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# Organizational Commitment: Three Research Models Proposal

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## **Abstract**

*Organizational commitment is a vital subject for all organizations that are trying to establish a sustainable business model. In all studies examining the effects of variables on organizational commitment, the research models are designed as all three dimensions of the organizational commitment are distinct variables that are not affecting each other. This research model is valid if the researcher is only trying to investigate the effects of the independent variables on the dimensions. However, if the organizational commitment is being investigated, then the research models should be different. This study tries to examine how the research models should be designed as per research purpose and demonstrates the difference between currently used and the proposed research models by using a sample dataset from a previous study.*

**Keywords:** *Organizational Commitment, Continuance Commitment, Affective Commitment, Normative Commitment*

**JEL Code:** *M12, M51, M54*

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## **1. Introduction**

Organizations have to keep their employees, which is the most important resource that an organization may have, committed to achieving organizational goals. The high level of organizational commitment causes superior business performance, improved productivity, and profitability, employee retention, customer satisfaction, improved workplace culture and harmony, and hence, sustainable business. Therefore, organizational commitment has been one of the most studied variables.

As per the three-component model (TCM) of organizational commitment, it has three dimensions: affective commitment (AC), which reflects the emotional attachment of employee and employee's desire to remain with the organization; normative commitment (NC), which is employee's sense of obligation to remain with the organization; and continuance commitment

(CC) that is employee’s awareness of the costs associated with leaving the organization (Allen and Meyer, 1990; Meyer and Allen, 1991; Meyer, Stanley, and Parfyonova, 2012).

As far as concerning OC, there can be three different research purposes:

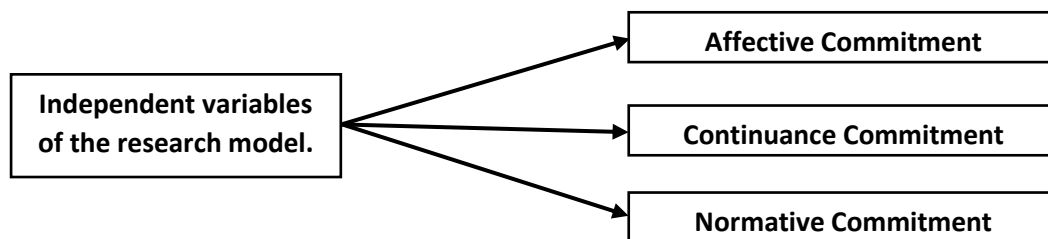
- i- To investigate the effects of the independent variables on each dimension of OC. In this case, the researcher is not interested in the overall OC, but only AC, NC, and CC.
- ii- To investigate the employee’s desire to remain with the organization. In this case, the only variable that the researcher is interested in is CC and the effects of other OC components (e.g, AC and NC) on CC.
- iii- Or to investigate overall OC. In this case, the researcher is not interested in each one of those three dimensions but the product of them, e.g., OC.

In this study, a research model for each purpose listed above will be proposed, and differences between them will be demonstrated.

## 2. Proposed Research Models

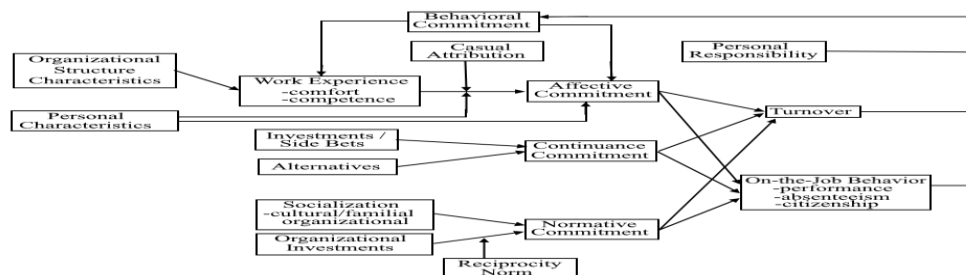
**Propose Research Model #1 (Currently Used Research Model):** The research models of all studies using Allen and Meyer (1990) organizational commitment (OC) scale that are trying to investigate the effects of other variables on dimensions of OC is illustrated in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Current Research Models



If the primary goal of the researcher is to assess the effects of independent variables on each dimension of OC separately, then that is the research model should be used. Furthermore, if the researcher aims to assess the effect of each dimension on other variables, this model is still valid, as shown in Figure 2, where Meyer and Allen (1991) have listed all variables that are reported to affect AC, NC, and CC and their effects on other variables.

