

# Differentiating Organizational Commitment From Expectancy as a Motivating Force<sup>1</sup>

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*If the concept of organizational commitment is to have any analytical utility, it must be differentiated from the concept of expectancy. Viewing commitment and expectancy as two independent behavioral forces makes it possible to explain instances of commitment not explicable according to exchange or expectancy theories, such as remaining with an organization despite reward valences being reduced, inequity developing, and expectations not being met. Commitment defined as a force that maintains behavioral direction when expectancy/equity conditions are not met has at least four sources: investments, reciprocity, lack of alternatives, and identification.*

It is difficult to find any comprehensive work on organizations that does not in some way refer to the construct of organizational or employee commitment. Some writers view commitment as a dimension of organizational effectiveness [Schein, 1970]. Others view it as a force that contributes to increased organizational effectiveness by improving worker performance and reducing turnover [Steers, 1977]. Whatever the interpretation, commitment has become a variable of interest because of the belief that increased commitment leads, in some way, to increased organizational effectiveness, and is therefore something worth developing in employees.

Although the literature on commitment is extensive, a comprehensive definition of the term and a model of the commitment process that incorporates divergent points of view does not exist. Is commitment a descriptor of a pattern of employee behaviors encompassing long-term membership and high levels of performance? Is commitment an attitude or, more specifically, a set of behavioral intentions that directs the individual toward long-term membership and high levels of performance?

Is commitment a motivating force that explains behavioral intentions, thus directing individual behavior? Any of these questions can be answered affirmatively, depending on the approach to commitment that is adhered to, leaving unanswered the question of what part of the behavioral process the concept of commitment helps us to explain.

The current literature on commitment is clearly divided into two seemingly divergent schools of thought. One school (variously termed the rational, organizational behavior, or attitudinal school [Porter, Steers, Mowday, & Boulian, 1974; Steers, 1977]) views commitment largely as an employee attitude or, more specifically, a set of behavioral intentions, such as a desire to remain with the organization, an intention to exert high levels of effort on behalf of the organization, and an identification with the organization's goals. The antecedents of these intentions are basically positive work experiences, personal characteristics, and job characteristics. The outcomes of these intentions are increased performance, reduced absenteeism, and reduced turnover [Steers, 1977]. As Staw [1977] suggests, this model takes the general form of expectancy theory, according to which employee behaviors are the result of valued rewards. Salancik [1977] questions the utility of this intervening con-

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struct of commitment in explaining the relationship between positive work experiences and outcomes such as performance, turnover, and absenteeism. If committed individuals are defined in terms of their intentions, it could be argued that commitment explains certain employee behaviors—as Locke [1968] has argued that behavioral intention is the attitude component most closely related to subsequent behavior. However, we would still have to search for the conditions that lead to these intentions (antecedents). Once we had identified these antecedents of commitment, they could be directly related to specific employee behaviors. The concept of commitment would thus lose its analytical utility.

Another school of thought on commitment (variously termed the behavioral, social psychological, or irrational school) has developed largely out of the work of Becker [1960] and Kiesler [1971]. This school views commitment as a force tying the individual to a specific organization. Whereas the attitudinal school uses the commitment concept to explain performance and membership, the behavioral school generally confines itself to the employee membership decision. The behavioral school uses the concept of “investments” to explain membership and in doing so implicitly defines commitment as a type of force directing individual behavior. This approach has some utility, in that commitment viewed as a motivating force acquires predictive and explanatory power it does not have when it is defined as a set of behavioral intentions. In the discussion that follows, commitment will therefore be viewed as a type of motivating force rather than an attitude or a descriptor of a set of behaviors. That is, using the typology of Katz [1964], I will consider individual commitment to be a potential force directing membership, adequate role performance, and innovative and spontaneous behavior (extra-role behavior). Thus, the fact that an individual exhibits one or more of these behaviors is not in itself an indication of high commitment. I will argue that commitment and expectancy are independent motivating forces and that membership, role performance, and extra-role behavior may be the result of high expectancy or high commitment, or a combination of both.

