On the Elusive Moderators of Affective Organizational Commitment

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Abstract. Departing from a universal perspective on affective organizational commitment, the present article examines the situational and personal variables that act as potential moderators of the relationship between affective commitment and its antecedents and outcomes. Based on emerging evidence and theory, it is argued that the relationship between extrinsic and intrinsic rewards and other job experiences and affective commitment is stronger when employees exert an influence over rewards and job experiences. This can be achieved when the organization offers opportunities for such influence or when employees' traits help them earn expected rewards. Similarly, theory and empirical evidence suggest that the relationship between affective commitment and work outcomes is subject to moderating influences. For example, affective commitment may foster employee retention when more career opportunities are available, making one's belongingness to the organization more attractive. Such career opportunities may result from the organization's action or from individuals' own proactivity to obtain them. Likewise, the relationship between affective commitment and work performance is likely stronger when supervisors' leadership helps employees engage in those behaviors that are rewarded by the organization. Finally, we discuss avenues for future inquiry by identifying group-level and cultural variables as promising moderators that warrant attention.

Over the years, two primary conceptualizations of employee commitment have emerged. From the perspective of the three-component model, Meyer and Herscovitch (2001, p. 301) proposed that "commitment is a force that binds an individual to a course of action of relevance to one or more targets". This approach further suggests that different mindsets are associated with this force, such as the "*desire* to follow a course of action," reflecting affective commitment, the *perceived cost* of failing to pursue the course of action of interest, reflecting continuance commitment, and the *perceived obligation* to do so, representing normative commitment. When the target of commitment is the organization, the course of action associated with the commitment would include maintaining employment with the organization or exerting effort to achieve its goals (Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001, p. 308). There is, however, evidence and consensus that within the three-component model,

the affective component is dominant, namely, because it is most strongly related to employee retention and job performance (Meyer et al., 2002). From a theoretical perspective, researchers have also argued that affective commitment most accurately represents organizational commitment because it is "an attitude regarding the organization, while normative and continuance commitment are attitudes regarding specific forms of behavior (i.e., staying or leaving)" (Solinger et al., 2008).

The second conceptualization of commitment has been more recently proposed (Klein et al., 2012), with the purpose of refocusing the construct on its essence, excluding from the definition those elements that refer to antecedents or consequences of commitment. Klein et al. (2012, p. 137) proposed that commitment is "a volitional psychological bond reflecting dedication to and responsibility for a particular target." Klein et al.'s (2012) approach defines commitment as a specific psychological bond that can be distinguished from other types of bonds such as acquiescence, instrumental

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bonds, and identification. To operationalize their conceptualization of commitment, Klein et al. (2014) developed a four-item scale called the Klein et al., unidimensional, target-free measure (KUT), intended to apply to all work-related targets. When applied to the organization, the KUT displayed a correlation of .69 with Meyer et al.'s (1993) measure of affective organizational commitment (Klein et al., 2014). Thus, from both an empirical (Klein et al., 2014; Meyer et al., 2002; Riketta, 2002) and a theoretical (e.g., Solinger et al., 2008) perspective, affective organizational commitment (hereafter affective commitment), the most widely researched dimension of commitment, embodies a central psychological bond that links employees to their organization, and its predictive power with respect to work behavior is stronger compared to any other form or component of commitment (Meyer et al., 2002).

The Moderators of Affective Commitment

Research suggests that the meaning and content of affective commitment are widely shared across cultures (e.g., Fischer & Mansell, 2009; Meyer et al., 2012; Wasti et al., 2016). However, the relationships between antecedent variables and affective commitment and between affective commitment and outcome variables may vary across individual differences, job characteristics, work experiences, and organizational variables. Despite its importance for the understanding of how affective commitment operates, this area of research lacks integration and systematic investigation. For example, we need to explore whether and how the effects of the presumed antecedents of affective commitment vary across contextual and personal factors. Similarly, more investigation is needed on how the influence of affective commitment on work outcomes varies across situations and individuals. However, such endeavors remain disparate, limiting what we know of how affective commitment operates (Wasti et al., 2016). In the next sections, I explore some areas where more work is needed to identify the situational and personal moderators of affective commitment.