Figure 2. A Three-component Model of Organizational Commitment



Source: Meyer & Allen, 1991:68

In short, if the researcher is interested in what effect (or being affected by) AC, NC, and CC, then this research model should be used.

**Proposed Research Model #2:** In the work of Meyer and Allen (1991:71), where they try to assess the antecedent of dimensions of OC, they wrote, “*because continuance commitment reflects the recognition of costs associated with leaving the organization, anything that increases perceived costs can be considered an antecedent.*”

However, to my best knowledge, none of the studies have included AC and NC as antecedents of CC in their research models, although anything that increases the perceived cost of leaving the organization should be considered an antecedent of CC.

By definition of TCM,

*“according to the three-component model (TCM) of organizational commitment, commitment can take multiple forms, each characterized by a different psychological state or mindset. Affective commitment (AC) reflects an emotional attachment and desire to remain with the organization, normative commitment (NC) is experienced as a sense of obligation to remain, and continuance commitment (CC) reflects an awareness of the costs associated with leaving”* (Meyer, Stanley, and Parfyonova, 2012:1),

we can conclude that there are consequences of leaving the organization even if the employee has only emotionally attached to the organization (AC) or has feeling responsibility (NC). Because some items in the CCS are not only implying financial consequences but also physiological (listed below).

- *It would be very hard for me to leave my organization right now, even if I wanted to.*
- *Too much in my life would be disrupted if I decided I wanted to leave my organization now.*
- *It wouldn't be too costly for me to leave my organization now.*

If the researcher believes that the employee's decision to stay with the organization is the sign of commitment, or if the researcher is interested in what causes the employee to remain with the organization, then CC is the commitment itself, and therefore, the model proposed in Figure 3 should be used.

In this model, the CC is the dependent variable, while AC and NC are mediators. As mentioned, the AC and NC affect CC and, therefore, any independent variable that affects any of those two (e.g., AC and NC) should affect CC as well since CC does not measure just financial costs, but also physiological, social cost, and the term *cost* may differ from person to person (e.g., financial, physiological, social).

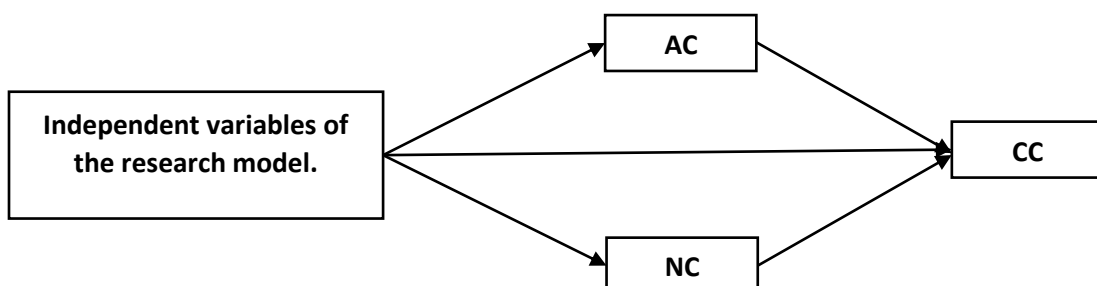
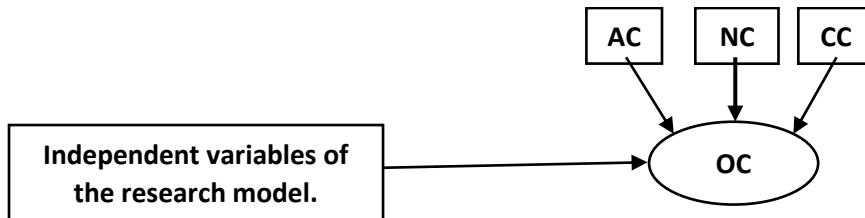