## Commitment versus Expectancy

At first glance, the motivation and commitment literatures tempt one to state that the commitment construct has not added anything to the existing body of knowledge on motivation. Much of the commitment literature clearly suggests an exchange perspective. In examining the organizational behavior literature, one finds that the exchange perspective, starting with the work of Barnard [1938] and continuing with March and Simon's [1958] inducements/contributions model, dominates the work on motivation. Specifically, two popular motivational process models are based on an exchange perspective: equity theory and expectancy theory. But if equity and expectancy theory explain membership and performance in organizations through an exchange process, what is added by arguing that commitment also explains membership and performance and that commitment is developed through a positive exchange relationship with the organization?

If the two motivation models are examined more closely, we find that commitment does have a place, a separate place from that of expectancy, in explaining employee behavior.

### Expectancy as an Explanation of Behavior

The fundamental argument presented in exchange models is that individuals perform for, or make contributions to, an organization in exchange for certain rewards or inducements. Membership and performance are maintained as long as a favorable inducement/contribution balance is maintained. More specific formulations based on the inducement/contribution notion have been developed under the concept of equity theory [Adams, 1963; Homans, 1961; Jacques, 1961]. Adams's version of equity has been the most widely researched and accepted version. He suggests that individuals compare their inputs (contributions) and outcomes (inducements) to the inputs and outcomes of comparable others. Membership and performance continue when there is a balanced ratio between inputs and outcomes as compared to those of others. Imbalance causes the individual to (1) perceptually change inputs or outcomes, (2) actually change inputs or outcomes, or (3) leave the

organization. Reviews of equity theory research have reported errors in some of the specific predictions of equity theory, but there is general support for the basic proposition that individuals attempt to maintain an equitable balance between inputs and outcomes by perceptual change, behavioral change, or leaving [Goodman & Friedman, 1971; Pritchard, 1969]. For example, in a study of hourly employees of a large aerospace firm, Telly, French, and Scott [1971] found that perceptions of inequity were significantly greater in shops experiencing high turnover than in shops with lower turnover rates.

Expectancy theory [Graen, 1969; Lawler, 1973; Porter & Lawler, 1968; Vroom, 1964] is another motivation model that makes use of the exchange concept in explaining the individual decision-making processes of membership and performance. In its general form, expectancy theory predicts that individuals will engage in behavior that they perceive as eventually leading to valued rewards. Theorists agree that at least two general components surface in this individual decision-making process. The first is the value, or valence, of the outcomes or rewards associated with a line of behavior. The outcome can be perceived as having value in itself or because of its instrumentality in achieving other valued ends. The second major variable is expectancy. Expectancy refers to the perceived probability that certain behaviors will lead to specific outcomes. More specific formulations used in explaining job performance break this variable into two components, the first generally termed expectancy and the second, instrumentality. Expectancy refers to the individual's subjective perception that effort will lead to performance; instrumentality refers to the individual's subjective estimate of probability that performance will lead to certain outcomes or rewards. When this model is used in explaining the membership decision, it is unnecessary to break the expectancy component into two elements; therefore, perceived probability that maintenance of membership will lead to certain outcomes will be termed *expectancy* throughout this article. As with exchange theory, there is general support for the major propositions of the expectancy model, but some controversy remains regarding certain components [Campbell & Pritchard, 1976; Heneman & Schwab, 1972; Lawler, 1973].

Three studies have specifically examined the utility of expectancy theory in predicting individual membership decisions. In the first, Vroom [1966] studied the process of choice by MBA students about to select an employer. He reported a strong relationship between the attractiveness of an organization that students were considering and an index of the instrumentality of these organizations. That is, students rated those organizations that they perceived as instrumental in achieving individual goals as being high in attractiveness. What is more important, Vroom discovered that 76 percent of the students actually chose the organization with the highest instrumentality score of the positions offered them. Mitchell and Knudsen [1973] also reported support for expectancy theory in that they found the perceived instrumentality of business as an occupation for achieving valued goals was related to students' choice of business as an occupation. In another study of the membership decision, Mitchell and Albright [1972] were able to predict job satisfaction and retention of naval aviation officers using a goal instrumentality index.

