the healthy organization.” The wellbeing of individual employees has already been studied in relation to the organizational context, including effects of person-environment fit (Schabracq, 2003), the psychological contract (Guest & Conway, 2003), and balanced commitment (e.g. Newell, 2002; Semmer, 2003).

The suggestion to study these processes more qualitatively is not to imply that there is anything wrong with quantitative measures per se. As already indicated in the different chapters, I am not suggesting we abandon it from the toolkit of organizational researchers. Besides, critical literature (e.g., Armstrong, 1994; Mintzberg, 1994) supports our own experience in organizations that all research, including quantitative studies, is ultimately about sensemaking. From this perspective, even statistics can form a narrative. It seems that managers need tables and numbers to make sense of the problems they face. By providing them with new labels like commitment and efficacy, they are helped for the moment, especially when these constructs have face validity and are presented with tables and numbers. Managers appreciate a focus on values because it helps them pin down the intangible but indispensable concept of organizational culture. It has been shown that surveys and abstract constructs help managers to do their work, not because they believe the figures and numbers, but because they serve as an imaginary life jacket to survive the chaos of the organization (Mintzberg, 1994).

Future research: job crafting and the metaconversation

Finally, to illustrate how we can study the context in which communication takes place, let us examine two different concepts regarding the relation between the wellbeing of organization members and their working environment. The first concept is *job crafting* (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001; Wrzesniewski et al., 2003); this represents a paradigm shift in management theory from viewing the worker as a passive attitude-bearer to an active agent who, through reflection and interaction, crafts the image of his or her job, role, and self in organizational contexts. The second concept is *metaconversation* (Robichaud et al., 2004), which reveals how the image of an organization emerges through the recursive nature of language.

Job crafting

One of the key developments in management thinking is the changing perspective on the relationship between the individual and the organization. Perspectives on the nature of this relationship vary from those offered by Taylor and Fayol to those of Mayo, Ouchi, Senge and others, but this relationship remains a key to understanding management and behavior. The dominant perspective today is the idea that a worker actively evaluates the situation he or she is in, having all kinds of opinions and feelings, which may be measured through operationalizations of organizational support (Eisenberger et al., 1986), job satisfaction (Spector, 1997), different foci and dimensions of commitment (Meyer & Allen, 1997), etc. Surveys audit the state, antecedents, correlates and consequences of these perceptions, and management is informed about the proper ways of dealing with these perceptions. Of course, this is a rather passive, reactive view of employees. Organization members are assumed to have some thoughts about the situation they find themselves in, but only react on it – for them, the environment is a *fait accompli*.

There are two ways to criticize this stance: the passivity of the individual and the passivity of the organizational environment. It is reasonable to assume that employees doing the same work in the same organization may differ in their work orientation, as the passive evaluation of the work has several attitudinal outcomes. Wrzesniewski et al.

(1997) provide evidence for this by showing that most people see their work as either a *job* (focusing on financial rewards and necessity rather than pleasure or fulfillment; their work is not a major positive part of their life), a *career* (focusing on advancement), or a *calling* (focusing on enjoying work that is seen as fulfilling and socially useful). As research on turnover has shown, people who are dissatisfied with their jobs and perceive a low fit with their organization (cf. Kristof, 2005; Schneider, Goldstein & Smith, 1995) are more likely to leave and look for a more suitable place. But Wrzesniewski and colleagues have proposed that there is another way of dealing with this situation than leaving the environment: one can actively engage, and change the tasks or the relationships by *crafting a job* (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001; Wrzesniewski et al., 2003). This is thought-provoking, because here the worker is perceived as an active individual who can change the task or relational boundaries of their work, instead of just taking the tasks they are assigned and having certain feelings about them. The work tasks and interactions that form the daily life of employees are then only the raw materials for the crafting activities of employees.

The importance of this idea is that "job crafting essentially changes the direction of the relationship between jobs and motivation: instead of the design of the job eliciting attitudes and motivation, the opportunity and motivation to craft elicit job crafting" (p. 181). The premise of this idea is that every employee has latitude to define and craft his or her job. The freedom employees have to actually craft their jobs is determined by how much independence they have to perform their tasks, and how close management monitors and supervises them. The more freedom management gives an employee, the more open space is available for crafting and enacting a job. This idea is in line with the trend, which is seen as a new development, that employees are increasingly being treated as "free agents" left to shape their own work experiences and career trajectories (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001, p.197).

Note that the primary intention of job crafting is to serve the employee, and the effects for the organization are not inherently good or bad. What is good for an individual does not necessarily help (or harm) the organization. Wrzesniewski and Dutton (2001) proposed three ways individuals "adapt their jobs in ways that create and sustain a viable definition of the work they do and who they are at work" (p. 180). The first is changing the task boundaries of a job in number, scope, or type of tasks. For example, universities are excellent places for this kind of job crafting, as there is relatively low team interdependence and also low monitoring by management compared to other organizations. This provides enough freedom and opportunities to craft a job in ways that satisfies the scholar. By changing the scope of one's tasks (which can fluctuate with the articles that are read), taking more or fewer tasks (e.g., Kahnemann and Tverski took a year off to write the 1974 *Science* paper, which ultimately led to a Nobel Prize), or changing the type of work (e.g., doing consulting based on the insights gained in university), one can shape a job towards one's ideal. Different personal interests lead to different focuses, and a scholar can shape the work accordingly. If someone likes to travel, or consult, or write, or get rich - or being lazy, wants to do as doing as little as possible without getting fired - a job can be crafted to a certain extent. The second way to craft a job is by changing the amount and/or the quality of social interaction on the job. One can choose a pattern of relationships and give priority to certain meetings in order to shape the job and its outcome. As Luthans (1988) showed, different patterns of relationships at work lead to different results: managers who have satisfied, committed subordinates and high performing units are internally focused and deal well with communication and HRM-issues, while managers who have been promoted relatively quickly are externally focused and network a lot. Job crafting provides a perspective that allows managers to choose a certain pattern of relationships, depending on what they expect a job to bring or the gain they expect.

In the third form of job crafting, people change the way they think about their tasks. This is a sensemaking process as people become aware of the broader context in which they work. Knowing how the practical details of a specific job fit in the whole process helps to commit an employee to the job. Think of this story: An Englishman visited Rome for the first time. As he strolled along the ancient boulevards, he saw three men laboring with stones and concrete. He asked what they were doing. The first man replied, "I am breaking my back for a lousy 475 lira an hour." The second man said, " I am putting up bricks for a big wall." The third man answered, "I am building a cathedral." Viewing his work as building a cathedral instead of just putting up bricks is an example of job crafting; the three men were doing the same work, but they had different attitudes about it.