Figure 2. Proposed Research Model #2

In this proposed research model, the OC is being measured with CC. Moreover, CC is considered the product of the independent variable(s), and both AC and NC.

**Proposed Research Model #3:** In this model, OC is a latent variable, a formative second-order construct that is the product of AC, NC, and CC (Figure 4).

Figure 3. Proposed Research Model #3



In this research model, the OC is the blend of the AC, NC, and CC; as Meyer and Allen (1991:67-68) stated,

*“...it is more appropriate to consider affective, continuance, and normative commitment as components...of commitment... it seems more reasonable to expect that an employee can experience all three forms of commitment to varying degrees. One employee, for example, might feel both a strong desire and a strong need to remain, but little obligation to do so; another might feel little desire, a moderate need, and a strong obligation, and so on. An important implication of viewing commitment in this way...is that the various forms of commitment might be expected to interact to influence behavior.”*

This research model should be used in the studies where the researcher is trying to investigate the overall OC and impact of each dimension (e.g., AC, NC, and CC) on OC.

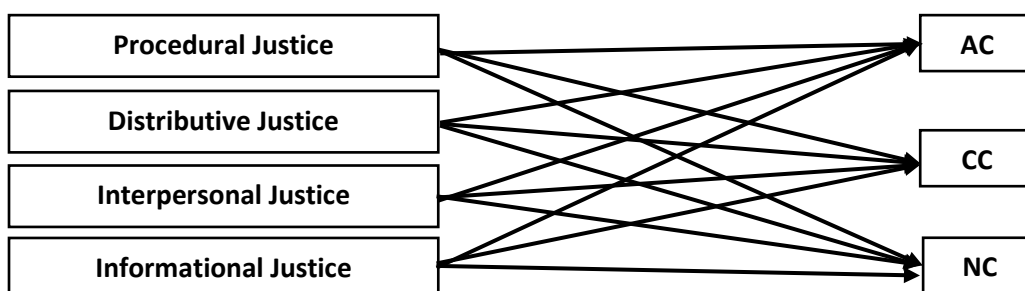
### 3. Research Design

The dataset used in the research conducted by Çolakoğlu, Dikili, and Aslan (2021) was used to test each model. In their research, Çolakoğlu, Dikili, and Aslan investigated the effect of perceived organizational justice on the dimensions of organizational commitment.

Based on the explanations above, three different models were designed and illustrated in Figures 5, 6, and 7.

The research model that is given in Figure 5, is to demonstrate *the proposed research*

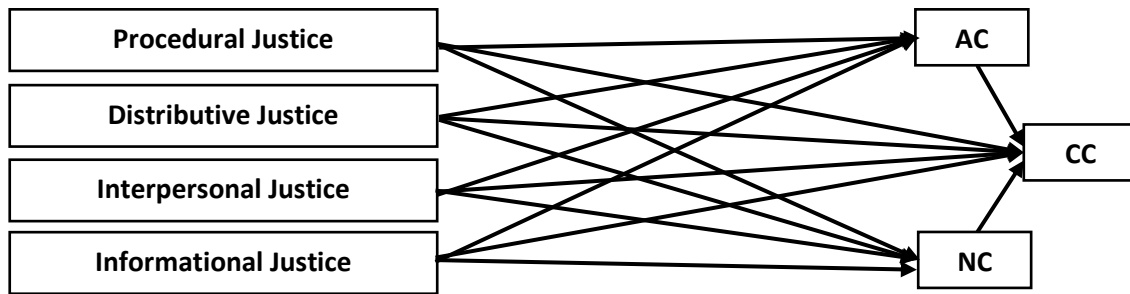
Figure 4. Research Model #1



model #1.