Relationships between Antecedent Variables and Affective Commitment

Relatively little is known about the moderators of the relationships between affective commitment and its antecedents. According to commitment theory (Meyer, 2009; Meyer & Allen, 1997), these relationships are driven by social exchange processes (Klein et al., 2020). That is, when work experiences (e.g., job characteristics, organizational justice and support;

Meyer et al., 2002) are perceived to be positive (i.e., are intrinsically rewarding), employees are inclined to develop an emotional attachment to their organization as a way of rewarding the organization for these positive experiences (Blau, 1964). It is, however, important to note that social exchange relationships are not independent of economic exchange relationships. For example, extrinsic rewards (e.g., pay, bonuses, promotions) or extrinsically satisfying job conditions (Eisenberger et al., 1997; Stinglhamber & Vandenberghe, 2004) provided to employees often result from positive social exchange relationships with the organization. Organizations extrinsically reward employees with whom they have a positive and trustful social exchange relationship to maintain their affective commitment (Gong et al., 2009; Kuvaas, 2006; Su et al., 2018). This is consistent with the positive association reported between income and affective commitment over time (Gao-Urhahn et al., 2016). Thus, both extrinsic and intrinsic rewards are likely to foster affective commitment because they reflect complementary aspects of a positive exchange relationship between employees and organizations. However, there might be situational and personal moderators that influence the magnitude of the relationships between extrinsic and intrinsic rewards and other job experiences and affective commitment.

Extrinsic rewards. Regarding extrinsic rewards, an early meta-analysis by Cohen and Gattiker (1994) found pay satisfaction to be more strongly (positively) related to affective commitment in the private sector, plausibly because private companies, more so than public companies, use flexible pay systems for rewarding work performance. Private companies would thus be more able to leverage financial resources to foster exchange relationships with employees. Another explanation may be that employees affiliated with private companies have a stronger need for achievement, which would make them more adjusted to organizations that use pay-for-performance systems. In another study (Bayo-Moriones & Larraza-Kintana, 2009) at the organizational level, profit-sharing plans were found to be more strongly and positively related to affective commitment when employee participation in decision-making was stronger. However, another study (Schreurs et al., 2013) found pay-level satisfaction to be less positively related to affective commitment when the organization had a strong decision-making climate. The authors suggested that employees' involvement in decision-making may end up obscuring the communication of the organization about the criteria used to reward employees. Another study indicated that the perceived level of pay was more strongly and positively related to affective commitment when

the cultural value of collectivism was low (Williamson et al., 2009).

The above results suggest that the magnitude of the relationship between extrinsic rewards and affective commitment varies across contexts, but the variables that would explain this variation remain to be investigated. For example, evidence regarding the role of employee involvement in the decision-making process is mixed. On the one hand, when employees possess some influence over the decisions within an organization, namely, regarding the rules that determine the attribution of rewards, the positive influence of extrinsic rewards on affective commitment might be stronger (Bayo-Moriones & Larraza-Kintana, 2009). However, on the other hand, a stronger climate for decision-making may promote a diversity of inputs from employees, which may weaken the ability of organizations to maintain consistent guidelines about pay policies. The key explanatory factor might be the ability of employees to exert some control over reward decisions. When such control exists, employees may be ensured that rewards are in line with their needs, thereby fostering the exchange relationship with the organization. This raises the larger question of the role of employee needs as moderators of the relationship between extrinsic rewards and affective commitment. For example, employees with a high need for achievement typically strive for excellence and full exploitation of their skills (Eisenberger et al., 2005). Therefore, such employees may feel comfortable in environments that promote pay-for-performance. Hence, achievement-oriented employees may derive more affective commitment from receiving extrinsic rewards that are tied to their level of performance. It is also worth noting that achievement orientation may be consistent with individualism, namely, a value that makes individuals more sensitive to pay as a driver of exchange relationships (Williamson et al., 2009).