In a second article (Wrzesniewski et al., 2003), Wrzesniewski and colleagues explored this idea further considering how interactions at work shape the meaning of work through sensemaking and job crafting. From a communication perspective, it is interesting to see how communication is implicitly the central concept in both articles. A process is mentioned in which “interpersonal cues” (p. 103) that are “sources of information” (p. 111) “carry signal value for understanding how others view us” (p. 104). Thus, “the relationship between a cue sender and an employee creates an important part of the context against which a cue is interpreted” (p. 124). Wrzesniewski et al. (2003) conclude:

> *Organizational researchers need to consider how the intended and unintended actions of structurally linked colleagues at work (bosses, subordinates, unit colleagues, customers) as well as chosen colleagues (e.g. friends of customers, co-located colleagues from different organizations) all play a role in composing work meaning by offering (intentionally or not) cues that are treated as signals of affirmation or disaffirmation.…Our perspective suggests that the interpersonal cues that shape work meaning may be much more explicitly social or interaction-based than those implied by a social information processing perspective on job design. Rather than seeing others at work providing cues that job incumbents passively receive and interpret, we argue that employees actively notice, interpret, and seek out cues in the course of daily interaction that convey evaluation and worth.* (pp. 126-127).

Wrzesniewski et al. then propose that new insights can emerge when we assume that people create their own context; this approach enriches the job attitudes literature by illuminating the interpretive process that is involved in global assessments of one’s work (2003, p. 122). It is obvious that communication scholars can add to the understanding of interpersonal sensemaking processes, since it has been a topic of interest in recent decades. The reactions to Wrzesniewksi et al.’s article underline the need for this understanding. For example, Briner et al. (2004) stated how this novel idea leads to a “fundamental theoretical reappraisal” (p. 223) of work stress research in the context of healthy organizations, adopting a dynamic view instead of the static one (cf. Wrzesniewski et al., 2003, p. 127).

Metaconversation

Robichaud et al. (2004) introduce the term "metaconversation" to identify a major aspect of the role of communication in organizing. They address the ambivalence that exists in the literature about the nature of an organization. On the one hand, organizations are treated as fragmented "multiverse" communities with many voices, individual attitudes, and different goals. The polyphonic nature of organizational processes stresses the local complexity of day-to-day activities from which the organization actually emerges (Cooren, 2004). Imagine, for example, how small, whimsical and competitive interactions contribute to a process that finally leads to a decision. One can imagine subcultures in groups and departments, even though these groups all use the same logo. Without falling into the trap of micro-level reductionism (cf. McPhee & Poole, 2001), one can certainly state that because an organization is composed of many individuals, their fragmented perceptions and multiplicity of opinions impede the creation of a unified perspective.

On the other hand, however, as Robichaud et al. (2004) point out, in normal conversations, organizations are described with the same words that are commonly used to talk about a subject, an individual. Organizations are seen to have intentions, emotions, and understanding (e.g., "the department was forced to admit…," "the FBI was frustrated," 'the university aims to…"). Such expressions portray organizations as having personality and being single, "universal" actors. In order to combine the multiversal and the universal perspectives, Robichaud et al. (2004) assume that organizations emerge from the interactive exchange of their members and that texts reflect the organization as it is called into being by those members (Taylor & Van Every, 2000), or even by the texts themselves (Cooren, 2004). To describe this, Robichaud et al. introduce the concept of metaconversation: "that is, the conversation in which a collective is constituted that is larger than that of the smaller communities of practice making up the organization" (p. 618). This metaconversation can be held when there is a voice that represents the "black box" of earlier conversations and the accompanying definition of reality that is taken for granted. When a voice speaks for silent or absent others (human or nonhuman), these "others" emerge as an existing entity. When conversations address this entity repeatedly, a metanarrative is constituted through this metaconversation. In this way, an organization is brought into being and can have a voice, feelings, or intentions. Imagine the following example as an illustration: an associate professor affiliated with a prestigious university meets with a Human Resources Officer of a multinational to discuss structural cooperation in research and consultancy on intercultural business matters. In this meeting, they both have to do several things in order to evaluate the experiences and knowledge of the other to find out whether cooperation will be productive or not. They both have to get an idea of the organization that the other represents (its prestige and resources, as well as the motivation for cooperation); this is done through the extralocal cues that are provided during the meeting. Further, as they probe the opportunities for cooperation between their organizations, they provide information about the "black box that their organization is (primarily for the other, but also in a way for themselves!). They will each paint a picture of their organization as a fixed reality in order to present a specific reputation. By presenting a unified picture, representatives of an organization neglect the different and opposing voices in their organization (as each is grounded in a community of practice), presenting the organization as a whole, as a subject of conversation (Ribochaud et al., 2004) -- by becoming the voice of the organization. So in a recursive way, both individuals represent their organization (being its voice in the conversation), and by giving voice to their organizations they re-affirm the organization as a given. This principle of modality has been described in reference to texts as "scaling up" and "bearing down" (Hardy, 2004).

Combining job crafting and the metaconversation

Thus far, the concepts of job crafting (in terms of interpersonal sensemaking) and metaconversation (in terms of recursivity and modality) have been discussed separately. But at the end of this discussion, I would like to suggest that these two developments can be cross-fertilizing. A fundamental difference between the job crafting perspective and metaconversation is in the *individuality* of individuals. The theories seem to take opposite views of the independence of individuals in the coorientational relationship implicit in organizational contexts. In job crafting, the individual remains the basic unit of analysis. Individuals are seen as having attitudes and thoughts about their job, which reflects an individual-centered focus, while acknowledging the communicational context in which job crafting emerges. The metaconversational perspective questions the autonomy of individuals and, while acknowledging the existence of individual actors, focuses on the interaction and the social context from which organizations emerge. Where team interdependence and managerial control are seen as the boundaries of job crafting, from a metaconversational perspective, the communal/communicative crafting of jobs starts there!

