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Affective commitment and citizenship behaviors across multiple foci

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Abstract

Purpose – This paper seeks to examine the relationships between affective commitment and organizational citizenship behaviors (OCBs) across four foci: organizations, supervisors, coworkers, and customers. Further, it aims to determine whether relationships among commitments and OCBs involve mediated linkages.

Design/methodology/approach – This study relies on matched employee-supervisor data ($n = 216$). The relative fit of different models representing relationships among commitments and OCBs was examined using structural equations modeling.

Findings – Results revealed that commitments to coworkers, customers and supervisors displayed positive relationships with OCBs directed at parallel foci. In addition, commitment to the global organization partially and negatively mediated the relationship of commitments to coworkers and customers to parallel OCBs dimensions. Results also revealed cross-foci relationships between local commitments and OCBs. Finally, no commitment target was significantly associated with organization-directed OCBs but the latter were positively related to local OCBs.

Originality/value – The paper demonstrates that multiple commitments and OCBs are involved in a complex net of relationships among which local foci play a critical, and positive, role.

Keywords Affective commitment, Organizational citizenship behaviours, Multi-foci, Structural equation modelling, Organizational structures, Behaviour

Paper type Research paper



Organizational citizenship behaviors (OCBs) refer to behaviors that are “discretionary, not directly or explicitly recognized by the formal reward system, and that in the aggregate promotes the effective functioning of the organization” (Organ, 1988, p. 4). Among the antecedents of OCBs, organizational commitment has received the most attention in the literature (Organ and Ryan, 1995; Podsakoff *et al.*, 2000). The relationship between organizational commitment and OCBs has been conceptualized within a social exchange framework (Lavelle *et al.*, 2007). More precisely, a strong commitment to the organization, as expressed via high levels of identification with the values and goals of the organization, is generally thought to result from an organization’s fair and supportive treatment of its employees (Coyle-Shapiro and Conway, 2005; Rhoades *et al.*, 2001), and to lead to the willingness to promote the organization’s well-being (Organ, 1988) via social exchange processes (Blau, 1964).

Research has also established that commitment may be directed toward a variety of constituencies within the organization (Becker, 1992; Reichers, 1985) including supervisors or coworkers. This has led to the emergence of a multiple-constituency approach to commitment (e.g. Becker, 1992; Becker *et al.*, 1996; Clugston *et al.*, 2000; Redman and Snape, 2005; Siders *et al.*, 2001). However, the question of how multiple foci of commitment relate to one another and OCBs remains a controversial issue. Becker (1992) found commitments to local foci to relate to work outcomes over and above commitment to the global organization. In contrast, additional studies showed that global organizational commitment fully (Hunt and Morgan, 1994) or partially (Maertz *et al.*, 2002) mediated the relationships between constituent commitments and work outcomes.

These contradictory findings can be partly attributed to the fact that past research has adopted an incomplete multiple-constituency approach by not measuring commitments and OCBs directed at parallel targets. Our purpose in this study is to determine whether commitments to local constituencies are primarily associated with OCBs directed at parallel constituencies and what role commitment and OCBs directed at the global organization play in these relationships. This question has broad relevance to research and practice. For instance, if employees better serve customers primarily when their commitment to customers is high, organizations would be well advised to encourage employees to develop more intense relationships with customers – which can be achieved by allowing more freedom in employee-customer contacts. In contrast, if employees do better attend customer needs when their attachment to the organization is high, then organizations may want to encourage identification to organizational goals and values, and possibly promote the implementation of standard rules for dealing with customers. To address these questions, our study will rely on measures of commitment and OCBs in which the target can be easily identified, an issue that has not been solved in past research (e.g. Fassina *et al.*, 2008). Four foci of commitments and OCBs will be examined: the organization, supervisors, coworkers, and customers. In the next sections, we review past research on multiple commitments and OCBs and present our hypotheses.

Multiple foci of commitment and OCBs

Commitment refers to a “[...] force that binds an individual to a course of action of relevance to one or more targets” (Meyer and Herscovitch, 2001, p. 299). Although various components of commitment have been proposed (Meyer and Allen, 1991), our

focus here is on the affective component because it is the most widely studied, the most generalizable across targets, and the most predictive of employee behavior (e.g. Solinger *et al.*, 2008; Somers, 2010). In particular, affective commitment has been found to be positively related to job performance and OCBs (Mathieu and Zajac, 1990; Meyer *et al.*, 2002). Social exchange theory (Blau, 1964) has been used as the conceptual underpinning of commitment's relationship to OCBs. In essence, employees who enjoy their organizational membership, i.e. experience a relationship characterized by mutual trust and long-term dedication (Cropanzano and Mitchell, 2005), are thought to experience stronger organizational commitment. Moreover, strongly committed employees will want to reciprocate by adopting behaviors that benefit the organization (Coyle-Shapiro *et al.*, 2004; Konovsky and Pugh, 1994).

Over the years, researchers have recognized that organizations include multiple constituencies whose goals and values may conflict (Reichers, 1985). This recognition has resulted in the study of multiple commitments in the workplace and their consequences (Becker, 1992; Bishop and Scott, 2000; Snape *et al.*, 2006; Vandenberghe *et al.*, 2004). Becker (1992) found that commitments to top management, supervisors, and workgroups contributed unique variance in turnover intentions, job satisfaction and prosocial organizational behaviors. Other studies reported evidence for a unique contribution of commitment to the supervisor to in-role performance (Becker and Kernan, 2003; Vandenberghe *et al.*, 2004), extra-role behavior and OCBs (Becker and Kernan, 2003; Cheng *et al.*, 2003; Gregersen, 1993; Snape *et al.*, 2006), and sales performance (Siders *et al.*, 2001). Similarly, commitment to the workgroup has been found to uniquely relate to job performance and OCBs (Bishop *et al.*, 2000; Ellemers *et al.*, 1998) while commitment to customers was demonstrated to uniquely relate to customer-relevant performance (Siders *et al.*, 2001) and customer perceptions of service quality (Vandenberghe *et al.*, 2007).