Intrinsic rewards. There is little additional research that has addressed the moderators of the intrinsic reward-affective commitment relationship, plausibly because the array of such rewards is more extended. For example, Lapointe and Vandenberghe (2017) reported supervisor mentoring to be more strongly and positively related to affective commitment when job scope was higher, while Zargar et al. (2014) found job scope to be more strongly related to affective commitment when the strength of employees' growth need was greater. Of incidental interest, Arora and Rangnekar (2015) found supervisor career mentoring to be more strongly related to affective *occupational* commitment among employees with high agreeableness. Newman and Sheikh (2012) found job autonomy and satisfaction with supervision to be more strongly associated with affective commitment when traditionality, a cultural value reflecting the acceptance of status differences and tolerance regarding unequal distribution of benefits, was low. Likewise, Williamson et al. (2009) found job autonomy to be more positively related to affective commitment when employee collectivism was high. Another study by Jehanzeb and Mohanty (2020) found organizational justice to be more positively associated with affective commitment when power distance was low. Finally, a study by De Menezes and Kelliher (2017) found that work arrangements such as remote working and flexible work hours were more positively related to affective commitment when these arrangements were informally negotiated between the employee and his or her manager than when there was a formal policy for work arrangements in the organization.

Generally, the above results suggest several implications regarding how intrinsic rewards may foster affective commitment. First, it appears that the sensitivity of employees' affective commitment to supervisor mentoring is increased when their jobs are enriched or more complex, indicating that mentoring has a stronger impact when the added value of mentoring is greater (i.e., the complexity of jobs requires such mentoring) (Lapointe & Vandenberghe, 2017). Second, employees' needs and traits make a difference. That is, employees derive more affective commitment from enriched jobs (Zargar et al., 2014) and supervisor career mentoring (Arora & Rangnekar, 2015) when their need for growth and agreeableness, respectively, are higher. This suggests a contingent approach to intrinsic rewards because individual difference variables represent important boundary conditions for these rewards. These variables have in common that they capture a commonality with intrinsic rewards, namely, the need for seeing one's competencies growing when holding complex jobs and the ease of getting along with others when affiliated with a supervisor who guides one's career development (Arora & Rangnekar, 2015). Third, cultural values are also potential moderators of intrinsic rewards. Values that reflect a low sensitivity to positive work experiences (e.g., job autonomy) or to how one is treated by the organization (e.g., organizational justice), such as the Confucian value of traditionality (Farh et al., 1997), power distance (Hofstede, 1980), or collectivism (Williamson et al., 2009), may reduce the influence of intrinsic rewards on affective commitment. Finally, the study by Jehanzeb and Mohanty (2020) suggests that work arrangements that are informally negotiated are more likely to enhance affective commitment, which is consistent with research showing that individualized work arrangements or idiosyncratic deals (i.e., I-deals) are positively associated with affective commitment (Bal & Boehm, 2019).

Other job conditions and experiences. A few other studies have examined the role of additional job conditions and experiences on affective commitment. For example, Guerrero et al. (2014) found I-deals to mitigate the negative relationship between psychological contract breach and affective commitment among high-potential employees, suggesting that informal work arrangements between employees and organizations helped reduce the detrimental effects of contract breaches. A study by Rawat and Nadavulakere (2015) reported employee calling, namely, the search for meaningfulness through fulfilment of one's gifts and talents (Bunderson & Thompson, 2009), to be more positively related to affective commitment in organizations with participative decision-making practices. In a cross-cultural study, Fisher (2014) found structural empowerment and a cooperative climate to mitigate the negative relationship between role overload and affective commitment. Furthermore, the societal value of power distance acted as a contextual moderator; the buffering effect of structural empowerment between role overload and affective commitment was more pronounced in low power distance countries. Overall, these studies suggest that job conditions and experiences are more beneficial (or less detrimental) to affective commitment when employees exert some control over their environment, for example, through empowerment (Fisher, 2014), negotiation of work arrangements (Guerrero et al., 2014), or participation in decision-making processes (Rawat & Nadavulakere, 2015). Interestingly, these effects might be enhanced in cultures characterized by low power distance (Fisher, 2014).