There are at least three things that metaconversation can do to enrich job crafting: First, the proposition that daily events are recursively embedded into a frame of reference through text and conversation can help understand how individuals craft their perception of the content and significance of their job. In other words, the tools that are needed to craft a job may be *text* and *conversation*. Wrzesniewski et al. (2003) state that their model can illuminate the interpretive process that leads to a global assessment of one's work. Given the recursivity of language, discourse analysis can help to gain insight by providing tools for understanding the sensemaking process. By addressing Wrzesniewski et al.'s notion that people attach value-laden meanings to other's behavior from a perspective of co-creation and co-orientation of meaning, one can better understand how these processes work. For example, Wrzesniewski et al. identify three questions that people ask as they reflect on an event ("What just happened?" "Is this positive or negative for me?" "Why did someone send this cue?"). It may be important in the sensemaking process to determine who the "someone is: is "someone" the voice of the organization? When "someone" represents the organization, the affirming or disaffirming power may be greater than when the "someone" is seen as an individual, thus lacking the co-orientation, and unable to co-create the meaning of one's work.

Second, Wrzesniewski et al. propose that the sensemaking process is inter*personal*. But as Cooren (2004) shows, interactions within organizations have to be viewed from a broader perspective than just that of people interacting; the interaction between communicating entities, whether people or texts, must be considered. When

Latour's idea (1993) of hybridity is taken into account, one can better understand how interaction is far richer than just people interacting, as other entities also interact.

Third, by stressing interpersonal relations, Wrzesniewski et al. overlook the active power relations that are available in an organization. When interpersonal cues are seen as important aspects of interpersonal sensemaking, and understanding how an organizational perspective emerges through metaconversation, this provides a powerful tool for organizations to change and allow various silent groups to participate. Understanding what Deetz (1992) calls the "sedimented typifications" for describing a phenomenon and the institutionalized justification for seeing things in a certain way will be very helpful in active job crafting – as this allows an understanding of the core of the job crafting process, interpersonal cues and their interpretation. Of course, as critical theory stresses, one has to be aware of the concept of a dominant discourse, where "a particular shared subjectivity becomes privileged" (Deetz, 1992, p. 117).

In a second article, Wrzewsniewski and colleagues (2003) consider the practice of interaction and explore the interpersonal dimension of sensemaking. They illustrate this by the notion of conjoint action as coming "to be a certain person in the social world through one's interactions with others" (p. 619). This may be a key difference between the perspectives. This, in turn, widens the perspective of Robichaud et al. (2004): the black box idea also holds for the individual in his or her job. In other words, the recursive property of language is not only a key to organizing (referring to the title of Robichaud et al.'s article), but also a key to crafting. I suggest that the way an organization emerges is similar to how a job is crafted: the processes underlying the emergence of an organization, i.e. through interactions of entities, also sheds light on the process of an individual crafting a job. The importance of context is seen as a parallel process influencing people actively crafting their jobs and organizing a working environment. Here the different traditions and worldviews held by the socio-psychological tradition and the socio-cultural tradition, described by Craig (1999) in his map of the communication field, are worth noting. While socio-psychologists accuse social cultural theory of ignoring psychological processes that underline all social order, socio-cultural theory, in turn, points out that the "laws" of socio-psychology are determined by culture.

This is a very important and interesting debate, and the challenge is to study these phenomena together and find out how both personal interpretation and social interaction lead to attitudes. I think that the quite abstract meta-theoretical debate that Craig encourages with his presentation (1999) of the map of the communication field will turn out to be very practical. It helps to uncover and abridge different views that underlie and separate perspectives like job crafting and the metaconversation.

For a better understanding of why people work, research thus has to focus on the way people evaluate the content and significance of their jobs. A key to understand what really happens there is to be able to discern the contribution of the communicative context on the one hand, and specific individual evaluations on the other hand. Wrzesniewski et al. (2003) suggested using experience sampling (in which individuals are invited to "report their interactions, affective states, and actions in real time, so that the flow of their activities and responses can be established" [p. 128]). This fits with the plea for more qualitative research methods. Research focusing on individual experiences and critical incidents will definitely provide new thought-provoking insights on the reasons people work. But that will take (at least) another six years of work.

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Samenvatting

’s Ochtends sta ik op station Deventer te wachten op de trein richting Enschede. Ik vind zelf dat het nog echt vroeg is, maar als de trein aankomt, stappen er doodleuk al forensen uit. Dit betekent dat zij de reis al achter de rug hebben en dus nóg vroeger zijn opgestaan dan ik. Waarom doen mensen dat? Waarom staan mensen zo vroeg op, verblijven het beste deel van de dag ‘op de zaak’ – en dat voor het grootste gedeelte van hun leven? Waarom doen *wij* dat?

De vraag *waarom mensen werken* is heel breed en er zijn al veel soorten antwoorden op gegeven. In dit proefschrift worden verschillende studies beschreven naar aspecten van deze vraag. Omdat de vraag zo breed is, zijn er twee beperkingen aangebracht om het onderzoekbaar te houden. Ten eerste ligt de focus vooral op beelden die leden hebben van hun organisatie als geheel. Daarmee wordt dus voorbijgegaan aan de bijdrage van andere belangrijke factoren, zoals de levenssituatie waarin de werkende zich bevindt of contact met directe collega’s en vakgenoten. Dus, hoe voelen zij zich betrokken bij de organisatie? Die betrokkenheid heet hier ‘commitment’. Voor verschillende vormen van commitment is gebruik gemaakt van een onderscheid dat Meyer en Allen (1997) hebben voorgesteld. Zij onderscheiden foci en dimensies van commitment. Wat betreft de foci onderscheiden zij de eenheid waarop commitment is gericht. Naast commitment aan de organisatie kan dit ook gericht zijn op het beroep dat werknemers uitoefenen, de groep waarmee ze werken, hun baas of zelfs de vakbond waar ze lid van zijn. Zoals eerder aangegeven beperkt het onderzoek in dit proefschrift zich tot betrokkenheid bij de organisatie (organizational commitment) en het beroep (occupational commitment). Meyer en Allen onderscheiden verschillende dimensies van commitment, te weten de affectieve, normatieve en continuïteitsdimensie van commitment. Affectief commitment is een emotionele binding aan de organisatie en het verlangen om een bijdrage te leveren aan de doelen van de organisatie. Normatief commitment is de perceptie dat loyaliteit aan de organisatie verplicht is, bijvoorbeeld omdat de organisatie zoveel in de medewerkers investeert en het dus oneerlijk zou zijn om weg te gaan. Continuïteitscommitment ten slotte is de inschatting dat het verlaten van de organisatie teveel zou kosten in geld en zekerheden, waardoor iemand betrokken blijft om dat niet te verliezen. Er is dan een ervaren noodzaak om te blijven. Er wordt in de literatuur een discussie gevoerd over de vraag of continuïteitscommitment eigenlijk wel een vorm van commitment is, aangezien het geen echte psychologische binding betreft.