Similarly, researchers have explored the foci or "intended beneficiaries" of OCBs (Bowler and Brass, 2006; Lavelle *et al.*, 2007). Williams and Anderson (1991) distinguished between OCBs directed towards the organization (OCBOs) and individuals (OCBIs). OCBIs can be further divided into OCBs that benefit supervisors, coworkers, or customers. Along that line, Becker and Kernan (2003) found that commitment to supervisors predicted OCBs directed towards supervisors and that organizational commitment was related to OCBs that benefited the organization. Vandenberghe *et al.* (2007) reported commitment to customers to relate positively to customer-reported employee helping. Interestingly, Lavelle *et al.* (2009) reported that the relationship between commitment and OCBs was stronger when they referred to similar rather than different targets.

An isomorphic multifoci approach

As noted by Fassina *et al.* (2008), current measures of OCBs do not necessarily allow for clear beneficiaries to be identified. For example, as they note, "conscientiousness" as a dimension of OCBs evokes such behaviors as attendance, compliance to organizational rules, and punctuality. Although these behaviors are assumed to favor the organization's well-being (Organ, 1988), supervisors and workgroups are also beneficiaries of these behaviors as they facilitate peer cohesion and job performance. Our purpose in this study is to examine the relationships between multiple commitments and OCBs by using clearly identified referents for OCBs and using an isomorphic approach to commitment and OCBs across foci. We retained supervisors,

coworkers, and customers as local foci of commitment as research has established their unique contributions to work behavior (e.g. Ellemers *et al.*, 1998; Siders *et al.*, 2001; Vandenberghe *et al.*, 2007). Moreover, these foci are all connected with the organization's goals, such that the viability of both a global (organizational commitment as key mediator; Hunt and Morgan, 1994) and a local (target similarity model; Lavelle *et al.*, 2007) perspective can be examined. Moreover, potential cross-foci relationships (Lavelle *et al.*, 2007) will be examined as well.

Organizational commitment as mediator versus target similarity

Organizational commitment as key mediator

Two opposing perspectives on multiple commitments have been proposed. The global perspective advocates that "organizational commitment is the same thing as the sum of an individual's commitments to all possible constituencies of an organization" (Hunt and Morgan, 1994, p. 1569). Hunt and Morgan claimed that commitments to local constituencies should contribute to organizational commitment because organizational components share the organization's values. This perspective suggests that organizational commitment acts as a "key mediating construct" through which commitments to local constituencies relate to work outcomes. A similar rationale has been adopted by proponents of the cohesion approach to commitment (e.g. Wech *et al.*, 1998; Yoon *et al.*, 1994). For example, Yoon *et al.* (1994) contended that interpersonal attachments within a group create additive effects that result in attachment to the organization. This logic is consistent with the idea that intra-organizational constituencies are rewarded by the organization for contributing to the achievement of the organization's goals. In that sense, commitment to supervisors and coworkers should contribute to organizational commitment.

Applying the logic of the "global" perspective to the present study, commitments to supervisors, coworkers, and customers should relate to organizational commitment which in turn should relate to organization-directed OCBs, which ultimately should relate to local OCBs. For example, individuals who feel committed to their supervisor will come to experience stronger attachment to the organization. Then, they will search for ways to improve the organization's functioning and ultimately generate behaviors intended to help local constituencies.

Target similarity model

An alternative approach is the target similarity model (Lavelle *et al.*, 2007; Rupp and Cropanzano, 2002). On the basis of research on attitude-behavior relationships (Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975), Lavelle *et al.* (2007, 2009) argued that attitudes more strongly relate to behaviors when they refer to similar contexts, actions, timelines, and targets. According to this logic, the alignment of foci among commitments and OCBs determines the strength of the association between constructs (Bishop *et al.*, 2005). For example, if an individual feels committed to his or her coworkers, he or she will naturally engage in OCBs that specifically benefit coworkers. No mediation by an overall construct of organizational commitment or organization-directed OCBs is expected to occur. The target similarity model is partly compatible with Lawler's (1992) choice process theory, according to which individuals develop stronger attitudes towards proximal entities (supervisors and groups) than towards distal entities (organizations) because proximal entities provide them with a greater sense of control over their work (Mueller and Lawler, 1999). Finally,

it is worth noting that the target similarity model recognizes the possibility of cross-foci relationships (Lavelle *et al.*, 2007) because OCBs tend to correlate across foci as their beneficiaries are not mutually exclusive.

An integrative test

Our study will test organizational commitment and organization-directed OCBs as potential mediators, target similarity relationships, and cross-foci relationships among commitments and OCBs. Figure 1 depicts the proposed theoretical models.

Solid arrows in the figure refer to predictions depicting organizational commitment and organization-directed OCBs as key mediators. The predictions from the target similarity model are portrayed via dashed arrows representing direct links from commitments to supervisors, coworkers and customers to parallel foci of OCBs. The cross-foci relationships are represented by dotted arrows among local foci of commitment and OCBs. Finally, Figure 1 incorporates the possibility that either local foci of commitment or foci-specific OCBs are correlated with one another (see bidirectional arrows). Empirically, this model will be tested using Anderson and Gerbing's (1988) decision-tree framework (see also Maertz *et al.*, 2002). This approach is described in the Method section.