Relationships between Affective Commitment and Outcome Variables

Research on the effects of affective commitment has essentially focused on two types of outcomes: Turnover and work performance (job performance and organizational citizenship behavior [OCB]).

Turnover. Although the relationship between affective commitment and turnover has been widely explored in the past few decades, there is surprisingly little work that has examined the moderating influences on this relationship. As affective commitment involves a desire to pursue organization-relevant goals (Meyer, 2009; Meyer & Allen, 1991; Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001), thus, affectively committed employees may feel more comfortable in an environment that promotes career advancement and offers growth and opportunities for development. Indeed, such an environment would facilitate career progress and make employees' contribution to organizational goals easier. As pursuing organization-relevant goals is central to the identity of affectively committed employees, perceiving career opportunities within the organization would make them more likely to stay. This is because such opportunities would help them achieve their identity. This line of reasoning has been supported in a recent study by Lapointe and Vandenberghe (2017), which found that affective commitment was associated with lower turnover when career opportunities were perceived to be higher.

Individual difference variables related to an employee's ability to build an environment that is conducive to their goals may exert a similar moderating effect between affective commitment and turnover. For example, an internal locus of control, as a trait reflecting a sense of agency in obtaining expected rewards (Galvin et al., 2018; Spector, 1982), is a distal trait that can help individuals achieve success in their actions. Thus, internals who experience strong affective commitment toward their organization, thanks to their sense of agency in controlling their environment, may feel capable of achieving the organization-related goals they cherish. For example, internals may be effective in obtaining rewards from their dedication and commitment to the organization, thereby making their membership more enjoyable and rewarding. In contrast, externals, who generally do not perceive a causal connection between their behavior and potential rewards (Galvin et al., 2018), may not consider displaying their affective commitment to obtain growth opportunities and career prospects in the organization. For these individuals, the pursuit of organization-related goals is perceived to be governed by external forces (e.g., luck, fate, supervisors), over which they believe they have little control (Ng et al., 2006). Thus, externals may not consider that their affective commitment helps increase the value of their membership in the organization because growth opportunities would be out of reach for them. This suggests that affective commitment may be more strongly associated with reduced turnover among employees with an internal locus of control.

Work performance. There is also little work that has explored the contingencies of the relationship between affective commitment and performance outcomes. Meta-analytic studies suggest that affective commitment is more predictive of discretionary or extra-role performance than of in-role performance (Meyer et al., 2002; Riketta, 2002), is more strongly related to performance among white-collar than of blue-collar workers, and that the magnitude of this relationship is not affected by job level, age, or tenure (Riketta, 2002). In addition to the fact that the nature of the performance is a potential moderator—that is, affective commitment is theoretically more likely to influence those aspects of performance that are unconstrained by organizational rules and depend on employees' freewill (Meyer et al., 2004)—we know far less about the contextual

boundaries that may influence the salience of affective commitment as a driver of performance. One study by Akoto (2014) indicated that perceived inflation, defined as the cost of goods and services, represents a situational constraint that may reduce the strength of the association between affective commitment and citizenship intent. That is, strong economic volatility constitutes an external constraint that renders the behavioral intent of employees less freely chosen and more externally determined, leading to a weaker relationship between affective commitment and citizenship intent. Akoto's (2014) study is one of the first to examine the role of the economic context as a moderator of the affective commitment-performance relationship.