Maar ook dit beeld van de organisatie kan nog heel breed zijn en daarover gaat de tweede beperking van dit onderzoek. Bij het onderzoeken van de oorsprong van dit beeld van de organisatie is de aandacht gericht op twee aspecten, die grofweg kunnen worden gelabeld als 'willen' en 'kunnen'.

Wat betreft het *willen*, wordt in dit proefschrift uitgegaan van de waarden van de organisatie en de werkende. Waarden zijn te omschrijven als "wenselijke, situatieoverstijgende doelen die variëren in het belang dat eraan wordt gehecht, en die dienen als leidende principes in het leven van mensen" (naar Rokeach, 1973). Verondersteld wordt dat waarden een goede insteek zijn om te onderzoeken wat mensen motiveert. Dit geldt niet alleen voor mensen: ook organisaties hebben waarden, een cultuur en een beeld van wat ze willen. Verschillende studies in dit boek beschrijven onderzoek dat nagaat in welke mate de waarden van de persoon en de organisatie bijdragen aan organisatiecommitment van de werkenden.

Daarnaast wordt in dit proefschrift bestudeerd hoe de overlap tussen de waarden van de organisatie en de werkende een graadmeter is voor commitment. Een karikaturaal voorbeeld kan dit verduidelijken. Een adviesbureau dat twee jaar geleden is opgericht door een ambitieuze ondernemer heeft een heel andere cultuur dan een grote overheidsorganisatie waarbij de werktijden vaststaan en de aankomst- en vertrektijden van werknemers worden geregistreerd met een pasje bij de deur. Voor de jonge adviesorganisatie is overwerken vaak een must om te overleven en een plek in de markt te bevechten, terwijl dit voor de overheidsorganisatie veel minder vanzelfsprekend is – een loket met vaste openingstijden structureert en vereenvoudigt de werkdag van de lokettist. De invulling van een onderwerp waar elke organisatie mee te maken heeft, bijvoorbeeld *het nemen van risico's*, wordt heel anders ingevuld in deze organisaties.

Waar stabiliteit, zekerheid en betrouwbaarheid voor de overheidsorganisatie belangrijk zijn, is het nemen van risico's en het uitproberen van nieuwe dingen een voorwaarde van overleven van het jonge adviesbureau. Voor werkzoekenden kan de cultuur van een organisatie een afweging zijn om wel of niet te solliciteren. 'Individuele waarden' worden in deze context gezien als de voorkeur die iemand heeft voor een bepaalde soort organisatiecultuur. Sommige mensen willen graag zekerheid en vaste werktijden om buiten werktijd 'ook een leven over te houden', terwijl anderen graag zo snel carrière willen maken dat dit de hoogste prioriteit is en alles daarvoor wijken moet.

De verwachting is dat commitment niet alleen bepaald wordt door de waarden van de organisatie en de werkende apart, maar dat daar ook een wisselwerking tussen is. De mate waarin de voorkeur voor een organisatiecultuur vanuit de perceptie van de werkende beantwoord wordt door de feitelijke organisatiecultuur waarin diegene werkt, wordt 'person-organization fit' of 'value congruence' genoemd. Kort gezegd is het 'willen'-aspect onderzocht door te vragen naar individuele waarden en perceptie van de organisatiewaarden - en de overlap tussen die beide.

Naast het 'willen'-aspect verwachtten we dat ook de evaluatie van het *kunnen* een rol speelt bij commitment. Want een organisatie kan wel van alles willen, maar wanneer dit wordt beoordeeld als kansloze luchtfietserij zal iemand zich hieraan niet snel committeren, terwijl hoog ingeschatte competentie een reden kan zijn voor iemand om deel zijn van een organisatie. De haalbaarheid van organisatiedoelen wordt daarom waarschijnlijk meegenomen in de keuze of hier kostbare tijd in gestoken zal worden. Natuurlijk zijn er meer mogelijkheden om voordeel te halen uit het lidmaatschap van een organisatie. Denk bijvoorbeeld aan salaris, status of de (op zich treurige) inschatting dat dit het minst slechte alternatief is dat iemand heeft. Net als bij de waarden is ook met betrekking tot de competenties onderscheid gemaakt tussen de inschatting van het individuele kunnen (omschreven als self efficacy – de mate waarin iemand zichzelf in staat acht bepaald gedrag te vertonen) en de inschatting van de capaciteiten van de organisatie (organizational efficacy, gedefinieerd als 'de perceptie van een individu over de algemene vaardigheden van een organisatie).

De verschillende hoofdstukken beschrijven elk een aspect van het onderzoek naar deze vragen. In *hoofdstuk 2* wordt eerst ingezoomd op de relatie tussen verschillende waarden en soorten commitment. Voor de uitwerking van de waarden is het Competing Values Framework (CVF) gebruikt (zie pagina 32), waar aan de hand van een interne versus externe focus en een onderscheid tussen flexibiliteit en controle vier kwadranten worden onderscheiden met verschillende waarden.

Een combinatie van twee foci (organizational en occupational (of: beroeps) commitment) en twee dimensies leidt tot vier vormen van commitment: affectieve organisatiecommitment, affectieve beroepscommitment, normatieve organisatiecommitment en normatieve beroepscommitment. De kerngedachte van hoofdstuk twee is dat deze vier commitmentvormen verklaard worden door de vier verschillende kwadranten met waarden uit het CVF. Dit is een gevolg van de koppeling tussen de foci van commitment aan de intern-extern as van het model (organisatie=intern, occupatie=extern) en de koppeling van dimensies van commitment aan de flexibiliteit-controle as (affectief=flexibel, normatief=controle). De verantwoording voor deze tweede koppeling is ingegeven door het onderscheid in intrinsieke en extrinsieke motivatie zoals dat te vinden is in de Self-Determination Theory van Ryan & Deci (2000). De resultaten geven een voorzichtige indicatie dat er een onderscheid gemaakt kan worden tussen de commitmentvormen op basis van de waardenkwadranten, maar alleen voor wat betreft de organisatiewaarden. De individuele waarden leveren nauwelijks een bijdrage aan commitment. Interactie-effecten die controleren voor de veronderstelde overlap-effecten, zijn afwezig.