In summary, a combined expectancy/equity model posits that individuals engage in certain behaviors when they perceive equitable rewards to be the result of these behaviors. Fundamentally, this expectancy/equity notion can account for choices among alternative behaviors, but how well does it do in explaining consistency or stability of behavioral *direction*? Conceptually, one would predict that a line of behavior would be maintained when the following conditions are satisfied: (1) constant equity or satisfaction with rewards, (2) maintenance of high valence of rewards (stable needs), and (3) continually met expectations (to maintain expectancy). Thus, according to the tenets of expectancy and equity theory, when one or more of these conditions is not met, an individual would be predicted to discontinue the line of behavior. In more specific terms, given that an individual joined an organization based on the expectation of receiving certain valued rewards, one would expect him or her to quit the organization if these expectations were not met. Additionally, quitting would be predicted if the valence of the expected reward were lowered substantially.

Empirically, some problems with expectancy as a

complete explanation of stability of membership have been found. In a follow-up of Vroom's [1966] study of college MBA students, Vroom and Deci [1971] found an overall trend for their sample to reduce the perceived attractiveness of the organization that they chose at graduation, although a large proportion of them were still with that organization. Much earlier, Chinoy [1952] documented a pattern of worker expectations. Many of the auto workers that he studied started out with high expectations of "getting ahead." A large number of these workers maintained employment in the auto industry even though these expectations were not met. In a study of cocktail waitresses, Hearn and Stull [1975] found a similar pattern of expectations. The subjects they studied began employment with high expectations of intrinsic satisfaction through interactions with clients and co-workers as well as monetary rewards. These expectations were short-lived, as the cocktail waitresses quickly learned that their work was not conducive to expressive interpersonal relationships or the development of feelings of self-worth. Nevertheless, although their expectations were not met, many of them continued working as cocktail waitresses.

In discussing the high frequency of dissatisfaction and alienation among nurses, Kramer [1974] cites the discrepancy between initial expectations created in nursing school and the realities of a hospital working environment. Clearly this "reality shock" [Dunnette, Avery, Banas, 1973; Hall & Schneider, 1973] can be seen as a major cause for nurses quitting, but how does one account for the many nurses who remain in spite of reality shock? In other words, how can continued employment be accounted for when reward valences change, inequity develops, or expectations are not met? Three possible explanations are that individuals find other valued rewards associated with continued employment, re-evaluate expectations, or, as Adams [1963] suggests, make perceptual changes in either outcomes or inputs.

There is a major conceptual problem with this explanation. If it is assumed that the behavioral direction is established and expectations are changed to be in line with this direction, a circular argument has been created. Expectancy is no longer the force maintaining direction, but rather

direction is the mechanism guiding expectancy. Expectancy can no longer be used as an explanation of continued direction. The basic problem here is one identified by Angyal in discussing goals in general. He stated that "it is not the goal which defines direction, but on the contrary, the intrinsic pattern of direction which defines what object can become a goal" [1958, p. 55]. More recently, Salancik and Pfeffer [1977] have questioned the conceptual basis of need/goal models. They suggest that needs lose their explanatory power once it is agreed that needs change to be consistent with the behavior they are supposed to be explaining. Rosenberg's studies of affective/cognitive attitudinal consistency illustrate this point. In his early studies [1953, 1956], Rosenberg was able to substantiate his contention that affect toward an object (e.g., an organization) would be highly correlated with an individual's cognitive index, which is a measure of the perceived instrumentality of that object in attaining valued ends. These findings led to the general conclusion that affect toward an object (e.g., job satisfaction) is largely determined by cognitions relevant to that object (i.e., expectancy  $\times$  valence). In his later studies [1960a, 1960b], Rosenberg altered affect toward certain objects through hypnotic manipulation of his subjects and later measured their cognitions related to these objects. As he predicted, subjects changed in both perceived instrumentality and value statements regarding these objects. While cognitions can have an important role in shaping affect, we also find that altered affect can change cognitions. Returning to the employment models, we see that although expectancy may lead to a consistent behavioral direction, once established the direction may cause expectancy to change.