Another study that provides a glimpse into how the context may act as a moderator is a meta-analysis by Jaramillo et al. (2005), which indicates that affective commitment is more strongly related to job performance among sales employees than among nonsales employees. The authors suggested that the moderating effect of job type is potentially due to sales employees having more control over their job outcomes and to job outcomes being more visible in sales jobs. They further argued that greater control over and visibility of job outcomes facilitate the translation of salespeoples' attachment to organizational goals into superior performance. Moreover, it is likely that the reward structure of pay systems (e.g., incentives) among sales jobs creates a stronger connection between employees' willingness to contribute to organizational goals (affective commitment) and the means (behaviors) required to accomplish them. Jaramillo et al. (2005) also reported affective commitment to be more strongly associated with job performance in collectivist cultures, potentially because these cultures promote in-group bonds and loyalty obligations toward the organization.

The research reviewed above suggests that more effort should be put into looking at the situational contingencies of the relationship between affective commitment and work performance. Contingencies may act on two levels. First, the supervisor is an important stakeholder in regard to guiding affectively committed employees toward the appropriate behaviors. Affective commitment is not in and of itself a guarantee that employees will act for the organization's well-being, as shown by a relatively weak association between affective commitment and job performance (Riketta, 2002). This is because affective commitment reflects an *unspecific* disposition to act in favor of the organization. Appropriate leadership by supervisors may help affective commitment be translated into work performance. For example, contingent reward leadership, which refers to leader behavior that rewards subordinates for complying with set expectations (Bass, 1985), may provide useful guidance regarding how employees can

practically and concretely contribute to organizational goals. A recent meta-analysis (Young et al., 2020) found such leadership to foster leader-member exchange relationships and indirectly enhance job performance but to simultaneously reduce psychological empowerment. By clarifying expectations and building agreements with subordinates regarding what they can obtain in return for their performance, contingent reward leaders may convert their affective commitment into performance. However, providing rewards to employees may have drawbacks, even if it helps communicate what is expected and what is discouraged (Yukl, 2006). For example, a potential drawback of rewarding employees is the increased control exerted by supervisors over subordinates, which may undermine their intrinsic motivation (Zhang et al., 2020). Therefore, one can speculate that reward-based leadership may be a double-edged sword that enhances the relationship between affective commitment and performance by strengthening leader-member exchange relationships (Young et al., 2020), while (partly) jeopardizing this effect by reducing empowerment or autonomous motivation (Young et al., 2020; Zhang et al., 2020). More work is obviously needed to determine how reward-based leadership moderates the relationship between affective commitment and work performance.

Second, at the organizational level, as discussed above, it is likely that work systems that promote a high level of performance (e.g., Nishii et al., 2008; Posthuma et al., 2013; Takeuchi et al., 2009) may strengthen the connection between affective commitment and work performance. These practices include performance management systems and pay-for-performance and, as such, build an environment that communicates to employees those specific behaviors and performance outcomes that are valued by the organization (Collins & Smith, 2006). Therefore, such practices may facilitate translating employees' affective commitment to the general goals of the organization into specific behaviors that contribute to work performance. In sum, high-performance work systems (e.g., Takeuchi et al., 2009) would help clarify the specific expectations of the organization and facilitate how employees can meet them. Such work systems would serve to translate an *abstract attitude* (i.e., affective commitment) into a *concrete outcome* (i.e., work performance).

Research Implications and Future Directions

The argument developed in this paper is that more investigation is needed into the contingencies of affective commitment (Wasti et al., 2016). As a central component of commitment, affective commitment has attracted surprisingly little work on the moderators of relationships with its presumed antecedents and work

outcomes. Regarding antecedents, extrinsic and intrinsic rewards and work experiences have received wide attention, but less so regarding their susceptibility to moderating influences. Based on prior research, pay-for-performance systems (Cohen & Gattiker, 1994), participation in decision-making (Bayo-Moriones & Larraza-Kintana, 2009), and decision-making climate (Schreurs et al., 2013) are worth exploring as moderators of extrinsic rewards (e.g., pay satisfaction or profit-sharing plans). One might reason that moderators that offer opportunities to influence job outcomes or to increase the relationship between one's behavior and rewards would strengthen the effect of extrinsic rewards. Participation in decision-making (Bayo-Moriones & Larraza-Kintana, 2009) is a good example of such moderators. Similarly, individual differences reflecting employees' sensitivity to extrinsic rewards would be valuable trait-based factors that moderate the influence of extrinsic rewards. For example, although it has not yet been tested, employees' need for achievement, as a trait indicating a propensity to strive for excellence, to exploit their skills, and to grow in their work (Mills & Fullagar, 2017) could magnify the effect of extrinsic rewards on affective commitment. The commonality among situational and personal moderators of extrinsic rewards would be growth and development opportunities, either offered by the work environment or obtained by the individual.