In *hoofdstuk 3* wordt verder ingegaan op een aantal verrassende conclusies uit het tweede hoofdstuk. Tegen de verwachting in bleek person-organization fit (de overlap tussen individuele waarden en organisatiewaarden) geen effect te hebben op welke vorm van commitment dan ook. Een logische volgende stap is de vergelijking tussen alternatieve metingen van person-organization fit. In de eerste studie was gebruik gemaakt van de indirecte meting, wat inhoudt dat er los gevraagd wordt naar de percepties van de organisatiewaarden en de voorkeur voor een organisatiecultuur. Door het werk van Edwards is bekend dat polynomiale regressie-analyse de meest adequate methode is voor het vaststellen van de feitelijke overlap tussen apart gevraagde variabelen. Daarmee is de indirecte meting ook wel bekend als feitelijke, dus *actual fit*. Om te bepalen in welke mate deze actual fit overeenkomt met de gepercipieerde overlap bij de mensen, hebben we als afhankelijke variabele niet commitment ingevoegd (zoals in hoofdstuk twee), maar een directe meting van de gepercipieerde overlap tussen individuele waarden en de waarden van de organisatie. Deze directe meting wordt verkregen door in een vragenlijst mensen gewoon te vragen in welke mate zij vinden dat hun persoonlijke waarden overeenkomen met de waarden van de organisatie. Daarmee is te vergelijken welke feitelijke waardenoverlap het meest bijdraagt aan de perceptie of er sprake is van overlap tussen de waarden van iemand zelf en de organisatie waar hij of zij lid van is. De twee organisaties die hiervoor zijn onderzocht, laten een redelijk vergelijkbaar profiel zien. Allereerst leveren de percepties van organisatiewaarden de grootste bijdrage aan gepercipieerde fit, in het bijzonder voor de waarden uit het Human Relations kwadrant van het CVF. Vervolgens blijkt dat individuele waarden slechts een marginale bijdrage leveren aan die perceptie. Ten slotte zijn volgens de regels die Edwards voor de interpretatie van de resultaten voorgesteld heeft, de interacties weer afwezig. Daarom moet geconcludeerd worden dat de feitelijke overlap tussen waarden geen voorspellende waarde heeft voor de gepercipieerde overlap. De individuele inschatting van de mate waarin bepaalde waarden voor de organisatie van belang zijn, bepaalt de perceptie van de overlap het beste, ongeacht de persoonlijke waarden. Bij nadere beschouwing van deze verrassende resultaten blijkt er een belangrijke kanttekening te plaatsen bij de manier waarop (met name) de individuele waarden gemeten worden. In de bovengenoemde definitie van waarden staat onder andere dat de waarden *variëren in belang*. In de oorspronkelijke definitie van Rokeach wordt hier zelfs expliciet gezegd dat de ene waarde de voorkeur krijgt boven een alternatief of het tegenovergestelde van die waarde. Wanneer de waarden dan elk apart worden doorgenomen alsof ze los van elkaar staan, gaat dit ten koste van een kernaspect van waarden – dat ze allemaal in zichzelf nuttig en goed kunnen zijn, maar dat deze juist in de prioriteitenvolgorde van belang worden. Dan blijkt wat echt *waarde*vol is. Op zichzelf genomen is aandacht voor productiviteit goed en zal elke medewerker in het ideale plaatje van een organisatie aangeven dat productiviteit heel erg belangrijk is. Maar productiviteit als waarde wordt pas duidelijk als dit ten koste gaat van andere waarden, zoals aandacht voor mensen, opleidingen en flexibiliteit. Juist in het spanningsveld met andere waarden wordt dan duidelijk wat de *relatieve positie* is van een waarde. Een overzicht laat zien dat dit kenmerk van waarden niet onderkend wordt in meedere onderzoeken en dus leidt tot irreële (en dus irrelevante) antwoorden bij de vragen over individuele waarden. Dit heeft weer tot gevolg dat de vanzelfsprekend hoge scores op individuele waarden het vinden van interactie-effecten in de weg staan – de meting van individuele waarden is bijna een constante geworden. Dit hoofdstuk eindigt dan ook met de suggestie om andere manieren te gebruiken om waarden te meten, zoals ordening of weging.

In *hoofdstuk 4* wordt dieper ingegaan op de dimensies van commitment en de relatie tussen affectief commitment en person-organization fit. Tussen haakjes: person-organization fit wordt vanaf dit hoofdstuk telkens gemeten volgens de directe methode, gegeven de kritiek op de indirecte methode in het voorgaande hoofdstuk. Om een beter zicht te krijgen hoe verschillende soorten commitment ontstaan, is er een vergelijking gemaakt tussen de commitmentprofielen van werknemers in loondienst en vrijwilligers binnen een organisatie. Het beeld bestaat dat het erg ingewikkeld is om leiding te geven aan vrijwilligers, mede omdat zij niet financieel afhankelijk zijn van de organisatie. Dit maakt dat een organisatie wel op een bepaalde manier afhankelijk is van de vrijwilligers, maar dat de vrijwilligers op geen enkele manier afhankelijk zijn van de organisatie. Die situatie lijkt voor veel managers een reden om geen gebruik te maken van diensten van vrijwilligers. Door een vergelijking te maken tussen de commitmentprofielen van betaalde en onbetaalde krachten kan inzicht ontstaan in de redenen waarom mensen gebonden zijn aan een organisatie.