A study of ROTC membership by Staw [1974] clearly exemplifies this phenomenon. Initial membership of his sample of ROTC candidates clearly follows the expectancy explanations. The candidates joined ROTC for the expected reward of avoiding the draft. The question surfaced as to what would happen if this reward lost its valence. This is precisely what happened for a number of the candidates when the lottery draft system eliminated them from the draft. ROTC was no longer a path necessary to avoid the draft. As predicted by

expectancy theory and equity theory, many of the candidates who were eliminated from the draft by the lottery system resigned. Those who remained either (1) still saw ROTC as a path to avoiding the draft, or (2) developed other reasons for maintaining membership; in expectancy theory terms, they perceived ROTC as instrumental in attaining new rewards of high valence. The question remains, Were these new-found rewards the force that actually maintained membership? Staw suggests that another external force, a signed contract, is what maintained membership. This contract obligated candidates to a certain number of years of military service in exchange for their education. Those without a contract tended to leave ROTC while those with a contract remained and subsequently reported new reasons for continuing. This fact calls into question the explanatory power of expectancy theory as a complete model of continued employment. Although one cannot discount the power of expectancy as a stabilizing force, there is much evidence to suggest that it is not fully adequate as an explanation of stability. An alternative explanation should be considered.

### **Commitment as an Explanation of Behavior**

An alternative explanation of behavioral stability lies in the concept of commitment. As a force directing behavior, it must be conceptually differentiated from current motivation models—specifically, expectancy and equity. For this reason, commitment will be defined here as *a stabilizing force that acts to maintain behavioral direction when expectancy/equity conditions are not met and do not function*. The question arises, If commitment is to be considered an alternative stabilizing force, what mechanisms, independent from both the behavior and expectancy, increase an individual's commitment to a given behavioral direction? Again, these mechanisms must be distinct from simple exchange mechanisms. A search of the literature reveals at least four possible commitment mechanisms: (1) investments, (2) reciprocity, (3) lack of alternatives, and (4) identification.

**Investments** Based on Becker's [1960] early arguments, a number of empirical investigations have attempted to verify the proposition that indi-

vidual investments into a particular organization act as a stabilizing or maintenance mechanism. Specifically, investments (termed "side bets" by Becker) are posited to decrease an individual's propensity to leave the organization. Investments can be thought of as contributions whereby a future gain from present participation is tied to continuance of membership [Kantor, 1968]. In terms of inducements/contributions, there is a time lag in the exchange: the individual makes a contribution today in expectation of future inducements. This is posited to tie the individual to the organization, even when the individual becomes dissatisfied with aspects of the exchange. The concept of "paying dues" nicely captures this idea. Investments can also be viewed in terms of alternative opportunities forgone [Blau, 1967].

The research undertaken to test this proposition has been cross-sectional in design. To test the hypothesis that the more investments an individual has put into an organization, the lower the propensity will be to leave it, high-investment members have been compared to low-investment members with respect to propensity to leave. The investments chosen for investigation have been general classes such as age, education, and tenure. These choices have been based on the assumption that as age and tenure increase, the investments will increase. In a sense, age and tenure have been used as a surrogate measure of investment. Kantor [1968] took another approach in researching this question. She examined the actual type of investments made by utopian communities and determined that increased investments made by members did in fact increase the stability of the community.

One of the first studies using the cross-sectional design was conducted by Ritzer and Trice [1969], who examined the relationship between a number of individual factors purported to represent increased investment—such as age, tenure, and education—and the propensity to leave an organization. As in most of the investment or side-bet studies, Ritzer and Trice operationalized commitment in terms of the amount of external inducement it would take to draw individuals away from the organization. This was done by asking subjects if they would consider leaving the organization for

specified increments of additional reward. The rewards used in this study were pay, freedom, status, responsibility, and opportunity to get ahead. On analysis, Ritzer and Trice found little relationship among the investment variables and their measure of commitment, which led them to conclude that the investment argument is weak and that commitment is largely a psychological process rather than a structural one.