The array of moderators of the relationship between intrinsic rewards and affective commitment is broader than in the case of extrinsic rewards. Job scope (Lapointe & Vandenberghe, 2017), the strength of employee growth need (Zargar et al., 2014), and employee agreeableness (Arora & Rangnekar, 2015) have been found to strengthen the effect of intrinsic rewards on affective commitment. In contrast, cultural variables such as the Confucian value of traditionality (Farh et al., 1997) and collectivism (Williamson et al., 2009) have been found to negatively moderate the effect of intrinsic rewards. Finally, the negative effect of other work experiences on affective commitment, such as role overload, appeared to be buffered by structural empowerment and a cooperative climate (Fisher, 2014). Thus, the little evidence accumulated at this point appears to suggest that the moderators of the intrinsic reward-affective commitment relationship act at a variety of levels, including the individual, organizational, and societal levels. This has implications. For example, given this complexity, future inquiry into these moderators should carefully control for organizational and societal influences when testing the moderating role of individual traits (e.g., growth need strength, agreeableness).

The contingencies of the relationship between affective commitment and work outcomes are also worth examining. Regarding affective commitment's relationship to turnover, it is essentially career opportunities (Lapointe & Vandenberghe, 2017) that have been explored as a moderator. Career opportunities make membership in an organization more rewarding and valuable. Individual differences may also come into play, although their moderating role has been neglected so far. For example, an internal locus of control, as a trait reflecting a belief in obtaining the rewards associated with one's behavior (Johnson et al., 2015), likely helps employees access the career opportunities that would make their affective commitment to the organization more valuable. Thus, both the provision of career opportunities and an internal locus of control could strengthen the association between affective commitment and employee retention. Finally, the magnitude of the relationship between affective commitment and work performance may depend on the extent to which supervisors' leadership behavior (e.g., contingent reward) guides employees toward those behaviors that engender work performance, although such leadership may come at the expense of intrinsic motivation (Young et al., 2020).

One area of research that needs attention concerns the role of team-level processes and how they may moderate the relationship of affective commitment with its antecedents and outcomes. While affective commitment remains an individual attitude (for a study that examined affective commitment at the organization level, see Gong et al., 2009), with variations of the levels of commitment within teams, team characteristics and processes may operate as moderators of individual commitment. Following the team input-process-outcome framework (Mathieu et al., 2008), team processes include emerging states such as psychological safety, potency, and collective affect. For example, psychological safety, which is namely reflected in team members feeling accepted in their group (Edmondson, 1999), may render the relationship between intrinsic rewards and affective commitment stronger, due to team members being protected against envy experienced by others when co-workers benefit from insightful job experiences. Relatedly, team-level inputs include such factors as task structure and organizational design features (Mathieu et al., 2008). For example, a high degree of task interdependence, reflecting the extent to which an employee's work performance depends on the other employees' input and skills (Wageman & Baker, 1997), may strengthen the relationship between affective commitment and work performance. This may be so because task interdependence drives team members towards those behaviors that best substantiate their affective commitment. Obviously, future research is warranted to explore these avenues.

Research has also indicated that cultural values may influence the magnitude of the relationships between affective commitment and its antecedents and outcomes.