Method

Participants and procedure

Employees from three organizations (*ns* = 270 (insurance company), 170 (pharmaceutical company), and 120 (communications company)) located in Canada were solicited to participate in this study between August and December 2003. The study was conducted using web-based surveys: employees from the first organization completed survey scales in computer rooms whereas employees from the other two organizations completed surveys via their personal computers. Employee response rates across the three organizations were high (90 percent, 82 percent, and 76 percent; total *n* = 473). A total of 55 executives who responded to the survey and 23 respondents with a high level of missing data (over 33 percent) were excluded, leaving a final sample of 395 employees (*ns* = 220, 105, and 70 for the three companies, respectively).

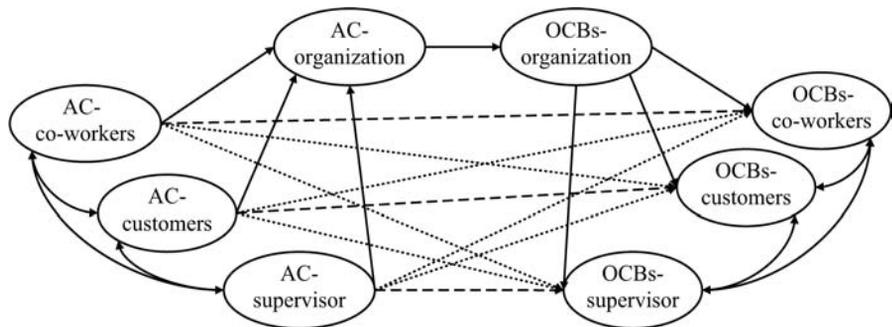


Figure 1. Hypothetical relationships among multiple commitments and OCBs

Notes: Solid lines/arrows represent relationships included in M_1 ; dashed lines/arrows are relationships added in M_{11} ; dotted lines/arrows are relationships added in M_{12} over those included in M_{11} . AC = affective commitment

Since Canada has two official languages, questionnaires were available in French and English. French Canadians (28.4 percent) completed the French version of the questionnaires (the remainder – 71.6 percent – completed the English one). Respondents' immediate supervisors were invited to separately evaluate OCBs for each employee of their teams. However, when teams were composed of more than five employees, supervisors were invited to complete the assessment of OCBs for five employees randomly drawn from their teams. Of the 95 supervisors who were contacted, 71 returned usable OCBs assessments, for a total of 216 responses (74.7 percent), of which 35.2 percent were reported using a French version of the scales (the remaining 64.8 percent were reported using the English version of OCBs scales). On average, supervisors evaluated 3.04 employees ($SD = 1.55$)[1].

Of the final 216 employees with matched commitment-OCBs data, 68.2 percent were female. Most worked full time (93.3 percent). Age was distributed as follows: less than 25 years (6.7 percent), 26-35 years (38.1 percent), 36-45 years (35.1 percent), 46-55 years (16.5 percent), and older than 55 years (3.6 percent). Organizational tenure was distributed as follows: less than one year (11.3 percent), one to two years (15.4 percent), two to five years (32.3 percent), five to ten years (25.1 percent), ten to 15 years (6.2 percent), 15-20 years (5.6 percent), and over 20 years (4.1 percent). Education level was as follows: high school (25.0 percent), CEGEP (a Quebec-specific degree between high school and college; 28.9 percent), certificate (6.9 percent), undergraduate degree (27.0 percent), and graduate degree (12.3 percent).

Measures

Affective commitment. We used measures that were previously developed in French and English using a translation-back-translation procedure (Morin *et al.*, 2009) based on Meyer *et al.*'s (1993) original affective commitment scale. Morin *et al.* (2009) reported evidence of factorial validity and measurement invariance of these scales across gender and language. These scales were also found to be highly reliable (α s = 0.85-0.91) and significantly associated with measures of performance, OCBs, intent to quit, satisfaction, quality of social relationships at work and justice (Morin *et al.*, in press). Commitment scales all comprised five items and were targeted at the organization ($\alpha = 0.88$), supervisor ($\alpha = 0.90$), coworkers ($\alpha = 0.84$), and customers ($\alpha = 0.88$). These items were rated on a seven-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (completely disagree) to 7 (strongly agree) (see the Appendix).

OCBs. We used measures that were previously developed in French and English using a translation-back-translation procedure (Boudrias and Savoie, 2006; Boudrias *et al.*, 2006, 2009). Boudrias and colleagues reported evidence for the factorial validity of these scales (Boudrias and Savoie, 2006; Boudrias *et al.*, 2006, 2009). These scales were also found to be highly reliable (α s = 0.84-0.93) and significantly associated with measures of organizational climate, empowering practices, role clarity, and job characteristics, among others (Boudrias *et al.*, 2006, 2009, 2010; Migneault *et al.*, 2009). The scales comprise OCBs targeted at the organization (five items; $\alpha = 0.92$), supervisors (four items; $\alpha = 0.83$), coworkers (six items; $\alpha = 0.89$), and customers (three items; $\alpha = 0.79$). The items were answered on a five-point frequency scale (1 = never; 5 = very often), and measured how often the target employee displayed the behaviors described within the last six months. Items are reported in the Appendix.

Analytical strategy

All models were estimated using Mplus 5.1 (Muthén and Muthén, 2008) and maximum likelihood (ML) estimation. As sample size was relatively low as compared to the number of parameters to be estimated, we created two manifest indicators (parcels) per latent variable. These indicators were created by combining the items from each subscale according to the alpha-if-deleted method (Bishop *et al.*, 2005)[2]. First, the theorized eight-factor commitment-OCBs model was compared to a series of simpler representations of the data. Then, relationships among constructs were separately examined using Anderson and Gerbing's (1988) decision-tree framework.