De resultaten van deze vergelijking bevestigden de verwachting dat de vrijwilligers een sterkere affectieve betrokkenheid hebben bij de organisatie dan betaalde werknemers. Daarnaast bleek dat de invloed van person-organization fit op deze affectieve betrokkenheid bij vrijwilligers ruim twee keer zo groot was als bij de betaalde werknemers. Dit suggereert dat vrijwilligers zich binden aan een organisatie omdat zij een bijdrage willen leveren aan de doelstellingen van de organisatie en deze doelen ontlenen aan de waarden van die organisatie. In tegenstelling tot de verwachting bleek dat vrijwilligers ook een hoger normatief commitment aan de organisatie hebben dan betaalde werknemers. Een psychologisch contract met de organisatie lijkt meer voor de hand te liggen voor betaalde werknemers, aangezien zij intensiever bij de organisatie betrokken zijn. Toch is dit niet het geval en een mogelijke verklaring daarvoor komt uit onverwachte hoek: de levensfase waar de vrijwilligers zich in bevinden. Dit is een onderdeel dat in de commitmentliteratuur nog niet uitgewerkt is, maar interessante aanknopingspunten biedt. De gedachte is dat de motivatie om vrijwilligerswerk te doen varieert met de leeftijd van de vrijwilliger: jongere vrijwilligers zoeken vooral interessante contacten door het werk, terwijl oudere vrijwilligers zich min of meer verplicht voelen om een bijdrage te leveren aan de maatschappij. De vrijwilligers in de onderzochte organisatie waren relatief ouder en de hoge scores op normatief commitment (in vergelijking met de betaalde werknemers) zouden verklaard kunnen worden uit deze generativiteitsgedachte. Continuïteitscommitment tenslotte wordt beïnvloed door de leeftijd van de respondenten. Omdat de vrijwilligerspopulatie in de onderzoeksorganisatie relatief oud was, leek er aanvankelijk geen verschil te zijn tussen beide groepen, maar wanneer leeftijd als factor werd ingevoerd, bleek in de lijn der verwachting dat continuïteitscommitment voor vrijwilligers lager was dan bij de organisatieleden die financieel (deels) afhankelijk zijn van de organisatie.

In *hoofdstuk 5* verschuift de aandacht tijdelijk van het ‘willen’ naar het ‘kunnen’ en wordt een onderzoek beschreven dat de relatie van effectiviteitsverwachtingen (self efficacy en organizational efficacy) met commitment bekijkt. Centraal staat een typologie van soorten organisatieleden die kan worden geconstrueerd als beide vormen van efficacy worden omgewerkt naar een hoog-laag verdeling. Wanneer iemand laag scoort op zowel self als organizational efficacy dicht deze persoon zowel zichzelf als de organisatie weinig capaciteit toe. Die is dan eigenlijk een gevangene in de organisatie die nergens anders heen kan (*Captive*). Een werknemer die zichzelf als capabel beschouwt maar weinig verwacht van de organisatie zal waarschijnlijk de organisatie als springplank gebruiken voor de eigen doelen en zich weinig gelegen laten liggen aan het grotere geheel of het organisatiebeleid. Dit zijn organisatieleden die onafhankelijk bezig zijn en de bereikte successen eerder zien als persoonlijke successen die eerder ondanks dan dankzij de organisatie zijn geboekt (*Independent*). Vervolgens zijn er mogelijk mensen die zichzelf niet zoveel capaciteiten toedichten, maar vooral veel verwachten van de efficacy van de organisatie. Die zouden dan erg enthousiast zijn over de organisatie en eenvoudige klussen doen die de organisatie ten goede komen. Typische *Supporters* dus. Ten slotte zijn er dan nog die organisatieleden die zowel van zichzelf als van de organisatie veel verwachten wat betreft de capaciteiten. Dit kunnen echte *Teamplayers* zijn, omdat ze zelf een bijdrage leveren en vertrouwen hebben in de anderen.

Deze typologie (van captives, independents, supporters en teamplayers) wordt getest op voorspellende waarde voor de commitment-dimensies. Uitgaande van een veelgebruikte methode (de mediaansplit) komen de resultaten overeen met de verwachte relaties. De mediaansplit is echter wel een erg ruwe methode waarbij de spreiding in antwoorden met geweld wordt teruggebracht tot een hoge of een lage score. Een gevoeliger methode is om gebruik te maken van modererende regressieanalyse en in dat geval blijft er weinig over van mogelijke interactie-effecten en dus van de typologie. De hoge face validity van deze typologie wordt dus niet ondersteund door de gegevens wanneer deze stevig getoetst worden. Een verklaring hiervoor zou kunnen zijn dat er problemen zijn met het meten van self efficacy met vragenlijsten. Mensen zullen niet graag aangeven dat ze ergens niet goed in zijn en strategisch antwoordgedrag wordt dus in de hand gewerkt. Net als bij de meting van individuele waarden (zie hoofdstuk 3) geeft ook de meting van self efficacy aanleiding om te twijfelen of vragen die mensen dicht op de huid komen wel tot reële antwoorden kunnen leiden. Het gebrek aan spreiding in de antwoorden beïnvloedt vervolgens de kans om een interactie-effect te vinden.

In *hoofdstuk 6* wordt verslag gedaan van de ontwikkeling van de schaal voor het meten van organizational efficacy. Terwijl er al meerdere schalen zijn voor het bepalen van bijvoorbeeld groepseffectiviteit en zelfeffectiviteit, is nog niet eerder geprobeerd om een effectiviteitsverwachting op het organisatieniveau vast te stellen Daarvoor is een schaal ontwikkeld en getest, de Organizational Efficacy Scale (OES). Nadat in een eerste inventarisatie mogelijke aspecten van deze perceptie waren vastgesteld, zijn die aspecten als een set van twaalf vragen voorgelegd aan een vijftiental mensen. Op basis van hun feedback vielen er vijf vragen af en werden andere vragen anders geformuleerd. Met deze overgebleven zeven vragen zijn een aantal validatiestudies uitgevoerd. Daaruit bleek dat het inderdaad mogelijk is om met zeven samenhangende vragen een meting te doen van organisatie-effectiviteit.

Deze schaal is vervolgens gebruikt in een studie waarin organisatie-effectiviteit wordt onderzocht, samen met de al eerder genoemde constructen person-organization fit en affectief organisatiecommitment. Omdat organisatie-effectiviteit een nieuw construct is, zijn hypotheses over de relaties tussen de constructen niet direct te baseren op eerder onderzoek. De parallel tussen het nieuwe construct organisatie-effectiviteit en het bestaande onderzoek naar groepseffectiviteit maakt het echter wel mogelijk om een inschatting te maken van de relatie met andere attitudes. De resultaten bevestigen deze hypotheses deels: hoewel in geen van de twee onderzochte organisaties werd een relevant interactie-effect gevonden tussen beide voorspellers, kan geconcludeerd worden dat zowel person-organization fit als organizational efficacy bijdragen aan affectief organisatiecommitment. Bij person-organization fit is dat niet echt nieuw, maar voor organisatie-effectiviteit des te meer. Het is dus gelukt om een construct toe te voegen aan het arsenaal van relevante werkattitudes – en daarbij een schaal te valideren die gebruikt kan worden om dit te onderzoeken.