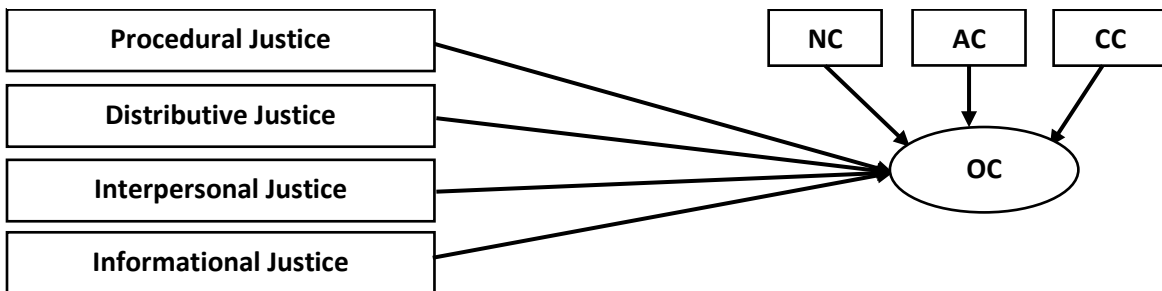
The research model that is given in Figure 6, is to demonstrate *the proposed research model #2*.

Figure 5. Research Model #2



Finally, the research model that is given in Figure 7, is to demonstrate *the proposed*

Figure 6. Research Model #3



*research model #3*.

#### 4. Measures

In their research, Çolakoğlu, Dikili, and Aslan (2021) used the scale developed by Colquitt (2001) and adapted into Turkish by Özmen, Arbak and Özer (2005) to measure Perceived Organizational Justice. To measure the Organizational Commitment, they used the scale developed by Allen and Meyer (1990) and adapted into Turkish by Wasti (2000).

##### 4.1. Sampling

Çolakoğlu, Dikili, and Aslan (2021) conducted their research with the participation of employees of a specific department and the same position of a single business organization operating in retail business and located in Istanbul Province. They adopted a total count sampling method. They reached all 142 sales personnel but only used 131 of the returned questionnaires. The majority of participants (76.3%) are university graduates, 64% of participants are male, and 36% female, and about 59% of them are 26-34 years old.

## 4.2. Findings

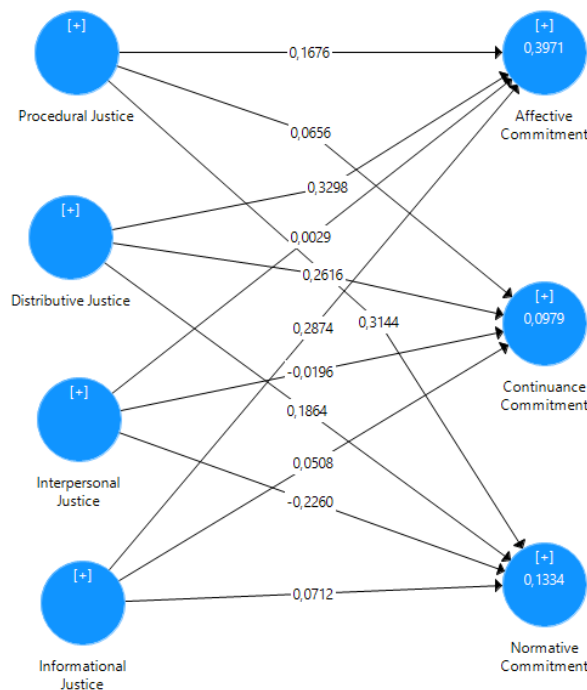
All analyses were performed by using SmartPLS 3.2.9. Although Çolakoğlu, Dikili, and Aslan (2021) had performed internal consistency reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity analyses performed again for verification purposes. Cronbach’s Alpha and Composite Reliability (CR) coefficients were used to verify the internal consistency and reliability of the scales. Average Variance Extracted (AVE) and factor loadings were used to determine the merger validity. The discriminant validity is verified with the heterotrait-monotrait (HTMT) ratio of the correlations (HTMT) method proposed by Henseler, Ringle, and Sarstedt (2015). All the results obtained from these analyses, and also VIF were in line with the results reported by Çolakoğlu, Dikili, and Aslan (2021). It is concluded that internal consistency reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity were established.