Five alternative structural models were compared. The fully saturated model (M_s) includes all possible links among latent variables and is formally equivalent to the eight-factor CFA model. This model serves as a standard for gauging the value of more parsimonious models. The null model (M_n) is defined as a model in which all relationships among latent constructs are fixed to zero. Then, the fully mediated theoretical model (M_t) represents the organizational commitment as key mediator perspective discussed previously. In that model, the correlations among local foci of commitment and among local OCBs' disturbance terms were freely estimated. The next most likely constrained model (M_c) differs from M_t by fixing the correlations among local foci of commitment and among local OCBs' disturbance terms to zero. We then proposed two next most likely unconstrained models (M_{u1} and M_{u2}). The first (M_{u1}) differed from M_t by adding predictions based on a target similarity logic, that is a model wherein local commitments also had links with parallel OCBs. The second (M_{u2}) differed from M_{u1} by including cross-foci relations between local commitments and local OCBs.

Model fit was assessed using multiple indices. The χ^2 test was first estimated. However, because this test is sensitive to sample size and minor departures from multivariate normality, researchers have suggested additional indices that are less dependent on sample size (e.g. Hu and Bentler, 1999). Thus, the following incremental fit indices were used: the Comparative Fit Index (CFI), the Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI), the Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) and the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA). Two absolute fit indices were also reported for comparison purposes: the Goodness-of-Fit Index (GFI) and the Adjusted Goodness-of-Fit Index (AGFI). Values greater than 0.90 for CFI, TLI, GFI and AGFI are considered to be indicative of adequate model fit although values approaching 0.95 are preferable, while values smaller than 0.08 or 0.06 for the RMSEA and smaller than 0.10 and 0.08 for the SRMR support acceptable and good model fit, respectively (Hu and Bentler, 1999; Marsh *et al.*, 2004; Vandenberg and Lance, 2000).

To estimate the significance of mediated relationships, 95 percent bias-corrected bootstrap confidence intervals (CI) were constructed from 5,000 bootstrap samples (MacKinnon *et al.*, 2004) as this represents the most effective way to identify mediated relationships given the asymmetry of their theoretical distributions (see also Cheung, 2007; Cheung and Lau, 2008; Taylor *et al.*, 2008). If the CI does not include "zero", the mediated relationship is said to significantly differ from zero.

Results

Confirmatory factor analyses

Fit indices for measurement models are reported in Table I.

	χ^2	df	CFI	TLI	SRMR	RMSEA	RMSEA 90 percent CI	GFI	AGFI
1. Eight factors	106.70	80 [*]	0.99	0.98	0.03	0.04	0.02-0.06	0.94	0.90
2. Five factors (all OCB dimensions combined in one factor)	409.01	98 ^{**}	0.88	0.85	0.07	0.12	0.11-0.13	0.82	0.74
3. Five factors (all commitments combined in one factor)	750.12	94 ^{**}	0.74	0.67	0.10	0.18	0.17-0.19	0.73	0.60
4. Four factors (commitment and OCB combined within foci)	1503.09	98 ^{**}	0.44	0.32	0.27	0.26	0.25-0.27	0.43	0.20
5. Two factors (commitment vs OCB)	1019.69	103 ^{**}	0.64	0.58	0.11	0.20	0.19-0.21	0.65	0.54
6. One factor	1503.55	104 ^{**}	0.45	0.36	0.20	0.25	0.24-0.26	0.52	0.37

Notes: $n = 216$; CFI = Comparative Fit Index; TLI = Tucker-Lewis Index; SRMR = Standardized Root Mean Square Residual; RMSEA = Root Mean Square Error of Approximation; SRMR = Standardized Root Mean Square Residual; CI = Confidence Interval; GFI = Goodness-of-Fit Index; AGFI = Adjusted Goodness-of-Fit Index; * $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$

Table I.
Confirmatory factor analyses of commitment and OCB dimensions: fit indices

The hypothesized eight-factor model yielded a satisfactory fit to the data: $\chi^2(80) = 106.70$, $p < 0.05$, CFI = 0.99, TLI = 0.98, SRMR = 0.03, RMSEA = 0.04; GFI = 0.94, AGFI = 0.90. This model improved significantly over more parsimonious models, including a five-factor model combining either all OCB dimensions in one factor ($\Delta\chi^2(18) = 302.31$, $p < 0.01$) or all commitments in one factor ($\Delta\chi^2(14) = 643.42$, $p < 0.01$), a four-factor model combining commitment and OCBs within foci ($\Delta\chi^2(18) = 1,396.39$, $p < 0.01$), a two-factor model representing commitment and OCBs as two general factors ($\Delta\chi^2(23) = 912.99$, $p < 0.01$), and a one-factor model ($\Delta\chi^2(24) = 1,396.85$, $p < 0.01$). These results suggest the four dimensions of commitments and OCBs were factorially distinct from one another.

Descriptive statistics and correlations

Table II reports descriptive statistics and correlations for the study variables.

Correlations among latent constructs are reported below, and corresponding bivariate correlations above, the diagonal. The internal consistency values were reasonably good for all substantive variables. Commitment to the supervisor correlated significantly with supervisor-directed OCBs ($r = 0.20$, $p < 0.01$) and customer-directed OCBs ($r = 0.22$, $p < 0.01$), while commitment to coworkers correlated significantly with customer-directed OCBs only ($r = 0.20$, $p < 0.01$). Organizational commitment and commitment to customers did not correlate with OCBs. Finally, as demographic variables displayed few significant associations with OCBs, these were not used as controls in structural model analyses (see Becker, 2005).

Structural model tests

Fit indices for structural models are reported in Table III.