In a partial replication of the Ritzer and Trice study, Aranya and Jacobson [1975] were unable to confirm the proposition that marital status, number of children, and salary were related to propensity to leave the organization. However, a number of investigations using similar methods [Alutto, Hrebiniak, & Alonso, 1973; Sheldon, 1971; Shoemaker, Snizek, & Bryant, 1977] did support the side-bet notion. These studies found a positive relationship between their measures of investment (tenure, age, and education) and propensity to remain.

What can account for these contradictory findings? There is a major issue that must be addressed before evaluating them. In order to investigate the investment notion adequately, one must consider the boundaries of the system to which the investment is made—that is, the specificity of the investment. An interesting corollary finding of the Ritzer and Trice study was that personnel administration majors expressed a greater propensity to remain in the personnel field than did general business administration majors. This finding indicates that if an educational investment is specific to a particular occupation or organization, then commitment to that occupation or organization would increase. Alternatively, an investment may be general enough to be applicable outside a particular occupation or organization, in which case no increased commitment would be predicted. This explanation ties in nicely with the concept of “locals,” those whose commitment is largely to their employing organizations, and “cosmopolitans,” those whose commitment is generally to their occupation [Gouldner, 1957].

In addition to the issue of specificity, there is another issue related to investment. Financial analysts have suggested that, in examining alternative investment opportunities, firms should consider the notion of sunk costs—investments that cannot

be recovered. The popular saying “today is the first day of the rest of your life” conveys this same message. Commitment based on investment suggests that some individuals have difficulty in following this logic. Assuming individual differences are involved in the commitment process, it seems likely that they would surface as different levels of tolerance to not recovering investments in a line of behavior. Are there some individuals who are able to make substantial changes in spite of large investments, and others who have difficulty making small changes in the face of rather small investments?

When the issue of specificity of investments, the surrogate measures of investment, the question of individual differences, and the studies that support the investment explanation are considered, one does find evidence that commitment is at least in part related to investment. Specifically, investments can act to tie an individual to a particular organization in spite of lowered expectations.

**Reciprocity** Although the literature does not deal specifically with reciprocity as a mechanism of organizational commitment, one can clearly see how the norm of reciprocity would act to hold individuals into a system when either exchange relationships were dissatisfying or more attractive opportunities existed. The most specific theoretical formulation of the norm of reciprocity has been presented by Gouldner [1960], who holds that reciprocity is a generalized and probably universal norm. Specifically, the norm is that (1) people should help those who have helped them, and (2) people should not harm those who have helped them. Whereas investments accrue as individuals make contributions that will be rewarded at a future time, reciprocity would work in the opposite fashion: an individual would receive a benefit, such as training or an opportunity beyond his or her current ability, and would expect to repay it through future performance. If the norm of reciprocity holds, we would expect that the debt incurred through advance rewards would act to hold the individual into a particular system until the debt was repaid. Additionally, we would not expect individuals to leave if doing so would cause any harm to an employer who has helped them. This notion may be viewed as speculative, but it does provide a point of departure in examining

commitment processes. Unfortunately, although others have discussed the reciprocity notion [Berkowitz & Daniels, 1964; Goranson & Berkowitz, 1966; Levinson, 1965], there has been no investigation directly testing the strength of reciprocity as a basis of commitment in an organizational setting. Of particular interest for future research would be the question of what constitutes a benefit to an employee. For reciprocity to be operative, a reward received by an individual must be beyond what is expected.

**Alternatives** Salancik [1977] has suggested that, as an individual's experiences become more specific to a particular organization, the ability to move from that organization decreases. Becker expressed much the same idea when he stated that "a person may so alter his pattern of activities in the process of conforming to the requirements for one social position that he unfits himself for other positions he might have access to" [1960, p. 37]. Becker had developed this idea in studying the career patterns of Chicago school teachers [1952]. Movement throughout the career tended to be horizontal, from less desirable to more desirable schools. However, he found that teachers who adjusted "too well" to the special needs of the schools in lower-class areas, where severe teaching, disciplinary, and parental problems existed, discovered that they were unable to move later into middle-class schools, where the skills they had learned would be considered objectionable. In the same vein, citing Veblen's notion of "trained incapacity," Dubin [1958] suggests that the clearly defined limits of certain organizational roles absolve individuals from the need to learn skills required outside these roles. This sets limits on the future opportunity of the specialist.