## 4.3. Testing Proposed Models

### 4.3.1. Proposed Model #1 (Current Model Used in Researches)

Model #1 is designed (Figure 8) as a way that can be found in all research models investigating OC, i.e., AC, NC, and CC are distinct entities and do not affect each other.

Figure 8. Structural Model of Model #1



The R<sup>2</sup> of Proposed Model #1 in Table 1:

Table 1. R<sup>2</sup> Values of Model #1

	R <sup>2</sup>	R <sup>2</sup> Adjusted
Affective Commitment	0,397	0,378
Continuanance Commitment	0,098	0,069
Normative Commitment	0,133	0,106

The path coefficients and significance of effects obtained are given in Table 2.

Table 2. Path Coefficients and Significance of The Effects

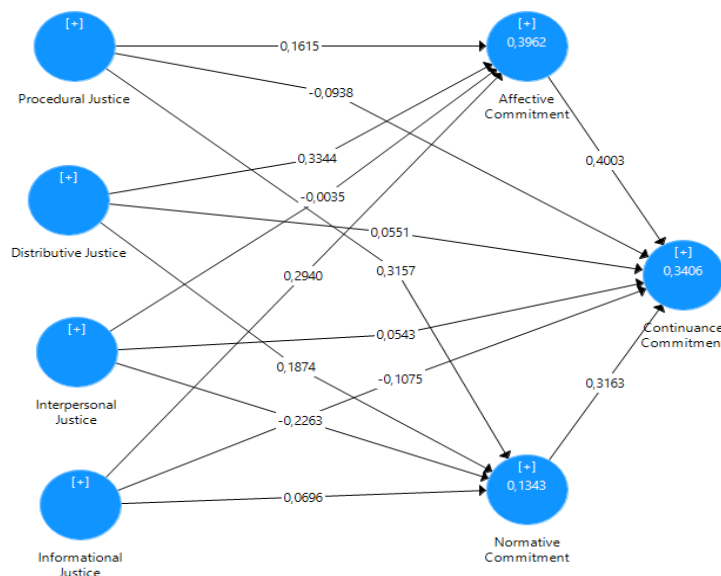
Path	$\beta$
Distributive Justice -> Affective Commitment	0,330***
Distributive Justice -> Continuance Commitment	0,262*
Distributive Justice -> Normative Commitment	0,186
Informational Justice -> Affective Commitment	0,287*
Informational Justice -> Continuance Commitment	0,051
Informational Justice -> Normative Commitment	0,071
Interpersonal Justice -> Affective Commitment	0,003
Interpersonal Justice -> Continuance Commitment	-0,02
Interpersonal Justice -> Normative Commitment	-0,226
Procedural Justice -> Affective Commitment	0,168
Procedural Justice -> Continuance Commitment	0,066
Procedural Justice -> Normative Commitment	0,314*

$\beta$ : Standardized Coefficients; \* $p < 0,05$ ; \*\* $p < 0,01$ ; \*\*\* $p < 0,001$

#### 4.3.2. Proposed Model #2

Model #2 is designed (Figure 9) to reflect the effects of AC, NC, and all independent variables on CC. As mentioned before, this model is investigating the CC.