For comparing models, we used Anderson and Gerbing's (1988) recommended sequential approach. First, the fully mediated theoretical model (M_t) fitted the data less well than the fully saturated model (M_s), $\Delta\chi^2(15) = 48.90$, $p < 0.01$, yet better than the next most likely constrained model which set the correlations among commitments and among OCBs dimensions' disturbance terms to zero (M_c), $\Delta\chi^2(6) = 201.37$, $p < 0.01$. Next, the fully mediated theoretical model (M_t) fitted the data less well than the two next most likely unconstrained models which either freed the paths from local commitments to local OCBs (M_{u1}), $\Delta\chi^2(3) = 16.80$, $p < 0.01$, or additionally included cross-foci relationships among local commitments on OCBs (M_{u2}), $\Delta\chi^2(9) = 35.64$, $p < 0.01$. When M_{u1} was compared to M_{u2} , M_{u2} was found to provide a better fit to the data, $\Delta\chi^2(6) = 18.84$, $p < 0.01$. Yet, both M_{u1} and M_{u2} displayed a poorer fit to the data than the fully saturated model (M_s), $\Delta\chi^2(12) = 32.10$, $p < 0.01$, and $\Delta\chi^2(6) = 13.26$, $p < 0.05$, respectively.

According to Anderson and Gerbing (1988), this suggests that additional paths in the best fitting model (M_{u2}) should be further relaxed until M_{u2} reaches a level of fit comparable to that of M_s . A close examination of the results associated with our theorized models revealed that relationships between local commitments and OCBs were not mediated through organizational commitment and organization-directed OCBs as the path between the two constructs was non-significant. This suggests the relations of local commitments to local OCBs may be mediated by only one of these variables (i.e. organizational commitment or organization-directed OCBs). We thus specified two alternative models: one in which relationships between organizational

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	M	SD
1. Sex	-	0.22**	-0.30**	0.15*	0.22**	0.07	0.06	0.11	-0.04	0.02	-0.03	0.05	0.69	0.46
2. Tenure	-	-	-0.26**	0.37**	0.06	-0.18*	0.05	0.06	-0.01	-0.05	-0.08	-0.05	3.33	1.47
3. Education	-	-	-	-0.16*	-0.25**	-0.06	-0.13	-0.12	0.14	0.07	0.09	0.14*	3.80	1.39
4. Age	-	-	-	-	0.16*	0.02	0.05	0.25**	-0.10	-0.05	-0.06	-0.05	2.72	0.94
5. AC to the organization	-	-	-	-	(0.88)	0.35**	0.44**	0.48**	-0.02	0.09	0.04	0.04	5.76	1.12
6. AC to the supervisor	-	-	-	-	0.37**	(0.90)	0.43**	0.17*	0.01	0.20**	0.10	0.22**	5.36	1.45
7. AC to co-workers	-	-	-	-	0.50**	0.45**	(0.84)	0.27**	-0.09	0.07	0.12	0.20**	5.58	1.17
8. AC to customers	-	-	-	-	0.54	0.24	0.29	(0.88)	-0.04	0.07	0.10	0.13	6.01	0.97
9. Organization-directed OCBs	-	-	-	-	-0.02	0.03	-0.09	-0.03	(0.92)	0.68**	0.65**	0.47**	2.68	1.07
10. Supervisor-directed OCBs	-	-	-	-	0.12	0.25**	0.09	0.10	0.75**	(0.83)	0.78**	0.63**	2.87	1.00
11. Coworker-directed OCBs	-	-	-	-	0.03	0.14*	0.13	0.11	0.73**	0.88**	(0.89)	0.65**	3.35	0.87
12. Customer-directed OCBs	-	-	-	-	0.05	0.26**	0.23**	0.14	0.54**	0.75**	0.76**	(0.79)	3.82	0.89

Notes: *n*s = 216-395; zero-order correlations are reported above the diagonal; correlations among latent variables are reported below the diagonal; alpha coefficients are reported in parentheses along the diagonal; for Sex, 0 = Male, 1 = Female; for Tenure, scores range from 1 (less than one year) to 7 (more than 20 years); for Education, scores range from 1 (elementary school) to 6 (graduate degree); for Age, scores range from 1 (less than 25) to 5 (over 56); AC = affective commitment; **p* < 0.05, ***p* < 0.01

Table II.
Descriptive statistics and correlations for the study variables

Table III.
Fit indices for structural models

	χ^2	df	CFI	TLI	SRMR	RMSEA	RMSEA 90 percent CI	GFI	AGFI
1. Fully saturated model (M_s)	106.70	80*	0.99	0.98	0.03	0.04	0.015-0.058	0.94	0.90
2. Structural null model (M_n)	825.56	112**	0.72	0.70	0.28	0.17	0.161-0.183	0.66	0.58
3. Fully mediated theoretical model (M_t)	155.60	95**	0.98	0.97	0.08	0.05	0.038-0.069	0.92	0.88
4. Next most likely constrained model: set the correlations among local commitments and among local OCBs' disturbance terms to zero (M_c)	356.97	101**	0.90	0.88	0.13	0.11	0.096-0.121	0.80	0.73
5. Next most likely unconstrained model (a): freeing the paths from local commitments to parallel local OCBs (M_{u1})	138.80	92**	0.98	0.98	0.06	0.05	0.031-0.064	0.93	0.89
6. Next most likely unconstrained model (b): adding spillover effects of local commitments on local OCBs (M_{u2})	119.96	86**	0.99	0.98	0.04	0.04	0.022-0.060	0.93	0.90
7. Alternative model 1: adding paths from organization-directed commitment to local OCBs (M_{a1})	109.19	83*	0.99	0.99	0.04	0.04	0.013-0.057	0.94	0.90
8. Alternative model 2: adding paths from local commitments to organization-directed OCB (M_{a2})	117.54	83**	0.99	0.98	0.04	0.04	0.023-0.061	0.94	0.90