In their study of cocktail waitresses, Hearn and Stull [1975] observed that although many of the waitresses interviewed indicated that they were highly dissatisfied with their roles and that their initial expectations were not being met, they expected to continue as cocktail waitresses. Apparently they regarded the skills that they had developed as extremely specific to this line of work and not transferable even to general food-service waitressing.

The possibility that the alternatives being considered are measurably worse than the present

opportunity must also be kept in mind. Again, the study of cocktail waitresses would be relevant. Thibaut and Kelly's [1959] "comparison level for alternatives" nicely handles such cases. Thibaut and Kelly argue that a relationship will endure, even though it might not provide initially expected satisfaction levels, as long as it provides outcomes that are above those for alternative opportunities. So, while there may in fact be a number of opportunities open to an individual, they may be no better than the present one, producing the perception that there are no alternative opportunities.

Again, individual differences might be helpful in explaining differences in employee commitment levels. DeBono [1970] has described two patterns of decision making and problem solving by individuals. "Vertical thinking" is characterized by continued perseverance in a chosen alternative, "lateral thinking" by an ability to identify and examine new and creative alternatives. We would expect vertical thinkers to become more committed than lateral thinkers, owing to the lack of perceived alternatives. Lateral thinkers should be able to identify alternative and imaginative uses for their unique combination of skills and abilities.

**Identification** As Friedman and Havighurst [1954] discovered, work is a major source of status and identification for a large number of individuals. It seems likely that, as an individual becomes more embedded in a social identity, change would become more difficult. This notion has been difficult to test empirically because a number of conceptualizations of commitment include identification as a component of commitment [Buchanan, 1974; Porter et al., 1974; Sheldon, 1971]. If we stick to the concept of commitment as a force leading to consistency of action, it seems reasonable to view identification as a process that increases commitment. Specifically, identification can be defined as the linking of one's social identity to a specific social role. In operationalizing this definition, Stevens, Beyer, and Trice [1978] found that identification was one of a number of factors leading to a decreased propensity to leave the organization among federal service managers. Thus, we can posit that if an alternative opportunity does not allow for maintenance of a particular social identity, we would expect that an individual's commitment to that opportunity would be increased.

## Recapitulation

Thus far, a general model of stability of behavior, with specific reference to a continuance of organizational membership, can be built based on previous theory building and research. This model is built on two fundamental propositions:

*Expectancy Proposition:* The propensity to remain in a particular organization increases as the individual's perceived probability of continued equitable rewards associated with continued membership increases.

*Commitment Proposition:* The propensity to remain in a particular organization increases as an individual's investment to that organization increases, the individual's debt to that organization increases, alternative opportunities become blocked through the acquisition of skills specific to that organization, and the individual's social identity becomes tied to that organization.

A similar argument is made by Wiener and Vardi [1980] in differentiating motivation from commitment. Their models suggest that work behavior is a function of both motivation, a calculative concept, and commitment, a normative, value-based concept. In their view, commitment is a force acting to maintain membership through adherence to certain norms or values, such as a view that individuals should be loyal, should sacrifice for the organization, or should not criticize the organization. In their study of insurance sales agents and staff professionals in a chemical firm, they were able to distinguish between calculative commitment and normative commitment. How might this value-based notion of commitment be linked to the model being presented here? As a point of departure, Kiesler's [1971] work on behavioral commitment is helpful. He suggests that attitudes and values are generally formed to be consistent with behavior. Thus, if an individual were committed to an organization through one of the processes discussed above, we would expect that individual to adopt attitudes and values consistent with long-term membership. The ultimate question requiring more study is whether the normative values are a force acting to maintain long-term membership or are a result of long-term membership.

Farrell and Rusbolt [1981] have presented another model of turnover that closely resembles the expectancy/commitment model. Their model

differentiates satisfaction from commitment and predicts a stronger relationship between commitment and turnover than between satisfaction and turnover. They view satisfaction as a function of a favorable reward/cost analysis (expectancy). Commitment is a more complex variable, being a function of satisfaction, the quality of alternative opportunity, and the magnitude of investments. In testing their model with a controlled laboratory analog of a work setting and a cross-sectional field study, they found support for their contention that commitment would be a stronger predictor than satisfaction of intention to remain and of turnover. Although their findings in turn support the expectancy/commitment model, it is important to note that Farrell and Rusbolt's commitment measure combined expectancy and commitment rather than viewing them as independent forces.