Tot op dit punt van het proefschrift is communicatie impliciet gebleven. Het is wel duidelijk dat de beelden die leden hebben van hun organisaties' waarden en effectiviteit ergens vandaan moeten komen. De bijdrage van de leidinggevende aan die beelden wordt onderzocht in *hoofdstuk 7*. Er is gekozen voor de communicatie met de direct leidinggevende, omdat die de aangewezen persoon is om de bredere context te schetsen van het werk dat mensen doen en de organisatie waarin dat gebeurt. Daarom wordt verondersteld dat tevredenheid met de communicatie van de leidinggevende een bijdrage levert aan het affectieve commitment van de medewerker. Daarbij wordt de verwachting getest dat deze relatie bestaat via de beelden die deze communicatie oproept van het willen en kunnen van de organisatie. Met andere woorden: of de communicatie met de leidinggevende van invloed is op commitment, omdat de communicatieve relatie met een leidinggevende een beeld creëert van de person-organization fit met en de organizational efficacy van de organisatie.

Uit de resultaten blijkt dat de tevredenheid over deze relatie inderdaad van invloed is op affectief commitment én dat deze relatie deels gemediëerd wordt door zowel organizational efficacy als person-organization fit. Om concrete aanbevelingen te kunnen doen voor de dagelijkse communicatie tussen leidinggevenden en medewerkers is ook nagegaan welke concrete communicatieactiviteiten bijdragen aan de algemene evaluatie van communicatietevredenheid. De twee belangrijkste elementen die daaruit naar voren komen zijn de tevredenheid met de mate van feedback die een manager geeft en het gegeven of de leidinggevende tijd neemt om naar de medewerker te luisteren. Deze twee elementen geven aan dat de interactie tussen medewerker en leidinggevende van groot belang is voor de uiteindelijke tevredenheid met deze relatie.

In *hoofdstuk 8* wordt allereerst een algemene terugblik gegeven op de onderwerpen die in de verschillende hoofdstukken zijn aangestipt. Op basis van de studies wordt onder andere gesteld dat de invloed van organisatiewaarden (dus los van interacties en fit) op commitment meer aandacht verdient. Verder wordt aangegeven dat voorzichtigheid geboden is wanneer mensen aangeven wat hun individuele waarden zijn of wanneer ze hun effectiviteit moeten inschatten.

Vervolgens wordt de communicatiebenadering die in dit onderzoek gebruikt is, geëvalueerd. Met behulp van een metatheoretisch model van Craig (1999) wordt de benadering geïdentificeerd als sociaal-psychologisch, waarna de zes andere benaderingen uit het model gebruikt worden als perspectieven om de kracht en zwakte van het onderzoek aan het licht te brengen. De belangrijkste conclusie is dat door deze kwantitatieve benadering (die gericht is op het trekken van algemene conclusies gebaseerd op generalisatie van individuele antwoorden) de context weggegeneraliseerd wordt, terwijl de onderzochte processen juist erg contextgevoelig kunnen zijn.

Naast alle voorstellen voor vervolgonderzoek die bij de specifieke hoofdstukken worden uitgewerkt, worden twee hoofdthema's in de literatuur uitgewerkt voor mogelijk vervolgonderzoek. Beiden zijn gerelateerd aan het belang van context zoals dat in het voorgaande is aangereikt. De twee onderwerpen zijn *job crafting* en de *metaconversation*.

Het job crafting-perspectief (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001) laat zien dat een baan niet een vaststaand setje taken is waar mensen een mening over hebben, maar dat werkenden op basis van hun mening over werk dat setje taken kunnen gaan beïnvloeden. Daarnaast hebben werkenden een zekere bewegingsvrijheid om interpersoonlijk contact op het werk te sturen en kan hetzelfde werk op een andere manier geframed worden. Zo zijn er schoonmakers in een ziekenhuis die precies hetzelfde werk doen, maar anders benaderen: terwijl de één vooral het idee heeft de rotzooi achter de heren doktoren op te moeten ruimen, ziet de ander zichzelf als een noodzakelijk en integraal onderdeel van het beter maken van patiënten. Beide houdingen kunnen gevolgen hebben voor de manier waarop het werk zelf, het takenpakket en de relaties met mensen die in de werkcontext aanwezig zijn.

De metaconversation is een taalkundig perspectief op de manier waarop organisaties ‘ontstaan’. Door taal (bijvoorbeeld: gesprekken binnen een groep) ontstaat een gedeeld referentiekader over onder andere de doelen, omgangsvormen, waarden en vaardigheden van het collectief. Dit referentiekader wordt vervolgens weer opnieuw ingebracht in nieuwe gesprekken of in gedrag waardoor dit beeld versterkt wordt. Sterker nog, het wordt mogelijk om iemand *namens* een organisatie te laten spreken, waarmee dus iemand een entiteit buiten zichzelf kan vertegenwoordigen – ook al is die entiteit ‘slechts’ een cognitief beeld, mede vormgegeven door de keuze voor aankleding van interieuren en toegeschreven status aan personen binnen de groep.

Nieuw onderzoek zou kunnen nagaan in hoeverre deze twee processen (job crafting en metaconversation) elkaar overlappen. Want hoewel job crafting als een individuele evaluatie wordt afgeschilderd en wordt begrensd door collega’s en managementcontrole, zijn juist deze interacties met anderen een plaats waar input verzameld wordt over de inhoud en het belang van het werk. Tegelijk kan de heel abstracte analyse over het ontstaan van een organisatie uit taal mogelijk eenvoudiger te analyseren zijn wanneer die taalgebeurtenissen betrekking hebben op een individu die probeert om een baan te vormen naar eigen inzicht en wensen. Die onderhandeling moet interessante informatie opleveren over de reden waarom het toch altijd weer zo is dat ik op station Deventer altijd dezelfde forensen de trein zie uitstappen – juist voordat ik instap om naar mijn werk te gaan.

Dankwoord

'*One needs a village to write a book*,' schreef Philip Yancey eens. Daarmee gaf hij aan dat boeken schrijven geen individuele bezigheid is, maar dat er een heel dorp aan mensen bij komt kijken. Ik wil u graag een korte rondleiding geven door mijn dorp.

Het waait heel hard – de laatste tijd is er zoveel gebeurd dat het me soms de adem beneemt. Toen ik Wim Elving eens vertelde dat ik onderweg was naar het pittoreske Consultancy, was hij de eerste die me vertelde dat er een dorp als dit bestond. Hij wees me de weg – en vertrok naar de grote stad.