Collectivism, power distance, and traditionality are examples of cultural values that may influence the emergence of affective commitment. Although previous research has examined the relationships between individualism and collectivism and affective commitment (Clugston et al., 2000; Fischer & Mansell, 2009; Meyer et al., 2012; Vandenberghe et al., 2001), it would be worth exploring whether these values moderate the relationship between specific rewards and affective commitment. For example, extrinsic rewards that target group performance may foster a sense of belongingness to the collective, hence should enhance affective commitment among individuals with collectivistic values. This may happen because collectivism makes rewards that promote group functioning more attractive. In contrast, employees holding individualistic values may be sensitive to extrinsic rewards that target individual achievements, hence should derive more affective commitment from such rewards. In terms of work outcomes, one may expect supervisors' leadership behavior (e.g., contingent reward) to be more strongly related to affective commitment among individuals with a strong power distance orientation. This may be so because power distance confers legitimacy to authority figures (Kirkman et al., 2009). Therefore, a supervisor who provides employees with advice and guidance regarding those behaviors that help improve performance may be better regarded by subordinates with strong power distance.

Practical Implications

This paper has practical implications. While the management of affective commitment has been widely construed from a universalist perspective (e.g., Meyer & Allen, 1997), the emerging evidence reviewed above and theoretical arguments suggest that its development and effects depend on various contextual and personal factors (Wasti et al., 2016). Therefore, organizations would be well advised to identify those factors that play out as moderators of affective commitment and to find ways to manage them. For example, participation in decision-making (Bayo-Moriones & Larraza-Kintana, 2009) may strengthen the effect of financial rewards (e.g., profit-sharing plans) on affective commitment. Organizations may thus think of supporting their pay-for-performance policies by allowing employees to get involved in establishing the criteria that form the basis of performance appraisal. Similarly, intrinsically satisfying job conditions may more strongly benefit affective commitment when employees possess a need for self-development (Zargar et al., 2014). This suggests organizations should prioritize the recruitment of individuals with high growth needs to assign them to complex jobs. This combination would lead to enhanced affective commitment. Relatedly, extrinsic rewards may be

effective to foster affective commitment in occupations where need for achievement is dominant such as in salespeople (Jaramillo et al., 2005).

On a related matter, organizations would benefit from building environments where career and growth opportunities abound, as research indicates that affective commitment bolsters employee retention when the organization provides such opportunities (Lapointe & Vandenberghe, 2017). However, growth opportunities are generally sought after by individuals with an internal locus of control (Johnson et al., 2015). Therefore, organizations may want to recruit internals as these individuals, when they develop stronger affective commitment, would tend to stay longer due to their ability to find opportunities for their careers in the organization. Finally, supervisors' leadership can make a difference in tying employees' affective commitment to work performance. Supervisors who communicate skillfully with employees are more likely to help affectively committed employees engage in the appropriate behaviors that foster work performance. Organizations should thus develop supervisors' management skills regarding goal setting practices and contingent reward behaviors.

Research on the moderators of affective commitment remains scarce. Although the search for moderators is an intricate endeavor, there is emerging evidence and theoretical reason to believe that the effect of extrinsic rewards, intrinsic rewards, and other job experiences on affective commitment is stronger when employees perceive having influence over rewards. This can be achieved when the organization offers opportunities for such influence (i.e., participation in decision-making, structural empowerment) or when employees' disposition helps them be effective in earning expected rewards (e.g., need for achievement, need for growth).

Regarding the relationship of affective commitment to employee retention, both theory and empirical evidence suggest career opportunities act as an important moderator. The possibility of career prospects in the organization would make belonging to the organization more attractive to affectively committed employees. Such a context can materialize through either the organization's action or individuals' own action (e.g., when they possess an internal locus of control). The relationship of affective commitment to work performance can also be moderated by specific factors, namely related to supervisors' leadership behavior. One avenue that would be worth exploring concerns the extent to which a supervisor helps subordinates learn the concrete behaviors needed to take advantage of their commitment to the more abstract goals and values of the organization. I hope the insights provided in the above discussion will contribute to reviving interest in the study of the elusive moderators of affective commitment.

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