Figure 9. Structural Model of Model #2



The  $R^2$  of Proposed Model #2 along with Model #1 in Table 3:

Table 3.  $R^2$  Values of Model #2

	$R^2$ (Model #1)	$R^2$ (Model #2)
Affective Commitment	0,397	0,396
Continuance Commitment	0,098	0,341

Normative Commitment	0,133	0,134
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The path coefficients and significance of effects obtained from both models are given in Table 4.

Table 4. Model #2: Path Coefficients and Significance of Direct and Indirect Effects

Path	$\beta$ (Model #1)	$\beta$ (Model #2)
Distributive Justice -> Affective Commitment	0,330***	0,334***
Distributive Justice -> Continuance Commitment	0,262*	0,055
Distributive Justice -> Normative Commitment	0,186	0,187
Informational Justice -> Affective Commitment	0,287*	0,294*
Informational Justice -> Continuance Commitment	0,051	-0,108
Informational Justice -> Normative Commitment	0,071	0,07
Interpersonal Justice -> Affective Commitment	0,003	-0,004
Interpersonal Justice -> Continuance Commitment	-0,02	0,054
Interpersonal Justice -> Normative Commitment	-0,226	-0,226
Procedural Justice -> Affective Commitment	0,168	0,161
Procedural Justice -> Continuance Commitment	0,066	-0,094
Procedural Justice -> Normative Commitment	0,314*	0,316*
Affective Commitment -> Continuance Commitment		0,400**
Normative Commitment -> Continuance Commitment		0,316**
Distributive Justice -> Affective Commitment -> Continuance		0,134*
Informational Justice -> Affective Commitment -> Continuance		0,118
Interpersonal Justice -> Affective Commitment -> Continuance		-0,001
Procedural Justice -> Affective Commitment -> Continuance		0,065
Distributive Justice -> Normative Commitment -> Continuance		0,059
Informational Justice -> Normative Commitment -> Continuance		0,022
Interpersonal Justice -> Normative Commitment -> Continuance		-0,072
Procedural Justice -> Normative Commitment -> Continuance		0,100

$\beta$ : Standardized Coefficients; \* $p < 0,05$ ; \*\* $p < 0,01$ ; \*\*\* $p < 0,001$

Since the mediating effect of AC is observed, the VAF Value is calculated as 0,708 for Distributive Justice->AC->CC. The VAF value (0,708<0,800) shows that AC has a partial mediator role (Hair et al., 2014:224), although the mediating effect is very strong, or full mediator as per Zhao, Lynch, and Chen (2010).

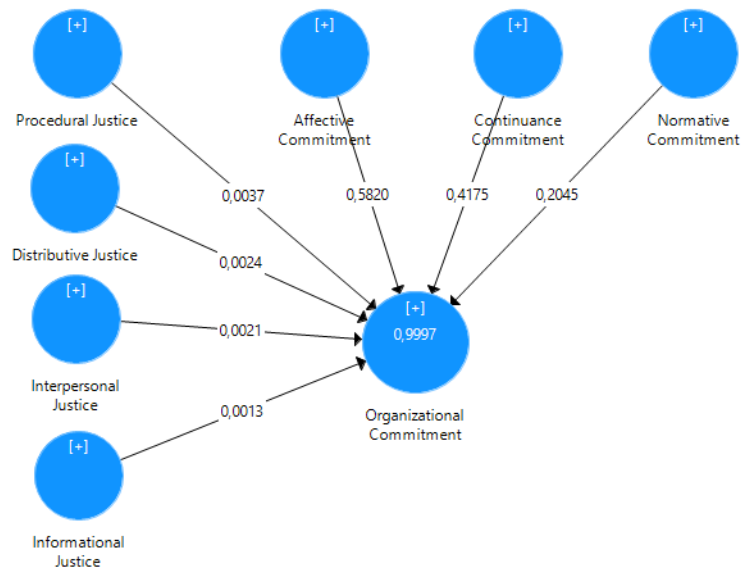
This mediating effect of AC would not be discovered if the research was done by using current research models (e.g., Model #1).