Wanneer je het dorp binnenkomt, valt dat ene gebouw direct op: het grote gebouw dat soms Ivoren Toren genoemd wordt, maar het niet is. Het gerucht gaat dat daar vroeger ook een jonge-hondenhok bij heeft gestaan, maar er is niets meer van terug te vinden.

In dat gebouw werkt onder andere Erwin Seydel, mijn promotor. Hij heeft een kamer op loopafstand van Faculty Club en boekwinkel. Een bijzondere man zonder wiens inbreng dit boek zeker niet had bestaan. Ik heb zoveel vrijheid en vertrouwen van hem gekregen dat het me soms beangstigd heeft, maar zo is dit boek wel geworden wat het is. Erwin, onze oneindige gesprekken over het leven, leiderschap, werknemerstypologieën en advisering hebben iets bij me losgemaakt dat waarschijnlijk nooit meer vast komt te zitten. Ik dank je daarvoor.

Menno de Jong is terug te vinden op de productie-afdeling van het gebouw. Hij heeft me onder andere geleerd om wild fladderende ideeën uit de lucht te schieten en vervolgens smakelijk te bereiden. Het samen schrijven en samen afgeleid worden door onze gedeelde fascinatie voor organisaties en onderzoek leveren plaatjes op om in te lijsten. Met alle plezier zet ik ze zo neer dat iedereen die binnenkomt ze niet missen kan.

Bernard Veldkamp bemant het rekencentrum hier. De beroemde psycholoog Skinner heeft overwogen om zijn boek Verbal Behavior uit 1957 op te dragen aan "the statisticians and scientific methodologists with whose help this book would never have been completed." Ik ben blij dat ik in Bernard een methodologisch referent heb gevonden die bewijst dat het ook anders kan. Ik zie dan ook uit naar onze nieuwe gezamenlijke onderzoeken.

Verder bevinden zich in dit gebouw vele soorten *species*: orgcommers, leerstoelgenoten, gangbewoners, kamerlieden, vrienden. Je moet een beetje gek zijn om hier te werken en ik vind dat we dat heel goed doen met z’n allen.

Ergens in een van die lange gangen bevindt zich ook mijn kamer - en gelukkig zat ik daar niet alleen. Ik vind het een heerlijke traditie dat mijn kamergenotes en ik zo lekker structureel elkaars verjaardagen vergeten. Door te praten over elkaars onderzoek, prijs ik me steeds weer gelukkig dat ik geen patiënten heb hoeven includeren voor mijn onderzoek. Lieke, even reagerend: volgens mij zijn we helemaal niet zo verschillend. Zou dat ook een krachtig gegeven kunnen zijn? Martine, hoewel ik niet altijd zie wat er aan de hand is, vind ik het heel mooi om te praten over de dingen die ons bezighouden. Ik neem nog een *de luxe* op jullie.

In het woud achter de Ivoren Toren staat een boshut waar mijn favoriete atheïst steeds vaker te vinden is: Egbert Woudstra. Hij is een heel belangrijke motivator voor me geweest. Als TCW een vader heeft, dan is hij het wel.

Ergens achter een plant bij het strand zit Jos verdekt opgesteld. Bedankt man, voor alle open en eerlijke communicatie tijdens de wandelingen over de campus. Dat heb ik zeer gewaardeerd.

(In de ongure steegjes van het dorp word ik gelukkig geflankeerd door twee mannen in jacquet. Job en Luuk, het is goed jullie in de buurt te hebben.)

Als we verder lopen, komen we bij de bibliotheek – een prachtige plaats om te zijn. Het is enorm inspirerend om door artikelen en soms zelfs persoonlijk in contact te komen met mensen die over mijn vragen en antwoorden langer, dieper en beter hebben nagedacht. Ik dank ze allemaal, met name G. K. Chesterton, Robert Craig, Stan Deetz, Vaskoslav Drasic, Robert E. Quinn, James Taylor, Karl Weick en Amy Wrzesniewski.

Aan de rand van het dorp –waarschijnlijk in verband met geluidoverlast – staat het studentenhuis. Ik heb met veel studenten van (voornamelijk) de opleiding Toegepaste Communicatiewetenschap contact mogen hebben, vaak tot mijn grote plezier. Het is toch heerlijk om te debatteren over de noodzaak van deadlines voor academische vrijheid? Nieuwsgierige studenten zijn het mooiste wat je overkomen kan als docent. Ik dank in het bijzonder de afstudeerders met wie ik heb gewerkt. Het is een luxe door al hun verhalen en ervaringen die prachtige methode van organisatieonderzoek te kunnen bedrijven die Weick *virtual ethnography in the armchair* heeft genoemd.

Op het bedrijventerrein van dit dorp bevinden zich de organisaties die op enig moment hebben meegewerkt aan deze reeks van onderzoeken. Ik dank mijn contactpersonen, de respondenten, managers en ondernemingsraden voor hun commitment aan de vragen die me zo intrigeren.

Het is wat verder lopen, maar wat is een dorp zonder ouderlijk huis? Weer bedankt, onder andere voor alles.

Midden in het dorp, op het grote plein, is een standbeeld in oprichting. Voor Korien, natuurlijk. Ik verheug me meer dan ik zeggen kan op het vooruitzicht dat zij ook zal zijn in elk dorp waar ik nog kom te wonen. De bouwtekeningen voor het standbeeld zijn nog geheim. Maar ik weet al dat als inspiratie dienen: de heldenstatus van Michiel Adriaanszn. de Ruyter uit Vlissingen, de toewijding van de Dokwerker in Amsterdam, en iets met de Zeemeermin van Kopenhagen.

Tim en Anoek, jullie zijn geweldig. Jullie leren me ontdekken hoe het is om echt primair te leven. En geen stopcontact te hoog of…

Ten slotte komen we bij de dorpskerk, bovenop een heuvel. Ik heb met veel bewoners van dit dorp gepraat waarom het er zo pontificaal staat. Voor mij is het echt een belangrijke plaats geweest – om Degene die er woont. Ook al gaat het boek over werk en mensen, ik heb steeds geprobeerd om het voor Hem te schrijven.

We zijn aan het eind gekomen van deze rondleiding. Ik dank u hartelijk voor uw aandacht. Kijkt u gerust nog even rond.

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