Notes: CFI = Comparative Fit Index; TLI = Tucker-Lewis Index; SRMR = Standardized Root Mean Square Residual; RMSEA = Root Mean Square Error of Approximation; SRMR = Standardized Root Mean Square Residual; CI = Confidence Interval; GFI = Goodness-of-Fit Index; AGFI = Adjusted Goodness-of-Fit Index; all models were estimated using equality constraints on indicators' factor loadings within commitment foci: * $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$

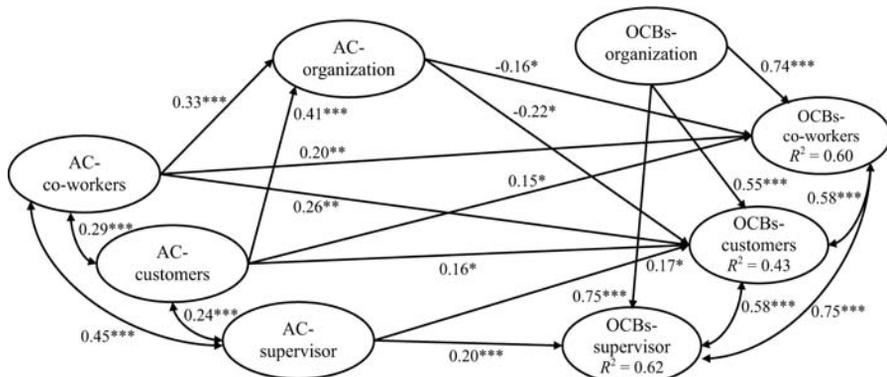
commitment and local OCBs were added to M_{u2} (M_{a1}), and one in which relationships between local commitments and organization-directed OCBs were added to M_{u2} (M_{a2}). As shown in Table III, M_{a2} did not fit the data better than M_{u2} , $\Delta\chi^2(3) = 2.42$, ns, and fitted the data worse than M_s , $\Delta\chi^2(3) = 10.84$, $p < 0.05$. In contrast, M_{a1} yielded a better fit than M_{u2} , $\Delta\chi^2(3) = 10.77$, $p < 0.05$, and was not significantly different from M_s , $\Delta\chi^2(3) = 2.49$, ns. Therefore, M_{a1} was the best fitting model in this study.

Figure 2 reports the significant path coefficients associated with M_{a1} .

First, commitment to coworkers was associated with OCBs directed towards coworkers ($\beta = 0.20$, $p < 0.01$), commitment to customers was associated with OCBs directed towards customers ($\beta = 0.16$, $p < 0.05$), and commitment to supervisors was associated with OCBs directed towards supervisors ($\beta = 0.20$, $p < 0.001$). Second, commitment to coworkers and commitment to customers related positively to organizational commitment ($\beta = 0.33$, $p < 0.001$, and $\beta = 0.41$, $p < 0.001$, respectively) which in turn negatively related to coworker-directed OCBs and customer-directed OCBs ($\beta = -0.16$, $p < 0.05$, and $\beta = -0.22$, $p < 0.05$, respectively). The bias-corrected bootstrap 95 percent CIs for these mediated relations (via organizational commitment) were significant for both the relationship of commitment to coworkers to coworker-directed OCBs (-0.051 , $SE = 0.027$, $CI = -0.219 / -0.005$) and customer-directed OCBs (-0.073 , $SE = 0.034$, $CI = -0.298 / -0.026$), and the relationship of commitment to customers to coworker-directed OCBs (-0.063 , $SE = 0.032$, $CI = -0.232 / -0.004$) and customer-directed OCBs (-0.090 , $SE = 0.040$, $CI = -0.312 / -0.037$). Therefore, the relations between commitments to coworkers and customers and their OCBs counterparts are partly mediated by organizational commitment through negative mediated relations.

Third, three cross-foci relationships were found:

- (1) commitment to coworkers was related to customer-directed OCBs ($\beta = 0.26$, $p < 0.01$);
- (2) commitment to customers was linked to coworker-directed OCBs ($\beta = 0.15$, $p < 0.05$); and
- (3) commitment to supervisors was associated with customer-directed OCBs ($\beta = 0.17$, $p < 0.05$).



Notes: AC = affective commitment. * $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$

Figure 2. Estimated completely standardized path coefficients and correlations associated with retained alternative model 1 (M_{a1})

Finally, organization-directed OCBs related positively to coworker-, customer-, and supervisor-directed OCBs ($\beta = 0.74$, $p < 0.001$, $\beta = 0.55$, $p < 0.001$, and $\beta = 0.75$, $p < 0.001$, respectively).

Discussion

The commitment and OCBs literatures have evolved towards considering multiple constituencies in work exchange relationships (Clugston *et al.*, 2000; Lavelle *et al.*, 2009; Redman and Snape, 2005; Rupp and Cropanzano, 2002). Researchers have also proposed different views of how multiple foci of commitment relate to OCBs. The global approach suggests that commitments to local entities will relate to organizational commitment and organization-directed OCBs which will lead to OCBs directed towards parallel foci (e.g. Becker, 1992; Hunt and Morgan, 1994; Maertz *et al.*, 2002). Conversely, the advocates of the target similarity approach proposed that individuals will only engage in behaviors that may benefit those constituencies they feel a commitment to (Lavelle *et al.*, 2007; Rupp and Cropanzano, 2002). This intended beneficiaries logic implies that relationships between commitment and OCBs will be stronger among parallel targets than among different targets.