#### 4.3.3. Proposed Model #3

Model #3 is designed (Figure 10) to reflect the effects of AC, NC, CC, and all independent variables on OC, a latent variable. As mentioned before, this model considers OC as a blend of AC, NC, and CC.

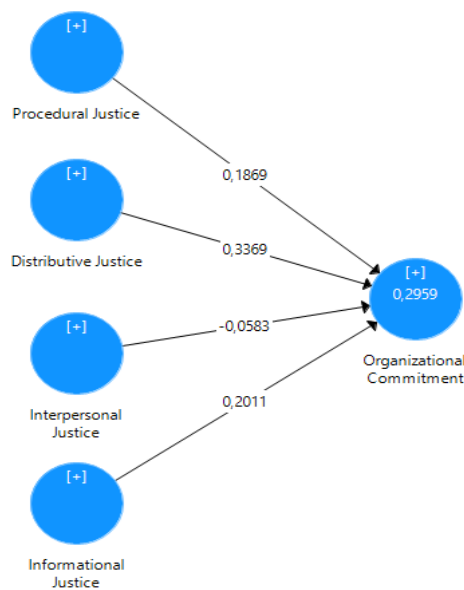


Figure 10. Structural Model of Model #3



In order to assess the model, a 2-step analysis using latent variable scores (repeated indicator approach) was used (Lowry and Gaskin, 2014). The final model, after a 2-step analysis using latent variable scores, is presented in Figure 11.

Figure 11. 2-Step Analysis of Research Model #3



The PLS-Algorithm test results of Proposed Model #1 in Table 5:

Table 5. R<sup>2</sup> Values of Model #2

	R <sup>2</sup> (Model #1)	R <sup>2</sup> (Model #2)	R <sup>2</sup> (Model #3)
Affective Commitment	0,397	0,396	
Continuance Commitment	0,098	0,341	
Normative Commitment	0,133	0,134	

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Organizational Commitment - - 0,296

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The path coefficients and significance of effects obtained from model #3 are given in Table 6.

Table 6. Model #2: Path Coefficients and Significance of Direct and Indirect Effects

Path	$\beta$ (Model #1)
Distributive Justice -> Organizational Commitment	0,337***
Informational Justice -> Organizational Commitment	0,201
Interpersonal Justice -> Organizational Commitment	-0,058
Procedural Justice -> Organizational Commitment	0,187

$\beta$ : Standardized Coefficients; \* $p < 0,05$ ; \*\* $p < 0,01$ ; \*\*\* $p < 0,001$

As per the results given in Table 6, only Distributive Justice has a significant effect on Organizational Commitment.

## 5. Discussion

The objective of this study was to propose and test the possible research models regarding organizational commitment, which is one of the most critical variables as an indicator of employee's willingness to remain with the organization and has been studied rigorously.

Results show that although the current research model (Model #1) is good to reveal the effects of other variables on components of the organizational commitment, it does not estimate the continuance commitment correctly. Current research models omit or overlook the effects of affective commitment and normative commitment on the continuance commitment, which is the most important indicator of the employee's awareness of the consequences of leaving or remaining with the organization. Furthermore, it seems like the Proposed Model #2 fits most of the research purposes, even for the dataset used to demonstrate the differences. Furthermore, the Proposed Model #2 better estimates continuance commitment compared to current research models and should absolutely be used if the employee's willingness to remain with the organization is the research subject. It also does show the mechanism of how other variables included in research affect the employee's desire to remain with the organization, as it is demonstrated in this study that distributive justice causes an employee to develop continuance commitment through affective commitment.

The third research model is useful if researchers try to investigate the effects of each component on the organizational commitment along with other variables included in the research. This research model is useful if the organizational commitment is considered as an endogenous variable and a blend of all three components (e.g., affective, normative, and continuance commitment), which is what it is in reality (Meyer and Allen, 1991:67-68).

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