Although the model developed here treats expectancy and commitment as independent behavior-stabilizing forces, it is likely that some expectancy must exist before individuals will engage in behaviors that will commit them to an organization. Kramer [1974] draws an interesting parallel between organizational reality shock and cultural shock as researched by anthropologists. She notes that individuals with a short time perspective in a new culture have a hard time adjusting to it because they are unwilling to make the investments necessary to adjust. Similarly, she suggests that individuals with short time perspectives in an organization will likewise be unwilling to make investments that would commit them to that organization.

## Implications

Applied to the employee membership decision, the expectancy/commitment model suggests a traditional 2 x 2 matrix, representing the two behavioral forces that employees are subjected to. High expectancy is characterized by a positive exchange between the employee and the organization, indicating a perceived match between the individual's needs and the requirements of the job in addition to the expectation of future equitable extrinsic rewards. High commitment is characterized by high investments, reciprocity, lack of alternatives, or identification.

		Commitment	
		Low	High
Expectancy	Low	1	2
	High	3	4

**Figure 1**  
**Expectancy, Commitment, and**  
**Employee Membership Decisions**

The first and most obvious implication from this matrix is that we would expect high turnover only among those employees in cell 1 of the matrix—that is, employees with low levels of both commitment and expectancy. We would expect the rate of turnover for employees in cells 2 and 3 to be the same, and less than for cell 1. Employees in cell 2 would be motivated to stay for reasons of commitment, and those in cell 3 would stay for expected rewards. As for employees in cell 4, at first glance it would make sense to posit that the effects of expectancy and commitment would combine to increase attachment. But further analysis might well suggest that attachment for those in cell 4 would be no greater than that of employees in cells 2 and 3. The rationale behind this prediction is that while individuals hold high expectations they would be unlikely to consider the effects of commitment processes. For example, those expecting a long-term career with regular advancement would be unlikely to consider the fact that they have made investments into their company, unless something happened to change their expectations, in which case the commitment consideration would become salient. This prediction was supported in a study of career expectations and commitments in two savings and loan institutions [Scholl, 1979]. In this study, employees with no previous organizational experience (low commitment) and no expectation of future promotions (low expectancy) reported shorter-term intent to remain and had a higher

turnover rate than did employees with longer experience with the organization or high expectations of advancement. No differences in either intent to remain or turnover were found among individuals in cells 2, 3, or 4.

Although the decision to remain with the organization may be the same for those in cells 2, 3, and 4, this is not say that there are no differences in their employment exchange. Further theory building and research in this area might examine differences among these individuals in performance. My focus has been on the relationship between commitment and membership, but of course commitment has also been studied in relation to performance. How would individuals in the various cells differ in such variables as work involvement, central life interests, and other measures of orientation to work, as well as specific performance dimensions? Would there be differences in the level of extra-role behavior among individuals in the various cells?

## Concluding Remarks

If the concept of organizational commitment is to have any analytical utility, it must be conceptually differentiated from current exchange perspectives on motivation. Models that view commitment as a set of behavioral intentions derived from a positive exchange relationship or the expectation of future rewards really do not add to expectancy theory or equity theory as explanations of behavior.

If commitment is viewed as a force distinct from expectancy, it can be used to explain instances of behavioral direction being maintained despite lowered expectancy through either changes in subjective probabilities or changes in reward valences. What is needed now is a closer examination of the processes of commitment. The four processes explored in this article—investments, reciprocity, lack of alternatives, and identification—are not meant to be considered an exhaustive list. Others should be identified. It is also clear from reviewing the research on these processes that more work is needed for a fuller understanding of how they work and how they are affected by individual differences. Finally, research is needed to determine how commitment and expectancy combine to affect such variables as job involvement, central life interests, job satisfaction, and work performance.

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