This study contributes to this ongoing debate. Our results support a partially mediated model. A close inspection of the paths reported in Figure 2 additionally suggests a strong locally-driven basis for the commitments-OCBs relationships. Indeed, local commitments essentially displayed relationships with local foci of OCBs. Moreover, local commitments appeared to have synergistic relationships with local OCBs. In other words, organizations that want to develop cohesive work teams, high-quality exchanges with supervisors, and stronger connections with customers would be well advised to encourage the development of commitments to these local entities, as these commitments operate synergistically in their relations to OCBs. Thus, local commitments serve the organization's objectives very well as they provide a basis for more OCBs among actors (employees, supervisors, and customers) who interact in the delivery of services and products.

Future research and theory development

Further research should investigate why synergistic relationships are observed between local commitments and OCBs. For example, role theory would suggest that supervisors' perspectives should primarily reflect organizational goals and values (Tangirala *et al.*, 2007) and may not be entirely compatible with customers' needs and expectations. Yet, this study shows that commitment to supervisors is associated with more OCBs towards customers. This suggests that the two perspectives are more compatible than one would think. Of course, these findings may partly reflect the organizations' culture and management practices. In fact, subsequent meetings with the participating organizations revealed that supervisors were actually rewarded based on their ability to promote customer service quality among their teams. This may explain the positive association between commitment to supervisors and OCBs targeted at customers. More generally, it would be worth measuring in the future whether the organization's reward system plays a moderating role in relationships among commitments and OCBs. Further, it would also be interesting to investigate other moderators, for instance whether value fit among local foci moderates the relationships between local commitments and OCBs. We suspect that these relationships are stronger when value fit is high.

While the multi-foci literature has largely built on the presumptive compatibility of local commitments with organizational commitment (Hunt and Morgan, 1994; Siders *et al.*, 2001; Snape *et al.*, 2006), Reichers (1985) nonetheless argued that work constituencies' interests and values may actually conflict with one another, making commitments to them potentially conflicting as well. Our findings show the latter view may partly be true as organizational commitment acted as a partial negative mediator of the relations between commitments to coworkers and customers, and OCBs directed towards the same foci. This may indicate a process whereby employees refrain from engaging in discretionary behaviors that would benefit customers or coworkers above and beyond the organization. That is, via commitment to the organization, employees may realize that the organization's goals and immediate interests require a focus on the core activities specified in job descriptions rather than OCBs that uniquely benefit coworkers or customers. This result illustrates potential conflicts between local commitments and organizational commitment that have been overlooked in past research (Reichers, 1985) and should be accorded more attention in the future. Research should also address whether such pattern of results applies to other antecedents of commitment, such as perceived support and justice. As the multi-foci approach has also been used in this area (e.g. Edwards and Peccei, 2010), it would be worth examining whether support and justice from local vs. global foci also have opposite relationships with local commitments and OCBs.

The negatively mediated relationships in which organizational commitment is involved suggest it plays the role of a "suppressor" variable (MacKinnon *et al.*, 2007; MacKinnon *et al.*, 2000). A suppressor variable is a form of mediator defined as "a variable which increases the predictive validity of another variable [...] by its inclusion in a regression equation" (Conger, 1974, pp. 36-7). In this study, correlations between coworker- and customer-directed commitments and OCBs were either small or nonsignificant, but relations became larger and significant with the inclusion of organizational commitment. Suppressor effects often take the form of "inconsistent mediation", because direct and mediated effects have opposite signs (MacKinnon *et al.*, 2000, 2007).

Contrary to Lavelle *et al.* (2009) who actually found a stronger relationship between organizational commitment and organization-directed OCBs than is generally reported when the target is less clearly identified (see Riketta, 2002), we found no significant relationship between the two. This discrepancy may be linked to how the multi-foci approach has been applied in past research. It might be that the magnitude of the relation between organizational commitment and OCBs has been overstated due to previous studies rarely distinguishing among the beneficiaries of OCBs (Organ and Ryan, 1995; Riketta, 2002). Similarly, much prior research on commitment and OCBs also failed to distinguish among foci of commitment. Therefore, future research should further investigate the unique contributions of multiple foci of commitment and OCBs by using carefully targeted measures of these constructs. Such an approach would help identify the various contexts where an emphasis on local rather than global commitments (and vice versa) is more appropriate. For example, in highly decentralized service organizations, local constituencies are known to represent strong drivers of employee attitudes and service performance (Liaw *et al.*, 2010). In such cases, attachment to local foci may be critical. In contrast, in organizations where the corporate culture is more homogenous and the development of products depends on the cooperation of multiple

employees from various departments, an emphasis on organizational commitment may be more appropriate. Another interesting avenue would be to determine whether the pattern of relationships of commitments to OCBs extends to other employee outcomes such as well-being. Research has established that organizational commitment relates to well-being (Panaccio and Vandenberghe, 2009). However, it is unclear whether local commitments display similar relationships with well-being. Lawler's choice process theory (Mueller and Lawler, 1999) suggests that this should be the case.

Practical implications

The present study's results suggest organizations would be well-advised to encourage the development of local commitments among employees. Given the synergistic nature of relationships among local commitments and OCBs, various approaches could be used. Supervisors may be informed that developing a cohesive team climate encourages OCBs but also invites employees to engage in OCBs that benefit customers. It can be so because co-workers help each other in finding solutions to customers' problems. Similarly, supervisors may want to develop high-quality exchanges with employees by providing coaching or mentoring with respect to work-related issues, as this may strengthen employees' commitment to supervisors and ultimately OCBs targeted towards both supervisors and customers. Finally, our results suggest organizations should question the benefits of organizational commitment for OCBs directed towards coworkers and customers, given the negative relationships among these constructs. Organizations may partly circumvent this problem by achieving stronger alignment of the organization's values and goals with those of work teams and customers.

Limitations

This study has limitations. First, OCBs assessments have been obtained from supervisors, who may have a limited view of OCBs. Although supervisors were instructed to rate OCBs based on their observation of these behaviors, they may have restricted observational access to some OCBs (Ilies *et al.*, 2009; Vandenberg *et al.*, 2004), in addition to being somewhat biased by employees' use of OCBs as impression management strategies (Bolino *et al.*, 2006). However, managers are generally interested in furthering employees' commitments to the extent that these efforts yield results that are observable to them and may be less interested in OCBs that occur out of their sight. Thus, though the present results may provide a somewhat incomplete picture of OCBs, this picture is important in its own right for managers and organizations. Nevertheless, future research should strive to obtain direct assessments of OCBs from the targets of these behaviors. Second, additional work should be conducted on testing the generalizability of our findings to other samples and contexts. As discussed above, contextual factors may influence the strength of commitment-OCBs relations. For example, foci of commitment and OCBs may be more distinguishable in larger and decentralized organizations than in small businesses; similarly, commitment and OCBs targeted towards customers may be more important in service organizations than in other industries. Along the same line, as advocated above, organizations' culture and management practices may moderate the relationships between multiple commitments and OCBs. For example, the extent to which the organization's culture is homogenous and the reward system incorporates the perspective of multiple constituencies should be measured in future research.

Third, the results of this study must be replicated with longitudinal data. The current cross-sectional design precludes any conclusions regarding the causal connections among constructs. More definitive conclusions regarding causality could be obtained by using panel studies that allow examining how change in commitment relates to change in OCBs. Fourth, this study did not address the relations among commitments and OCBs at multiple levels of analysis. Actually, our data did not show significant variation across supervisors, suggesting that conducting analyses at the individual level was appropriate (Hofmann *et al.*, 2000). However, it is likely that in contexts where organizational culture is more diffuse and local cultures dominate, relations among commitments and OCBs would hold at multiple levels. Obviously, much work remains to be done to get a clearer picture of how commitments and OCBs relate across foci, sources, and levels of measurement.

Notes

1. Analyses revealed that scores on commitment and OCB variables did not vary significantly across: supervisors; organizations; excluded versus included respondents; employees with or without supervisors ratings of OCBs. Preliminary analyses also confirmed the complete measurement invariance of the commitment and OCBs measures across language and organizations. Finally, all models were estimated on the subsample of employees who were nested within supervisors (i.e. whose supervisors had to rate more than one employee) using Mplus complex survey data features (Muthén and Muthén, 2008). These results were virtually identical to those reported here.
2. Models with only two indicators per construct may be locally underidentified. To circumvent this problem, Little *et al.* (1999) suggested placing equality constraints on the loadings of indicators within constructs, which is acceptable if the decrease in fit is nonsignificant. In this study, these equality constraints were appropriate for the commitment scales but not for the OCBs scales.

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Further reading

Bollen, K.A. (1989), *Structural Equations with Latent Variables*, Wiley, New York, NY.

Appendix. Survey items

Commitment

Affective commitment to the organization

1. I am proud to say that I work for this organization (*COMPANY NAME*).
2. This organization (*COMPANY NAME*) means a lot to me.
3. I don't like working for this organization (*COMPANY NAME*).*
4. I don't feel emotionally attached to this organization (*COMPANY NAME*).*
5. When I talk about this organization (*COMPANY NAME*) to my friends, I describe it as a great place to work.

Affective commitment to coworkers

1. I'm happy to work with my co-workers (in my unit).
2. My co-workers (in my unit) make me feel like going to work.
3. When I talk about my co-workers (in my unit) to my friends, I describe them as great people to work with.
4. I don't share the values conveyed by my co-workers (in my unit).*
5. If it were possible, I would move to another unit so I wouldn't have to work with my current co-workers any more.*

Affective commitment to customers

1. I really care about the satisfaction of [*COMPANY NAME*] customers.
2. Delivering quality products and/or services to [*COMPANY NAME*] customers is a major source of satisfaction for me.
3. I consider satisfying [*COMPANY NAME*] customers the most important part of my job.
4. In my opinion, the satisfaction of [*COMPANY NAME*] customers is a priority.
5. [*COMPANY NAME*] customers inspire me to give my best.

Affective commitment to the supervisor

1. I like the values my immediate supervisor conveys.
2. I feel privileged to work with someone like my immediate supervisor.
3. I don't like my immediate supervisor.*
4. If it were possible, I would like to work with another immediate supervisor.*
5. When I talk about my immediate supervisor to my friends, I describe him/her as a great person to work with.

OCBs

Organization-directed OCBs

1. Participates in solving problems in the organization.
2. Becomes involved in work committees in the organization.
3. Proposes changes that will have an impact outside his/her work group.

4. Expresses his/her ideas in discussion groups in the organization.
5. Makes suggestions to improve the organization's functioning.

Coworker-directed OCBs

1. Helps coworkers do their work.
2. Provides constructive feedback that helps coworkers.
3. Keeps coworkers informed of the progress of his/her work in group projects.
4. Questions inefficient ways of doing things in his/her work group.
5. Introduces new ways of doing things in his/her work group.
6. Suggests improvements to increase his/her work group's efficiency.

Customer-directed OCBs

1. Does everything in his/her power to satisfy the customer, even when there are problems.
2. Makes suggestions to improve the products and/or services offered to customers.
3. Projects a positive image of the organization to customers.

Supervisor-directed OCBs

1. Helps you by doing things that are not really part of his/her regular duties.
2. Keeps you informed of important events which concern you.
3. Suggests ways to you of improving the work group's performance.
4. Advises you on ways to improve your management practices.

*Reverse coded item.

About the authors

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